



# Milford-Orange Times

Vol. 12 / Issue 14

www.TheOrangeTimes.com

December 15, 2022

## Orange Hosts Holiday Parade



Orange held a lighted tractor parade during the tree lighting on Dec. 4 at the Town Green. Other activities included a bell choir at the Orange Congregational Church, ice carvings and a visit from Santa. Additional photos on page 17. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

## Height Request For Milford Apartments Denied

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The developers who want to turn the site of the former Kmart in Milford into apartments faced a setback at the Nov. 15 meeting of the Milford Planning & Zoning Board when the governing body

rejected the proposed height of the building.

The owners, Casey Associates LTD Partnership, had asked P&Z to allow

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## Orange Chamber Hosts Brick Dedication Ceremony



The Orange Chamber of Commerce held a dedication ceremony on Nov. 19 for the bicentennial brick walk in front of the gazebo at High Plains Community Center. The project allows people to purchase personalized bricks to be installed around the gazebo. Additional photos on page 16. Photo courtesy of the Orange Chamber of Commerce.

## Both Sides Weigh In On Orange Pot Dispensary

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Town Plan & Zoning Commission delayed a vote at its Dec. 6 meeting on approving a cannabis dispensary in town that has drawn fierce public

opposition since the commission earlier in September approved new regulations that were tailored to allow just such an

*Continued on page 2*

## Take The Orange Bicentennial Quiz

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

How much do you know about Orange's history? Take the 10-question quiz below to test your knowledge about the town's last 200 years.

1. Orange split from Milford to become its own municipality in 1822, but another town

split off from Orange in 1921. What was that other town?

- a. Woodbridge
- b. West Haven
- c. Derby
- d. Bethany

*Continued on page 2*



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## Quiz

### (Continued From 1)

2. Where does Orange get its name from?
  - a. The color on the town seal
  - b. The fruit trees grown by farmers in town
  - c. A town in the Netherlands
  - d. William III of England, Prince of Orange
3. The section of Route 34 that runs through Orange wasn't always a state road. What has it been in the past?
  - a. A path used by Native Americans
  - b. A cattle path
  - c. A river that was subsequently diverted
  - d. All of the above
4. The New Haven and Derby Railroad ran through Orange during the late 1800s. Which towns were at the ends of the line?
  - a. Ansonia and New Haven
  - b. Derby and New Haven
  - c. Shelton and West Haven
  - d. Naugatuck and New Haven
5. Which Native American tribe originally lived where Orange is now located?
  - a. Wampanoag
  - b. Paugussett
  - c. Mohegan
  - d. Mashantucket Pequot
6. Tyler City Road was once envisioned as a major hub for workers in New Haven. How many building lots were surveyed for the planned development?
  - a. 200
  - b. 1,000
  - c. 2,000
  - d. 4,000
7. Orange native Emily Catherine Prudden is famous for her efforts to educate poor and Black children in the South prior to desegregation. Where is there a statue of her today?
  - a. On the Orange Town Green
  - b. Furman University in South Carolina
  - c. Connecticut Historical Society Museum and Library in Hartford
  - d. Pfeiffer University in North Carolina
8. What agricultural product became a major industry in Orange?
  - a. Corn
  - b. Flowers
  - c. Seeds
  - d. Fertilizer
9. The Orange Country Fair was revived in 1975 and has continued ever since. But when was the first fair held?
  - a. 1876
  - b. 1898
  - c. 1912
  - d. 1932
10. Orange was home to an important site for the region during the Cold War. What was it?
  - a. A Russian language learning center
  - b. An engineering company that designed reconnaissance satellites
  - c. A control site for Nike missiles
  - d. A geopolitical consulting firm

Answers: 1, b; 2, d; 3, a; 4, a; 5, b; 6, c; 7, d; 8, c; 9, b; 10, c.

## Dispensary

### (Continued From 1)

establishment.

Southern Connecticut Wellness & Healing and parent company Green Thumb Industries want to move their existing operation from Milford to the location of a former bank at 175 Boston Post Rd. in Orange.

The town had placed a moratorium on pot dispensaries in 2021, shortly after the state legalized the sale of recreational marijuana. But Green Thumb, working with other town entities, successfully convinced the

commission to adopt a narrowly-crafted regulation change that would essentially allow one dispensary in town via special permit, limited to the area along the Boston Post Road where the company would like to relocate.

But Green Thumb's representatives went back before the board on Oct. 18 to get their dispensary approved, a numerous residents came out to oppose it.

That opposition continued during the Dec. 6 meeting, with several residents taking to the podium to voice their concerns. Others from the area came out to support the application.

Attorney Marjorie Shansky has been before the commission throughout the autumn arguing for approval of the dispensary. She opened the discussion by arguing that many of the concerns raised by neighbors were not even within the purview of planning and zoning, especially those involving potential wetlands impacts, air and water pollution.

One point of contention was that stormwater runoff would be untreated or otherwise affect local water. Green Thumb found that stormwater treatment was already in place at the existing site.

The company did make some revisions to its site plan, including forcing customers to take a left turn only onto Lindy Street, effectively guiding drivers out toward the Boston Post Road and away from the neighborhood's residents.

Resident Pat Panza, who lives on Lindy Street and has made opposing comments at past meetings about the project, was not satisfied, arguing that the congestion on his street would become a nuisance.

"We can deliberate all night long about this and whether it's acceptable. What you're trying to do here is you're trying to put a round peg in a square hole. The property, size of the building, what you have for parking – it doesn't work."

Stephen Trinkaus, who owns a civil engineering firm in Southbury, said the site plan itself was invalid because it was drafted by an architect, while Connecticut law does not allow architects to do so. He argued that there was missing information on the existing site plan, including drainage structures that weren't listed.

"I would be taking a huge liability professionally to sign a plan that was not based on an accurate survey," he said, arguing that the plan was not in compliance with many of the TPZC's regulations.

Jesse Parks, who lives nearby on Founder's Way, argued that a cannabis facility can't be adequately compared with other adult-use facilities, since marijuana is still classified federally as a Schedule I drug. He noted that there was a children's toy store, a pet store and a dance school nearby.

"The text amendment that the town has adopted prevents cannabis establishments within 1,500 feet of schools and houses of worship," he said. "Why shouldn't our children enjoy these same protections in their neighborhood when they're going to dance school or going to the pet store?"

On the other hand, Milford resident Cori Alicea testified in favor of the dispensary. She has been diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, and has used medicinal marijuana to treat her symptoms.

"I wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for this company and the medicine that they provide for me," she said, arguing that the perceptions of cannabis users are misplaced.

Selectman Mitch Goldblatt also spoke in favor of the application, pointing out that it would be across the street from VIP, a store that sells sex toys and films.

"I think I can explain the use of cannabis to children much easier than I can explain what is sold at VIP," he said. He noted that the town went to federal court over VIP and

## A Look Back By Priscilla Searles



Orange Congregational Church, one of the town's oldest buildings. Photo from Priscilla Searles' collection.

In the earliest days of our community, residents traveled to Milford for church services – not an easy task in those days. In 1792 the Connecticut General Assembly granted a request permitting construction of a small meeting house in North Milford, now known as Orange. It was built on the northwestern corner of the Green, and services were shared with Milford.

Cutting through all the history involved in establishing a church, in 1804 a charter was granted for a new society. Erastus Scranton, a Yale student, was the first minister, serving that capacity for 22 years. He later donated the land that is now the south end of the Green.

By 1809 it became clear that the church had outgrown the small meeting house. Samuel Treat donated land just north of the Green, and \$2,000 was raised by subscription for construction. David Hoadley was hired as designer. A 50-foot by 40-foot structure was planned, and in June 1810 the frame was raised in just four days. The dedication of the church building, then known as the Church

lost.

"Quite frankly, all of our collective fears as a town never materialized, including effects on our children," he added.

When the TPZC finally came to discuss the plan amongst themselves, they were unsure that they had enough information to approve or deny the application outright. Instead they closed the public hearing and pushed the decision off to allow time to consult with outside sources, including the town engineer.

## Milford Development (Continued From 1)

them to build a 50-foot high building. This would have required a regulation change, since the maximum height in that zone is currently 40 feet.

Fifty feet was already something of a compromise. Representatives for the developers have been hashing out adjustments to the project before the board since early in the year, and the original plan called for a 55-foot building, but took the five feet off after pushback from some neighbors.

The basic premise of the development has remained the same, with 202 units overall and 10 percent set aside as affordable.

At the meeting, attorney John Knuff

of Christ in North Milford, was held on April 17, 1811.

The interior contained box pews, a high central pulpit and a gallery. The church bell not only served members but announced fires and other town events. Today, the Orange Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, remains largely as it was on the outside, with changes made over time to the interior.

Note the horse sheds in the photo to the left of the church, which were constructed in 1838. They helped keep the horses warm during long winter Sunday sermons. The last sheds were torn down in 1933.

If you have a vintage photo of Orange and are willing to loan it to Town Historian Priscilla Searles, contact her at publisher@theorangetimes.com. All photos on loan will be scanned, with the scan becoming the property of the Orange Historical Society. Originals will be returned to the owner.

*Priscilla Searles is the Orange Town Historian.*

argued for the developer that his client's overarching goal was to maintain the number of units regardless of any other changes to the plan.

"As you can imagine, there is a substantial amount of work that has to take place at the site, including a massive environmental cleanup," Knuff said. "That frankly requires capital. It requires a certain density. So we get to 202 units, but we do it in a way that is still entirely respectful of the zone and entirely respectful of the neighborhood."

Landscape architect Wayne Violin drew attention in particular to the trees and other landscaping elements that would shield residents of Meadows End Road, which runs directly behind the property. Much of the buffer area, he said, would remain undisturbed – including a number of trees and wetlands.

The project continued to have critics among the neighbors, however.

Robin Lewis, who lives on Meadows End Road, said she thought the project was still too large for the neighborhood.

"The trees behind my house are very tall," she said. "And if that building is going to be as tall as those trees, that is a monstrous-sized building."

Suzanne Chimini, who also lives on Meadows End Road, said that the

*Continued on page 4*

### For Nature's Sake

## Eco-Heroes In Our Midst

As we have learned to recognize the role of essential workers – people whose behind-the-scenes labor supports individual and community well-being – it's reasonable to wonder, "Who ensures that we have clean air to breathe and water to drink, and who is, really, safeguarding the landscapes and wildlife that enable humans to survive here?"

While Mother Nature once offered those amenities for free, we now rely upon laws and organizations to restore and protect our water, air and ecosystems.

This year, two of our state's eco-heroes were singled out for recognition by the Environmental Protection Agency. Out of 20 awards allotted to individuals and organizations across New England, the two honorees from Connecticut were Sharon Lewis, who received an individual EPA merit award for her work as executive director of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice, and Betsey C. Wingfield, who received a lifetime achievement award after 34 years at the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

"Sharon Lewis embodies the best of the environmental movement," says the glowing commendation from the EPA's merit awards program. During the past year Lewis has mobilized to limit the expansion of a landfill that has already sickened neighboring communities and lobbied for better air quality in schools, school bus electrification and clean energy.

She has done this in part by bringing to the conversation powerful insights into ongoing, disproportionate, exposure of Black, indige-

nous, and people of color (commonly called BIPOC) populations to pollution in our state, as well as a need to recognize the legacy and persistence of racism in land use decision-making. In a talk to a group of college students, which was one of over 100 online virtual appearances she has made in recent years, Lewis emphasized that the ultimate goal of environmental justice is not to equalize pollution but eliminate harms completely.

Wingfield, deputy commissioner of DEEP for the last three years, has been "in the room where it happened" (to quote the Broadway show Hamilton) for over three decades of key policy decisions and actions to restore and protect natural resources in our state. The EPA notes that she has "found equitable solutions to environmental challenges, relying on science, innovation, and partnerships," including the landmark nitrogen trading program for wastewater treatment plants that has improved the quality of Long Island Sound, and the recently established state water plan. The EPA further described her work on brownfield and superfund clean ups and other initiatives that she either spearheaded or contributed to, drawing upon her insights and abilities as a scientist and administrator.

Wingfield retired earlier this year, and now, reflecting on the lifetime achievement award, feels "honored and humbled that my colleagues at DEEP nominated me and that the EPA selected me...I feel incredibly grateful to have been able to spend three plus decades



PATRICIA HOUSER

working on behalf of Connecticut environment and its citizens. I am born and bred in Connecticut; its resources and people and places are really important to me."

When I asked these honorees for their ideas about addressing environmental challenges in the new year, they both referred to the importance of public education.

"We've done a lot...through regulation...A lot of our challenges today are about collective individual actions," she said, adding, "I think we need to give people information so that they understand what their part is."

An informed public would reflect on how they are managing their organics, for example.

"Are they recycling to the full extent that they can? Are they thinking about their carbon footprint – and what they can do to reduce that?" she asked.

When people figure out how to reduce their energy usage and their gas usage, it can help people economically too.

"A lot of things that are win for the environment are a win for the individual," Wingfield said.

Lewis's first thought also was to encourage people to reduce their waste, endorsing slogans like, "practice zero waste," and "reduce, reuse, refuse, and then recycle."

"Try to keep stuff out of the waste stream," she said. "Think about how much we buy, how much we waste – reconfigure your brain as far as 'Do we really need this?' or 'How can I use this three or four times before I throw it

away?'"

The other piece of public awareness and policy that must accompany any effort going forward, Lewis said, is a matter of "people using their privilege, white or black but mostly white, to make sure equity and justice are infused into everything that's done."

That means, regardless of the setting, calling out a person for racist or discriminatory words and deeds. And it means including impacted communities at the table when land use decisions are made.

"It's not just about pollution," Lewis said. "Urban planners, architects, zoning boards, financial institutions, housing people, energy and more, stakeholders should consider environmental justice in every decision they make beginning with looking around the table. If the marginalized and disenfranchised are not there, cancel the meeting. For too long, BIPOC participants have been added to the decision-making tables late, as an afterthought. Why is this still happening?"

Connecticut is an environmentally healthier place because of people like Lewis and Wingfield. They also remind us, among other things, that pollution, economics and equity are inseparable, that we have more work ahead, and that in the new year we each have a role to play in reducing waste and carbon footprints and shaping community conversations.

*Patricia Houser, PhD, AICP, shares her exploration of local and regional environmental issues in this column as a member of the nonpartisan Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition.*

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# Opinion & Editorial

## Commentary

### Technology Waits For No Man

Change is difficult for us at some times in our life. Many times one will hear, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But we all know there is a time when things really should be replaced.

The tax-front-end charge card, debit card and e-check system in use is one of these things that needs to be replaced. The current system developed by Point & Pay was introduced to Orange's taxpayers in 2015. It was innovative and gave more flexibility for paying tax bills, including allowing a credit option that the town couldn't provide on its own. (We as a town can't offer credit, so it employed a third-party vendor to offer a credit card option.) In addition to credit, a Visa debit card option was offered.

I have had constant questions about why debit cards aren't working with our system. It almost always revolves around the attempt-

ed use of a non-Visa debit card. E-checks have also been a problem. It is a great low-cost option, especially as deadlines are close and the tax still needs to be paid. If you get the bank routing number and your account number correct, this works well. When it gets goofed up by, for instance, a transposition error on one of these numbers, you end up with a bounced check (and a \$25 fee), and if the correcting payment misses the deadline, additional interest payments.

Our vendor is sunsetting this older system and has a newer one that removes some of the aforementioned limitations. However, the environment for offering these services has great-



THOMAS P. HURLEY

Our transparency in government initiative, Policy 10-3, Allocation of Payments, has been posted on the tax department's page on the town's website. Outstanding taxes short paid by a check without specific bill information (an undesignated payment) will result in the tax office deciding which bills are paid. If a second check is sent designated

ly expanded in the intervening years. There are now more vendors willing to offer these services and more. To obtain the best services and costs to the town and taxpayers, I have determined that a bid process is needed to select the next generation front end for our QDS tax system. We hope to have the new system with exciting new ways to pay your taxes in place for July 2023. Stay tuned.

for a specific bill number now paid, that check will be returned indicating "no outstanding balance."

Overpayments trigger the refunds process, which costs the town money. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to contact the tax office within the grace period to resolve all outstanding balances. Not doing this within the grace period will result in additional interest charges.

So if you didn't designate the first payment, don't designate the second. This unties our hands. We can usually figure it out to the taxpayer's benefit. We are not clairvoyant and usually don't have your phone, cell number or email addresses. All our notifications are done by USPS (regular mail).

*Thomas P. Hurley is the tax collector for Orange.*

### Letters to the Editor:

Send us your letters to the editor with no more than 350 words to [editor@theorangetimes.com](mailto:editor@theorangetimes.com). Include your name and full address; only your name and town will be published. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

#### Dog Pictures Appreciated

To the Editor:

The Orange Town Clerk's Office would like to sincerely thank all our dog owners who submitted photos of their dogs to our office when renewing their dog licenses during the month of June this year.

We received 150+ photos of residential dogs that were on display at Town Hall to help commemorate the town's bicentennial anniversary. Visitors to our building enjoyed looking at them throughout the year.

The display was recently dismantled, and all the photos will be placed in the town time capsule to be opened in the year 2072. The photos were labeled with the dogs' names and the families they belong to.

We hope this will be a wonderful reflection 50 years from now on how our most beloved four-legged residents got a chance to help celebrate our town's 200th anniversary.

Mary Shaw  
Orange Town Clerk

#### Orange Can Do Better With Fred Wolfe Park

To the Editor:

It is concerning to me that First Selectman Zeoli's letter published in the recent Milford-Orange Times was focused on the Orange Soccer Association rather than the actual issue at hand.

This is not an OSA vs. Orange issue. The

issue is that there are 14.4 acres of land that belong to the town and is leased out for \$375 per year to a farmer.

I didn't know Orange was in the business of philanthropy. I love that Orange has farmland. It makes this town special, but we have an opportunity to turn town property into something functional to benefit the town.

If anyone has been to Fred Wolfe Park on a weekend when there are many lacrosse games as well as soccer games, you know how dangerous that entrance and parking lot can be. It isn't paved or lined and there are no handicap parking spots. There is no easy way for an emergency vehicle to get onto the field. I was told that someone would have to call an OSA person, who has a key to open the gate in the far field, to let an ambulance in. We can do much better.

The town also spent upwards of \$40,000 in turning a portion of FWP into new fields. No one from lacrosse or soccer was ever consulted. It is currently being used as an unofficial dog park (something FWP also could use). That is one expensive dog park.

What is missing is a sense of collaboration and community. Leadership should want to work with the athletic clubs in town to get their input and ideas, rather than unilaterally building fields that may not be used for their intended purpose.

Gov. Ned Lamont issued \$31.3 million to 77 small towns in Connecticut for infrastructure improvements in September. Orange was not on this list.

Why would we not apply for more grant money? We need to do better. This land should be used to make Fred Wolfe Park a place that provides for all of its residents.

Other towns have beautiful recreational parks. They invest in keeping the integrity of the neighborhood intact while creating an area that adds to the town's landscape. We need to focus on how we are going to move

to it to prevent future building there. He expressed a strong preference by his client to have a vote on the regulation change that night, even though only eight of 10 board members were present and six yes votes were still required for approval.

The board accommodated that preference, but their discussion revealed lukewarm feelings toward the current proposal.

"I would rather wait for a better proposal," board member Joseph L. Castignoli suggested. "I don't think this is the last proposal we're ever going to get on this parcel. We're being presented with a take it or leave it, and I don't think that's the case."

The members split their vote four to four, and the regulation change went down to defeat.

Orange forward and provide recreational areas/facilities that make this town proud.

Erika Higgins  
Orange

#### Thanksgiving A Wonderful Holiday

To the Editor:

What a wonderful national holiday Thanksgiving is.

Out of 195 countries in the world, we are one of only five that have a national holiday devoted to giving thanks to God. Imagine a nation that has a day when we can all pause from our self-centered lives and think about people, belongings and a country we are grateful for.

President Lincoln asked people to have a national day of Thanksgiving in 1863 right in the middle of the Civil War. What a transcending idea. In the middle of a war between countrymen, find something to give thanks for.

Today, with so much negative talk about our country and woe is me for what I don't have, how nice to have a day of positive reflection and thanksgiving for all we do have.

Russell Barnes  
Orange

#### Thanksgiving Treaty Ignored

To the Editor:

It is outrageous that for Thanksgiving you publish an article trashing the holiday by comingling it with subsequent poor relations between colonists and American natives while totally ignoring the good relations that Gov.

William Bradford (most years from 1621 to 1656) had with Chief Massasoit and the Pokanoket (Wampanoag) tribe with which the first Thanksgiving was shared.

Bradford was an excellent leader for the new colony. There were very few complaints made about his governorship in historical records. He worked hard to maintain friendly relations with the Native Americans and also managed to organize fishing, trading and farming in their community.

According to Wikipedia, on March 16, 1621, the settlers had their first meeting with the American Indians in the region when Samoset walked into the village of Plymouth as a representative of Massasoit, the sachem of the Pokanokets. This soon led to a visit by Massasoit himself on 22 March, during which he signed a treaty with John Carver, governor of Plymouth, which declared an alliance between the Pokanokets and Plymouth, requiring them to aid one another militarily in times of need.

Bradford recorded the language of the brief treaty in his journal. He soon became governor and the clause of the treaty that occupied much of his attention as governor pertained to mutual aid. It read, "If any did unjustly war against [Massasoit], we would aid him; if any did war against us, Massasoit should aid us." This agreement secured the colonists with a faithful ally in New England, though it resulted in tensions between the colonists and Massasoit's rivals, such as the Narragansetts and the Massachusetts.

Publishing an article comingling Thanksgiving with the subsequent poor relations of colonists with American Indians trashes America, which, despite imperfections, has grown to provide more freedom and opportunity to more different kinds of people than any other country in world history.

Stephen R. Hildrich  
Orange

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The Milford-Orange Times is published by The Orange Times LLC, P.O. Box 584, Orange, CT, 06477  
Phone: 203.799.7500 Online: [www.milford-orangetimes.com](http://www.milford-orangetimes.com)  
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# Opinion & Editorial

## Honor Through Action



STATE REP. (D-114)  
MARY WELANDER

December 14 marks 10 years since the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. For myself, and I think many others, that day marks a “before” and an “after” point in our lives. At the time, we lived the next town over and my oldest was in kindergarten. There was so much disinformation that morning, including that other shooters were heading to our school campus. I have never felt more afraid and helpless, or more relieved to hug my child when he got home.

Shortly after Sandy Hook Promise was formed, I made the pledge to become a Promise Leader.

Over time I was honored to become the first SHP ambassador for Connecticut, testifying to Congress at the first school safety listening session, and successfully fighting for funding of our violence prevention programs and advocating for the expansion of nationwide emergency risk prevention orders, or “red flag” laws.

Despite the broad scope of the organization, SHP works to meet people where they are by providing many ways to make their communities safer. Becoming a Promise Leader is simply that: making the promise that you will take steps to reduce gun violence. My first action was learning to be comfortable asking about the presence and storage of firearms before playdates, and offering that information about our firearms. Actions may be big or small, but they all count.

One of my favorite programs is “Start with Hello.” Intended for children in kindergarten through 12th grade, this is about creating stronger, safer communities. By recognizing the strengths in our differences and giving kids the language and the tools to reach out to others and identify unsafe situations, they can break down barriers of isolation, create more inclusive and healthier environments and ultimately prevent community violence.

Like any parent, I want to protect my kids, and sometimes the simplest way is to make sure they and those around them do not feel alone. In this modern world it is too easy to “other” those different than us, and so many feel isolated in their thoughts and experiences, despite being “connected” to others almost constantly. When presenting the Start with Hello programs I always started by asking everyone, kids and adults, if they ever had bad days. Inevitably, everyone’s hands would be raised – illustrating one simple way we are all more alike than unlike.

Creating even a small connection can make it easier to say something in difficult moments, becoming an upstander instead of a bystander.

You can learn more about this amazing organization and its programs at [sandyhookpromise.org](http://sandyhookpromise.org).

Sandy Hook Promise is asking that people “honor with action and never forget.” I know our community has so much heart; I hope that you join me in showing care for others and honor those we’ve lost by taking action. We can be upstanders when faced with unsafe or “othering” behavior, we can lead with kindness and compassion, we can ensure that our firearms are responsibly stored, and we can remember their names and honor their lives.

## The Gift Of Giving



STATE SEN. (D-14)  
JAMES MARONEY

As we enter the holiday season, many of us think of this as a joyful time, as a time to reconnect with family and friends, and a time to reflect on the importance of family. While for many it is, some aren’t as fortunate. It is important to stay mindful that it may be a difficult time for others.

The holidays can also bring upon sadness, for some families may have suffered a recent loss, whether that be a loss of a family member, loss of a job, loss of a friend or loss of a marriage. Some folks may have anxiety about large gatherings, or suffer from depression, or have seasonal affective disorder. The truth is there are any number of reasons someone may be suffering, but we need to be mindful of others and learn to be understanding.

In this season of giving, it is a good time for us to find local nonprofit organizations to support. We have so many great organizations in our community that make a significant difference in many residents’ lives.

In this time of inflation, the number of food insecure residents is rising. I am thankful in our community we have Food2Kids in Milford and Orange. They work to help feed school children who may have little or no food resources when they are away from school. We also have the food banks at both the Milford and Orange senior centers and numerous churches. If you are able to spread some holiday cheer this year, you might consider donating your time or money to one of these organizations to help brighten someone’s holiday season.

Brightening someone’s day and helping to pitch in doesn’t always take a material item – often it just takes time. As we all rush to get our own to-do lists done, take a moment to pause and check in on your family, friends and neighbors who may be lonely or getting over a loss. It is never easy to lose a loved one, especially during the holiday season. It is never easy to lose a job, let alone during a time that is supposed to be merry and bright.

This holiday season I want you to give the gift of giving. Help out someone who may be in need. Sometimes a small conversation can go a long way. The feeling of loneliness may feel increased with an absence of a loved one when the holidays revolve around family.

I know that for many people stress levels are high. However, try to take the time to be kind and offer up an encouraging word. Often it is those unexpected acts of kindness from strangers that can make all the difference.

I often think of the lyrics of a Jeff Buckley song:

It is easy to laugh/

It is easy to hate/

It takes strength to be gentle and kind.

Over the next couple weeks, I wish you much laughter with your loved ones. In this season of light and love, I hope you will join me in trying to stem the tide of hatred, which flows all too easily, and replace it with feelings of peace and joy. Most importantly, I hope you have the strength to be gentle and kind, and that you find compassion for our fellow residents. Have a happy and healthy new year.

## Always A Reason To Be Grateful



STATE REP. (R-119)  
KATHY KENNEDY

The holiday season is upon us, and I am excited to celebrate faith and family. Between my family and health, there are so many things to be grateful for; and as I enter a new legislative session, I am most especially grateful for you.

Recently, I joined the General Assembly to convene for a special session to discuss House Bill 6001. This bill consisted of an extension of the gas tax holiday, additional funding to the “hero pay” program, the Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program and Operation Fuel, as well as free public bus fares and changing some bottle deposit requirements.

I was grateful to come together and provide necessary financial relief to Connecticut families and residents during these challenging times. Despite its success, what many voters need to understand is that HB 6001 failed to incorporate permanent solutions and the interests of other in-need groups, such as first responders and the middle class.

For example, the extension of the gas tax holiday was a success for short-term relief. However, total elimination of the gas tax would have produced long-term relief as my Republican colleagues and I had argued. Our attempt for a stable solution in an unaffordable state was quickly rejected by the Democratic majority.

Furthermore, the allocation of additional funds for LIHEAP will serve as immediate aid in heating costs for low-income families and residents. Although beneficial, Democrats once again missed the opportunity to support Republican-led amendments that expanded the income requirements and overall accessibility of LIHEAP to also assist the middle class.

The third most significant tier of HB 6001 concerned the Premium Pay Program, also known as hero pay, related to pandemic relief. There was bipartisan agreement on bolstering the program. However the most essential members of our community – police, firemen and several other first responders – were sadly left out of the program’s benefits.

Following a 134-7 final vote tally in the House, the bill passed without any conversation about the highway use tax increase which goes into effect on Jan. 1, serving only to make Connecticut more unaffordable.

HB 6001 did include some successes, yet at the cost of not giving attention to our middle class and first responders, whom I am most thankful for this time of year. My gratitude for the responsibility to voice your concerns and ask the necessary questions to establish long-lasting success is what motivates me as I prepare myself for the upcoming 2023 legislative session.

There is always work to be done, and you have once again entrusted me to make your interests a priority. That is why I encourage you to call upon your government, especially those in the majority party, to better integrate stability in our solutions as we continue to experience constant financial burdens from inflation and unnecessary taxes.

As always, please contact me should you have any questions about this important issue or concerns on any other topics relating to state government at [Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov) or at 800-842-1423. My heart and wishes go out to all my constituents during the holiday season and the new year. Thank you for always being a reason for me to be grateful in my daily life. Happy holidays.

## 2023 Legislative Session Resources



STATE REP. (R-117)  
CHARLES FERRARO

After another election season has wrapped up, state legislators are back to planning their priorities for the upcoming legislative session. It is a great honor to return to the State Capitol to serve as your state representative for the 2023-2024 session, and I look forward to enacting meaningful policy measures that address affordability concerns of utilities, electricity and burdensome state taxes, worries about public safety in our community, and more.

The governor called for a special session of the state legislature in late November to address some serious issues in our state and provide financial relief in select instances to Connecticut residents and families. The House passed HB 6001, which bolstered the pandemic bonus Premium Pay program, provided additional funding to LIHEAP to assist with home heating costs, extended the gas tax holiday with an implemented phase-in calendar and extended free bus fares for Connecticut residents. I voted yes on this bill.

These initiatives certainly deliver relief, but the legislation had grave flaws that Republicans aimed to address through amendments. The majority looped these measures into one large omnibus bill, and we proposed to separate them for increased scrutiny on each individual proposal. Our amendment failed on party lines.

This upcoming session will likely follow some of these same trends, and House Republicans will continue to be your voice in the General Assembly that prioritizes actions that do not make government pick winners and losers. The issues facing our state and its residents are too serious to allow one-party rule to run rampant through our legislature.

The 2023 legislative session convenes on Jan. 4 and will conclude on June 7. I encourage all of you to follow along, stay in touch with your state legislators, testify in public hearings or just make your voice heard on issues that matter to you and your families.

Each meeting of the state House of Representatives will be broadcast live on the web, newly in high definition, on CT-N.com. There you will find livestreams of floor debates, Capitol news briefings, committee meetings, and public hearings.

You can also stay updated on the session through my public profiles. I encourage you to follow my Facebook page, [facebook.com/RepFerraro](https://www.facebook.com/RepFerraro), my webpage at [cthousegop.com/ferraro](http://cthousegop.com/ferraro) and by signing up for email updates.

Your contributions to the legislative process are integral in ensuring that our policies are reflective of the will of the people. It is our hope that a new year and new legislative session will also bring a renewed policy on public access to the state Capitol. Currently, we are still battling restrictive policies which are a hurdle to strengthening the quality of our work by stifling public input.

Together, we can ensure that our community enjoys a safe, healthy and prosperous winter and holiday season. Please continue to reach out to me at [Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov) with your questions and concerns regarding state issues.

## Facing Ourselves

# Moving Beyond Fight Or Flight

You. Me. Us. Them. Battle lines are drawn and opposing sides become entrenched in an increasingly polarized world, one in which the struggle to find common ground grows greater.

Why is it so difficult to come together, to compromise and to come to a consensus? Why is it so difficult to bear witness to another's suffering and to hold space for it, with compassion and care, rather than feeling attacked and defensive? Why is it so challenging to admit one's current and past mistakes and make reparations, rather than deflect, justify and deny? Why is it so easy to vilify those with whom we have different viewpoints?

Every one of us has fallen into the above patterns. We do so because our innate fight or flight mechanism for survival is triggered when we feel that what and who we hold dear, including our deeply held beliefs, are being attacked. This mechanism is engaged even when we are not in physical danger.

Our cortisol levels surge, and physiologic changes occur in our bodies which prepare us to defend ourselves and survive. Our field of vision literally narrows. Our brain's energy shifts from the frontal lobes, in which higher-level cognitive processes and executive functioning occur, including learning and good decision making, to the more primitive areas of our brain, the amygdala and hypothalamus, whose function is more focused on immediate survival rather than analysis or complex analysis.

Changes in the cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, metabolic and immune system also occur. The results are beneficial in the short-term for survival when life is imminently in threat, but long term can result in inflammation and a myriad of chronic dis-

eases. In these modern times, there is no dearth of dispute which can trigger this fight or flight response. Consequently, our behaviors are more easily driven by primal reaction versus complex thinking and problem solving.

So how can we find balance? The key is not to eliminate the fight or flight response, but to explore our own response to disagreement and differences. We can practice compassion and empathy, skills that can be innate, but which can also be learned and cultivated. Thanks to neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ongoing ability to learn, develop new neurons and rewire old neural pathways, we can grow our brain's capacity for compassion and empathy.

This includes the region of the right supramarginal gyrus, located at the intersection of the frontal, temporal and parietal lobes, which helps us be more empathic and correct for the tendency to view another's emotions and situation solely from one's own perspective. Although the right supramarginal gyrus can be impaired when we have to make rapid decisions or are in a fight-or-flight scenario, we can strengthen the circuitry in this area with intentional choices.

We start with basics, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods and regularly exercising, as often as we can. When we take care of our basic physiological needs, our brains are less apt to perceive that we are threatened, and less easily slip into the fight-or-flight mode unless it is absolutely necessary. As a result, our frontal lobes are more likely to be engaged when we encounter difficulty, and we are



JENNIFER  
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better able to make decisions with a wise mind, and to respond skillfully versus react rashly.

We can engage in prosocial behavior and volunteer, taking the time to see the world from different perspectives and circumstances. We can listen and learn, rather than just confront and condemn. We can expand our mind beyond black and white and see the multiple layers of truth and complexity within opposing viewpoints. We can nurture equanimity, which is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "mental calmness, composure and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation" to oneself and others. We can choose to "love thy neighbor as thyself" and make the conscious decision to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We can embrace our shared humanity, with our ego, faults and all, and realize all of us are imperfect, and we all fail, err and fall short.

We can also choose to see the beauty within each of us, and embrace the philosophy expressed in one of the translations of the Hindu greeting, namaste, which means "the light in me honors the light in you."

Choosing to have compassion does not necessarily mean agreement or approval. It does not mean making amends is unnecessary. Instead, compassion and empathy allow us to view one another's suffering without defensiveness and denial, recognizing that all of us suffer and have caused suffering in turn. We can shed the shackles of shame and blame and seek freedom in realizing that each moment is new, and we can always choose a better and more just

course of action. We can practice loving kindness and wish the following commonly used phrases for ourselves and those around us:

May I be happy.  
May I be healthy.  
May I live with ease.

May you be safe.  
May you be happy.  
May you be healthy.  
May you live with ease.

May all living beings be safe.  
May all living beings be happy.  
May all living beings be healthy.  
May all living beings live with ease.

In a world fraught with divisiveness, one in which the incessant drum beat of "less than" echoes throughout the onslaught of societal messages driven by commercialism and competition, and in a time marked by uncertainty and the shared collective trauma resulting from this ongoing pandemic, perhaps a gentle, kind, helpful resolution for now and in the upcoming new year is to embrace this wish for ourselves, for others and for this beautiful and miraculous planet which we call our home.

*Jennifer Ju, MD is a physician who is a graduate of the Brown University family medicine residency program. She is also an actor and writer who has performed in various theatres across the state and whose plays have been produced locally. Ju has also presented numerous online and in-person workshops on mindfulness, health and wellness for parents and children, as well as for pre-K-12 educators in New Haven and Fairfield counties.*

## Orange Board of Finance

# CT Gets Positive Credit Rating But Energy Policy Looms

In last November Standard & Poor's Global Ratings announced that Connecticut's credit rating was raised on its \$17.7 billion of general obligation bonds to AA-minus from A-plus. The upgrade on the state's debt was driven by Connecticut's sustained positive financial results and building of high reserve levels based on economic and revenue growth.

Connecticut has also been proactive in its commitment to structural budget balance and addressing the state's long-term debt, which includes bond debt, pension and other post-employment benefit liabilities.

S&P's stated that the state's overall credit improvement is supported by Gov. Ned Lamont's commitment to extend financial controls into next year's budget. The budget that gets released in February will include an extension of the bond covenants, a key reason for the rating upgrade. Clear signs that Connecticut is on the right path to putting its fiscal house in order included the governor's commitment to continued structural budget balance and addressing the state's long term debt, as well as the growth of Connecticut's economy, which has seen real results over the past three years. The credit rating increase will mean lower interest and financing costs for critical capital projects.

S&P assigned an AA-minus rating to the state's \$400 million of series 2022E general obligations; \$250 million of Series 2022F general obligation social bonds, and \$250 million of Series 2022G general obligation refunding bonds. The bonds constitute the state's full faith, credit and taxing power toward repayment. The Series E bonds are a

new-money issuance to finance various projects. The Series F bonds are a new-money issuance for school construction and program expenses; the state has designated them as social bonds. The Series G bonds will be used to refund some outstanding general obligation bonds.

One of Connecticut's major challenges within the short term will be an expected supply shortage of electricity this winter, coupled with a 40 to 50-percent increase in electricity for consumers. ISO New England, the region's electricity transmission organization, has warned of the possibility of power outages during the height of the heating season are a real possibility due to generators not having sufficient enough natural gas to meet the increased demand for electricity.

It is really hard to imagine the world's largest economic power could potentially experience blackouts and outages within Connecticut and the Northeast similar to what California experienced during the summer. It's also unacceptable. Natural gas within the US is one of the most abundant and reliable sources of sustainable energy. It is significantly cleaner than oil and coal. Federal policies have failed to deliver on using natural gas as an option this winter and have failed to approve much needed construction of proposed pipelines within New York, which would have provided much needed economic relief.

To make matters worse, the current federal energy policy blocks natural gas production



KEVIN  
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within the US in order to transition to alternative energies like solar and wind. These types of energy will take decades to produce and will never be able to deliver the same level of output as oil, natural gas and nuclear.

Transitioning to renewable energy is the right approach; however, the transition needs to be realistic and completed over the long term. An economic transformation of renewable energy within an advanced economy like the US cannot happen overnight. To go from carbon-based fuels to renewables such as solar and wind turbines is going to take decades.

A commonsense approach is to introduce alternative renewable energy sources as a compliment to the current sources of energy. Natural gas has one of the highest capacities for output and distribution of electricity. Banning or outlawing our greatest resources of oil and natural gas is not the right approach. In the final analysis, higher electric prices coupled with possible outages this winter due to not using natural gas is not acceptable here in Connecticut, the Northeast or anywhere else with the US.

*Kevin McNabola is the chief financial officer for the city of Meriden and a member of the Orange Board of Finance.*

## Insurance Company Expands In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on Dec. 8 for the grand opening of Zurita Insurance's newest and largest office in Milford. The company has other offices in South Norwalk, Westport and Milford. The new office is located at 188 Cherry St. From left: Milford Mayor Ben Blake, Yara Alves, Larisa Zupkova, Maritza Garcia, Loren Marozas, Amber Raza, Catherine Hains, Nathalie Pacheco, owner Jonathan Zurita, Erin Hamel and MRCC Membership and Marketing Director Simon McDonald Director. Photo by Gregory Geiger.

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The Arts Scene

The Arts As Gift, Part II

During a recent interview, I was asked why I do what I do. While I did attend art school, studying illustration, I believe the answer lies in the larger snapshot and simple answer: my brother and I were raised with an awareness and appreciation of the arts.

Although some distant relatives are artists, neither of my parents are. Yet our home was filled with music playing on the radio and record player, rooms were decorated with vignettes of interesting artifacts and memories, arts and craft supplies were plentiful, trips to the symphony and the theater were a tradition, books were plentiful and accessible.

My father attended business school in college and his roommate was studying the organ – not organs in medical school, but the pipe organ. As I remember the story, his roommate either had a key or would break into the campus chapel to practice, and my dad would sit back in a pew and let the music wash over him while enjoying his own private concert. Years later he led the effort to restore our church’s pipe organ and hosted free concerts for the public. And every Sunday morning I fell out of bed as the sounds of classical music (usually organ) played through the floorboards of my bedroom, shaking my mattress. I would run downstairs

to find my dad conducting with his head from behind the newspaper next to his coffee and a box of donuts. Heaven.

My mother was a kindergarten teacher and always depicted herself as “the worst ever” because she had extended naptime while playing classical, ragtime and jazz music. Yet I remember young parents stopping and thanking her for the appreciation of music that they now shared with their children. Her father was a self-taught ragtime pianist who entertained friends at house parties. She even had a 75 rpm recording of him we would play during the holidays. She also introduced me to classic film, which we would watch and discuss for hours.

We attended symphony concerts in New Haven and musicals at Goodspeed Opera House, visited museums and hunted through antique barns. Our local library was only a block away. I spent hours in the aisles choosing which books to bring home. Sometimes it was two trips worth.

I realize some of these experiences are not regularly accessible to everyone, but the



PAIGE MIGLIO

availability of awareness and appreciation of the arts is all around us.

Beyond the offerings for children’s entertainment (yes, Baby Shark, this means you), awareness means enrichment and enlightenment.

Find time to have music playing in your home rather than the din of television. It can be classical, jazz, soul, folk, rock, blues, rap – or better yet, all of it. Mix it up. If a trip to a museum is not in the cards, google local galleries and artist collectives. What’s great about this option is that the living artist is often on premises and eager to chat with budding artists and curious people of all ages.

So many movies are remakes of classics. It’s an easy download to create your very own film class. Some movies are wonderful introductions to classic literature, which can be a great transition to the books themselves.

Live music and theater is a biggie for me. Many venues offer student pricing. If they don’t promote it, ask. Smaller spaces are wonderful places for kids to experience music and plays while being able to watch per-

formers up close. Many venues host meet-and-greets after events. Another option is outdoor concerts and festivals. Pack up egg shakers, drumsticks, long ribbons on sticks and hula hoops. Let your kids move, dance, conduct and play along.

Take walks with your kids along the beach or in the woods. Collect small items such as shells, rocks, wildflowers, leaves or bark, and have them journal their adventure. Give them a sketch book and ask them to draw their items and write descriptions and details of what they saw.

Create memories. Find or rediscover your own creativity and embrace your child’s. You will both find yourself more curious, more engaged, better listeners, better problem-solvers, more open-minded and kind.

That’s the gift of art.

Paige Miglio is the executive director of the Milford Arts Council, celebrating 50 years of service in 2022 supporting and presenting all genres of art to the greater Milford community. Visit milfordarts.org for information on the MAC, and send her your events in the arts (include dates and details) to executive-director@milfordarts.org.

‘Pass The Guitar’ To Benefit Beth-El Center

Pass the Guitar, a movement bringing musicians and communities together for a purpose, will be held on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. at the Milford Arts Council at 40 Railroad Ave. in downtown Milford as a fundraiser for the Beth-El Center shelter and soup kitchen.

Hosted by the MAC and Frank Critelli, the event will showcase 20 local performers on the MAC stage sharing one guitar. Entrance is free, but donations are requested for those experiencing homelessness and hunger in the community.

For more information, visit milfordarts.org.

Orange Senior Center To Hold Hikes In December

The Orange Senior Center will have two hiking group events in December, both around two miles at 10 a.m. Meet at the location of the hike. The first hike is on Dec. 22 at Maltby Lakes on Route 34 in West Haven. The gate is unlocked starting around 9:45 a.m. The second hike

is on Dec. 29 at Ewen Farm Preserve, located at 648 St. Johns Dr. in Orange.

For more information, contact Dennis Marsh at the Orange Senior Center at 203-891-4784. The Orange Senior Center is located at 525 Orange Center Rd.



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Travel Matters

# Festive Season On The Rivers

As I pack for my next trip to the Christmas markets in Germany, I have been noticing an increased interest in traveling during the festive season in many places – some closer, some further away.

The Christmas markets river cruises are some of the most popular river cruises with Viking, AmaWaterways and Avalon. They started with the Rhine (Amsterdam to Basel, Switzerland) and the Danube (Budapest, Hungary to Vilshofen, Germany) and have expanded to the Rhone River (Arles to Lyon) where there is an exploration of nativity scenes, and the lower Danube (from Budapest to Bucharest, Romania), to name just a couple of the expanded locations.

Festive season generally starts Nov. 30 and continues to Dec. 22. The ships are intimate and range in size from 140 to 190 passengers. The length of the cruise is from four nights to seven nights and is all-inclusive of excursions, unlimited wine or beer

with meals, free WiFi and more.

My trip from Dec. 7-12 was on the Main River in Bavarian Germany, starting in Frankfurt and ending in Nuremberg, home of the largest Christmas markets in Europe. We visited a small village along the Main River to see how the locals celebrate. We toured the “Pearl of the Romantic Road” in Wurzburg, with its towering fortress and baroque bishop’s Residence; Bamberg, medieval home of Germany’s Roman Empire dynasties, where we strolled through dozens of nativity scenes, from miniature to life-size; and Rothenburg, known as the “Jewel of the Middle Ages.” Rothenburg is a living museum known for its ancient fortification with five medieval gates, red-roofed buildings and half-timbered homes (think Beauty and the Beast),



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

plus a world-famous Kathe Wohlfahrt Christmas shop.

The river cruise trips are a mixture of history in the morning, and culinary delights and shopping in the markets in the afternoon. Known as Christkindlmarkt in Germany, there are countless local treats including bratwurst, German dumplings, gingerbread and Bavarian ale or mulled wine (gluwein). It’s a great way to shop for your family and friends because there are so many local artisans that you can find just about anything you are searching for: furs, leather, artisan ornaments, holiday décor, scarves, wallets, music boxes, plus items that you never knew existed.

Local musicians and dancers come on board the river ships for a taste of local culture and entertainment. We also enjoyed a

presentation of Christmas customs on the ship while sailing to the next destination. Each river cruise ship brings the festive season onboard with beautiful decorations and local culinary specialties on the menu for lunch and dinner.

Festive season cruises are also available now on the Mississippi River and in the Pacific Northwest.

Is it cold? Yes. Bring a very warm jacket, wool hat and gloves. The gluwein also helps keep you warm.

Is it festive? You bet. This will be my third festive season river cruise. I keep coming back and bringing different people to enjoy the experience.

*Karen Quinn-Panzer is the owner of Dream Vacations Quinn Panzer Travel. She can be reached at kpanzer@dreamvacations.com or 203-647-3107.*

## Orange Senior Center To Resume Hop The Bus Program To Symphony

The Orange Senior Center is resuming its longtime “hop the bus” program to the New Haven Symphony Orchestra’s performances at the Lyman Performance Center at Southern Connecticut State University with funding from the Orange Arts and Culture Commission.

The bus departs from High Plains Community Center at 2:15 p.m. for performances that begin at 3 p.m., and departs at 6:45 p.m. for performances that begin at 7:30 p.m.

Residents should go online and purchase tickets to the show; the Senior Center will

supply the ride for free.

The first show is on Friday, Jan. 20 at 7:30 p.m. for Cabrera Conducts Dvorak.

The second is on Friday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m. for Miller Conducts Schumann and Beethoven.

The third show is on Sunday, March 26 at 3 p.m. for So Conducts Beethoven.

The fourth show is on Sunday, April 16 at 3 p.m. for Blachly Conducts Dawson.

The fifth show is on Friday, May 12, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. for Price, Bonds, and Hagan.

For more information, contact the Orange Senior Center at 203-891-4784.

## Milford Concert Band Performing Holiday Music

The Milford Concert Band, the official band of Milford, will celebrate Christmas music three times this December beginning with its 30th “A Milford Christmas” performance at the Milford Town Hall on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. The band will be playing holiday favorites as well as a reading of A Visit from Saint Nicholas by Milford Historian Richard “Dick” Platt.

The band’s second performance will be on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 1 p.m. at the Milford Senior Center.

Finally, on Monday, Dec. 19, the band

will bring the sounds of the holidays to the CT Post Mall at 7 p.m. on the lower level in front of Macy’s.

All performances are free and open to the public.

The 30-piece band is made up of local musicians of various talents, from student players, area semiprofessionals to retirees and performs around 20 shows a year for the public. It is always looking for new musical talent to join on Monday evenings at the Fowler Memorial Building for its weekly rehearsal.

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## The Rotary Club of Orange

# Orange Rotary And The Season Of Giving

I have written for several years in these pages about the work that Orange Rotary does to benefit those less fortunate and in need of assistance locally, regionally and around the world.

Our work takes several forms. One part of our mission is to perform direct service work where our members roll up their sleeves and work on projects that benefit the needy in underserved communities. The other is to raise funds through various events, such as our Thanksgiving Day 5K Turkey Trot, the Annual Lobsterfest and the Annual Mother's Day Rose Sale.

Over the years, these fundraising activities have enabled Rotary Club of Orange to dole out money to organizations that file grant requests. Additionally, we have participated in coordinated grants organized by various other Rotary clubs in our district for larger projects,

including global ones. Other sources of funds are direct donations from philanthropic individuals who understand and appreciate our mission and generously share their personal treasure with us, knowing that the funds will be put to the best and most efficient use.

Through the fundraising efforts outlined above, and a significant bequest from Lynda Hammond, an extraordinary member of our club who we tragically lost to a fatal illness, we have amassed a significant amount of money in our foundation. Because our club's operating expenses are covered primarily by dues and small amounts raised at our meetings, 100 percent of the money raised is under the manage-



ROGER TAUSIG

ment of our foundation and earmarked for giving to the numerous causes that we support.

Our club is currently in an unusual situation. We have a substantial amount of money in our foundation's treasury and are looking for opportunities to use that money to fund projects that align with our goals to give financial support to those in our community and region for vitally needed assistance. Of particular interest to us are projects that directly benefit children.

This was the wish Lynda Hammond had for the money she left to our club, as children were her passion.

If you are reading this and part of a service organization, think about causes and charitable organizations that you might be aware of that can benefit from funding from our club.

We have a simple form that can be found by visiting our Rotary Club of Orange website at [rotarycluboforange.org/](http://rotarycluboforange.org/) and selecting the "Request Funding" tab. Once submitted, our Grant Review Committee will review all grant requests and consider them based on the nature of the purpose for which the money will be used and the reasonableness of the requested amount. We are primarily interested in having the funds be used for direct service to the ultimate beneficiaries. If the requested grant amount warrants it, we will potentially open it up to our district, where larger sums can be obtained and matched by our district's foundation.

In this season of giving, and at a time when there is so much need, please consider the plight of those around you who are less fortunate and help us to put our funds to use to fulfill those needs.

## Orange Chamber of Commerce

# Chamber Unveils Community Bricks

Saturday, Nov. 19 was a highly awaited day for many residents. It was the Orange Chamber's Bicentennial Brick Dedication Ceremony. A crowd of more than 200 people gathered in front of the gazebo at the High Plains Community Center fairgrounds to celebrate this new community treasure. It was quite a striking sight: the huge American flag hanging from the fire truck ladder, the uniformed firefighters and police officers, guests scanning the bricks hoping for a glimpse of theirs before the festivities began.

If you haven't already, I encourage to stop by to see the brick installation. The stories the bricks tell pull at the heartstrings and spur the imagination. You'll wonder about the stories behind the bricks and what they mean to those connected to them. The inscriptions on the bricks make this installation a heartfelt addition to our town that will touch people for years to come.

As you walk the installation you may be surprised by those you recognize, as well as marvel at the people, businesses and organizations whose bricks weave a tapestry

of town history. It is extremely moving to witness how this installation has touched so many so deeply.

There's the brick with the names of Amity High School students who have been friends for 40 years, and the woman who bought a brick with only a "heart" symbol just because she wanted to make people smile. There are the bricks that recognize community leaders like Walter Bespuda, George Chatzopoulos and Walter "Bud" Smith. There's too many to do justice to them here. They need to be seen.

In recognition of their contributions to the Orange community, the chamber presented bricks during the ceremony to the Orange Volunteer Fire Department, the Orange Police Department, AVANGRID and a certificate of appreciation to Marino, Zabel & Schellenberg, Attorneys at Law.

After the event, the chamber received many positive comments.



KATHY CONVERSE CHARBONNEAU

"The Chamber has made this memorial something special. We will only know its true impact as time passes and our memories stay as a permanent reminder of who we are, in this walkway," said Ginny Reinhard, president of the Orange Historical Society.

"Thank you for the wonderful ceremony on Saturday. The chamber's efforts in continuing to make Orange a great town are very much appreciated," said Dr. Lawrence Messina, president of the Orange Land Trust.

"We were honored to receive a brick from the Orange Chamber of Commerce as part of their beautiful brick walk at the High Plains gazebo. This project features hundreds of bricks engraved with the names of families, organizations, and businesses who call this town home. We are proud to be among them," said OVFD Chief Vaughan Dumas.

A huge thank you to community hero sponsors AVANGRID and Marino, Zabel & Schellenberg, Attorneys at Law. Your gen-

erosity made the event possible. We would also like to thank Saray Bakery & Ice Cream Shop, who provided a beautiful bicentennial logo cake and other delicious goodies for the whole crowd, Community Champions Network for beverages and bringing their Thanksgiving Stuff-a-Bus, Milestones Behavioral Services for its children's activities and media sponsor the Milford-Orange Times.

There is still a limited number of bricks available. They make a one-of-a-kind holiday gift that will last a lifetime. To learn more, visit [bricksrus.com/donorsite/orange-chamberbricks](http://bricksrus.com/donorsite/orange-chamberbricks) or email [director@orangectchamber.com](mailto:director@orangectchamber.com). Please support our local businesses this holiday season. They need you, and our community needs them to help keep it the special place we all love. Happy holidays to all.

*Kathy Converse Charbonneau is the executive director for the Orange Chamber of Commerce. Contact her at 203-795-3328 or [director@orangectchamber.com](mailto:director@orangectchamber.com).*



# ALEXANDRA JOY

## PHOTOGRAPHY



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Your Health

# Strengthening Public Health Systems

Gov. Ned Lamont recently announced that the Connecticut Department of Public Health has been awarded a \$32,253,484 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that will be used to support the state agency's newly launched Office of Public Health Workforce Development.

"Additionally, more than \$12 million from this grant will be distributed directly to local health departments to assist them with supporting their infrastructure, their own workforce development, and their needs for post-COVID-19 recovery and rebuilding," Lamont said during his press conference announcing the grant.

According to the DPH website, "this federal funding was awarded through the CDC's Strengthening US Public Health Infrastructure, Workforce, and Data Systems grant, which is a groundbreaking investment that supports critical public health infrastructure across the US."

Other goals of the Office of Public Health Workforce Development include working with academic leaders in existing public health programs at public and private colleges and universities in Connecticut to ensure that they have the resources they need to deliver academic training and coursework that is up-to-date; cross-cutting content addressing health equity and mental health; aligning with the current standards for public health professional training; and producing graduates who are work ready.

While this is wonderful news, as all the health departments (full time, part time and districts) across the state will likely benefit from this federal funding in filling the gaps. However, the Orange Health Department must be ready to tackle ongoing public health issues and be prepared to respond to future pandemics.



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

I had the opportunity to update our Board of Finance, and during my presentation highlighted the importance of adequate local funding to provide essential services to our community.

The Monday before Thanksgiving each year is observed by the American Public Health Association and Research as National Public Health Workers Day, to highlight and celebrate the profound contributions and sacrifices made by the public health workforce throughout the US.

On Nov. 21, I, along with other public health directors, were invited to the National Public Health Worker Appreciation ceremony hosted by Health Commissioner Dr. Juthani. We. The Orange Health Department received an official statement of honor and recognition from Lamont high-

lighting all the hard work done during the pandemic.

This is a testament to all the hard work and dedication for our ongoing focus in keeping the public well-informed and provide essential services in a timely manner. While new cases of COVID-19 are ticking up, we are also experiencing a high level of respiratory illnesses caused by influenza and RSV viruses in all age groups, especially school-aged children.

It is important to monitor your health and seek out assistance from your health providers in a timely manner. My recommendations to those residents with any underlying conditions or illness is to remain up to date with available vaccines.

I wish you all happy and safe holidays.

*Dr. Amir Mohammad is the Director of Public Health for the town of Orange.*

Senior Life

# New Year's Resolutions Are For Seniors, Too

New Year's resolutions have a long and rich history dating back at least 4,000 years. The ancient Babylonians had an entire New Year's festival to help them resolve to do right in the new year. If they kept their promises, they believed they would be rewarded by their gods.

I majored in Russian way back in the day and have a beautiful memory of a New Year's Eve in Saint Petersburg. This Russian tradition had you write your New Year's resolution on a small slip of paper,

which you then lit on fire, throwing the ashes into your glass of champagne and drinking it down to seal the covenant.

Whatever the origins, the psychology is straightforward. At the new year we get a fresh start to do better. This need for renewal stays with us as we age. Seniors, as much as anyone else, benefit from having goals and aspirations.



SUSAN ODERWALD

Like many of us, seniors tend to focus on health-related goals – walking more, staying hydrated, taking their medications, eating right. But it is important that seniors take on some type of new interest, learning, trip or other similar objective. I have had clients in their 80s decide they wanted to learn a new language or take up an instrument. There is quite a bit of anecdotal evidence that learning new skills helps us stave off cognitive decline. A more basic truth is that personal growth is perennial.

Seniors sometimes shy away from taking on things they would very much like to do because they may require help to do it (assistance on a computer or driving to an activity, for instance). Talking with friends or family about resolutions and soliciting the support needed to see them through can

feel awkward. For this reason, I suggest that family members talk together or create a New Years resolution ritual of some kind that will help draw out each other's goals and identify ways to be supported. Following through on this support is incredibly important, and a great opportunity to create new memories with an older person in your life.

Whether you take part in an elaborate festival, drink down the ashes of your aspirations, or just make a list, take time with a senior in your life to make and support a few achievable resolutions this year. You will be glad you did.

*Susan Oderwald is care director at the Always Best Care Senior Services Milford Office. She can be reached at Soderwald@abc-seniors.com or 203-877-1377.*

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### Pack 922 Gives Back In November



Cub Scout Pack 922 packing kits in November for the Beth-El Center in Milford. Photo courtesy of Pack 922.

Cub Scout Pack 922 in Orange participated in their annual Scouting for Food Drive in November where they helped pack the Orange Food Bank for the holiday season. They also created kits for the Beth-El Center, participated in a wreath sale, and climbed to the top of Sleeping Giant in Hamden.

The troop is welcoming new members and is open to all children grades in kindergarten through fifth grade. For more information, contact Cubmaster Jessica Zamachaj at [jessica.zamachaj@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.zamachaj@gmail.com), the pack's Facebook page at [facebook.com/CubScoutPack922](https://facebook.com/CubScoutPack922) or its website at [orangecubscouts.com](http://orangecubscouts.com).



Cub Scout Pack 922 hiked to the top of Sleeping Giant State Park in November. Photo courtesy of Pack 922.

### Bicentennial Quilt Won In Drawing



The winner of Orange's Bicentennial Quilt was drawn on Dec. 4 during the town's tree lighting festivities. Jeanne Hetes of Milford, left, won the quilt and posed with Bicentennial Committee Chair Patrick O'Sullivan when she came to pick it up. The quilt was made by Sue Yamaguchi. Donations of \$482 will benefit the Orange Fuel Bank to help residents. Photo courtesy of the town of Orange.

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Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

# Winter Is The Season To List Your Home

January is traditionally the biggest transfer month of the year. This may sound odd, but corporate transferees do not wait until spring. They commit early, when they have time to preview areas. Many motivated prospects are in Fairfield County and coming to our area for education, affordability and convenience.

We all know that there is less inventory at this time of year, and especially this year. This situation puts all new listings up front for preview. Even though the market has shifted slightly, Milford and Orange are always desirable locations. The housing demand is strong and professional realtors are using their experience to help buyers with rates and financing, the grit of selling success.

A winter prospect is a serious buyer, as opposed to open house browsers in the spring. You may have fewer showings, but they will be more qualified and motivated buyers. Local prospects also have more time to look around during holiday and vacation schedules. There is never a season that is not busy for families in their everyday life. However, what prompts a buyer or seller to jump into the market could be that lack of space for the holidays or overnight guests from out of town.

The backyards are low maintenance now, but for some, this may be a time to downsize as they recall time and cost associated



BARBARA LEHRER

with large properties. As long as the weather stays clear of snow covering roofs and driveways, the real estate market is very active. In the event of a huge storm, we just do not show the homes on the market until all is safe and cleared.

You may ask yourself how a realtor can help you receive more money for your home now. There is less competition, and if a buyer has sold his home he has to choose from what is available. You may wonder why the home down the corner got a higher price than you can ask for now. This question is typical during all kinds of markets and seasons.

We base price on condition, square foot-

age, time frames and contingencies. As we shift to a less frantic pace, your business plan takes on a new meaning. Buyers are returning to try to buy again. This second-chance opportunity is an important discussion to be had with sellers who want to list. Sellers should evaluate offers using objective criteria such as price, timing and contingencies.

There is still a residual market shortage. Homeowners' wealth is up. That is all good for prices. The strategy to sell is a modest business plan that includes the right price at which to market, where to move to and what the final costs will be.

Happy holidays, and hope to see you soon.

If you need more information on these issues, email [Barbara.Lehrer@cbmoves.com](mailto:Barbara.Lehrer@cbmoves.com).

## Milford Student Elected To Kid Governor's Cabinet



Liliana Magazine. Photo courtesy of the Connecticut Democracy Center.

Liliana Magazine, a student at Meadowside Elementary School in Milford, has been appointed to the 2023 Kid Governor Cabinet by the Connecticut Democracy Center.

Magazine, who was a final candidate in the 2022 Connecticut's Kid Governor statewide election in November, will work with the Connecticut Democracy Center's Kid Governor program staff and 2023 Connecticut's Kid Governor Ellie Mendez to promote youth civic engagement in the state, as well as the community issue at the center of her campaign platform: literacy.

You can watch Liliana's campaign video at [youtu.be/mW4cfyf3cAo](https://youtu.be/mW4cfyf3cAo).

## Or Shalom's Mortgage Paid



Congregation Or Shalom celebrated a "double-mitzvah" was on Nov. 19, celebrating both Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus's 40 years of service as spiritual leader, and the final payment on the synagogue's mortgage – which was ceremonially burned. Or Shalom's longtime member and past president Linda Zwerdling, along with her family, recently paid off the synagogue's mortgage. The Zwerdlings dedicated their gift to the memory of Marty Zwerdling, Linda's husband. Wainhaus was honored by Orange Selectman Mitch Goldblatt, who read citations and greetings from First Selectman Jim Zeoli, US Sen. Richard Blumenthal and US Rep. Rosa DeLauro. Speakers included the rabbi's past students, Rabbis Marissa James and Jesse Sachs, who focused on Wainhaus's life-changing influence. Rabbi Richard Eisenberg of Congregation Rodeph Shalom and Rev. Peter Orfanakos of St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church provided invocations and blessings. Photo courtesy of Congregation Or Shalom.

## Wine Talk

# The French Take Labeling Seriously

In France, AOC is an identification label for agricultural products that are grown and processed in a specific area. It stands for appellation d'origine controllee. The French believe that grapes grown in a specific area contain unique and special characteristics. This comes from the nutrients and character of the soil. They call it the terroir.



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

Everyone who has tried wines from different parts of the world seems to agree with the French. That is why the French name their wines by location rather than grape varieties. Until 30 or so years ago they would not disclose what the grapes were in some of their most popular wines.

It is illegal to manufacture and sell a product that does not comply with the criteria of AOC under French law. This is true for wine grapes, dairy products and most other field-grown products. Product labeling in France is a big deal. Because of legislation concerning the ways that vineyards are identified, recognizing the AOCs is challenging – specially for those of us who are not familiar with the nuances associated with the system.

For example, if the wine is not from a Premier Cru vineyard, the vineyard name must be printed in letters half the size or less of those in the vineyard name. Although the labeling system is strictly enforced, to be called an AOC wine has to have a taster designate the wine. They are local people who may have a vested interest in how the wine is labeled. It may not be as accurate as it appears.

Loire Valley in central France has an area called Sancerre that is the most recognizable appellation for Sauvignon Blanc. The limestone hills deliver rich-textured Sauvignon Blanc with a smokey and flinty flavor and long acidity aftertaste. Sancerre was one of the original AOCs awarded in 1936 for Sauvignon Blanc. In 1959 the same area was designated for red wines, and today they make some wonderful Pinot Noir.

The AOC area has expanded fourfold over the years. The most recent expansion was in 1998. For years many Americans did not know that Sancerre was Sauvignon Blanc. When the Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand took off in the US about 10 years ago, the French started advertising Sancerre as the greatest Sauvignon Blanc in the world, made in central France since Roman times.

It may very well be. During this holiday season, pick up a bottle of Sancerre and look for AOC on the bottle. And keep in mind that white Bordeaux is Sauvignon Blanc too.

*Ray Spaziani is the chapter director of the New Haven Chapter of the American Wine Society. He is on the wine tasting panel of Amenti del Vino and Wine Maker Magazine. He is an award-winning home wine maker and a certified wine educator. His fall classes were sold out but have been canceled due the coronavirus. He hopes to return to them in the spring. Email Ray with wine questions and anything wine at [realestatepro1000@gmail.com](mailto:realestatepro1000@gmail.com).*

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**Mental Health**

# Managing Stress During The Holidays

The season of giving and spending time with loved ones is upon us, and with that comes a complex mix of emotions from joy and connection to stress, anxiety and depression. With finances being an issue for so many due to inflation, 68 percent of Americans expect that their stress levels will worsen from holiday spending, according to Beyond Financial's 2022 Financial Stress Survey. Forty-nine percent are feeling burdened by expectations set by family members and friends. And the Collage Group's Holidays and Occasions 2021 Survey found that nearly 40 percent find holiday family gatherings stressful.

Many also grieve the loss of loved ones during this time of year, which contributes to symptoms of depression. A poll conducted by the American Psychiatric Association in November 2021 found that being able to find and afford gifts (40 percent and 46 per-

cent) and contracting COVID-19 (38 percent) were rated at the top of concerns contributing to stress over the holidays.

So how do we manage through the holiday season and get the most out of our time with family and friends? How do we help to balance the hustle bustle with peace, gratitude and joy?

The National Alliance for Mental Illness offers strategies to cope during the busy holiday season. These include setting boundaries and allowing yourself to say no if demands become too unmanageable, connecting with yourself and allowing for quiet time and reflection, maintaining some of your day-to-day healthy habits despite the indulgence holidays often bring, and accepting the range of emotions that come at you during the season.



JENNIFER FIORILLO

The choice to prioritize yourself throughout all of the preparation, running around and spending money will be key to staying grounded, making it easier to push through the stress and demands.

The holidays don't always need to be perfect. Circumstances change that may require a shift in how we celebrate during the season. There is always room to pare it down, meet with family virtually and be more realistic about what we expect to accomplish. Sticking to a budget and planning ahead helps to prevent overwhelming our finances and our lives. There is power in simplifying that opens up more space for quality time with friends and loved ones and ourselves, and it will reduce the exhaustion that prevents many

of us from truly enjoying the festivities.

Finally, not being afraid to reach out for help during the holidays is the biggest gift we could give to ourselves. If you are wide awake at night and overwhelmed about everything that needs to get done, if you're becoming more irritable and can't seem to shake the holiday blues, it might be time to seek professional help to get you through the season.

Often we lose sight of what the holidays means with everything we take on to please others. Self-care should be at the top of the list during the season so that we can be the best to ourselves and those who share in celebration.

*Jennifer Fiorillo, MBA, MPH is the president and CEO of Bridges Healthcare in Milford, and may be reached at [Jfiorillo@bridgesmilford.org](mailto:Jfiorillo@bridgesmilford.org).*

**The Garden Spot**

# Dormancy: Your Garden's Secret To Survival

All of our "woody" plants go into dormancy, or hibernation, as a way to survive the winter. Annual plants do not go into dormancy since they have evolved to survive the winter conditions in the form of a seed.

Just as those bears we've been seeing "bulk up" with calories prior to hibernation, so do plants. When plants are in their growth period (generally April through August) they are using the process of photosynthesis to turn carbon dioxide, water and some inorganic salts into carbohydrates which are then stored in the plant roots for winter survival. Just as the bears use their stored carbohydrates to survive over the winter, so do our plants. This process is most obvious in our deciduous trees as the green chlorophyll is moved out of the leaves, turning them the wonderful fall colors we love.

Dormancy is triggered by changes in the angle of the sun, length of daylight and temperatures. These changes induce the plant to release plant hormones to signal dormancy and cold tolerance. The carbohydrates that the plant stored during the growing season are now sent down to and used by the roots to survive the winter. The plant also starts to move water from inside the cells to outside its cells so that the cells don't burst when frozen.

Pretty amazing, isn't it?

When plants go dormant, they begin tracking "chilling units," which are the hours of time spent above freezing. Plants that are native to a region will have differ-



PAT DRAY

ent chilling needs so, for example, plants native to the South have shorter chilling requirements than do our natives. This indicates to the plant that it is time to "wake up" and start the growth period by using the remaining stored carbohydrates in the spring. This makes sense when you realize that in Connecticut we cycle through warm winter days (above freezing) periodically through the winter. If a single warm day made plants come out of dormancy, they would freeze when it became cold again.

The dormant period is a perfect time for you to take a close look at your shrubs and trees. It's much easier to see the growth pattern when the leaves have fallen. Do you see

any crossed or damaged branches? If so, get out your loppers and do some winter pruning. Where are the bare spots in your garden? What changes should you make in the spring?

This cycle of growth and rest is also a metaphor for the effect winter has on us. Do we dread winter, or do we see it as a period of rest and planning for our spring planting? I know that I'll be spending my post-holiday winter days planning for new growth.

Best wishes for everyone for the new year, and happy gardening in 2023.

*Pat Dray is a past president of the Orange Garden Club and a master gardener.*

**Here's To Your Health**

# Take A Stroll Down Memory Lane

In my last column, I wrote about joining a challenge to keep weight off during this holiday season encouraging you to maintain and not gain those extra pounds. That challenge still stands. However, I'd like to add a little something extra to the challenge. The challenge is to be deliberate about taking small strolls down memory lane and do it often.

Many of us get tied up in the shopping lists, baking for the cookie swaps, parties and wrapping presents we forget to stop and smell the roses. What about a home video night with loved ones or going through some old photo albums? How about homemade ornaments to pass out as gifts or a family game night?

In our house, we have a memory tree. Each year when we are decorating our tree we are reminded of special people, mem-

orable places we've been and those no longer with us and the love we shared with them.

For some, this year may have been full of loss and disappointments. So perhaps a stroll down memory lane may just inspire some positive thoughts and help with the blues. Being intentional about living in the "now" can be challenging when the hustle and bustle of the season seems to take hold of the wheel, but if you make little efforts to be in "awe" and grateful for all the important things, you will be happier because of it.

We have a certain tradition like watching It's a Wonderful Life, Scrooge and The Grinch. Traditions are wonderful, yet



MICHELE TENNEY

sometimes traditions were meant to be changed. Letting go of expectations is also an important way to help ease stress and be content. Sometimes just allowing ourselves to understand we can't be all things to all people is enough.

Blessing others is another great way to feel good. Perhaps buying a few coffee gift cards and handing them out to strangers or helping out at a food bank. I think by now you get the point.

Let your holiday season be full of real cheer. Do things that make you smile and feel glad that you did them. It's very good for your health. Remember what I say: You are a spirit that has a soul that lives in a body, so take care of all of you.

Some of us can't wait for the new year to begin so we

can put 2022 behind us. Believe me, I have some parts of this year I wish I could forget as well, so I can understand. I encourage you to make some healthy plans and goals, not a new year's resolution. Slow and steady wins the race. Rome wasn't built in a day and we need to remember that small baby steps turn into habits and habits eventually become lifestyles.

I believe in you. You can do this. From the Tenney family to your family, merry Christmas, happy Hannukah, happy Kwanzaa and holidays to everyone. Here's to your health.

*Michele Tenney is a Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist & Wellness Coach. She is a member of the Orange Board of Health. She can be reached at 203-668-2969 or email at [Hmgbrd3@gmail.com](mailto:Hmgbrd3@gmail.com).*

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## Amity Ends Continuing Education Program

After tabling a vote in October, the Amity Board of Education took action on Nov. 14 to formally end the Amity Continuing Education Program due to declining enrollment, decreasing revenues, and lack of a program director. The board waited for a month prior to making this decision to hear

from the public. No comments against discontinuation of the program were received.

The district will continue to partner with Hamden Public Schools to offer adult education and English language learner opportunities. Any funds remaining in the Continuing Education Account will be transferred to the Drama Account for purchase of items that will support the creative theater, musical, choral, band and whole-school programs.

# Orange Rotary Turkey Trot



The Rotary Club of Orange hosted Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning starting around the High Plains Community Center in Orange. Photos by Lexi Crocco.

# Orange Lions Club Thanksgiving Dinner



The Orange Lions Club hosted its annual Thanksgiving dinner around the holiday at High Plains Community Center in Orange. Photos by Lexi Crocco.

# Orange Bicentennial Brick Dedication Ceremony



The Orange Chamber of Commerce held a dedication ceremony on Nov. 19 for the bicentennial brick walk in front of the gazebo at High Plains Community Center. The project allows people to purchase personalized bricks to be installed around the gazebo. Photos courtesy of the Orange Chamber of Commerce and the Orange Volunteer Fire Department.



## Orange Tree Lighting And Holiday Parade



Orange held a lighted tractor parade during the tree lighting on Dec. 4 at the Town Green. Other activities included a bell choir at the Orange Congregational Church, ice carvings and a visit from Santa. *Photos by Lexi Crocco.*

## Foodie Foursome

# Hidden Gem In Plain Sight In Downtown Milford

The 7 Seas, a family-owned and run restaurant, has been serving the Milford area since 1965 and is actually the longest continuously running restaurant downtown. The location had several restaurants prior to that dating back to the 1940s. It is on the bend that feeds New Haven Avenue into Daniel Street.

The deep tones of the décor, antiques and divided dining area and bar are warm and welcoming – and a step back in time. Richard Smith took over the restaurant after serving in the Navy from 1966-69 when he rebranded the restaurant “The 7 Seas.” It has been voted Best Neighborhood Restaurant three times by Connecticut Magazine, and definitely oozes that vibe.

Its award-winning lobster rolls, seafood and steaks have been the mainstay that not only attracts locals but notables such as Paul Newman, John Legend, Dan Patrick and Richard Blumenthal. Even the famous “ShaNaN” had dinner there before their gig at the Milford Performance Center.

On this evening Cindy and I were joined by friends Judy and Decelle. Our opening salvo definitely reflected one of the eatery’s sayings, “So fresh it slept in the ocean last night.” We started with stuffed clams, crabcakes, fried calamari and a quesadilla. Since our dinners have taken on the form of a chef’s

tasting, our choices allow the four of us to try different dishes and the ability to reflect on them for discussion. We generally like to try the classics as well as something new or original, and cover dishes that reflect the variety of offerings at each establishment.

The stuffed clams featured a casino-style presentation stuffed with fresh chunks of clam, Parmesan cheese, bacon, peppers and garlic. They had a nice texture and had multiple layers of flavor. The fried calamari were perfectly prepared with a delicate coating, fresh and tender, and served with marinara sauce. The crabcakes had a light breading with a soft crab filling, creating a nice addition to our appetizers. Our last selection, the quesadilla, was two flour tortillas stuffed with fresh lobster chunks, cheddar and jack cheese, chopped tomatoes, onions, green peppers and real bacon bits. This was one of the best quesadillas we have had in quite some time.

The management, waitstaff and kitchen were friendly and spot-on in their timing and service. Before our entrees were served we had two of the featured soups. One was the 7 Seas chowder, which was a creamy New



STEVE COOPER

England-style clam chowder. It was not just creamy, but flavorful with nice-sized pieces of clam. The same can also be said of their lobster bisque; it had sizable chunks of lobster meat.

We started our entrées off with the ribeye steak and the broiled scrod with crabmeat. The ribeye was quite sizable, tender, juicy and perfectly charbroiled to our desired temperature. It was served with a baked potato and fresh green beans. The broiled scrod was as fresh as it was delicately prepared and topped with a mixture of crabmeat, breadcrumbs and Romano cheese. The mixture took on a patty-like consistency and was beautifully browned and caramelized with nice crisp edges. It was also served with a side of green beans and baked potato.

Our last two entrees were definitely worthy of bragging rights. One of their top selections and most recommended dishes is their fish and chips. The four, healthy pieces of tender, sweet breaded cod was perfectly fried, showcasing a thin crust with a scrumptious crunch as you bite into the flaky, fresh fish. Served with a side of seasoned steak fries and coleslaw, this is worth the price of admission.

For our last entrée item, we wanted to try something completely different. We were not disappointed. The “peachtree chicken” was a fresh boneless chicken breast sautéed with peach slices, walnuts and glazed with peachtree schnapps. Served with potato and vegetables, this chef’s creation is bathed in simplicity yet is an incredibly tasty chicken dish and one of my favorites of the evening.

We finished the evening with a chocolate cake and a limoncello cake. The chocolate cake had a richness to the frosting and soft cake that was still able to keep its structure. While I am not a personal fan of limoncello as a drink, this cake had a smooth and inviting lemony taste that was hard to put down. There is a reason this small but quaint local treasure has been part of the area’s culinary destinations for 50-plus years.

7 Seas is located at 16 New Haven Ave. For reservations call 203-877-7327. They are open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, and Friday and Saturday until 2 a.m.

*Steve Cooper is a local, national and international award-winning photographer, culinary influencer and executive director of the Milford Performance Center. Contact him at 203-723-3672.*

## Health & Wellness Resolutions Fair Coming

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellness Council will be hosting a Health & Wellness Resolutions Fair on Saturday, Jan. 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the center court of the CT Post Mall in Milford.

The fair will feature practitioners and

vendors from across the Milford region, with booths featuring a variety of healthy ways to help people keep their New Year’s resolutions.

The center court is located in the mall between the main entrances of Macys and Boscov’s.

## Orange Lions Host Senior Thanksgiving Dinner

The Orange Lions Club hosted its 34th annual Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 27 at High Plains Community Center. Seniors and family members were able to sign up through the community center. A turkey dinner with all the fixings was prepared and served. Meals were also delivered to

homebound individuals by Orange Lions Club members.

Lions Club members, scouts, Amity students, volunteer parents, Community Services and Julia’s Bakery all helped with the dinner. Craig Calistro played music throughout the dinner.

## Art Therapy Business Opens In Milford



Erica Hatrick is a lifelong Milford resident who has always dreamed of opening her own business in downtown Milford. With the opening of Art Therapy of Milford, she has made that dream come true. Art Therapy of Milford combines a holistic mix of art and therapy. From left: Alderman Dan German, Milford Mayor Ben Blake, owner Erica Hatrick and Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald. Photo by Robert Creigh.

## Amity BOE Recognizes National Merit Scholarship Program Recipients

The National Merit Scholarship Program recognizes and honors academically talented students across the US. Students qualify for National Merit recognition based on their PSAT results from fall of their junior year of high school. Amity continued its tradition of recognizing the National Merit Commended Scholars and National Merit Semifinalists on Nov. 14 before the Board of Education.

Approximately 3.5 million students participate in the PSAT/NMSQT each fall. Commended scholars honors are awarded to the students who score in approximately the top 3 percent of all test-takers. The semifinalists represent the top 16,000 students in the country – or those who score

in approximately the top 1 percent nationally.

The following students received National Merit Commended Scholars recognition: Anushka Acharya, Henry Atwood, Simran Jain, Isha Khan, Marin Korenaga, Matthew Li, June Lin, Daniel Liu, Sophia Liu, Jennifer Luo, Nicholas Massey, Sophia McDermott, Harshil Parmar, Kiley Pickens, Lucas Rodriguez Herlihy, Sreenidhi Tadepalli, Silas Turner, Aadya Wijesekera and Mingyue Zha.

The following students were recognized as National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists: Piyush Bahel, Jacob Bettencourt, Francis Cavallaro, Jennifer Li, Si Ru Liang, Yuqi Liu, Melinda Lu and Brian Scully.

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# The Inspiration Of The 2022 World Cup

The US Men's National Team did not qualify for the 2018 FIFA World Cup to the disappointment of players, fans and supporters who hoped that US soccer would earn recognition as a true competitor in the international arena.

In response to this disappointment, the team was rebuilt with a renewed determination to succeed in securing a place in 2022. All involved are to be commended as the USMNT won placement in the 2022 World Cup currently underway.

Highlights of the US performance in 2022 have been impressive and exciting. Christian Pulisic, a star player for the US team, sustained blunt force trauma when he collided with the goalkeeper during a game against Iran. Despite this injury, Pulisic scored the winning goal and continued to play for a brief period. Pulisic was later hospitalized but recovered fully and returned to play in the Saturday round.

The US team was subsequently defeated by the Netherlands in an intense game viewed internationally by millions in the "round of 16" as part of what is known as the knockout phase of the worldwide competition.

There has been and will continue to be much and varied discussion about this dramatic loss that sent the USMNT home and out of the competition.

The 2022 world cup has provided a heart-warming interlude necessary in a world weary of pandemic and political strife. My own

inner circle had the gift of sharing the experience together during a family visit. My 2-year-old granddaughter, who speaks and comprehends Finnish and English, rooted along with her 6-year-old brother. Shouts of "USA! USA!" amidst giggles and smiles brought glee to us all. We watched together during the Thanksgiving holiday, talking with the children about such far-away places and flags as Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Senegal, Germany, England, Uruguay and Ghana. What a fun and splendid experience so enriching for youngsters and for all.

Pope Francis rooting for his beloved Argentina team has reminded the world to let soccer unite us. I wondered aloud and good-naturedly whether the pontiff wears a Lionel Messi jersey and the famed blue and white stripes while in his private chambers. Hopes for peace and a better world were present along with cheers of competition.

Much has been written about the poor choice of Qatar for the World Cup. Criticism was plentiful that the country did not have the traditional, premier playing soccer culture, including a hot and humid climate that many deemed unsuitable for the athletes, staff and fans alike. Opinions weighed in from varied quarters of political corruption concerns about the World Cup bidding process, coupled with documented reports of



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

hazards, injuries and deaths to workers conscripted to build the stadium facilities under unsafe and often brutal work conditions.

Nonetheless, hope and optimism prevailed among the athletes.

These players are simply champions performing a role they earned by their spirit, talent, determination, knowledge of strategy, skill, persistence and pure love of the game. For a short while during these few weeks of the World Cup, despite fierce national team loyalties, there exists a spirit of comradery among people dedicated to excellence in sport and love of competition and performance. It simply has been a joy to behold.

There will continue to be much discussion about the dramatic loss that sent the USMNT out of the competition. The USMNT has much to be proud of and should be commended for qualifying and staying the course among the best teams in the world. Expectations are high for the future, especially since the US will jointly host the 2026 World Cup with Canada and Mexico. The USMNT has earned respect for US soccer.

I previously wrote about the US Women's National Team reaching the significant, historical achievement of ratification of a collective bargaining agreement with FIFA that attempts to correct the longstanding pay in-

equities of women's soccer. Filed as a gender discrimination suit by some members of the USWNT, the settlement shares money earned by the USMNT for reaching the knockout phase of the World Cup. Going forward, money from FIFA will be shared more equally and help to support the USWNT as they head into the upcoming Women's World Cup, to be held in Australia and New Zealand. There is more sport, skill, talent and joy of soccer coming our way shortly.

Both the USMNT and the USWNT have expressed their joint commitment to the game and to equity in soccer. We should be optimistic and excited. There is so much to look forward to, and we thank the athletes – both the men's and women's teams – for the journey. Godspeed.

*Dr. Ellen Russell Beatty served seven years as Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at Southern Connecticut State University, and also served as interim Academic Vice president, Dean of Health & Human Services and Director of Faculty Development. In addition to the broad perspective and a multitude of skills required of high-level administrators, her areas of special expertise lie in strategic planning, accreditation, assessment and planning and budgetary allocation.*

## Orange Congregational Church To Celebrate Holidays

Orange Congregational Church is holding holiday worship services in its sanctuary on the corner of 205 Meeting House Ln. and Orange Center Rd.

On Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve worship will take place at 3 p.m. and at 10 p.m. At 3 p.m. there will be an an

intergenerational worship service where children, youth and families will tell the story of Jesus's birth. At 10 p.m. the church will offer a traditional candlelight worship service where the choir and music director will lead in a service of lessons and carols.

On Sunday, Dec. 25 at 10 a.m. the OCC encourages people to come in their pajamas or whatever they feel comfortable wearing for a celebration of Christmas Day with joy, laughter and fun.

On Sunday, Jan. 1 at 10 a.m. the church's worship will be lay led. The service will

focus on the New Year with intentions for new beginnings on the first day of 2023.

All services will be livestreamed to the OCC's YouTube channel. Visit orangecongregationalchurch.org for more information on worship, faith formation and music programming.

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# Cruising Down The River; Reliving Milford's History

By Marilyn May

The first two bridges in Milford, Meeting House Bridge and Memorial Bridge, were discussed in the previous edition of the Milford-Orange Times, so going forward bridges will be listed from north to south.

The first bridge over the Wepawaug this side of the Milford/Orange line is the Flax Mill Lane Bridge (or Woodruff Street Bridge). There must have been earlier bridges there, but it is not known when the first span was built. An old-fashioned fieldstone bridge was there in 1935 but was replaced in 2020 by a longer and wider span. The old bridge was still safe, but swift waters were beginning to erode the soil and exposing the footings on one side. Fortunately, when rebuilding, the builders did not want this new bridge to lose its New England charm, so they added a stone veneer to look like the former bridge.

Continuing south, the Wepawaug meanders through the 200-acre Eisenhower Park where there is a footbridge that leads to hiking trails. Birds and other wildlife find food and sanctuary along these quiet riverbanks. Its official address is 780 North St.

On Walnut Street (once called Fenn Road), there is a bridge so nondescript that you hardly know you are crossing the river. A bridge was built there in 1819 and another in 1878. It crosses the Wepawaug where it is narrow and shallow unless there is a freshet happening. A freshet is caused by snowmelt or heavy rainwater entering the river farther north that builds up and causes a sudden rise in a freshwater stream that flows into the salt water. The late Ruth Platt (1885-2001) recalled a time when a bridge there was destroyed by a freshet that washed all the planks down the river. The last bridge was constructed there in 1911.

A little farther south, there is a small bridge that is part of a driveway where truckers cross to reach a warehouse.

The next bridge is on the highly traveled Boston Post Road, just west of the twin lights intersection at North Street and the Post Road. The first bridge there was constructed in 1931, about the time the Rt. 1A cutoff was built to reroute Rt. 1 from going through Milford Center. That bridge was rebuilt in 2015.

For a short distance, the river is out of sight as it flows behind residential private property, and then it reaches the North Street Pond and park area. In 1768, at the very north end, there was a footbridge about where the North Street bridge is today. In 1800 it was called the Nehemiah Bristol Foot Bridge. He had his home and nearby general store on North Street. Over the years, there were at least four footbridges there as late as 1833, and the store was run by four generations of the Bristol family.

The bridge we see today at the north end of the pond was designed by Col. Camille Mazeau (1873-1957), a Milford resident and civil engineer in the US Army Reserves Corps who was commissioned a colonel by President Theodore Roosevelt. Although now commonly called the North Street Bridge (that crosses by way of Bridge Street), the real name is the Col. Mazeau Bridge. It was opened to the public on Aug. 28, 1909 to great fanfare with a band concert and fireworks in commemoration of the town's 270th anniversary.

Mazeau also designed the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Bridge that crosses the Housatonic River, linking Milford and Stratford. He died at age 84 and is buried in the Old Milford Cemetery.

What's the story about Kissing Bridge? Well, there are at least two versions, and the first version gets the most votes. Kissing Bridge was either the North Street Pond Bridge (Col. Mazeau Bridge) or the Walnut Street Bridge.

Most historians say it was the North Street Pond Bridge. The land along the sides of the pond was once lined with mills and factories. The story goes that in the mornings, wives would walk their husbands to work, kiss them goodbye at the foot of that bridge and return home. Women would never walk as far as the factories.

The other version comes from the late Ruth Platt. Having lived to 106 and having been a charter member of the Milford Historical Society in 1930, she was familiar with Milford history. According to her, the nickname Kissing Bridge was attached to the Walnut Street Bridge, which is 0.03 miles north of the Col. Mazeau Bridge and in a wooded and quiet area. At any rate, it seems there was a lot of kissing going on.

Now we move on to the bridge at the southernmost part of the North Street Pond. In 1711 it was ordered that a "cart bridge" be built at the southern end of the pond. It was called King's Bridge, but today is known as the Maple Street Bridge. How many bridges were built there we do not know, but one spring one of them was swept down the river by an ice floe. People watched as the bridge was destroyed and then raced down to the Meeting House Bridge to see what would happen there. No problem: the bridge there was not damaged.

Meanwhile, back at the Kings Bridge site, in 1952 Mazeau designed the handsome stone bridge we have today near the waterfall. It connects travelers between Maple Street and West River Street to North Street and Governors Avenue.

On old maps, Maple Street was called Peacock Lane, after John Peacock, who came to Milford from Wethersfield and owned a lot of land in the area. Peacock's home was on the corner of Maple and West River streets where the late Mary Hepburn Smith's Italianate style, early Victorian mansion was later built. Construction dates range from 1854 to 1870.

In 1868, the original King's Bridge name was officially changed to Maple Street Bridge. (Curiously, Queen Anne, not a king, was on the English throne from 1702 to 1714.)

When you add up all bridge problems, it makes you think, with apologies to Robert Frost, "Something there is that doesn't love a bridge." One time, that "something" was a truck. In 1950 a Frouge Construction Company truck carrying a load of dirt away from the new Milford High School construction site heavily damaged the Maple Street Bridge and caused a partial collapse, rendering it impassable (except for children who found it a great place to play). The 10-ton maximum load bridge was not strong enough to carry



Ladies enjoy the afternoon on a small island just below the waterfall behind today's City Hall. This was a tranquil spot where falling water was the only sound heard. A glimpse of the Davidson Mill is visible at the far left. Photo courtesy of Marilyn May.

the 16-ton combined weight of the truck and its contents. The driver did get the load across, and he was neither hurt nor arrested. Someone had removed the sign warning that the 50-foot span had a 10-ton capacity. That iron-framed and wood-decked bridge had been built in 1881.

There is, however, more to say about the history of the North Street Pond area. There were decrepit mills and factories along its banks, and burnt-out structures that were never taken down. The area had become unsightly. However, if you look at Lambert's 1855 map, it shows an island by King's Bridge (later Maple Street Bridge).

In 1908 townspeople formed the Village Improvement Association, and the members had lots of plans. About 1914, local philanthropist Mary Hepburn Smith purchased all the land along the banks of the North Street Pond and the Duck Pond, and the VIA demolished all the rundown structures along both shores of both ponds. Afterward, Smith donated the land back to the town, and today we have park-like areas along the river.

Marilyn May is a lifelong resident of Milford and is on the board of the Milford Historical Society.

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Your Finances

# The Importance Of A Fiduciary Financial Advisor

An important concept when evaluating financial advisors is the concept of being a fiduciary. In the most basic sense, fiduciary involves a duty or trust between a trustee and a beneficiary and the obligation of the trustee to act solely in the best interests of the beneficiary. A typical fiduciary relationship might be between a lawyer and a client, an employer and an employee, a doctor and a patient or a spouse to another spouse.

When assuming a fiduciary role, one should undertake a duty of care making informed choices and duty of loyalty avoiding any potential conflict of interest. Depending on the specific role of a fiduciary, additional legal responsibilities and obligations may apply.

When choosing a financial advisor, it may be assumed that all advisors would be held to the same standards and always act in your best interests. However, this is not necessar-

ily so. An advisor signing on as a fiduciary offers some significant differences in terms of their legal and ethical standards.

Fiduciary advisors are required to be completely transparent about the products and services they recommend. They must fully disclose and thoroughly discuss their decisions with their clients, providing all relevant information and pertinent facts. This transparency includes disclosing any fees charged, whether they are a fixed percentage of assets under management (typically 1 percent) or a flat fee. This type of transparency provides greater understanding of the services offered and whether they align with your particular situation.

Fiduciary advisors are not tied to a par-



MATT GALLAGHER

ticular company and as such can select financial products from a broader marketplace. This is in direct contrast to brokers, who are employed by broker dealers, limited by their employer's products and receive commissions for selling these products. Access to a wider variety of investment choices allows for a more customized portfolio.

Fiduciary advisors are held to a higher standard. As discussed, a fiduciary advisor is legally bound to act in the client's best interest and disclose any conflict of interest according to the Investment Advisors Act of 1940. Conversely, brokers follow a basic suitability standard set by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. The suitability standard only requires a reasonable belief that an

investment or frequency of transactions fits the needs of the client (age, risk tolerance, goals). As such, a broker may have a conflict of interest based upon commissions or sales goals.

Engaging a financial advisor can be a crucial step in attaining one's financial goals. When evaluating potential advisors, consumers should consider a wide variety of factors such as services provided, fees and access to investment products, as well as the standard of care required of the advisor. Partnering with a fiduciary advisor who is bound to place your interest above their own is another important factor to consider.

*Matt Gallagher is a partner and head of business development at TrinityPoint Wealth. He can be reached at 203-693-8519 or by email mgallagher@trinitypointwealth.com.*

## St. Mary School Launches App To Keep Students Safe

Saint Mary School in Milford has announced the implementation of SaferWatch – a mobile panic alert system that sends real-time alerts to law enforcement during a critical incident. It helps officers respond more quickly to keep students, staff, and parishioners safe, according to the school. The technology will be used at the Saint Mary School, rectory, and parish.

When activated, the software operates

like a silent panic alarm at a bank and immediately sounds an alarm at the Milford Police Department dispatch center to alert police and initiate a response to Saint Mary School and Church.

“Saint Mary Church and Parish is a vibrant community where our children come to learn and our parishioners come to worship,” said Deacon Dominic Corrado, principal at Saint Mary School. “The safety of all those in our Saint Mary community

remains our top priority and I'm confident that the recent addition of the SaferWatch mobile panic alert system will help provide an additional layer of security and comfort.”

“The safety and security of every student in Milford is important to the Milford Police Department,” said Milford Police Chief Keith L. Mello. “St. Mary Church and Parish implementing the Safer Watch Mobile Panic Alert System provides instant notification to our dispatch center.

We know that each second matters and this now gives us the ability to quickly start a police response in the event of an emergency.”

The SaferWatch app directly connects to the Milford Police Department and can be used to report active aggressors or critical situations. Additionally, staff at the school, rectory or church can trigger the mobile panic alert system directly from their phone.

## Exhibit On Connecticut Whaling Opening In Milford

The Milford Preservation Trust is opening the Downs House at 139 North St. in Milford from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 17 for an exhibit on Connecticut whaling. The exhibit will feature an

original poster done by artist Bob Sforza showing the many ports in Connecticut where whaling vessels left, the names of the towns, ships and captains. Portraits of individual captains, whales and dates of the

voyages are included. Baleen, sperm whale teeth, scrimshaw, almanacs and tools are also part of the exhibit. Donations will be accepted to help the trust restore the house to the year 1775.

The public is encouraged to make handmade ornaments of whale species to be hung on a Christmas tree in the house. For information, call the trust at 203-988-0918.

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## Insuring Your Future

# Are You Leaving Money On The Table?

Many insurance companies are offering free benefits and cash for being proactive about your health. As we come to the end of 2022, take a minute and make sure that you have collected all the credits available. These benefits come in two categories. First, many Medicare Advantage plans offer rebates for dental visits, eyewear and hearing aids. They also provide quarterly or monthly credit for over-the-counter medications and health related products. Second, many companies also offer cash rewards in the form of gift cards for completing health related activities.

Many plans will reimburse you for cleanings and other procedures up to a certain amount. If the dentist is not in network, submit a copy of the paid receipt. The same is true for glasses and contact lenses. Some

plans require you to see a certain vendor, but many do not. Check with the member services department or go online for instructions on how to file a claim.

The over-the-counter benefit is probably the most underused perk. Each plan has a different way of delivering this benefit. Some have a swipe card that can be used at specific stores; for others you need to call or go online. Not sure of the balance on your account? Call member services and they can tell you what is left and how to order. There are catalogues available on company websites and in printed formats. The balance will not carry over to next year, so use it or lose it.



TRISH  
PEARSON

In addition to medical products, some companies are offering extra benefit cards that can be used for healthy foods, utilities and transportation. These benefits are available for those who qualify for extra help with medical copays, prescriptions and Medicare B premiums.

Did you have a physical this year, cancer screening such as a colonoscopy or mammogram, or do you have diabetes? Many insurance companies are offering cash rewards for completing these and other activities or completing a survey about the condition. Start by setting up an online account with the insurance provider and then follow the instructions on how to collect or

complete the post-paid business card that was included in your insurance materials.

The rewards come in the form of gift cards to area stores such as The Home Depot, Kohls and Best Buy. For more information, go online or call the member services number on the back of your insurance card. If you need help with the online part of this, call your agent or your grandson or your daughter. It's worth the phone call.

Finally, I wish all readers a special holiday season and a year ahead with less COVID, less stress and more good health and happy times. Thank you for following me in this column and for your kind comments.

*Trish Pearson is a licensed independent insurance agent and certified long term care specialist. Contact her at 203-640-5969 or trishpearson281@gmail.com.*

## Sports

# Jon McNelis: A Baseball Life

Amity varsity baseball tryouts were over in March 2018 and then-junior Jon McNelis still hadn't officially been told he made the squad. Tryouts had already been extended two different times and McNelis hadn't been assured of anything.

Manager Sal Coppola wanted McNelis to come to the first scrimmage and would talk to him after the game. In the game, McNelis made every play at third base and went two for three.

The conversation with Coppola never happened. McNelis started every game at third base the next two seasons. Consistent excellence after being underrated would become a hallmark of McNelis's baseball career.

After an Amity career where he batted .312 and .355 in his two seasons, McNelis didn't aggressively pursue playing in college. Most players get on the scouting radar in their sophomore year, but he was a moderately regarded junior varsity player who wasn't a lock for making varsity at any point. After his junior year, Salve Regina and Nichols College asked him to work out. But McNelis only wanted to play Division I and he didn't have the physical traits of a Division I player at the time. So he went to Storrs to find a major and himself.

And then a global pandemic happened.

"I got to college and wasn't playing baseball," McNelis said. "My goal was to get as strong as possible. During COVID I had so much time on my hands. I started eating way better than any other time of my life. I got so much faster and it translated directly to baseball."

At Amity, McNelis had always lifted for baseball, but he did more stability exercises for injury prevention. Now, with nothing but time on his hands, he tried to get as big as possible. He ate as much protein as possible and benched, squatted and deadlifted heavyweights. When he played twilight league the first summer after COVID, the balls that were routine fly outs became homeruns.

"I never stopped playing baseball," McNelis said. "I needed it in my life. The summer before my junior year, I played on a twilight team that had other club baseball kids. I started playing more and more. I was playing on two club teams and often had six games a week. All the lifting I was doing and reps I was getting against good competition led to another

big jump in skill."

Back on campus in fall 2021, former Amity teammate and UConn club baseball president Ben Lodewick convinced McNelis to try out for the team. McNelis tried out and made the team, but wasn't sure what to expect. He hadn't played baseball outside of summer ball for two years.

As it turned out, Lodewick's recruitment of McNelis might have been one of the best things to happen in the history of UConn club baseball. McNelis, now much more physical, batted third in the order every game and put up an astounding 526/611/807 slash line with nine steals. He moved around between third base, second base and outfield. The team won the North Atlantic North with a 12-3 record, but lost early in the playoffs. Heading into the 2022-2023 season, McNelis and his teammates knew that they had the infrastructure for some national damage.

"We were returning all nine of our starters and were really good last year, so we knew we could be better this year. So we started playing extra games to see more competition," McNelis said.

A large part of the extra competition was that the team arranged a trip to the Wood Wars tournament in Dallas, Texas, a yearly large National Club Baseball Association tournament. The tournament consists of 16 teams that play pool play followed by single elimination. UConn went 5-0 and won the tournament easily. McNelis belted three home runs in the five games.

Unlike varsity baseball, which runs in the spring only, the NCBA season begins in the fall and ends in the spring. This season UConn is 16-1 and first in the North Atlantic North. McNelis is leading the entire country with 23 hits. His slash line currently sits at 500/528/850 and he has added eight steals. He has only seen action in outfield out of necessity.

"The infield is so deep that I'm only playing outfield," McNelis said. "We need all our bats in the lineup."

Not only is McNelis one of the best NCBA hitters in the country, but he also is the team's manager. UConn, unlike many other NCBA teams, uses a player-manager structure where the player voted vice president before the sea-



NICK  
MIRTO

son is also the team's acting manager. McNelis ran for the position against an incumbent and won the secret offseason vote.

"There are no challenges with the player-coach model," McNelis said. "We have a very close group of guys. The team chemistry is very good. We have 23 good guys on the team. A lot of the club teams have coaches. We had an option to hire a coach but we haven't. It has worked out for us, so we've kept that going."

McNelis is not without coaching experience. The past three summers, McNelis has been the manager of the Orange Post 127 17U American Legion team. His coaching experience helped him select this year's team.

"Coaching legion definitely helped with everything," McNelis said. "Amity also helped. Amity showed me what knowing good baseball players are. I've been around so many winners with good attitudes like Pat [Winkel] and Lump [John Lumpinski]. I know what to look for in finding a team."

This year, 67 kids tried out, but UConn could only take six due to many players returning. There are 22 players on the roster.

"I had a large say, but all four of the executives had a say," McNelis explained. "We had three days of tryouts and met and talked after every tryout. We try to find anyone on campus who has played and encourage them to try out. When you have over 60 kids try out, you're going to see who is a competitor and who is there to screw around."

Amity baseball is known for having a strong culture where players will do anything to win. You can certainly see Amity DNA all over the UConn club baseball program from the time Ben Lodewick became president. The culture change has morphed the program from a fun extra-curricular activity into a win-at-all-costs endeavor where anything less than excellence is seen as unacceptable.

"When Ben was a junior, that's when the culture of the program changed," McNelis said. "Ben, coming from Amity, didn't want a losing culture. He assembled a great tryout and found some new guys. That's when the change happened."

Then, in McNelis's first year, seven of the

nine starters were new. A year later, all nine starters were the same. They had the experience of winning the North Atlantic North and a playoff game. This year, the team has scored 108 runs and allowed only 44, good for a +64 run differential.

"Last year we were ranked ninth in the country by the guy who does the official club baseball rankings," McNelis said. "The guy watched all of our games in Texas and said that we'd probably be top five at the start of spring."

No matter the outcome this spring, McNelis has no regrets. A late bloomer in high school and then once again in college, he knows that there is a possibility that he could have been a D3 star or a D1 contributor. However, he is immensely happy with his baseball experience since high school.

"At times I wish I looked more into being recruited, but I couldn't be happier where UConn club baseball has brought me," McNelis said. "We are lucky to be as good as we are. I'm so happy at every practice and game. At the end of the day I'm playing baseball with 20 of my best friends and winning games while living a good life."

Last year, McNelis made the decision to pursue nursing as his career. He is applying to masters programs in nursing at various D1 schools and isn't ruling out trying to walk on when he steps foot on campus.

"The most important thing is getting a degree, but once I apply to schools and hear back, then I'd definitely reach out to those coaches," McNelis said. "I'd be interested in playing. I'd work out with them in the summer."

McNelis can never be counted out. When he was a few bad days away from getting cut from the Amity team, he made the squad and became a star. When everybody thought he had quit meaningful baseball, he bulked up during COVID and became one of the biggest NCBA forces in the country and made UConn club baseball a legitimate national title contender. His baseball career has had stops and starts but it is far from over.

*Nick Mirto is a Milford resident involved with Orange baseball. He can be reached at 203-464-9971 or Nick.mirto@gmail.com.*

## Recycling Tip: Can You Recycle Wrapping Paper?

By Loretta Smith

There are so many times during a year when we use wrapping paper: birthdays, Hanukkah, Christmas, weddings, anniversaries, holidays. We wrap the gifts we purchase for these occasions in attractive, colorful or funky paper that makes a statement for the lucky receiver. Sometimes the

wrapping paper is a heavy gold or silver foil. Other times it's wrapping paper from a roll or folded paper in a set of two or three sheets.

Though it may suit the occasion in appearance, it may not be the best choice.

Companies making gift wrap tend to line it with plastic to make it firmer, or they use plastic as part of the pattern. Also, the

amount of ink present on gift wrap "makes it difficult to extract fibers during recycling," and ultimately fewer fibers get recycled. The bottom line here is that purchased wrapping paper is generally not good for the environment.

What should we use instead? Colored newspaper comics are terrific for children's gifts, though there are many adults who

would get a chuckle from it also. Brown paper grocery bags can be decorated, whimsically or seriously, to suit the occasion; add a small bouquet of snips of boxwood or a sturdy shrub, plus a gift tag, attached with twine or a clothespin. Cloth bags or pillowcases make excellent wraps because they can be reused for the same purpose. So can bento bags.

Just Floored

# Hardwood Flooring Trends In 2023

Hardwood floors will never go out of style. Built to last, these floors can survive a lot of use while retaining their beauty and charm. Choose new flooring that's growing in popularity in 2023 to get these benefits, along with the interest and character that is sure to set these floors apart for years to come. Homeowners are looking for exciting, new flooring options.

The minimalist design trend continues to grow in popularity, and flooring choice is no exception. Homeowners are gravitating toward more natural, neutral floor colors that are versatile enough to fit with a variety of living spaces, from dining rooms to bedrooms. Shades of white, cream and honey can be used in homes, luxury condos and commercial spaces.

One wood species that is particularly popular is white oak for its versatility as well as functionality. The creamy undertones add a subtle warmth to many spaces. It's naturally

water-resistant, which has an added appeal for pragmatic homeowners and business owners alike.

The color gray swept through the interior design world a few years ago, and no area of the home or office has been left untouched. This year, another trendy gray look is sweeping through the interior design world.

Smokey toned floors offer additional drama and character to solid hardwood floors. This floor color has a unique look that's very appealing. They still have the warm undertone that hardwood flooring options are known for, but they also have a rustic, edgy look that is gaining in popularity. Almost any type of wood species can go through the process of creating a smokey look. These hardwoods get their color without having to apply stain.

Light wood tones help to brighten up



ANNAMARIE AMORE

a space and bleached or white-washed wood tones create a relaxed and rustic atmosphere in a home. The process for bleaching a wood floor involves adding a chemical solution to the wood surface to remove the color or stain. Whitewashing will give wood a white look while still showcasing the natural wood grain.

Flooring trends aren't just about the color; different textures also have their appeal.

Rustic floors have a lot of allure. They call to mind nature and natural textures and surfaces, which in turn have a calming effect on the viewer. All rustic textures, however, can add a lot of depth to a room. They work well in cottages, farmhouses, lodges and any home where a natural appearance and vibe are desired.

The sizing of the planks that make up a

hardwood floor seem to change every few years as different widths go in and out of fashion. One floor that's had an enduring popularity and a recent resurgence is the wide plank floor.

Wider planks are less busy than other wood floors, with fewer pieces going into the construction. This lets you see more of the grain and variation across each piece of wood. This creates a floor that's more interesting and more subtle at the same time.

Wide plank floors can be sanded smooth, or they can be rustic or reclaimed. No matter what style you opt for, they're sure to make a big impression on your new floor.

*Annamarie Amore is founder/owner of A.A.I. Flooring Specialist. She can be reached at amoreinteriorsllc@gmail.com.*

## Downtown Milford Eatery Opens



Downtown Milford takeout restaurant B's Twisted Eats Express celebrated its grand opening on Dec. 6 with a ribbon-cutting sponsored by the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. The venue has an expansive menu of traditional fare done in unique ways, from homemade potato chips to sandwiches all the food is made with love you can feel and taste. It is located at 35 River St. and open Tuesday through Saturday at 11 a.m., with a special late night menu on Friday and Saturday. From left: Mayor Ben Blake, co-owner Daniele Waterhouse-Walente, chef/owner Brandi Marshall and partner Kali Marshall. Photo by Gregory Geiger.

## Milfordites Raise Funds For Slain Bristol Officers



On a rainy December day, the Milford community came together to raise money for fallen Bristol police officers Lt. Dustin DeMonte and Sgt. Alex Hamzy, who were killed in October in an apparent ambush. Hundreds of people donated thousands of dollars, and people plunged into the cold waters of Long Island Sound. Milford Police Chief Keith Mello spoke and thanked the officers from Bristol and Milford. The fire department supplied their emergency truck for the plungers to change into dry clothes after the swim. Bottom photo, from left: Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald, US Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Officer Brianna MacDonald, Mello and his daughter, Officer Marilisa Anania. Photos by Gregory Geiger.

## Milford Trick Or Trot 5K Event Raises \$32K For Beth-El Center



Patricia Diorio and Kenneth Ferrari from Sikorsky Credit Union and attorney Joe Kubic from the law firm of Harlow, Adams & Friedman, P.C. presented Jenn Paradis, executive director of the Beth-El Center, with a \$31,934.81 donation from the Milford Trick or Trot 5K. Photo courtesy of the Beth-El Center.

Beth-El Center homeless shelter and soup kitchen received a \$31,934.81 donation from the proceeds of the 11th Annual Milford Trick or Trot 5K Run/Walk fundraiser held on Oct. 29 in Milford. Event organizers and sponsors Harlow, Adams & Friedman, P.C. and Sikorsky Credit Union presented the donation on Nov. 30 to the center's Executive Director Jenn Paradis.

"We are so thankful to everyone who ran and walked in the Trick or Trot. We're very grateful for our long-term partnership with Harlow, Adams and Friedman and Sikorsky Credit Union who went above and beyond to ensure this event was a success," Paradis

said. "Over the past decade, the support of the Trick or Trot has helped us sustain our programs and services that assist people in crisis in our community."

This donation will support the operation of the Beth-El Center's emergency homeless shelter, food programs and support services for men, women, veterans and families in the Milford area who are experiencing homelessness. Additionally, it will support the center's work in the community to prevent hunger and homelessness.

For more information about Beth-El Center and its services, visit [bethelmilford.org](http://bethelmilford.org) or call 203-876-0747.

## Beth-El Gets Check From MPC



Steve Cooper, right, of the Milford Performance Center presented a check for \$3,000 on Nov. 22 to Jennifer Paradis, left, executive director of the Beth-El Center in Milford. The proceeds came from the MPC's recent Peter Noone & Hermans Hermits concert. Photo by Robert Creigh.

# Obituaries

Full obituaries and pictures (if provided) of the deceased are on our website at [www.milford-orangetimes.com](http://www.milford-orangetimes.com) and are published at no cost to residents of Milford and Orange.

**Allen Bogdanowicz**, age 72, of Milford, died on Sunday, December 4, 2022 at his home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Ronald Francis Bozelko**, 85, of Orange, CT, died on December 2, 2022 at St. Vincent's Hospital in Bridgeport after a long illness. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Marianne Cameron** was born to Jean (Nixon) and Walter Cameron. She grew up in Milford, where she attended St. Mary's and Milford High School. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Rosemarie Cameron**, age 94, of Milford and beloved wife of 66 years to the late Paul L. Cameron, entered peaceful rest on November 17, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Raymond T. Carroll**, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Denise Dirga Carroll passed away suddenly on November 30, 2022 at age 52, after a long battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Regina Marie Dacier** was born on June 1933 and passed away on November 28, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Linda Mary DeCrosta**, 67, of Orange, entered into eternal rest on December 4, 2022. She was born in New Haven on June 12, 1955. (West Haven Funeral Home)



**Linda (Beebe) DeLeo**, 82, of Milford, passed away on November 17, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Dorothy R. Denning**, 89, passed away on November 29, 2022. Born on March 14, 1933 in Stamford, she was the daughter of the late Achilles and Anna Rustici. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**James "Jimmy" Charles Dunn**, 73, of Milford, passed away on Sunday, December 4, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**James E. Dutton**, age 88, longtime resident of Milford, and beloved husband of the late Marian I. Dutton, passed away on December 1, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Richard A. Fredericks**, 86, of Milford, beloved husband of Joyce Fredericks, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Jo-Ann (Tanase) Friberg** passed away peacefully on November 22, 2022 after a long and difficult journey. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Peter K. Grassmann**, 75, of Milford, passed away on December 4, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Roberta M. Hanson**, age 89, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Guy Hanson, entered peaceful rest on November 18, 2022. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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# Obituaries

**Susan Nicole Holm**, 48, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved daughter, sister, fiancé, dog mom and friend to all, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Margery Dye MacKendrick**, 82, of Milford, beloved wife of Robert "Bob" MacKendrick, passed away on November 19, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Nancy Musante**, 60, of Orange, beloved wife of the late Matthew Musante, passed away on November 13, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Jack Palumbo**, 93, of Milford, beloved husband of Loretta Palumbo, entered into eternal rest on December 2, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Linda (Jones) Hoppes** was born on November 21, 1942, and passed away on November 28, 2022 at age 80. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Joan Irene McGrath**, age 84 of New Haven and formerly of Milford entered peaceful rest on Sunday, November 6, 2022. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Stephen Nunziata**, age 61 of Milford, beloved husband of the late Angela Hart, died suddenly on November 22, 2022, at Yale New Haven Hospital. (Wakelee Memorial Funeral Home)



**Barbara Richards** was born on September 3, 1940 and passed away on December 2, 2022 at age 82. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Freda l'Anson**, loving wife, mother and sister passed away peacefully at home with her daughter Valerie l'Anson, MD by her side on Tuesday 29th November 2022. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Robert Harvey Miller Sr.**, 82, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Suzanne Miller, passed away peacefully on December 5th, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Mary C. Nysten**, 103, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Hubert Nysten, passed away on November 28, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Louis A. Romney**, age 65, of Milford, died on Saturday, November 19, 2022 at his home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Richard X. Iannazzi**, 82, of Seymour, passed away on November 11, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Janet E. (McCurry) Moulitis**, age 80, beloved wife of the late Robert "Michael" Moulitis of Kirkside Avenue in Milford, entered peaceful rest on November 29, 2022. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Julius J. Paecht, Jr.**, affectionately known as Butch, entered into rest on December 3, 2022, at his home in Orange. (West Haven Funeral Home)



**Honorable John J. Ronan**, 90, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away peacefully at his home on November 17, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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# Obituaries

**Felicetta Runco**, age 92, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Angelo Runco, died on Monday, November 21, 2022 surrounded by her family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Joan Monroe Tiberio**, age 77, of Milford beloved wife of the late Joseph Tiberio Sr., died on Wednesday November 9, 2022. (Parente-Lau-ro Funeral Home)



**Brianna Rose Sabol**, 26, of Milford, passed away on November 30, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Marianna Nicole Triolo**, of Milford, passed away peacefully on Monday, November 28th, 2022 in her home, surrounded by her family, after a long fight with ovarian cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Stanley T. Short Jr.**, age 57, of Woburn, MA and formerly of Milford, passed away on October 11, 2022 at his home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Barbara Sutherland Williams**, 84, of Milford, beloved wife of 67 years to Charles Williams, passed away on November 24, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**George Marty Smith, III**, 43 years of age, of Milford, passed away on November 23, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Rosemarie (Mette, Donahue) Wright**, age 68, of Stratford and a former resident of Milford passed away on Thursday, November 24, 2022. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**The massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown happened 10 years ago on Dec. 14, 2012. It was the deadliest mass shooting in Connecticut history. The Milford-Orange Times remembers the victims and extends its deepest condolences to all those affected.**

- Charlotte Bacon, 6
- Daniel Barden, 7
- Olivia Engel, 6
- Josephine Gay, 7
- Dylan Hockley, 6
- Madeleine Hsu, 6
- Catherine Hubbard, 6
- Chase Kowalski, 7
- Jesse Lewis, 6
- Ana Márquez-Greene, 6
- James Mattioli, 6
- Grace McDonnell, 7
- Emilie Parker, 6
- Jack Pinto, 6
- Noah Pozner, 6
- Caroline Previdi, 6
- Jessica Rekos, 6
- Avielle Richman, 6
- Benjamin Wheeler, 6
- Allison Wyatt, 6
- Rachel D'Avino, 29, behavior therapist
- Dawn Hochsprung, 47, principal
- Anne Marie Murphy, 52, special education teacher
- Lauren Rousseau, 30, teacher
- Mary Sherlach, 56, school psychologist
- Victoria Leigh Soto, 27, teacher

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### Celebrate Hanukkah With Or Shalom

Residents can light the first candle for Hanukkah with Congregation Or Shalom in Orange on Dec. 18 at 5:30 p.m. The group will meet in the lobby and the rabbi will light the menorah and sing Hanukkah songs with his guitar.

Participants can bring their own menorah and light up the room. There will be latkes, gelt and dreidels for everyone. All are welcome.

Congregation Or Shalom is located at 205 Old Grassy Hill Rd.

### Orange Health Director Honored



Cub Scout Pack 922 packing kits in November for the Beth-El Center in Milford. Photo courtesy of Pack 922.

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### Bidder's Notice of Source Selection (NGFE)

#### The Tax Collector's Office of the Town of Orange (Agency)

Announcing the bidding cycle for the Next Generation Front End (NGFE) credit payment system for Orange's QDS Tax System. Bidding instructions and proposal preparation information is available on the Town of Orange website (orange-ct.gov) under the sidebar of the Tax Collector Department heading.

Receipt of proposals in the Tax Collector's Office are due no later than 27 Jan 2023 at 1 P. M. ET. One hard copy and one electronic copy are required in a .pdf format. Proposal Volumes should be delivered to Tax Collector, 617 Orange Center Rd., Orange, CT 06477-2432. Prospective bidders are requested to email a notice of intent to bid to [thurley@orange-ct.gov](mailto:thurley@orange-ct.gov).

Everyone Is Invited To A

### VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

State Project No. 0106-0108  
US Route 1 Operational Lane  
Town of Orange

The Virtual Public Information Meeting is being held to provide the public and local community the opportunity to offer comments or ask questions regarding the proposed project. Residents, commuters, business owners, and other interested individuals are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about and discuss the proposed project.

Please join us on Thursday, December 15, 2022  
Formal Presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Question and Answer (Q&A) session will immediately follow the presentation.

The meeting will be livestreamed via: Zoom and registration is required.  
The meeting will also be live streamed on the CT DOT YouTube Channel and no registration is required.

For instructions on how to access the meeting, ways to provide comments, and how to ask questions, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DOTOrange106-108>.

Individuals with limited internet access may listen to the meeting by calling (877) 853-5257 and enter Meeting ID 891 4233 9086. Persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities may dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). Persons with limited internet access may also request that project information be mailed to them within one week by contacting Michelle C. Saldana, Project Engineer, at [Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov](mailto:Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov) or 860-594-3348.

Language assistance may be requested by contacting the Department's Language Assistance Call Line (860) 594-2109. Requests should be made at least five business days prior to the meeting. Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.

Members of the public may submit comments and questions during the two-week public comment period following the meeting. Please submit comments and questions by January 11, 2023 to [DOTProject106-108@ct.gov](mailto:DOTProject106-108@ct.gov), (860) 594-2020, or to Michelle C. Saldana, Project Engineer, at [Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov](mailto:Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov) or (860) 594-3348. Please reference State Project No. 0106-0108.

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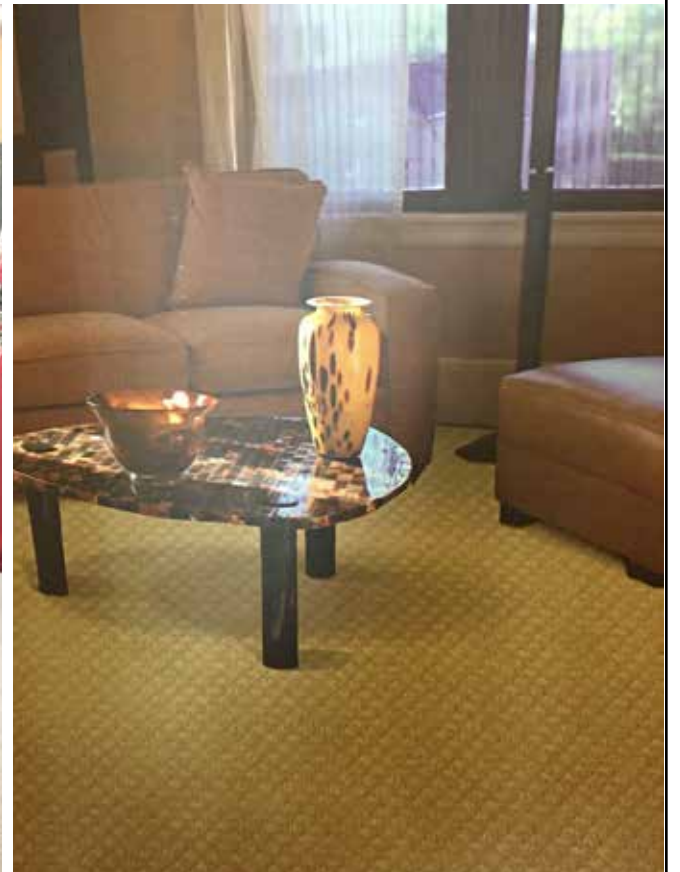
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