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Fred Wolfe Park Planning Gets Off To Lurching Start

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

As the work of the ad hoc committee created to plan improvements to Fred Wolfe Park in Orange came before the Board of Selectmen with its first formal request on March 1, long-simmering tensions over the future of the park continued to boil over.

The main park-related item on the agenda was a request by the park committee asking if it could retain a consultant to do a traffic and safety study. Even that otherwise fairly routine request, however, brought fraught dialog.

The tone of the meeting was set early on, with two residents using their opportunity for public participation to chide First Selectman Jim Zeoli for comments he had made to another resident during the previous BOS meeting.

Tom Pisano, who leads the Orange

Soccer Association and has long battled with Zeoli over Fred Wolfe Park, said Zeoli improperly asked his wife, Peggy Pisano, not to speak during the public participation period at the previous meeting. The other speaker, DeeDee Lebov, was even more blunt in her assessment of the incident.

"I need to admonish Mr. Zeoli for his disgraceful and insulting conduct in refusing to allow Peggy Pisano to speak during the allotted time for public comments," Lebov said, adding that she thought Zeoli owed Pisano a public apology.

When the agenda item for the traffic safety study came up later in the meeting, things again became contentious.

Selectman John Carangelo, who also serves as the chair of the park committee,

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Blake To Step Down; Aldermen To Choose Mayor

By Brandon T. Bisceglia



Milford Mayor Ben Blake.

The Milford Board of Aldermen will be tasked with selecting a new mayor for the city after Gov. Ned Lamont on Feb. 7 nominated Mayor Ben Blake to fill the post of Administrative Law Judge for Connecticut's Workers' Compensation Commission.

If confirmed by the legislature, Blake said he intends to step down as mayor. The legislature is expected to vote on the nomination before the session ends in June.

"I am humbled by the Governor's confidence and trust," Blake said in a statement. "The legislature is expected to act upon the nomination before adjourning its session on June 7, 2023, and once confirmed, I intend to step down as

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Milford P&Z Okays Scaled-Down Apartment Plan

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Planning & Zoning Board unanimously voted at its Feb. 21 meeting to approve a much scaled-down plan for an apartment complex at 553 West Ave. that was the subject of vehement opposition just a few years ago.

The new plan cuts the number of units nearly in half, from 342 to 189. It does the same for the number of parking spaces, bringing those down from 503 to 261.

Blake Smith, Director of Real Estate Development for property owner Metro 533 LLC, said that the reductions would eliminate the need for multilevel parking garages and help to maintain the environmental character of the landscape. The plan already had the signoff of the Inland Wetlands Commission in December.

The complex will include a significant affordable housing component, with 30

percent of units set aside for people earning up to 80 percent of the area's median income, and 10 percent reserved for those earning up to 10 percent.

Developments that include an affordable housing component are often able to skirt other local zoning requirements as long as do not pose dangers to things like health or safety. Chris Smith, the lawyer for the developers, explained that although Milford is currently under a temporary moratorium from the affordability requirements, the original form of this project had been approved in 2017 prior to the moratorium.

Although there were no public comments on the latest version of this development, its original version drew sharp criticism from many in the neighborhood, particularly from the nearby residents of Gloria Commons.

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Happiness Hut Opens In Milford



The Happiness Hut held a ribbon-cutting today Feb. 8 at its new location in Milford. The business, under owner Danielle Rathey, offers help with special education support, Section 504 educational plans, performance anxiety for musicians and dancers and goal attainment coaching for children, teens and adults. Rathey is a life coach who works within a school of psychology that focuses on happiness rather than tragedy. The Happiness Hut is located at 125 Broad St. From left: Milford Mayor Ben Blake, owner Danielle Rathey and Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Car Wash Opens Second Milford Location



Russell Speeders car wash held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Feb. 22 for the grand opening of its second Milford location at 109 Roses Mill Rd. Russell Speeder's is offering free car washes all week long, culminating on Sunday, March 5 with an event from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. including food trucks and other giveaways. From left: Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald, General Manager K.C. Bushka, Manager Robert Meekins and Regional Manager Rod Diaz. Photo by Gregory Geiger.

Orange Board Of Finance Questions Amity Budget

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Although the amount that Orange is proposed to pay toward its share of the Amity Regional District budget is expected to increase by only a small amount this year, members of the town's Board of Finance at their Feb. 27 meeting continued to argue that the school system is overtaxing its participating towns.

Amity's budget proposal is still in flux, most recently having been lowered by the school's finance committee from a 2.93 percent increase over last year to a 2.56 percent increase. The Amity Board of Education has yet to vote on the budget.

The Amity budget is shared by Orange, Woodbridge and Bethany, and gets divvied up each year in proportion to the percentage of student enrollment from each town.

Although Orange sends the most students overall to Amity, its enrollment actually dropped in the past year, from 1,091 students to 1,017. Orange's contribution to the budget

would actually drop by \$184,155 if the proposal passes.

Nevertheless, Orange BOF Vice Chair Jim Leahy suggested that Amity continues to hold too much money over in surplus, and that the district could get by just fine with a much smaller budget increase – and perhaps no increase at all.

Leahy said that until around 2016 or 2017, Amity's budget surplus hovered in average range of around \$600,000 to \$700,000. In the last six years, the average surplus has been \$2,547,843 per year, according to his calculations.

"As I've told many people many times, if the surplus was in a relatively small range as it had been for many years, we wouldn't be having this conversation," Leahy said. "It's just been because of the magnitude of it."

Leahy, along with fellow Board of Finance members from the other towns, instead

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Blake

(Continued From 1)

Milford's mayor to accept this new public service position. Until that time, my focus is to ensure a stable and seamless transition of administrations so that Milford continues to be soundly governed."

The Workers' Compensation Commission administers workers' compensation laws in the state "with the ultimate goal of ensuring that workers injured on the job receive prompt payment of wage loss benefits and appropriate medical treatment," according to the commission's website. The commission approves voluntary agreements, adjudicates disputes, issues findings and awards, hears and rules on appeals and closes out pending cases through full and final stipulated agreements.

No election will be held for Blake's successor. Milford's city charter requires that the Board of Aldermen appoint a new mayor from the same party. Blake is a Democrat.

The Milford Democratic Town Committee is currently soliciting potential candidates, and will choose someone who will then be forwarded to the aldermen to consider and vote on.

Blake is nearing the end of his sixth term as mayor. His signature achievement while in office has been a record-setting six consecutive reductions in the city's mill rate. Milford has continued to experience strong business growth, even through most of the coronavirus pandemic, and remains a popular destination for families and homebuyers.

"For the past 12 years, I have been responsible for managing the City's operations while furnishing vision and direction for Milford's successful future," Blake said. "With the help of our

residents, employees, and volunteers, we have achieved unprecedented economic expansion, advanced our City schools, developed world class recreational amenities, and rebuilt critical public infrastructure – all while cutting taxes and reducing the City's mill rate for each of the past seven consecutive years. Every day I'm reminded of how much good there is in the Small City with a Big Heart. While it is an all-consuming job, serving as mayor for this remarkable community has been my greatest professional honor."

"I'm grateful for your continued confidence and I look forward to our community's successful future as we all work towards a healthy transition," he added.

Blake's tenure has not been without controversies. One notable point of contention came over construction of a new police headquarters. The original building, built in the late 1970s, is too small to accommodate the current force. The Police Department has for years been requesting the city bond for funds to replace the building, but Blake has in the past resisted, saying the price tag was too high and pushing instead for a renovation to the existing headquarters. The city included \$40 million in its five-year capital improvement plan in early 2022 for a new building.

Apartments

(Continued From 1)

Residents had raised concerns about environmental impact and traffic problems, as well as the proximity to the Iroquois natural gas pipeline that runs through the property. Those concerns had not swayed the P&Z when the proposed project was at its original, larger scale.

Adopt A Pet: Spice



Spice is a medium sized Staffordshire terrier mix who is very sweet but full of energy. She may not be too fond of other dogs just from observation, but may need to meet another dog in a potential home to be sure. Small children are not recommended. Come down to Milford Animal Control at 664 E. Broadway in Milford to meet her. Spice has waited a long time to find her forever home.. For more information, call 203-783-3279. Photo courtesy of Milford Animal Control.

OCC Holding Lent, Easter Events

Orange Congregational Church is holding a Lenten table during the Wednesdays in Lent. A simple soup supper at 6 p.m. will be followed by worship or activity at 7 p.m. All are welcome to either or both parts. There is a \$5 per person suggested donation for the soup and bread supper.

Palm Sunday will take place on April 2 at 10 a.m. followed later in Holy Week by a Maundy Thursday service on April 6

at 7 p.m. Easter Sunday worship will be on April 9 at 6 a.m. for a sunrise service on Hannah's Hill near the church and at 10 a.m. for a traditional Easter worship service in the sanctuary with music from the choir.

The church is located at the corner of 205 Meeting House Ln. and Orange Center Rd. The office can be reached at 203-795-9749 and is open weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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Facing Ourselves

Unsung Women Helped Shape America

Women's History Month began as a week-long celebration organized by an education task force in Santa Rosa, California 45 years ago to coincide with International Women's Day on March 8. Women's History Week was quickly adopted by other communities in the following years, resulting in women's groups lobbying for national recognition.

In 1980, National Women's History Week was established by President Jimmy Carter. In his first presidential proclamation, Carter wrote, "From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often, the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievement, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well."

How well do we know the names of the women who built America? Often, the American history taught in classrooms focuses heavily on the contribution of "men whose names we know so well."

How many of us are familiar with Sybil Ludington, a 16-year old girl who, despite being less than half Paul Revere's age, rode more than twice the distance that Revere traveled to provide warning of the impending attack of British troops on Danbury, Connecticut in April 1777?

How many are aware of the legacy of Sojourner Truth? Truth made an indelible impact in early American history through her work as a passionate activist for women's

rights. Having escaped a life of slavery with her infant daughter, Truth also fought for emancipation and spoke out against racism and segregation.

Who is aware of the contributions of Jane Addams? Dubbed the "mother of social work" and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, Addams's work included pushing for a myriad of legislation, ranging from abolishing child labor to promoting labor unions to advocating for compulsory school attendance to fighting for safer working conditions. She also founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

How many have heard of Hedy Lamarr? Not only was she a popular actress often praised for her beauty, Lamar was an inventor who, along with George Anthiel, developed a communication system designed to aid the US military in World War II. Although their invention, which enabled radio transmissions to be disguised, was dismissed by the Navy, their work was eventually recognized and is considered to be a predecessor of modern wireless technology.

Other famous female scientists include Rosalind Franklin, whose groundbreaking work on x-ray techniques led to the imaging of DNA, which was used by scientists James Watson and Francis Crick in their work on the DNA structure. Franklin was given scant credit for her contribution to Watson and Crick's work, for which the two men were



JENNIFER JU

awarded the Nobel Prize. Nevertheless, Franklin continued her research, eventually creating the foundation of modern virology. Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu is another scientist whose work in physics was a key in a discovery for which only her male research partners received the Nobel Prize in 1957. Many have not heard of Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who refused to be held back by the limited opportunities for women athletes. Despite being the only member of her team in the US women's track and field championship, she won five events as well as the overall championship. She went on to win three medals (one silver, two gold) at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics. This feat was followed by her achievements in golf, where she was the first woman to play in an all-male PGA Tour event, as well as record-holder for the longest winning streak in golf history for both men and women.

These women are only a fraction of the legion whose contributions have been crucial in both the momentous and everyday actions that have built this country and continue to propel its greatness.

Every year, March is designated Women's History Month by presidential proclamation. Yet it is also important that our recognition of women's contributions go beyond just one month a year. It needs to extend to a year-long acknowledgement, as well as advocacy for women's rights and equality. Despite the gains that have been made, in 2022

women continued to earn an average of 82 percent of what men earned, according to a Pew Research Center analysis. That figure reflects no significant improvement in the narrowing of the gender wage gap over the past 20 years.

According to the United Nations, the current trajectory of progress toward gender equality, including "decision making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and gender-responsive budgeting," is not on target for achieving this goal by 2030.

Violence against women, unequal access to education and job opportunities, subpar legal protections, unequal political representation, racism and suboptimal women's health care are just some of the myriad obstacles and injustices women face today.

As Gloria Steinem said, "A feminist is anyone who recognizes the equality and full humanity of women and men." Recognizing this shared and equal humanity is the first step we must take if we wish to educate ourselves on these ongoing issues and do our part in fighting for equality for all.

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.

by Joseph Cole to handle or even address the situation location on February 20. We're taking the week to move in and get Dr. Peter Branden said. He will be one of several doctors working out of the 10,000 square foot space. He estimates between the group's rotating list of doctors and

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Fred Wolfe Park (Continued From 1)

said that although the committee expects to bring many future ideas and proposals forward, studying the park's current safety needed to happen sooner rather than later.

"Because the park is being used by a lot of people, we felt it imperative that a consultant be retained for traffic and safety for the people that use it right now," he said.

There was some confusion, both from the ad hoc committee and the Board of Selectmen, over how much authority the committee had to request quotes and how they should interact with the selectmen on each piece of the various plans they might come up with.

Selectman Mitch Goldblatt, who said he was generally in favor of a traffic study, did note that it was something of a "blank check" for the board to approve the committee's request without having a price attached to it.

"Eventually, this committee is going to come back to us with an overall plan, such as the one that was done 10 years ago," Goldblatt said.

"I think they would need some direction from us," he added, "as to whether they do it this way, or whether they have the authority as a committee to go out and get some proposals, get some pricing, and then come to the board and say, 'Hey, we've done this and we want the board to approve XYZ company for x thousands of dollars to do an overall study.'"

Zeoli, however, felt the selectmen should know who the committee would retain and what the cost would be. He suggested having the committee identify someone, get a price and then come let the Board of Selectmen know so that they could set up a short special meeting to approve the cost.

Resident Jomo Nichols pointed out that conducting a traffic study after having already decided the location of the playscape currently under construction seemed like doing things backwards.

"This is exactly what happens when you mishmash something," he said. "It seemed to me we kind of said, 'We're putting a playscape here and it's a nonstarter in terms of moving it.' And now we want to do a traffic study," he argued. "You don't decide you're going to put it here, and then say, 'We want to do a traffic study to see if it's safe.'"

"My understanding is there was a plan," Carangelo noted. "Orange Park and Rec had a plan. Part of that plan was implemented. Now we have additional things going on that we need to address."

Tom Pisano took a second turn to speak, questioning whether the recommendations of an eventual traffic study would actually be followed.

"The question I have is, if a traffic study is done right now, would you do something?" he asked. "You would have to do it, because they would tell you that it's unsafe."

Carangelo took exception to Pisano's questioning of the board's intent.

"Anything this board does, anything the committee does, I assure you is for the best interest of the town," he said. "So if we're going to vote on something, we're going to implement it to the best of our ability. We're all concerned about the safety. You and I have butted heads about this. I've had kids that played on those fields. I understand the concerns you have. But it's no different than any other field. There also has to be some parent accountability of watching your kids. It can't fall all upon us. We're going to do the best that we can, I assure you that."

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FOML Selected For Stop & Shop Community Bag Program

The Friends of the Milford Library has been selected as a beneficiary of the Stop & Shop Community Bag Program for the month of March.

The Stop & Shop Community Bag Program, which launched in May 2019, is a reusable bag program that facilitates community support with the goal to make a difference in the communities where shoppers live and work.

FOML was selected as the March beneficiary of the program by store leadership at the Stop & Shop located at 855 Bridgeport Ave. in Milford. FOML will receive a \$1 donation every time the \$2.50 reusable community bag is purchased at this location during March, unless otherwise directed by the customer

through the giving tag attached to the bag.

"We are excited about being chosen for the Community Bag Program," said Pam Pilla, president of FOML. "These donations will support quality programs offered by the library and funded by the Friends of the Milford Library."

FOML is a nonprofit, volunteer organization, and all its proceeds are used to fund library children and adult programs, museum passes and expenses not covered by the Milford city budget. For more information, visit ci.milford.ct.us/milford-public-library/pages/friends-of-the-milford-library. For more information on the Stop & Shop Community Bag Program, visit stopandshop.2givelocal.com.

Foran High School Booster Club Kicks-Off Engraved Brick Fundraiser

Members of the Foran High School community, past and present, can purchase a personalized, laser-engraved brick that will line the soon-to-be renovated entrance to the Vito DeVito Sports Complex.

A 20-foot-wide walkway will be installed from French Drive to a new stadium entrance. A border made up of 4-inch by 8-inch personalized bricks will line each side of the walkway. The cost of purchasing a brick is \$100 and allows for three lines of text with 20 characters per line. Donors may choose to commemorate a graduate, remember a loved one, celebrate a teacher or honor a family.

The funds raised for this project will help supplement the athletics department budget and benefit student athletes. Projected projects include upgrades to the

gymnasium's public address system, practice equipment for various teams, customized Foran Lion flags for the poles around campus and display/trophy cases.

This will be an ongoing fundraising project for years to come. The first phase is anticipated to begin in late spring and will continue over the summer. The deadline to order for the inaugural installation is March 31.

Everyone in the community is welcome to purchase a brick and can place their order online by visiting the link on the main Foran website homepage at milforded.org/o/fhs. Questions can be directed to Foran Athletic Director Anthony Vitelli at avitelli@milforded.org or by calling 203-783-3502 ext. 4.



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For Nature's Sake

Green Options For Tick Control

As we look forward to spring, it's not too early to start considering how to avoid ticks during one of their most active times of year. Scientists at the state level are considering ecosystem factors, including high deer populations, that make us vulnerable to ticks and tickborne disease, but even on the local level we can consider the landscape and human health implications of the choices we make in controlling ticks.

For residential property owners, the Centers for Disease Control recommends avoiding plantings that attract deer, separating spaces where humans and pets play from any mice habitat like rock walls and woodpiles, and rimming the safe space with a three-foot-wide application of pebbles or large wood chips. Other expert recommendations include a tall fence to keep deer out.

For those who hesitate to apply chemical pesticides in their yards, eco-friendly lawn treatments include the application of "beneficial nematodes" that kill ticks without harming other insects or pets.

Instructions on these strategies can be found at the CDC's web document called "Preventing Ticks in the Yard." Information on how to apply nematodes can be found, among other places, in the online post from Arbico Organics at arbico-organics.com/ titled, "How to Control Ticks in Four Steps."

One resource to check the toxicity of various tick repellants for applying to one's clothing or skin, is the 2018 Guide to Bug Repellants from the Environmental Working Group at ewg.org.

The quiz below offers more facts related to tick control.

1. True/False: According to the US En-

vironmental Protection Agency, the term "natural" on a pesticide label means the product is safe to use.

2. Why do so many wildlife and public health experts recommend restraint in using pesticides as a lawn treatment for preventing ticks? Choose one or more of the following:

a) The EPA has categorized permethrin, a common tick pesticide, as having "potential carcinogenic effects in humans."

b) Pesticides can run off into local wetlands and streams after a rain event and harm aquatic life and water quality.

c) The chemicals that kill ticks can also harm pollinating insects, including bees.

d) Spraying pesticides at a residential property, even when it lowers tick populations, does not necessarily reduce the incidence of Lyme disease in the inhabitants of that residence.

e) All of the above.

3. True/False: Opossums consume such large numbers of ticks while self-grooming that the tick population tends to be lower where they live.

4. The Japanese barberry shrub is an invasive species that damages native ecosystems and creates a habitat where ticks thrive, fueling the spread of Lyme disease. Four of the states below have responded to those risks by banning the sale and cultivation of Japanese barberry plants statewide. Which of these has not banned Japanese barberry for sale and cultivation in the state?

- a) New York
- b) Connecticut



PATRICIA HOUSER



- c) Massachusetts
- d) New Hampshire
- e) Pennsylvania

5. Fill in the blank: The CDC says that when returning home after being exposed to a high-risk environment for ticks, you should place your clothes in a dryer set to high heat for _____ minutes.

Answers:

1. False. According to the EPA's online Label Review Manual, the federal government does not permit the use of the terms "natural" or "naturally" in the labeling of any registered product. The EPA says those terms are too vague and offer no guarantee of safety.

2. e) All of the above. A 2016 paper in the Journal of Infectious Diseases describes the research showing that "acaricide (tick-killing) barrier sprays do not significantly reduce the household risk of tick exposure or incidence of tick-borne disease."

3. False. For years the National Wildlife Federation and other reliable sources have depicted opossums as "little vacuum cleaners" helping to clear ticks from an area. However, a 2021 study out of Eureka College in Illinois cast doubt on that finding. More research is needed for a definitive answer.

Perhaps the more lasting wildlife hero for the tick-beleaguered public will be foxes, who the New York Times speculated in 2017 might be "Lyme disease's worst enemy." Research from that year showed that higher numbers of mouse predators, especially foxes, was correlated with greatly reduced numbers of ticks

in an area.

4. b) Connecticut. The New York state ban on Japanese barberry went into effect in 2015, New Hampshire banned it in 2007 and Massachusetts banned the importation, distribution and sale of Japanese barberry in 2009. Most recently, in 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture added Japanese barberry, or *Berberis thunbergii*, to a state list of noxious weeds – plants that cannot be legally sold or cultivated anywhere in the state.

While Connecticut scientists have produced some of the most important research on links between Japanese barberry and Lyme disease, we are one of the only states in the region without a ban. When state representative Mary Mushinsky (D-Wallingford), who sought to have Japanese barberry banned as early as 2010, spoke with NBC Connecticut in 2017, she noted that the nursery industry had lobbied against the ban of Japanese barberry because of its profitable sales. Other states with bans on Japanese barberry, according to their websites, include Vermont, Maine and West Virginia.

5. Ten. The CDC, Vermont Department of Health and others currently recommend putting clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks. Dry heat will kill ticks, but wet heat will not necessarily have the same effect – so it's important to dry clothes before washing.

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.

JAY ROWE PRESENTS THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF

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BARRETT OUTDOOR

Opinion & Editorial

Ponder This

An Opportunity Awaits Us

Just about one month has passed since Milford Mayor Benjamin Blake announced that he will resign from office sometime in the coming months. Blake has been nominated by Gov. Ned Lamont for an administrative judgeship on the Worker's Compensation Commission. The legislature should confirm the position sometime before the session ends this June.

Blake has served for nearly a decade as mayor of Milford, leaving a record as a popular, talented leader with many significant and varied accomplishments to his credit.

The city charter gives responsibility for the filling of vacancies to the Board of Aldermen with the requirement to name a member from the same political party. The Board of Aldermen, working together as a full representative board of the majority and minority parties, uses the outlined Democratic Town Committee process. The DTC's selection of a candidate will be voted on at a special meeting for that purpose. That person's name will then be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen for approval. It is customary rather than binding that the Board of Aldermen approve the party's choice.

The DTC has scheduled an upcoming special meeting for the purpose of selecting a candidate to fill the position as replacement mayor. The word interim is not used since the appointed person will step into the full

role of mayor, not as an interim or caretaker, albeit one appointed to fill a vacancy during a term of office. There is nothing interim about stepping up to this complete role.

Thus far, two candidates have declared that they are ready, willing, able and eager to immediately take on the responsibility as mayor. The special DTC forum will permit a presentation of their unique credentials, abilities and experiences. The audience will be able to dialogue with the declared candidate about their particular vision for the city and the path forward. Other individuals may also be interested in being considered for this vacancy, so additional names may be forwarded from the DTC leadership according to the proper DTC process.

I am currently serving in my fourth term as a Democrat on the Board of Aldermen, and I have faith that we will continue to engage in robust discussion with the best interest of the city, the party, the residents and effective governing in mind. Transparency and openness in government are not mere buzz words. It takes time, commitment and fortitude to follow process and allow for exploration and interpretation of ideas in the governing process. We have examined our char-



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

ter, discussed our intersection as DTC members and examined the process put forward for us to implement. There is confidence among us, in our Democratic coalition, that we remain open to ideas without preconceived preferences determining the selection of candidates before us.

By the time these ideas are in the press, we may have made a selection for mayor. The Board of Alderman has a task to accomplish as an important component of democracy. We are also prepared and ready to pay attention to detail as we focus on the immediate work in front of us. The current budget deliberations require sustainable fiscal management strategies in changing fiscal times. Milford has an uncommon history of fiscal stability reflected by stable mill and tax rates despite challenging driving forces over a period of years. The important goal is to continue to provide high quality services within this record of fiscal stability; it is a daunting task requiring our full attention.

This unusual municipal situation of mayoral replacement represents an opportunity rather than a crisis. Change can be difficult but must be considered as positive and transitional. We must not see only risk or

impasse but opportunity. If handled well, a turning point can foretell future trends.

Let us collectively provide another round of gratitude and appreciation to Mayor Blake as he journeys toward a new professional endeavor. He is wished continued success and prosperity.

But such success never occurs alone or in isolation. It takes a village, and the village remains calm, ready and able to continue a positive path for the city. Our remarkable history is enriched by elected officials, city employees, unit directors, appointed board/commission members and countless volunteers among a fully engaged community. May we all continue the good work and progress for Milford.

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.

Commentary

Informed Citizens Make The Best Voters

How informed are you about the daily operations of Orange? Where do you get that information?

One of the places is the town Board of Finance meetings. They are going on now and are setting the budget numbers for the town departments. This process is very illuminating regarding what is going on in the town departments. This process is used to develop the budget to be presented on Thursday, April 20 at 7 p.m. in the High Plains Community Center cafeteria.

All budget meetings of the BOF are open to the public. These meetings are where the heavy lifting is done and where you, the citizen, may have the greatest impact if there is something you want added or deleted from the budget. Written documentation is best. The board determines the rules for public comment.

The meeting on the April 20 is really the

last good chance for changing budget priorities. From there the BOF finalizes the budget for presentation at the town meeting. The town meeting follows the Board of Selectmen meeting on Wednesday, May 10 at 7 p.m. and convenes promptly at 7:30 p.m.

This is where you come in. There are various motions made that determine things like tax collection and what to split payments on and what not to. Authority for the Board of Selectmen to make certain property transactions and at what amounts is decided. The town's citizenry may propose floor motions. If you aren't there, you aren't fulfilling your obligations as a town citizen.

This is also your absolute last chance to



THOMAS P. HURLEY

change the budget. Since the budget is already pretty much set up by the time of the town meeting prior to referendum, you see how important it is to participate early on in the process.

The final step, the Orange budget referendum, is set for Wednesday, May 17, with polls open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at High Plains Community Center.

This is not the only thing driving your tax burden. We are part of a regional school district (Amity Region 5). Their finance committee is also meeting on the Amity budget, with a proposed increase of 2.93 percent at this time. Due to student attendance records from last October, this increase will be distributed across the three district towns to pay for it. Therefore, each town will

likely share a different tax increase based on these statistics. Watch for details as the Amity budget is finalized.

The Amity board has to approve the budget before going to referendum. So if you have budget changes there, go to an upcoming Amity Board of Education meeting and get on their public speaking agenda at one of their upcoming meetings. The annual district meeting is on Monday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m. at the high school. This meeting can be rather short, so don't be late.

Orange residents will vote on the Amity budget referendum at High Plains on Tuesday, May 2. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. All registered voters are eligible to vote.

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. Include your name and full address; only your name and town will be published. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Questions About Leases for Corn Fields

To the Editor:

I watched the January Board of Selectmen meeting with interest on the lease for the field near Fred Wolfe Park, the parcel of land that many members of the community believe would serve our community better as part of the park than a corn field.

It was interesting to learn that there are four parcels leased each year, two (the parcel in question as well as Race Brook Tract land) to Walter Hine of Fieldview Farm on Route 34, one to the Bespuda family whose farm is on Derby-Milford Road, and the fourth is the Wright land leased to Moncheski whose stand is on Grassy Hill Road near Fieldstone Village. The rationale to lease this open space to them is so the area is maintained.

During the meeting First Selectman Jim

Zeoli said, "I am the only one to not lease land from the town." I was puzzled by this because 1) Zeoli doesn't grow corn so he would have no need to lease land. And he is not alone in that but because he doesn't grow corn, I found this comment odd. 2) In addition, Treat Farm doesn't lease any land nor does Sunflower Farm. Stappa Winery is considered a farm, they don't lease any town land either. Perhaps there are others I am unaware of. So, Zeoli's comment was completely inaccurate.

Walter Hine and Fieldview Farm are leasing land to grow corn after selling their corn field for millions of dollars to have the homes on Skyview Road built as well as Fieldstone Village. I echo the comments made by a gentleman on one of the "You know you're from Orange" Facebook pages: "I would ask the farm in question since they have been located here from many many years to opt out of the current lease. I would hope they would put our children ahead of their planting crops."

Isn't it also interesting that Walter Hine has never exercised his option to renew in prior years but suddenly did this time. Was it just because of the public opinion or was

it that someone told him to?

Lastly, our town attorney didn't seem to have properly read the leases until the issue came up, leaving the town in a non-negotiable position. How many other documents is he neglecting to properly vet?

I ask the residents of Orange: can you

buy your corn from other folks in town who aren't putting their own interests ahead of our children's? I know I can, will and do.

Jody Dietch
Orange

Milford-Orange Times

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In The House: Rep. Mary Welander (D-114) Rep. Charles Ferraro (R-117) Kathy Kennedy (R-119)
Senator's Seat: Sen. James Maroney

Columnists:

Annamarie Amore, Flooring	Jennifer Fiorillo, Mental Health	Amir Mohammad, MD, Public Health
Carolina Amore, Personal Experiences	Ben Gettinger, Probate	Michael Moses, Milford Chamber
Ellen Russell Beatty, Ponder This	Patricia Houser, Environment	Ilene Moyher, Recycling
Cathy Bradley, Running	Thomas P. Hurley, Commentary	Susan Oderwald, Senior Care
Kathy Charbonneau, Orange Chamber	Jennifer Ju, Bias	Jennifer Paradis, Homelessness
Steve Cooper, Food	Barbara Lehrer, Real Estate	Trish Pearson, Insurance
Rob Craft, Recovery	Dan May, Earth Science	Karen Quinn Panzer, Travel
David Crow, Conversations	Marilyn May, Milford History	PJ Shanley, Life Insurance
Theresa Rose DeGray, Bankruptcy	Kevin McNabola, Orange Finances	Raymond Spaziani, Wine
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews	Paige Miglio, Arts	Roger Tausig, Rotary
Pat Dray, Gardening	Nick Mirto, Sports	Michele Tenney, Wellness

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Opinion & Editorial

Reading The Room



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

We just finished Read Across America week, where I had the opportunity to visit multiple public schools across the district and see what an amazing job our educators are doing to instill a love of reading in our youngest students. If you ever have the chance to volunteer to read with children, I can guarantee that it will be an incredibly rewarding experience, especially if it is in a classroom setting. Seeing firsthand our teachers work tirelessly to direct, support and instruct a classroom of students will give you a new appreciation for the work they do.

The Education Committee also had a big week at the state Capitol. We held a 14-hour public hearing to discuss a multitude of issues that are challenging our schools right now, but my priorities were SB 1096, An Act Concerning the Charter School Approval Process, and SB 1094, An Act Concerning the Implementation of Reading Models or Programs.

Regarding SB 1096, it is no secret that I firmly support the type of schools that we have here in Orange, or what is called a “neighborhood public school.” My belief is based on this simple point: public funds should have public oversight. Right now, any resident can reach out to their elected board of education members, attend and speak at their public meetings, and then vote on whether to approve or reject the requested budget. It’s not a simple process and can often be difficult or messy. But it is the democratic process.

Currently, if a charter management organization or individual wants to open a charter school, they need to apply for an initial certificate of approval from the appointed members of the State Board of Education. If certificate is granted, they then need to request the set startup funds of \$1.2 million from the elected state legislature, going through the committee, appropriations and budgetary process.

The charter school cannot begin to enroll students or be legally seen as an official school until those funds are granted. SB 1096 would change that process, eliminating the publicly elected legislature altogether and granting immediate and complete control to the politically appointed State BOE. This is unacceptable. A personal stance on charter schools is irrelevant in this instance. It all comes back to the idea that public funds should have public oversight.

SB 1094 is a bit more complicated. The goal of this legislation was to ensure that all students can read at grade level by the end of third grade; this is a goal that I know we can all support. The problem is in the details; the current law requires that districts choose one of six literacy programs to use/purchase, regardless of existing program use and effectiveness. During the hearing we heard from countless educators that more flexibility is needed in the approach.

We must let our teachers do what they are experts at: teaching. I challenged the commissioner of education to provide more options for instruction and clarity on the waiver process, and will continue to work toward improving this legislation.

If you would like to chat with me about something you would like to see addressed in Hartford, please email me directly at Mary.Welander@cga.ct.gov.

Making Safe Driving A Priority



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

Following the release of 2021 data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that stated driving-related deaths were at a 16-year high, predictions for 2023 are that the upward trend will continue. Studies suggest that last year was one of the deadliest for both pedestrians and drivers, with annual deaths rising at a rate of 30 per year since 2019.

Between rising incidents of wrong-way accidents and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, why aren’t we having a conversation about this?

As a mother and the ranking member on the Transportation Committee, it is both my passion and responsibility to promote safe driving in our state and reduce overall accidents and deaths. Let’s begin with a new approach: emphasizing safety through education and enforcement.

Several key bills have been addressed in public hearings on our committee, many of which directly promote better safety practices on the road. For example, one bill (HB 5965) would incorporate driver’s education lessons on the dangers of operating a vehicle after the consumption of cannabis. Another bill (HB 5917) would eliminate the open container law, mandate helmets for motorcyclists, encourage seat belt safety education in schools and develop training for middle and high school students on the goals of the Vision Zero Council to eliminate potential traffic accidents and deaths through education.

What are the positives of these bills? Safety is their goal. The negatives? The government shouldn’t overregulate its people. Some lawmakers on the other side of the aisle have tried to hold drivers hostage and threaten their right to privacy as organ donors if they refuse to wear a helmet. Although I am a supporter of driving safely, these comments were childish and insensitive.

Aside from investing in educational resources, a solution is not possible without enforcement. Connecticut has seen a significant decline in State Police recruitment numbers, leaving many of our roads and communities unsupervised and our reduced police force overwhelmed. That’s why I voted in support of the State Police contract agreement this year, which looks to incentivize recruitment, grow the force and have more officers to maintain the rule of law on our roads.

As distractions, accidents, drug usage and deaths on the road increase annually – sadly impacting a member of our own General Assembly – now is the time to reconsider how we promote safe driving in Connecticut. Investment in smart educational strategies and fostering trust and support for our law enforcement on our roads will lead to the meaningful solutions we need to counteract the bad-driving epidemic in our state.

I urge you to share your voice at any upcoming public hearings on the Transportation Committee. Please visit the Connecticut General Assembly website to access the calendar or follow my Facebook page to regularly receive updates on public hearing dates, agendas and information on submitting testimony.

I will update you on the future of these and any other proposed bills as we move forward with the legislative process. As always, please contact me should you have any questions about this issue or concerns on any other topics relating to state government at Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov or at 800-842-1423.

Safety And Responsibility



STATE REP. (R-117)
CHARLES FERRARO

Each session, improving public safety in our communities is top of mind for the state legislature. Connecticut has seen troubling increases in violent crimes, juvenile offenders and a growing culture of recidivism that traps troubled youths in a perpetual cycle of criminal activity.

Earlier this month, I joined my state Republican colleagues to unveil a set of legislative proposals aimed at making some of these necessary improvements that will enhance public safety and address the critical downfalls in our statutes that allow these issues to continue.

Our proposals feature a comprehensive approach to public safety: reducing crime by enhancing services for at-risk youth, supporting law enforcement, increasing protections for victims of domestic violence and making necessary reforms to the bail bond system.

The pandemic worsened an already growing issue in our state – teenaged juvenile offenders, especially committing vehicle thefts. Unfortunately, there are often innocent bystanders who are directly impacted by these crimes. Our current laws coddle these offenders and disregard victims, while also encouraging “clean slates” for criminal records.

House and Senate Republicans are proposing to expand the circumstances under which a juvenile offender is automatically transferred to the regular criminal docket, including commission of a serious juvenile offense. Additionally, we are proposing to reestablish the Family With Service Needs Program to provide diversion services for children who are beyond control, runaways or truant from school.

To address a growing trend of bail bond abuse in Connecticut, our proposals would streamline the licensing system for bail bondsmen as well as imposing fiduciary standards on clients’ funds similar to the system used by attorneys. While many bail bondsmen in Connecticut are helpful allies, some bad actors in the field must be held accountable to maintain integrity in the judicial system.

Decisions from the majority in the legislature in recent years have severely damaged morale among the ranks of our state troopers and local police departments, leading them to engage in less proactive enforcement. We are looking to allow officers to reengage with proactive policing, such as requesting a driver’s consent to search their motor vehicle in order to get guns and drugs off the street, pursuing offenders in cases of stolen vehicles or property, and litigating governmental immunity in a way that is fair to both sides.

Incidents of domestic violence in which victims are grossly abused by members of their families or loved ones crowd the headlines in Connecticut. We propose increasing the penalty on murders committed during an act of domestic violence to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Further, we propose enhancing protections for the surviving victims, including an expansion of GPS monitoring of the most dangerous domestic violence offenders.

Please continue to reach out to me at Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov with your questions and concerns regarding state issues.

Retraining For CT’s Unfilled Jobs



STATE SEN. (D-14)
JAMES MARONEY

According to the state Department of Labor, Connecticut had nearly 75,000 job openings in January. The largest two industries: health care and manufacturing together accounted for over 26,000 job openings. Many of the positions in these two sectors require more than a high school diploma, but less than a college degree.

Jobs with similar educational requirements are often referred to as middle skills jobs. In fact, some estimates show that nearly half of all jobs in the country are what we refer to as middle skill jobs. Upskilling and reskilling our residents who want to set themselves on a pathway to well-paying jobs is critical for the success of both individuals and businesses in Connecticut.

This legislative session I proposed Senate Bill 869 as a response to two critical issues in workforce development. First, the workforce needs of companies often change more quickly than the government’s ability to respond. Second, the way we currently do workforce development puts all the risk on the employees. Employees invest their time and money in a training program and hope that it will pay off with a job. It is incumbent upon the state to modernize and build a flexible workforce development pipeline as well as to take the burdens off employees to pay for their training.

Senate Bill 869 will address these issues. It creates a Pay It Forward Success Program where the state partners with training programs in various sectors that are identified as in-demand careers by the Office of Workforce Strategy. The fund would pay for the tuition, and then the employees would pay it back as a percentage of their income when they obtain a job earning a certain minimum salary.

Further, to achieve the number of skilled employees we need in the state, high school graduates alone are not enough. We will need to retrain those unemployed or underemployed workers. However, because many of these individuals are adults who have financial responsibilities, it is important that we provide additional “wrap-around” services. These individuals may have rent payments, transportation issues and perhaps child care payments. They often cannot take the time off even for a three-month training program that will lead to a higher paying job, because they have obligations and payments to make.

The wrap-around services often include stipends, travel assistance, child care assistance and social workers, all funded by corporate and philanthropic donations. The tuition repayments go back into the fund and can be recycled and lent to future students.

If five years ago you had told me that the problem in Connecticut would be too many job openings and not enough workers, I wouldn’t have believed you. However, here we are with nearly 75,000 unfilled jobs in Connecticut. One of the largest issues is a skills mismatch. We lack the residents with the skills necessary to fill those positions. We need to find creative ways to retrain and upskill our citizens, for the good of the economy and to provide pathways to high paying jobs for our citizens.

Getting To Know You

Going From A Movie To A Portrait

My daughter, who is my middle child, is about to graduate from college. I'm having trouble believing it. These four years went even faster than her four years of high school. She recently decided to go for a doctoral degree in mechanical engineering. She applied to 10 universities around the country to continue her studies with an eye towards getting a PhD. As of this writing, she's received offers from eight of the 10 schools she applied to and is waiting for an answer from the final two.

There has been a lot of traveling to visit these schools. There are the various labs to tour, various other doctoral students who are also working in her field to meet and interview. Eventually, there will be various meetings with the professors who will provide the guidance and funding for her research. This last week included trips to visit Georgia Tech, the University of Virginia and North Carolina State.

Yes, I am very proud of my daughter, but that was the case before she decided she wanted to pursue an advanced degree. Now I am very impressed with my daughter.

My daughter has grown into a woman and is coming into her own life. Soon she will

be living on her own and, mostly, paying her own way with the research grants she will receive. One day in the not-too-distant future, if God is willing and the creek don't rise, she will graduate with her doctorate and she will be my doctor daughter. Then she will launch into a career and continue to grow as the independent person her mother and I raised her to be. I'm very happy when I think these thoughts, but it is also a touch sad.

There are a lot of strange things to get used to as an empty-nest parent. While my children are always in my thoughts, one of the toughest parts has been that I now only see still photographs of their lives. It is through those photographs that I realize just how much they've grown and changed in the years since they all left home for school. I got a good dose of that feeling when I started going through this process with my daughter.

When my daughter lived at home during her childhood, I got to see her grow and change every day. Some of that growth and change happened so slowly that I didn't notice it until someone else who didn't see her



DAVID
CROW

every day pointed out how tall she was getting or how her face was changing as she grew up. Some changes were more immediately noticeable, such as when I learned she stopped watching Blues Clues and started watching Hannah Montana. And some changes were shockingly fast, such as the time my little girl went up to her room and then came back down the stairs a young lady, dressed to go to her senior prom. Yet all those changes happened right there in front of me. It played out like a movie in real time.

Now, as I watch her speak about her chosen field of study in technical jargon I cannot even begin to comprehend, I realize that somewhere between the day I dropped her off at college and this week my daughter did a lot of growing and changing. And I wasn't there to see it happen. I only got to see the end result.

It's like someone shot a beautiful portrait of a young woman, only now instead of watching the photographer choose a lens and meter the light, I had to go to the museum, buy a ticket and view the final portrait like everyone

else. I can admire it. Maybe I played small part in the preparation of it. But now the photographer works on her own, out of my sight, and all I see is the end product.

So yeah, I get a little sad when I realize that my daughter will live the majority of the rest of her life out of my sight. She will continue to grow and change and make her own beautiful picture of a life. From time to time, I'll buy a ticket and go view the finished product, and it will amaze me and fill me with awe and wonder, just like she did when I watched her take her first breath. I will continue to be proud of and impressed with her as she sets her own course and achieves her goals. I want that for her.

Yet a small part of me will always miss the days when I got to watch the movie, instead of waiting for the next portrait.

David Crow lives in Orange with his wife and three children. He practices law and he asks everyone to call him "Dave." Only his mother and his wife call him "David," and only when they're mad at him. You can contact Dave at Sit.a.Spell.and.Visit@gmail.com. He'll always find a half hour for a good chat.

Wine Talk

Colorado An Up-And-Coming Wine Location

Over the past several years the wine industry in Connecticut has grown by leaps and bounds. We now have 34 wineries in the state, and the quality of the wines is constantly improving.

This is true of our surrounding states also. The wine industry in New York and Long Island, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Virginia, Maine and other surrounding areas has grown precipitously. The quality of wines is improving constantly.

One of the big up-and-coming wine areas, however, is Colorado.

Colorado has great difficulty with climate but has had a long heritage of wine-making. Unfortunately, this heritage was wiped out by prohibition. Colorado was slow to recover.

In 1968, a dentist named Gerald Ivancie decided that wine should be made again in Colorado. He planted some vineyards and opened Ivancie Cellars. He looked for a talented winemaker and found Warren Winiarski. He quickly convinced Ivancie

to plant the first classic vines in the state. He made the first couple of vintages of Ivancie's wines. He went on to purchase a prune orchard in California that he turned into Stag's Leap Wine Cellars.

Things did not explode for wines in Colorado. By 1990 there were only five wineries making commercial wines in the state. Winiarski's work set the Colorado wine industry on a path to produce high-quality wines. He only stayed for a couple of years before he went off to buy a prune farm in California. He turned that farm into Stags Leap Winery, where some of the finest wines in the world are produced.

Today there are 150 commercial wineries making wine in Colorado. They are farming close to 800 acres of vineyards. There are two established American viticultural areas. They are Grand Valley and



RAYMOND
SPAZIANI

West Elks. There are high desert micro-climates which provide diverse daytime and nighttime temperatures that make for excellent grape growing. There are great challenges associated with Colorado grape growing, however, such as winter freezes and early and late frosts.

Colorado Cabernet Franc is a big fruity wine. For years it was in the top wines in the Governor's Cup wine competition, which is held every September.

Syrah has taken over as the state's top wine due to its hardiness. Cab Franc can be difficult to grow if the climate does not cooperate. Merlot has a spicy aftertaste that makes it unique. Some say it is because of the high altitude. Bordeaux blends are popular as well as Petit Verdot. The climate and growing areas make it a great place to grow Gewürztraminer and Rieslings. There is an Italian red called Teroldego that is popular

as well.

The Governor's Cup wine competition has been a big help in improving the quality of the wines produced in Colorado. It gives the winemakers feedback on their wines and thus helps them work toward improvement.

If you get an opportunity, try some of these great wines from Colorado. It is the next big up-and-coming wine location.

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.

Homelessness

Panhandlers Are Human

The most influential study I have read over the years dates back to 2016. Psychologists involved in the study sought to understand the perception of disenfranchised groups by general society. The findings were grim; neuroscientist Lasana Harris and social psychologist Susan Fiske state that the most extreme outgroups, the low-low (such as people experiencing homelessness or people who panhandle) receive unabashed disliking and disrespect.

Groups stereotyped as neither warm nor competent elicit the worst kind of prejudice – disgust and contempt – based on perceived moral violations and subsequent negative outcomes that these groups allegedly caused themselves. Extreme discrimination reveals the worst kind of prejudice: excluding outgroups from full humanity. Social psychological theory underscores the idea of perceiving some outgroups as less than people.

This rattles me. We in the vast majority dehumanize panhandlers, associating them more closely with inanimate objects like stop signs and fire hydrants than with someone like ourselves or even a complete stranger. With those who panhandle making up less than 1 percent

of our total population, the sobering conclusions of this study say more about who we are as a society and less about the people panhandling, deserving basic dignity and respect as such.

Who are people who panhandle? Statistically, more than 50 percent are people experiencing homelessness, and an additional 25 percent are folks who live in a room for rent or apartment but rely on panhandling for income necessary to meet other basic needs. All panhandlers referred to the act as their last resort, reporting that traditional education and employment opportunities were difficult to maintain over time. We have come to understand that many people who panhandle have complex trauma histories, and a large percentage of individuals have cognitive deficits such as traumatic brain injuries.

Nearly 75 percent of individuals primarily spend the money received from panhandling on food. Allergies, dietary restrictions, capacity to prepare ingredients and meal preferences create high barriers in accessing soup kitchens, mobile food pantries and accepting food do-



JENNIFER
PARADIS

nations from community members who feel food is a more acceptable form of donation than money.

The next largest expense was shelter, with many individuals using donations to underwrite household expenses. Lastly, about 10 percent used donations to aid in addictions. Just like homeless shelter beds, there are not enough treatment resources for those struggling with substance use. The cycle of seeking treatment meets no long-term solutions after a 10-day detox bed, and so immediate relief supersedes the hope of freedom from addiction.

Deeply affordable housing, accessible and culturally diverse food, and appropriate support for substance use programming are solutions to addressing panhandling that we can and should work toward together.

The most frequent question I receive during lectures and workshops about our homeless response system is specific to panhandling. Phrased in a variety of ways, people hope for a solution to what one should do when confronted with the opportunity to engage with someone who is panhandling. My answer nev-

er waivers: smile and say hello. Although the backgrounds of those who are panhandling in our community vary, there is one finding of the aforementioned study that stands above the rest: 100 percent of panhandlers report loneliness and social disconnection.

We may not have the capacity as a community to alleviate the systemic issues that result in panhandling overnight, but we do have the capacity to lead that change with kindness now.

The person who is begging for their food, shelter or in a desperate attempt to manage their addictions in the short term has the same human value as all of us. In many ways, they are the largest victims of our societal failures, as their ability to care for themselves comes with public harassment and shame. Rather than disliking, disrespecting and dismissing people who panhandle, pivot frustrations to the broken systems that allowed these conditions in the first place and support solutions that alleviate suffering for all.

Jennifer Paradis is the executive director of the Beth-El Center in Milford.

Just Floored

How Do You Make Your Bathroom Look Larger?

Over the years I have been asked by numerous clients how to make their bathroom look larger. There are many ways to accomplish this task.

Larger format tiles have always opened a space when using light colors. Tiling the area from floor to ceiling is a great trick to make the bathroom look larger. An entire wall elongates the space and draws your eye upward. I am a fan of wet walls (which is tiling the space above the sink). This creates a distraction to how small the space is, and the creativity of the tile makes for a pleasing and attractive look.

Mirrors are key in smaller bathrooms; adding a larger mirror will dramatically open the space. The reflection of light makes the room bright and adds dimension to give an illusion of a deeper space. I

love decorative mirrors with that little extra detail in the frame or the dramatic bold colors of black and gold.

Lighting is also key in the space to make it feel open and airy. Bright white lights will cause a reflection on all the tile and highlight the details on a wet wall. They will reflect off the mirrors for a grander and spacious feel.

Vanities also play key role in smaller bathrooms. Select a vanity with premium functionality, meaning many drawers so nothing needs to be put on the countertop. Always select light-toned counters such as quartzes in a bright white or bright grey tone. If you have the space for a double vanity,



ANNAMARIE AMORE

find pieces that have an open bottom for storage and are visually appealing to the space.

If you have a shower curtain, remove it and get seamless glass doors. This is a benefit in many ways. It can show off the amazing tile you have put in the shower with the decorative accents from the niche to the floor. Depending on where the shower is positioned, it can also reflect off the mirror. The lighting will also illuminate the tile and instantly make the bathroom look and feel more spacious.

Select a tile that is simple in texture and patterns. Choose a monochromatic color palette for a

seamless space and polished look. Stick with one color palette: white, grey, beige, soft blues. Whatever you select, keep it the same throughout the entire bathroom.

Keep clutter off the countertop and out of the bathroom. Add a few practical accessories like small jars and trays to bring a personal touch. Remove all towel racks and shelves of any kind and stick with baskets for hand towels that can go on the floor. These few tricks will truly change the feel of your smaller bathroom.

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

The Garden Spot

Why Biodiversity Matters

According to the American Museum of Natural History, biodiversity means “the variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and can encompass the evolutionary, ecological and cultural processes that sustain life.”

Yes, that’s a mouthful, but for our purposes we’ll focus on the biodiversity of the ecosystem. If you remember learning in grade school that “everything is connected,” then you know the reason that biodiversity is important. All species, including humans, rely on other species to survive. Unfortunately, we don’t know how the loss of one species will impact the ecosystem in general.

Most of the scientific reports studying extinction say that species are currently disappearing hundreds of times faster than would be expected based on historical data. Since

over half the world’s GDP is dependent on nature, this is a true crisis complicated by climate change and habitat destruction.

As home gardeners, the most important things that we can do to encourage biodiversity are to stop destroying habitats and to plant natives. Everything is connected, and this means that certain insects and mammals are dependent on specific plants for survival. When natural habitats are destroyed and growth patterns change, there can be a mismatch between when a certain plant is in bloom and when the specific species would feed upon it.

Planting natives can slow down the rate of species extinction. Consider the impact of cut-



PAT DRAY

ting down a single tree or planting one. In his book, Bringing Nature Home, Doug Tallamy compares the biodiversity of different woody plants. His research showed that our native white oak tree (*Quercus alba*) supports over 534 species of insects, compared to only 125 for a beech or willow. Add to that the nutritional value of the nuts from the oak to other mammals and it’s clear why we should plant natives.

Tallamy also points out that the common *Clematis vitalba* (we all love it near our mailboxes, don’t we) has been in North America for approximately 100 years. While it supports over 100 insect species in its native European and Asian habitats, it only does so for one insect species in North America.

If you are planning on tree removal and replacement, plan for natives. Do some research on which native plants or trees would be appropriate to the area you are working with so that you have the right plant in the right place.

Please don’t cut down a tree so that you can grow turf. I’ve often been asked by neighbors which grass will grow in shade, and I always say “none.” Plant some understory natives, such as foamflower or serviceberry and you’ll have a wonderful low-maintenance, diversity-supporting landscape.

If you are interested in learning about biodiversity in greater detail, one resource is the UN Environmental Programme publication “Facts about the Nature Crisis” at unep.org.

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



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The Rotary Club of Orange

Rotary Challenges Students With Four-Way Test Contest

Rotary International has defined seven areas of service that we as clubs focus on when determining our projects and funding activities. Rotary International's seven areas of focus are promoting peace; fighting disease; providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene; saving mothers and children; supporting education; growing local economies; and protecting the environment.

In any given year, the Rotary Club of Orange endeavors to address one or more of these important needs. This column will focus on supporting education.

While working on creating a more robust relationship with our regional high school, one project that is designed to move that forward is the annual Four-Way Test Essay Contest that is organized for our club by Richard Dumbrill, chairman of our Youth Services Committee. The contest is a district-wide event that is open to the 58 Rotary clubs that comprise

Rotary District 7980. Dumbrill has very ably acted in this role for several years, working with Amity High School teachers and students to promote the contest and organize the judging and finalist presentations.

So what is the Four-Way Test? The Four-Way Test is a nonpartisan and nonsectarian ethical guide for Rotarians to use for their personal and professional relationships. Rotarians recite it at club meetings.

It is a test to apply to the things we think, say or do.

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?



ROGER TAUSIG

These principles have been developed over the years to provide Rotarians with a strong, common purpose and direction. They serve as a foundation for our relationships with each other and the actions we take in the world.

Using the Four-Way Test as a foundation, we challenge high school students to internalize its tenets and then write an essay on a topic that exemplifies their understanding of its meaning. Students draw on personal life experiences as well as societal issues

to tie in the Four-Way Test and formulate their thoughts into essays.

We typically receive hundreds of entries and then select local winners who present their essays in their towns. We then narrow that down to a small number of finalists who present their essays at our Rotary district conference in the

spring. All live presentations must be given without notes, further challenging the students not only to produce a meaningful essay but also testing their poise and public speaking skills.

I have attended a number of these presentations both locally and at district conferences, and have been thoroughly impressed with the quality of the material that these extraordinary young people have developed and the thoughtfulness and maturity they have demonstrated, often tackling serious social issues of the day. Hearing these young people present their essays has renewed my faith in this generation and given me hope that there are young people who will grow to adulthood and become the leaders that every generation needs to thrive and advance.

It is just another reason that I am proud to be a Rotarian.

Your Health

Improving Nutrition In Our School Systems

The US Department of Agriculture is the federal executive department responsible for providing leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition and related issues based on public policy. They have more than 4,500 locations across the country and abroad.

According to the USDA website, on May 15, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation to establish the department and two and a half years later in his final message to Congress, Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department."

Recently, I came across news that the USDA is proposing more stringent nutrition standards for school meals. This step is

focused on reviving efforts to improve the health of millions of public-school students and to curb the rising epidemic of childhood obesity and other diet-related diseases.

According to news outlets, these new rules will be rolled out gradually over the next few years, and will be aimed at reducing sugars, fat and salt in school menus. It will limit added sugars in flavored milks, cereals and yogurts. Sodium (or salt) reduction will also occur over the years to give adequate time to implement the changes.

While these proposed changes will take



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

time, we all should take an active role in improving our dietary habits. Maintaining a healthy weight and eating a balanced diet should be a priority in every household.

One simple step is to cut all the added sugars. Before purchasing any food products/items, review the nutrition label. Ensure that children are getting adequate sleep time and

keep their screen time to a minimum. According to the Centers for Disease Control, children ages 3 through 5 should be active throughout the day. Children and adolescents

ages 6 through 17 should be physically active at least 60 minutes each day. Both aerobic activities as well as muscle strengthening activities are important.

Preventive steps, if taken now, will reap future benefits.

The USDA is welcoming feedback on its proposed standards, which it will use to inform the final standards. You can submit your comments until Apr. 10 at [regulations.gov/document/FNS-2022-0043-0001](https://www.regulations.gov/document/FNS-2022-0043-0001).

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



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Travel Matters

Restyled Luxury – Oceania Riviera Ship Tour

My husband and I just returned from a ship tour of the refurbished Oceania Riviera – a ship we had last sailed on in 2016. When we walked onboard into the center atrium, I thought of two words: restyled luxury. The Riviera was one of the cruise line’s first new builds in 2012, after the Marina in 2011, and Oceania is calling it a “stem-to-stern re-inspiration” of both Riviera and Marina.

The ships now have a reduced capacity for 1,210 guests after the refurbishments (November 2022 for the Riviera) due to larger staterooms and public areas. Tuscan marble, engaging works of art and designer furnishings adorn the re-inspired spaces – from the chandeliers in the grand dining room to the Lalique crystal-laced grand staircase in the atrium.

There are so many wonderful works of art onboard that a self-guided audio tour is

available to find out more about the art curation. Frank Del Rio, owner of Norwegian, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas, is a huge collector of Cuban art, which represents almost 80 percent of the art on the ship.

We were told that Oceania refurbishes every two years to maintain the luxury experience of the cruise line, which bills itself as the “small ship luxury” cruise line. They proudly boast “the finest cuisine at sea” with all food prepared “a la minute.” Jacques Pepin, a Madison, Connecticut resident, is the executive culinary director, and we enjoyed a gala luncheon that was well beyond the norm. There are four specialty restaurants and two main dining rooms. A new pizzeria and trat-



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

toria are onboard, in addition to food and wine pairings at La Reserve by Wine Spectator and private dining at the intimate Privée.

So what has changed the most? The color palette of the ship’s design and décor is lighter and brighter. The staterooms and suites have all been remodeled with new furnishings, restyled bathrooms, new lighting and new details, such as an abundance of outlets and USB ports. The bath-

rooms are more luxurious and larger, with oversized showers. The veranda staterooms and concierge veranda staterooms are the largest standard staterooms at sea at 291 square feet.

talk by a historian or former ambassador. Learn to prepare a variety of dishes at the Culinary Center, a state-of-the-art cooking school which offers culinary classes in featured cuisines. You can embrace your inner artist at Artist Loft, where talented artists in residence offer inspiring workshops. The Aquamar spa offers a full spa experience along with many indulgent treatments onboard and free fitness classes.

When the ship tour ended, I asked myself “How can I live here? Or, at least, can I stay onboard for the next sailing?” Guess I will have to wait a bit for that luxury.

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

Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Condominium Restrictions To Protect The Homeowners

Each condominium association has its own documents – the rules and regulations that pertain to each owner in the complex. A homeowner can basically consider his ownership inside the walls of the condominium. For instance, the homeowner’s insurance included in the condo fee covers if anyone gets injured in the common hallway, driveway, parking lot and laundry area, if there is one.

When you purchase a unit in a development, it is the law that you have a right to review these condo docs and assess if they are comfortable for you. You will sign off on the receipt of this booklet of rules and regulations. It is up to you and your representatives (realtor and attorney) to assist you as you read through and interpret the rules. Your cost to own the property each month includes the principle, interest, taxes and condo fee. The condo fee includes, on av-

erage, the maintenance, snow, garbage removal, lawn and exterior insurance. Usually each owner contracts with an additional insurance policy to cover their belongings and safety inside the unit.

The association rules reflect subjects such as preventing you from renting your unit and eliminating the unit as investment property. Perhaps there are no motorcycles allowed, or no pets. Animals can have limitations on size and number. Age restricted units do not allow buyers to purchase if they do not meet the age requirement, and may have a rule on long-term guests.

Protecting the buyers begins when you write an offer. The lender is always con-



BARBARA LEHRER

cerned about the percentage of renters to owner-occupied units. In this manner they are making sure that the development is stable. They will present a questionnaire to the association asking about their budget and perhaps any multi use affiliations, such as commercially rented or sold units.

Rules change over time for many reasons. The condo board, an appointed group, identifies any issues that need repair, for instance. Perhaps flood insurance add-ons or changes could be on the table. This group meets in a timely manner to review estimates and work in the best interest of the complex. Many new owners attend meetings and stay abreast of the agenda following each meeting. In other words, you

have a stake in your home and you can share your concerns.

For example, a pool has many rules, and pets are commonly on the agenda. If you are in a huge subdivision, then concerns about dog walking and safety or maintenance issues at the pool are ongoing. Most places post their rules. Loud neighbors, common hall upkeep and parking issues can all be complained about once in a while, too.

Of course, your individual condominium documents should be updated and delivered to you whenever anything changes.

Always read the docs and enjoy the living quarters where families share respect and friendships in an enjoyable community.

If you need more information on these issues, email Barbara.Lehrer@cbmoves.com.

Energize CT Accepting Submissions For Student Contest

Energize Connecticut sponsors Eversource and AVANGRID, Inc. subsidiaries United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas, have announced that the 18th annual eesmarks Student Contest is now accepting student submissions until March 31.

Updates to grade-specific prompts have been made this year to foster students’ creativity and allow for new technologies and social media platforms to be used in responses. The contest is open to Connecticut students in grades K-12 and topics are focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability solutions.

“Computers, video, social media and even, gaming technology have changed how students interact with and learn about important environmental issues like energy conservation,

renewable energy and energy efficiency,” said Erik Robie, director of customer programs and products at AVANGRID, which is based in Orange. “Our students are our future. We hope that with these changes more students are engaged in the eesmarks Student Contest and inspire others to make meaningful change in our community.”

“For almost two decades, the eesmarks Student Contest has engaged students throughout Connecticut and has asked them to use their imagination and knowledge to come up with solutions to address real-world energy matters,” said Eversource Vice President of Energy Efficiency and Electric Mobility Tilak Subrahmanian. “Our new prompts are designed to foster creativity and empower students to leverage new technologies and

tools that are readily available to them today. We are excited to see how students implement these platforms to address critical energy issues and the importance of energy efficiency in their responses this year.”

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade are assigned grade-specific topics and asked to submit their entries in the form of a poster (grades K-2), narrative (grade 3), letter to the principal (grade 4), children’s picture book (grade 5), persuasive TikTok (grade 6), anime or comic strip (grade 7) or a public service announcement for social media (grade 8).

Students in grades 9 to 11 are asked to propose a community-based project to address an energy-related issue. Students may work in groups of up to three members. The winning

team’s school will receive funding to help make their proposed project a reality and must complete it by March 31, 2024.

Students competing in the grade 12 category will produce a persuasive infographic that advocates for energy conservation and alternate energy sources. Infographics are eye-catching, concise overviews (typically one page) that contain images, data visualizations (charts or graphs) and minimal text. Entries will be evaluated based on scientific accuracy and concise and convincing imagery.

Finalists in all categories and grade levels will be honored at a special awards ceremony to be held in May 2023. Winners will receive a certificate and an Amazon gift card.

For more information about the contest, visit eesmarks.com/contest.

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Here's To Your Health

Building Muscle Over 50

I was recently told that at my age I should be very careful about shoveling my walkways.

While I appreciated the concern this family member had for me, I couldn't help but quietly chuckle. While I did write my last column about heart health, my intent was to inspire you to live a healthy lifestyle as a means to prevent heart disease, not scare you about risk factors for your age.

At 56 years old, I have never felt better. I am still running, weight training, taking yoga, teaching Pilates and living a good, healthy life. I am especially committed to weight training and keeping lean muscle mass on my body. Sarcopenia and related osteoporosis, or loss of bone, are part of the aging process. However, just as I mentioned in my last column, there are ways to help you prevent this from happening.

Decreases in muscle mass begin at age 40 in most people, and a steady decline follows different patterns in women than in men. Women generally have a greater chance of developing these conditions and osteoporosis,

diabetes and obesity greatly contribute to sarcopenia.

However, it is still possible to build muscle after age 50 and maintain it despite the odds. Weight training, whether it be with weights or resistance bands, three times a week partnered with high intensity interval training is an excellent way to build muscle mass, according to a 2017 article that appeared in the journal Cell Metabolism. There is also benefit to muscle mass by playing recreational sports. Not only does this encourage weight loss; it also promotes better sleep and a sense of well-being.

Building muscle mass will not happen without adequate and proper nutrition. You are a spirit that has a soul that lives in a body, right? As we age, we definitely need to add more protein to our meals. It's imperative to building muscle regardless at any age. Your body needs protein because it takes amino



MICHELE TENNEY

acids found in the protein, breaks them down and restructures them so that they literally turn into muscle tissue.

I'm not telling you to eat only protein or go over the top and eat excessive amounts. Depending on your needs, you can find a calculator at calculator.net/protein-calculator.html.

For those battling health issues, I would also encourage you to speak with your doctor about what things you can do to improve your health with exercise and food. Physical therapy is a wonderful way to get back to recovery and become stronger. Once you get stronger, be committed to staying strong and make the necessary changes to living your best life. Just as being intentional about building and/or maintaining your muscle mass gets to be more of a challenge as we age, so does weight loss. If you've got 30 pounds to lose at 50, that's going to be a commitment in and of itself. But again, it can be done.

The most important factors in all of this are lifestyle and attitude. Eating healthier more than you don't, reducing stress, getting the proper amount of sleep, proper hydration and how you feel about having a purpose are all relevant. We all have a purpose. My 99-year-old client turned 100 years old in January. She is the most upbeat person I know and does not view herself as "old." I have to remind her that she's not 10. She does exercises that some people half her age struggle with. She still creates artwork and cards, loves to read and spend time playing word puzzles.

Start a health plan today. It's never too late. You are worth living your best life. 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.

Upcoming Activities At The Orange Senior Center

Living Treasure Awards

Three individuals will be honored at the Living Treasure Award ceremony on May 18, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at High Plains Community Center in Orange. Purchase tickets at the Community Services office.

Coin Talk

Join the Orange Senior Center on Monday, March 27 at 1 p.m. when Blair Soucy returns to appraise coins and talk about coins. Call the office to register at 203-891-4784.

Hop the Bus

Hop on the bus to the New Haven

Symphony Orchestra performances at Lyman Center at Southern Connecticut State University. The bus is free, you just must buy your tickets to the show. The next trip is March 10 to Miller Conducts Schumann & Beethoven. The bus departs at 6:45 p.m. Call the office to register at 203-891-4788.

Movie of the Month

Join the Senior Center on March 10 at 1 p.m. for Waking Ned Devine. When a lottery winner dies of shock, his fellow townsfolk attempt to claim the money. Popcorn and soda will be served. Call to reserve a seat.

Join the center again on March 17 at 1 p.m. for The Banshees of Inisherin. Two lifelong friends find themselves at an impasse when one abruptly ends their relationship, with alarming consequences for both. Popcorn and soda will be served. Call to reserve a seat.

Book Club

The book club normally meets the last Friday of the month at 2 p.m. The next meeting will be in the senior lounge on March 31. March's book is Magic Mountain by Thomas Mann.

Zentangle

Join the Senior Center on the March 31 for the new free class: Zentangle. Zentangle is a relaxing and meditative art form that helps with focus and concentration. This class will be led by certified Zentangle teacher Rosemarie Main. There is a limit of 15 people. Call the Senior Center at 203-891-4788 to reserve a seat.

Hot Lunch Program

Lunch is offered Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to noon. No meals are offered on Saturday or Sunday. A \$3 donation is accepted for people 60 and over. Call Ellen at 203-891-4765 to register.

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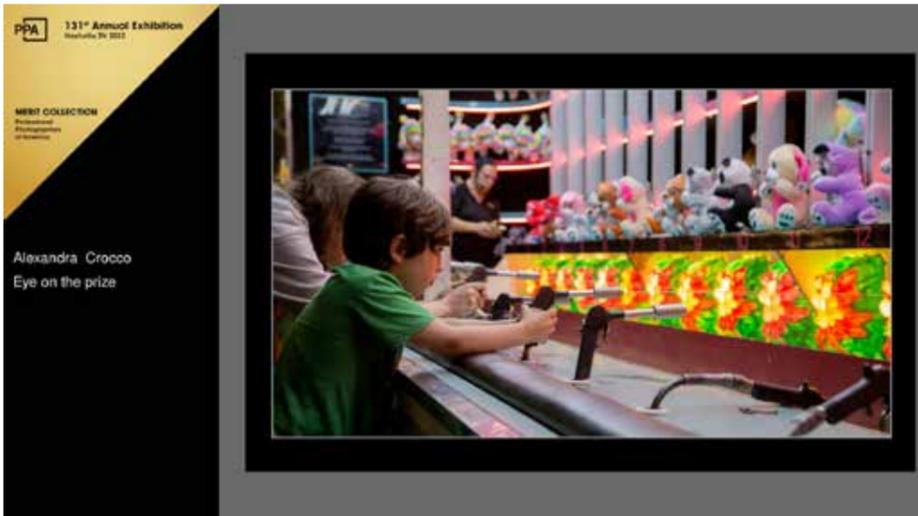
Alexandra Crocco, owner of Alexandra Joy Photography and a photographer for the Milford-Orange Times, was recently accepted into the (Merit/Imaging Excellence) Collection of Professional Photographers of America's 2022 International Photographic Competition.

Crocco's work was on display from Jan. 22-24 at Imaging USA in Nashville, Tennessee. Imaging USA is one of the largest annual conventions and expos for professional photographers.

A panel of 36 jurors from across the US selected the top photographs from over 5,000 total submitted entries at PPA headquarters in Atlanta. Judged against a standard of

excellence, 2,212 images were selected for the Merit Collection and 1,013 images (roughly 20 percent) were selected for the Imaging Excellence Collection – the best of the best. The Imaging Excellence Collection images will all be published in a book by the same name published by Marathon Press.

Crocco's photo, "Cancer was tough, she was tougher..." was in the International Photographic Exhibition alongside other top photographic works from the competition and traveling and special invitational displays. These images constitute one of the world's largest annual exhibits of professional photography gathered simultaneously in one place.



Mauriello Hired As OVNA Director



Mauriello

Marissa Mut Mauriello was hired in fall 2022 to be the administrator/director of the Orange Visiting Nurse Association in Orange. She comes to the agency with 24 years of experience in home health care.

"The OVNA has been serving Orange for

nearly 90 years, and as someone who grew up in Orange, I am honored to be a part of its history," Mauriello said.

The OVNA is a municipal home health care agency and part time public health department. It provides nursing, physical, occupational, speech therapy, HHA and social work services to the towns of Orange, Milford, Woodbridge, West Haven and Derby.

Mauriello grew up in Orange on North Greenbrier Drive and attended Amity High School along with her five siblings.

She earned her bachelor's degree in nursing from Salve Regina University and went on to establish her own home care agency, Total Care Homecare Nursing Service, giving her experience in caring for patients in their homes. Mauriello is also the former vice president of Rehab Solutions.

She has two young daughters, Angelina and Isabella, and resides in North Haven. Her family still lives in town.

Little Library At Walnut Beach Reopens

The Friends of the Milford Library has announced the reopening of the Little Library at Walnut Beach outside Firehouse Art Gallery, located 81 Naugatuck Ave. The new Little Library is stocked with books and ready to once again serve the community. It is registered with Little Free Library Ltd. and can be found on their worldwide maps.

The bright blue library box, handcrafted in America by Amish artisans, was made with plastic lumber from recycled milk jugs. The composite material is made to better withstand the weather conditions near the shoreline.

Little libraries follow the simple concept of "take a book, leave a book." Each of FOML's little libraries has volunteer stewards who are responsible for overseeing and checking on the stock of books. When leaving a book, keep in mind that space is limited and no books are to be left outside the Little Library box.

The previous Little Library at Walnut Beach was taken down in October 2022 due

to age and safety concerns.

There is another Little Library at the Milford YMCA near the soccer fields which is open year-round and stocked with books for both adults and children to borrow or swap. A third Little Library at Gulf Beach is seasonal and will reopen in the spring.



The Little Library at Walnut Beach. Photo courtesy of the Friends of the Milford Library.

Always Best Care Receives Awards

Always Best Care of Milford has received both the 2023 Best of Home Care – Provider of Choice and Employer of Choice Awards from Home Care Pulse. These awards are granted only to the top-ranking home care providers, based on client and employee satisfaction scores gathered by HCP. Always Best Care is now ranked among a small handful of home care providers across

the country who have proven their ability to provide an exceptional work experience to employees and the highest quality care to clients.

"We want to congratulate Susan Oderwald and her team at Always Best Care in Milford on receiving both the Best of Home Care – Provider of Choice Award and the Best of Home Care – Employer

of Choice Award," said Todd Austin, President of HCP. "Since these awards are based on real, unfiltered feedback from clients and caregivers, Always Best Care has proven their dedication to providing a great work environment and solid training to employees, while maintaining their focus on client and caregiver satisfaction. We are pleased to recognize their dedication to

quality, professionalism, and expertise in home care."

Best of Home Care providers have contracted with HCP to gather feedback from their clients and caregivers via live phone interviews each month. Because HCP is an independent company, it can collect honest and unbiased feedback.

"These last few years have seen tremendous change for our industry and it is so gratifying, after all we have done to adjust to demanding times, to be recognized by our employees and clients this way," says Susan Oderwald, owner of Always Best Care in Milford.

"At HCP, our mission is to help home care businesses create an experience that goes beyond client and caregiver expectations," said Austin. "We're thrilled to recognize Always Best Care of Milford, CT as a Best of Home Care award-winning provider and celebrate their accomplishments in building a team of happy, qualified caregivers who provide outstanding care for their clients."

Includes Traditional St. Patty's Day Fare and 2 Drink Tickets

St. Patrick's Day

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Business After Hours

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Orange

ORANGE CHAMBER of COMMERCE

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Regional Chamber of Commerce
WHERE BUSINESS CONNECTS

Orange Garden Club Members Win Awards At CT Flower And Garden Show

Members of the Garden Club of Orange came home with awards from the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show, held from Feb. 23 to 26 in Hartford.

Violet Nastri, a first-time participant in the show, received a blue ribbon and the prestigious Designer's Choice Award. It's a section award, meaning that Nastri's design was judged the best out of the 12 designs in her section. The judges' comments on her standard design included: "Romantic, excellent rhythm with an effective choice of color harmonies."

Pat Dray, who also writes a column on

gardening for the Milford-Orange Times, was awarded a yellow ribbon in the petite division for her "striking use of color." A petite design is less than 12 inches, whereas a standard design has standard-sized flowers and is larger than 12 inches.

The Garden Club of Orange's next program will be on March 14 at High Plains Community Center in Orange, featuring the topic "Insect Pests of the Garden and Landscape." It will be presented by Katherine Dugas of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. All are welcome to attend. For more information, call 203-795-9425.



Orange Garden Club member Violet Nastri's design won the Designer's Choice Award in February at the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show in Hartford. Photo by Margherita Lisi.



Orange Garden Club member Pat Dray's design received a yellow ribbon in the petite division in February at the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show in Hartford. Photo by Margherita Lisi.

Orange Resident Supports Big Brothers Big Sisters



Big Brother (adult mentor) Alex Beck, right, was a special guest at the recent Big Brothers Big Sisters Expanding Potential Gala, held at The Society Room of Hartford. He attended the event with his Little Brother, mentee, in the organization's program, Mekhi (middle). Beck lives in Orange and is an assistant state's attorney for the Milford-Ansonia Judicial District. Alex has been a board member at Big Brothers Big Sisters since 2017. He's been a Big Brother with the youth mentoring organization for nine years. Alex's Little Brother, 17-year-old Mekhi, lives in New Haven. He's a senior at Eli Whitney Technical High School and will be honored in May by Big Brothers Big Sisters as its 2023 Youth of the Year. Also shown in the photo is Andy Fleischmann, left, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut. Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters Connecticut.

Contest Allows Children To Link Math And Art

Room 17 and the Milford Arts Council have designed an event to showcase that math is everywhere. Children in grades K-12 can use various media (music, digital media, dance, photography, painting, sculpting) to create a piece and share how they incorporated math.

Funds raised will support Room 17 summer learning opportunities for local youth organizations.

Artists will be invited to the MAC on April

2 to share their creation with the community and their family members. Judges will be visiting all artists and selecting finalists and winners. Prizes will be awarded. Finalists and winners will have their work displayed at the Walnut Beach Coffee House for a period of time after the event.

Submissions are must be submitted by March 12. For submission details and more information, visit room17math.com/MACshow.

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Asian American Cultural Center Hosts Lunar New Year Celebration



The New England Asian American Cultural Center hosted its first Lunar New Year celebration on Feb. 4 at its Milford location. This event had an audience of 200. Dr. Henry Lee, a world-renowned forensic scientist, was the keynote speaker. State Sen. James Maroney and Junchao Chen, the director of General Consulate of the People's Republic of China in New York also attended. The first Lunar New Year celebration was in partnership with the Asian Pacific American Coalition and sponsored by the Commission on Women Children Senior Equity and Opportunity. Cunjie Guo, the president of NEAACCC, gave the opening remarks. Wu Dang Kung Fu Academy, Aiping Taichi and other Asian American communities presented performances for the audience. *Photos courtesy of NEAACCC.*

Participants Sought For Milford Earth Day Events

Milford's Environmental Concerns Coalition is welcoming nonprofit environmental organizations, musicians, artists, educators, civic groups and businesses wishing to set up a table or booth on the Milford Green for this year's Earth Day.

The organizers are encouraging groups that will feature activities and/or displays to inform and engage the public on environmental issues. Ideas related to the protection of natural resources in the region and/or environmental action items that will help restore and protect landscapes, wildlife, air and water and/or the products and habits that will help keep households (and the planet) more toxin-free are welcome.

Earth Day on the Milford Green will take place on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is free for the public to attend. The event will feature activities for children plus numerous how-to exhibits including recycling, composting and

reusing of materials, and instructions on how to create a pollinator garden. Sweet Louise & the Monkey River Band will perform from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Our steering committee is encouraging groups that will feature activities/displays to inform and engage the community on environmental issues related to the natural resources in our region," said Environmental Concerns Committee President Ann Berman.

According to Berman, a number of environmental groups and agencies have already signed on, including the UCONN Extension Gardeners, Alice's Re-loved Workshop, the Milford Arts Council, the CT Audubon Society Coastal Center at Milford Point, Haven's Harvest, Beth-El Center and the Back Yard Beekeepers Association.

No fee is required to participate, but each group must supply and set up its own table. To reserve space, go to milfordearthday.org and complete the exhibitors application page.

Milford Looking For Lifeguards, Camp Counselors

Milford is looking for certified lifeguards for Milford public beaches between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day.

Lifeguards must be 16 years old by the start of their first shift. Those who are not currently certified as a lifeguard may still apply if they will be certified by May 26.

Applications are available upon request and must be turned in by Friday, March 31 at 4 p.m.

For more information, contact Rich Minnix at 203-783-3387 or rminnix@milfordct.gov.

milfordct.gov.

The Recreation Department is also looking for dedicated and responsible counselors who have experience working with children.

The program will run from June 26 to Aug. 4. Individuals must be fully committed to this time. There will also be a mandatory orientation beforehand. Applicants must be at least 16 years old.

For more information, contact Mike Dooling at 203-783-3386 or mdooling@milfordct.gov.



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www.newhavenmineralclub.org



Food Drive/Fundraiser To benefit Purple Pantry Boxes

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Orange Chamber of Commerce

The Power Of Partnerships

“We need to be connected to both our roots and our branches.” – Q.L. Cook

The Orange Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to kick off events and programs this month that demonstrate the power of partnerships between local businesses, organizations and the community. Making connections with residents of all ages is a top priority for the chamber because it strengthens our town across generations. Orange chamber members will reach out to residents from elementary school to retirement age through our new programs. These programs are designed to provide practical ideas, tools and resources.

Orange Senior Center and Chamber Collaborate on Lunch Talks and Money Management Series: Dennis Marsh of the Orange Senior Center invited the chamber to provide presenters for monthly lunch talks and a money management series. Our members have stepped up and are planning informative presentations to help seniors find and use local services that support their needs.

The first lunch talk takes place on Wednesday, March 15 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It features Ed Knight of Transference LLC, who will talk about his company’s services

to help alleviate administrative stress after the passing of a loved one. Red tape, massive paperwork and complicated forms often make the grieving process more difficult. Transference LLC helps guide family members through the administrative chaos.

On Thursday, March 16 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., Rob Craft of Sentinel Asset Management will present “Financial Planning 101: Expecting the Unexpected” for the money management series. Every person confronts risks while planning for retirement – inflation, a bad economy, rising health care costs, negative stock market turns and rising taxes. Craft shares his expertise on how to solve these challenging issues. Attendees will be offered a free financial plan by Craft at no cost, fee or obligation.

Lunch talks and money management presentations are free and open to the public. If you are interested in attending and not a member of the Orange Senior Center, email

director@orangectchamber.com to register or call 203-795-3328.

Chamber Partners with Race Brook School and Junior Achievement to Benefit Students: Junior Achievement Day is a program where parents and community members volunteer to present lessons developed by Junior Achievement. These lessons engage students in learning activities that focus on financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship.

This year, Alice DiNicola, the Junior Achievement Day organizer for Race Brook School facilitated an opportunity for Orange chamber members to become involved in the program. Along with school volunteers, chamber members will present these fun, educational lessons to RBS students on March 24. Chamber volunteers include Myla Chadwick and Mary-Ann White of Coldwell Banker Real Estate and Community Champions Network, Attorney Theresa Rose DeGray of Consumer Legal Services, Judy Primavera of the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation, Vincent DeDominicis and Matt Salem of Sentinel As-



KATHY CONVERSE CHARBONNEAU

set Management and me. Saray Bakery & Ice Cream Cafe will provide dessert for the JA volunteers at lunchtime.

Thank you to our chamber volunteers, Race Brook School Principal Kathy McNeil and JA administrator Alice DeNicola, and Kathy Mannion and her team from Junior Achievement of Southwest New England for their efforts in making this a successful community partnership.

St. Patrick’s Day Business After Hours hosted by Orange Ale House: Don’t miss the annual joint event of the Orange and Milford chambers generously sponsored by the Orange Ale House. Network with area businesses, nonprofits and residents while enjoying delicious Irish fare including corned beef and cabbage and two drink tickets. The event on Wednesday, March 15 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. costs \$20 for chamber members and \$30 for nonmembers. Get tickets at orangectchamber.shop.

Kathy Converse Charbonneau is the executive director for the Orange Chamber of Commerce. Contact her at 203-795-3328 or director@orangectchamber.com.

Recycling Tip: Natural Versus Synthetic Fibers

By Ilene Moyher

The most popular destination at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center is the hopper at the top of the hill, with a continuous flow of residents throwing their household trash into the giant receptacle. The facility also has separate stations for recycling of common household items, each clearly marked with a sign and any relevant instructions. Residents simply drive up and place items in the designated place.

Here’s one reason why this matters: all

garbage collected in Orange gets weighed and the town gets billed by the pound for disposal. The same goes for recyclables, though the cost is lower. Therefore, throwing recyclables away rather than recycling them costs Orange more. With multiple recycling stations at the Transfer Station & Recycling Center and residential blue bins, it’s easy to recycle.

The mixed recyclables bin is the first station on the left on the way to the hopper. This large bin/dumpster is for cans, bottles, plastic containers and paper. Do not put plas-

tic bags in this bin, because it can cause the entire load to be rejected for recycling, thus costing Orange extra. If your recyclables are in a plastic bag, simply dump the contents into the bin and put the bag in the “Plastic Bags and Wraps” shed, conveniently located next to the bin. This shed is for all plastic wraps, bags or bubble wraps. You can also bring these items to local retailers.

Do not put polystyrene in any recycling bin. All polystyrene goes in the trash.

To the right of the info booth are “Electronics” and “Paint” stations. Residents may

put computers/laptops, monitors, TVs, cell smart phones, MP3 players, iPads/tablets, hard drives and wiring and cables into the electronics trailer. The paint can trailer (open on Saturdays only) is for leftover cans of paint, primers, stains, sealers and clear coatings such as shellac and varnish. Empty cans go in the hopper or your regular trash bin.

For more on recycling at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center, visit orangerecycles.com/transfer-station and facebook.com/ORCinCT. For info on recycling specific items, visit recyclect.com.

Amity Student Artwork On Display At Bethany Library

Artwork by Amity students from seventh through 12th grade is being exhibited at the Clark Memorial Library in Bethany through mid-March.

There will be an opening reception from

4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 23. Student work can also be viewed during normal library hours.

The Clark Memorial Library is located at 538 Amity Rd. in Bethany.

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Things To Know About The Medicaid “Unwinding”

At the start of the pandemic, Congress enacted the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which required that Medicaid programs keep people continuously enrolled through the end of the month in which the COVID-19 public health emergency ends. Primarily due to the continuous enrollment provision, Medicaid enrollment has grown substantially compared to before the pandemic. Consequently, the uninsured rate has dropped.

But the continuous enrollment provision is ending, and some people could lose coverage. Here is a summary of what will happen next.

On or about the anniversary of enrollment in HUSKY, the Department of Social Services or Access Health CT will send a notice requesting confirmation of current income. The form must be completed and returned within the timeframe indicated in the notice.

Failure to reply within the specified time will result in HUSKY benefits being cancelled – even if you are still eligible.

Do not ignore this notice. If your address has changed since the original application was submitted, make sure that the mail is forwarded to you, or contact DSS to change your address. If you applied through Access Health CT, you can get the notice through your online account.

Once you have completed the form, mail it back to the DSS scanning center, where it will be processed. If your income is still within the appropriate limits, your current coverage will continue.

However, if your income has increased so that you are no longer eligible for HUSKY, you will receive a notice that coverage



TRISH PEARSON

is ending as of a specific date. In some cases, a family with dependent children may find that the children are still eligible for HUSKY but the parents are not. The parent(s) should still be eligible for a tax credit toward their premium and apply through AHCT.

Loss of HUSKY does not mean that affordable health insurance is not available. Most people will still qualify for an advanced premium tax credit that will reduce the premium. The income ranges are quite broad due to the Economic Recovery Act, which will keep premiums within manageable ranges.

Any change in HUSKY coverage will trigger a special election period of 60 days to enroll in new coverage. If this happens,

contact Access Health CT and they can help with the process of applying through the exchange. They cannot assist with choosing a health plan and will refer the applicant to a licensed agent who is certified on the exchange. One way to expedite the process is to contact an agent directly who can assist both with the application and choosing a plan.

The most important thing to remember not to ignore the requests for information. Make sure your address is correct in the DSS database so that you receive any notices. If you are not sure of the anniversary date, contact DSS or check your account online.

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

Book Reviews

The Wild Hunt By Emma Seckel

Superstition and folklore have existed for centuries. The Wild Hunt by Emma Seckel is a thoroughly engaging and creepy novel that pays homage to both.

Every October the residents of an island off the Scottish coast anticipate with a mixture of dread and trepidation the arrival of the sloughs. Sloughs are crow-like creatures who always travel in groups of three and are believed to carry the souls of the dead with them.

Leigh returns to the island she left years ago to attend her father’s funeral. A number of factors played into her decision to leave: her mother’s abandonment, an increasingly distant relationship with her brother, devastating breakups and the lingering psychological effects of doing what she could during the Second World War.

Royal Air Force pilot Iain MacTavish returns to the island with secrets and apprehensions of his own. Leigh and Iain begin a friendship and join forces to search for a missing island boy, Hugo, who disappeared after the annual slough ritual. Their initial search is fruitless, but both begin to experience strange dreams and other strange events occurring on the island.

Hugo mysteriously reappears, with no rational explanation of what happened to him or where he’s been for two weeks. The islanders are quick to accept Hugo’s statements, but Leigh isn’t quite so willing to accept this reappearance at face value. Iain, on the other hand, aligns himself with the islanders and wants to put the whole matter to rest.

Leigh returns home and is shocked at what she sees. Her house appears to be vandalized; every inch of her home is covered with sloughs. She enlists the help of her friend, Kate, to rid her home of the birds. Kate is attacked by one of the birds and, out of nowhere, Hugo appears, utters words in Gaelic and the attack stops. Leigh is not only traumatized by witnessing the attack – she accidentally touches Hugo and is horrified to feel how very cold he is.

Leigh later has a dream in which a disembodied voice is telling her to go to the pool near a cave. She and Iain arrive at the pool to discover Hugo’s body. They and the rest of the islanders are stunned at this development, as many of the residents attest to hav-



CARMELA DEVITO

ing seen Hugo in town.

The discovery of Hugo’s body enables the sloughs to attack at will. This attack leads many of the residents to consider shutting everything down and leaving the island for good.

Surprisingly, it’s Leigh who wants to stay, strongly advocating that the islanders do whatever it takes to retain their homes.

Leigh has an unexpected ally in her quest: George, a man she had an unpleasant encounter with when she first returned to the island. Leigh decides to explore a nearby cave as a possible home for the immediate future. In the cave, she notices ghost-like figures approaching her and asking if she has come to finish it. Leigh begins a conversation with the voice, who initially sounds like Hugo but then takes on the tone and voice of her long-gone mother. The voice clarifies why the sloughs are the way they are and presents them as misunderstood beings. Although Leigh tries, she is unable to resist her mother’s commands and submerges herself in the pool.

Iain has a psychological breakthrough

when he realizes that the death of his friend Matthew was not his fault and looks for Leigh. He becomes concerned when he doesn’t find her at home and senses she went to the cave where they had discovered Hugo’s body.

Iain rescues Leigh from the cave (with the help of Hugo’s voice) and as they exit they are bombarded by a massive number of sloughs. Additionally, the islanders who attended the festival approach the cave as they are responding to the voice commands of their deceased loved ones and are similarly bombarded.

Leigh has a near-death experience in the cave highlighted by the voice of her mother telling her she needs to choose between succumbing to the past or living life in the present and future.

This novel explores the universal themes of grief, loss and abandonment that can be difficult but necessary to process. It is well-written and challenging at times but so worth the read.

Carmela DeVito, a voracious reader, is a retired social worker and a member of the Friends of the Milford Library.

Bankruptcy

Forlorn Hope: Bankruptcy Throughout The Years

Black’s Law Dictionary defines the term “bankruptcy” simply as insolvency. I often explain to my clients that it basically means you owe more than you are worth. People who owe debts and file for bankruptcy protection are called “debtors.” The people and companies that are owed the money are called “creditors.”

They say the word “bankruptcy” stems from the Latin term *bancus ruptus* which roughly translates to “broken bench.” That was based on the symbolic breaking of the bench on which the banking of the day was performed when the bank ran out of money to lend.

The formal process of bankruptcy dates back to the first bankruptcy laws enacted in England in the 16th century during the reign of King Henry the VIII. That is when defaulting on debt was thought to be a criminal act. One could be punished by being sent to debtor’s prison, or worse: sometimes debtors’ ears were chopped off. Luckily, that was all done away with around the time of the French Revolution, and a more civilized system was created to protect the insolvent from their creditors.

Ratified in 1789, the US Constitution states in part at Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4, “To establish...uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States.”

The first official but rather primitive bankruptcy laws were seen in the US in 1800. Around that time an imprisoned debtor and attorney at law took up the cause. His name was William Keteltas, and he wrote pamphlets – prison newspapers – called Forlorn Hope, advocating for prison reform.

In his treatise, Republic of Debtors: Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence, Bruce H. Mann wrote that prisoners whose debts would now be forgiven as a result of the new laws gathered, drinking toasts and exclaiming, “The bankrupt law, this Godlike act!”

Since then, the formal bankruptcy system has undergone many iterations and has become rather sophisticated. I won’t bore you with the details of each one of them from 1803, 1841, 1867, 1898, 1933, 1934, 1978



THERESA ROSE DEGRAY

and 1994. But I will tell you that the last overhaul of the system came in 2005 when then-President George W. Bush signed into law the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (also known as BAPCPA and pronounced by some as “bap-see-pa”).

I was admitted to practice law in 2006 and filed for personal bankruptcy relief in 2009, so I have only ever operated under BAPCPA.

With it, BAPCPA brought many changes, including the requirements of credit counseling before filing and debtor education classes after filing, as well as the means test (which is the way people qualify for bankruptcy). In effect, BAPCPA made it more difficult for people to file bankruptcy. I will dig deeper into many of these requirements and qualifications in future columns.

Throughout the history of bankruptcy in America, there have been some very famous filers, including a few US presidents: Abraham Lincoln and Donald Trump. Other famous filers have been Connecticut’s own

P.T. Barnum, Walt Disney, rapper 50 Cent and financial guru Dave Ramsey.

Bankruptcy is the ultimate fresh start. It literally wipes the slate clean and lets folks start over as if they were born again and businesses reorganize. Without it, we may never have had one of the greatest American presidents (Lincoln), the greatest show on earth (Barnum) or the happiest place on earth (Disney).

The biggest news to hit the bankruptcy scene in Connecticut came in 2021 when the homestead exemption was raised from \$75,000 to \$250,000. Exemptions are a set of protections used to save certain pieces of property, whether real, personal or mixed, from liquidation.

Currently the Connecticut homestead exemption’s change is on appeal and lawyers like me who represent people in bankruptcy are impatiently awaiting a decision.

Theresa Rose DeGray practices law in Orange and can be reached at TRD@ConsumerLegalServicesLLC.com or 203-713-8877

Milford-Orange Probate Court

The Potential Benefits Of A Will

If you pass away in Connecticut without a will, your assets get distributed in accordance with state statute, which is known as the laws of intestacy. For example, if you have a surviving spouse and children from the marriage, your spouse would get the first \$100,000 and half of the balance and your children would split the remaining half balance.

A will allows you to control how your assets get distributed, with some limitations. Using the example above, you may want your surviving spouse to receive all of your assets, or you may want to give one child more than another. Similarly, you may want to leave something for your grandchildren, a charity or caregiver. Unless you have a will (or another estate planning vehicle), your assets will get distributed through the laws of intestacy and not in accordance with your preferences.

In addition to potentially giving you the freedom of choosing how your assets get distributed, there may be other advantages to having a will in place. A will allows you

to select the fiduciary of your estate, who will manage the estate throughout the probate process. The appointment of a fiduciary can sometimes be contentious if one or more individuals wants the role, so naming someone in your will can limit any arguments, as the court is generally required to appoint the fiduciary named in the will.

Your will can also give the fiduciary certain powers without the need for court approval. Such powers may include being able to sell or mortgage real property, which can save time and money and may allow the estate to enter into a transaction it may otherwise have missed if it needed to wait for court approval.

A will can also waive the need for a probate bond, direct how certain debts and expenses get paid and account for certain scenarios (such as leaving money to a child only if he or she graduates from college). In short, a well-written will can potentially re-



**BEN
GETTINGER**

duce or negate disputes, limit the need for court intervention and approval, save time and money during the probate process and give you more control over how your assets get distributed.

Below are a few examples of how a will can potentially prevent or resolve certain issues:

Issue 1: You do not want your assets distributed through the laws of intestacy.

Potential solution: Use a will to distribute your assets in accordance with your preferences.

Example: I hereby leave my wife Rebecca and my children David and Cindy my entire estate in equal shares. I specifically omit my child Edward because he won the lottery and does not need my support.

Issue 2: You are worried multiple members of your family will want to be fiduciary of your estate.

Potential solution: Use a will to name a fiduciary and successor fiduciary.

Example: I hereby appoint Frank Martin as the fiduciary of my estate. If Frank Martin predeceases me, is incapable of serving as fiduciary or declines, I hereby appoint Dean Sinatra as the fiduciary of my estate.

Issue 3: You do not want your estate to incur the expense of a probate bond.

Potential solution: Use a will to waive the bond requirement.

Example: I direct that no fiduciary shall be required to file or furnish any bond.

As always, this column is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Its purpose is to simply illustrate the potential benefits of a will. The laws governing wills are complex and nuanced, so you should familiarize yourself with the applicable laws or consult a professional before drafting and executing a will, to make sure it is valid and actually accomplishes what you want it to accomplish.

Ben Gettinger is the probate judge for the Milford-Orange Probate Court.

Amity Budget (Continued From 1)

proposed a 0.46 percent increase in Amity's budget, with the rest of the district's expenses being paid through the built-in surplus.

Leahy further argued that Amity's debt service costs will continue to go down in the next few years.

BOF member Kevin McNabola (who is also a Milford-Orange Times columnist) asked, however, whether Amity was expecting debt service to go back up as new capital improvement projects get underway.

"I'm sure there's going to be projects that

are going to be layered in as the debt service goes down," McNabola said. "When the debt service comes down, that's typically a time when people go out and they do new bond issuance, and they finance to kind of just level it off. And they do investment into capital infrastructure projects."

BOF member John Cifarelli noted that the numbers from Amity didn't show those potential plans.

"Yeah, they're not showing what they're going to be putting in," McNabola said.

"Or they're not planning on putting in anything. That was one of the things she said," Cifarelli replied, referring to Amity

Superintendent Jennifer Byars. "Taking her 2 percent, she was going to try and avoid bonding."

Leahy also highlighted an increase in medical and dental costs for Amity staff of over 8 percent in the proposed budget. McNabola noted, though, that while the number looked a little high, medical costs can be highly volatile.

"In health care, you just never know," he said. "I've seen health care numbers...go up 10 percent, 12 percent. I've also seen them only go up five percent."

Voters in all three towns will go to the polls on May 2 to make the ultimate decision on Amity's budget.

Fred Wolfe Park (Continued From 4)

Selectwoman Judy Williams also pushed back against some of the skeptical public comments.

"If we've gone down the road the wrong way, well, at least we're going to try to see if we can fix it," she said. "So let's not be negative about it until we see what we've got to deal with. And then you know that this board is going to move forward and do the very best for everybody in town - not just the soccer group, but for everybody."

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Speaker To Recall Childhood In Wartime Poland, France

By Marilyn May

The year was 1939, and Poland was soon to be remembered as the country that was “first to fight.” Hedwige Babak, now Hedwige Babak Kuepper, was 9 at the time when her family got a telegram from her father that likely saved her life and the lives of her sister and mother.

Babak Kuepper was born of Polish parents in Paris where her father worked. She, her sister, and mother were on a holiday visiting relatives in Poland when they received a telegram from her father telling them to return to Paris immediately, because war was imminent. They got on one of the last trains out of Krakow.

Babak Kuepper will tell her story at the

next meeting of the Milford Historical Society on Monday, March 20 at 7 p.m. at the Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church. The program is free and open to the public. At 92, she is one of a dwindling number of primary sources who today can tell her personal story of wartime.

The train the family was traveling on went through Berlin. There she saw posters in the train station. Not knowing who Adolf Hitler was, she was staring at the posters when a woman on the train came up to her and said, “Isn’t he handsome?” Babak Kuepper, who would ultimately master five languages, mixed up her words and ended up saying something like “Yes, he is fat.”

The second leg of the train trip went

smoothly, but when the family disembarked in Paris, she saw newspaper headlines: “Germany Bombs Poland.” It was at that moment that she began to understand.

A nightmare that was to change the world forever had begun, and her story of growing up in occupied France was also just beginning.

For more information, visit milfordhistoricalsociety.org or call 203-874-2664. The meeting room is accessible to the handicapped, and there is ample parking in the back church lot, located at 168-172 South Broad St.

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



Hedwige Babak Kuepper

Scouts Visit Orange First Responders



Cub Scout Pack 922 checked out a police car while visiting with Orange first responders in February to learn about safety. The troop is open to all children grades in kindergarten through fifth grade. For more information, contact Cubmaster Jessica Zamachaj at jessica.zamachaj@gmail.com, the pack’s Facebook page at facebook.com/CubScoutPack922 or its website at orangecubscouts.com. Photo courtesy of Pack 922.

State Farm Opens New Location In West Haven



West Haven celebrated the grand opening on Feb. 27 of Christopher Carucci’s second State Farm insurance office at 4 Ocean Dr. From left: Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald, MRCC President Michael Moses, State Farm Associate Mariely Gonzalez, West Haven Mayor Nancy Rossi, Office Manager Eric X. Negrón, owner Christopher Carucci and state Sen. James Maroney. Photo by Robert Creigh.



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Mental Health

Supporting Employee Mental Health And Wellness

It's no surprise that the level of stress and burnout among American workers was higher throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the American Psychological Association's 2021 Work and Well-Being survey of 1,501 US adult workers, almost 80 percent of employees had experienced work-related stress in the month prior to being surveyed. Almost 60 percent of employees reported negative impacts of work-related stress, including 26 percent who lacked motivation and energy and almost 20 percent who lacked effort at work. Forty-four percent reported physical fatigue – a 38 percent increase since 2019.

The chain of events following the start of the pandemic, including financial challenges, illness, death and drastic changes in how we work and educate our children all contributed to the compounding stress and burnout that impacted most of us in some way.

There are more than 160 million people who are part of the US workforce, and those

who are full time spend almost half of their waking hours at work. Given this high volume of people who are actively working, it's incumbent on employers to promote positive employee mental health and wellness and foster an environment of connectedness and engagement. Not doing that can potentially have a damaging impact on the health of employees and a business.

Results from a Gallup poll conducted in August and September 2022 found that the estimated cost of missed work due to poor mental health over a 12-month period in the US was almost \$48 billion in lost productivity.

There are a number of strategies employees can use to promote mental health and wellness in the workplace, starting with top leadership building a culture of safety to express and address mental health issues. This culture can be supported in a number of ways



JENNIFER FIORILLO

that include investing in education for employees to learn more about mental health and making it a normal part of conversation. Giving employees the tools around mental health literacy can help to reduce stigma and increase the likelihood that they will recognize when their peers and colleagues may be struggling.

Offering adequate mental health coverage under an employee health plan is essential, as is communicating that these benefits are available. Some employees may not know that there is coverage and how to access services. Raising awareness through new staff orientation or a periodic review of benefits is a basic strategy that can help to improve the chances that employees will know how to seek whatever help they may need.

Finally, giving employees a forum to talk

openly among themselves will offer them an outlet of support and acceptance. Employee-led resource groups allow for open and safe discussion in the workplace, fostering a culture of inclusion and a place to express concerns and issues. Employee resource groups have become more common in the last few years as part of employers' diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

Addressing mental health in the workplace will lead to employees feeling like an organization is committed to their well-being. Creating a culture around educating, communicating and offering access and space for discussion with coworkers can lead to more engaged employees and improved retention in the end.

Jennifer Fiorillo, MBA, MPH is the president and CEO of Bridges Healthcare in Milford, and may be reached at Jfiorillo@bridgesmilford.org.

Orange Players Holding General Meeting, Reader's Theatre

The Orange Players will hold their spring general membership meeting on Thursday, March 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at High Plains Community Center in Orange.

The Orange Players is open to all and the public is invited to attend the meeting. Plans for upcoming activities will be discussed. After a short business meeting, refreshments will be served and the evening's program will be presented.

The Readers' Theatre program, "Functioning, with Humor," is drawn from the works of icons of American humor including Jules Feiffer, James Thurber, Ogden Nash, and Judith Viorst.

"Functioning, With Humor" presents a variety of characters who are functioning getting on with life going in unique and sometimes bizarre directions. The cast includes Toni Chila, Carol Hechtman, Steve Hechtman, Rich Moran, Tedra Schneider and Paul Templeton. The pianist is James Teti and Pat Miller is the director.

The Orange Players always needs actors, scene painters and builders, backstage crew, lighting technicians, stage managers, house managers, costumers, committee members and other positions. Besides performances, there are workshops, tours of theater venues and social occasions as well.

Aquarion Seeks Nominations For Environmental Champion Awards

Aquarion Water Company has opened nominations for the 2023 Aquarion Environmental Champion Awards. For the past 12 years, the program has celebrated those dedicated to environmental protection and sustainability.

Winners in the adult, nonprofit organization and business categories will have the opportunity to select an environmental nonprofit to receive a \$5,000 grant. The winner of the student category open to grades 9-12, will receive a \$1,000 award.

"Each year, Aquarion is impressed by the hard work and dedication of the state's residents, businesses and organizations to

protect our natural environment and create a more sustainable Connecticut," said Donald Morrissey, president of Aquarion. "Our awards program honors and celebrates these remarkable efforts and brings awareness to the ever-increasing need for environmental conservation."

The submission deadline is May 5, and the winners will be announced on June 3 at an awards ceremony at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo.

Details and an online nomination form for the 2023 Aquarion Environmental Champion Awards are available at aquarionwater.com/awards.

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Milford Chamber Hosts Bridal Expo



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its first annual Bridal Expo on Feb. 19 at Cielo Catering and Events in West Haven. Photos by Robert Creigh.

Recovering

Marijuana Effects On Youth Underestimated

As I participate in recovery meetings for young people and hear their stories, it has become more and more obvious that a re-sounding number of our youth are first introduced to mind altering substances via marijuana.

I would argue, and research will support, that the marijuana of today is in no way comparable to the marijuana of 25-30 years ago. Young kids have helped to make marijuana the most commonly used illegal substance in the US, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Research shows that when children start using before age 18, the rate of addiction rises to one in six. It is an amazing rate that has gone up significantly over the years.

The accessibility of marijuana and its newer means of consumption, via dabbing, smoking, edibles or vaping, has created easier access for teens and easier means of doing the drug right in their bedrooms, cars, houses or school.

There are profound risks in this marijua-

na usage to our youth. SAMHSA research indicates that habitual marijuana usage can cause permanent IQ loss of as much as eight points when people start using it at a young age. This cognitive impairment is followed up, more frightfully, by the fact that marijuana studies link use to depression, anxiety, suicide planning and psychotic episodes for teens. Teens are using the easy access to marijuana as a self-soothing and medical therapy without understanding its deeper impact.

Over the past few decades, the amount of THC – the main psychoactive chemical in marijuana – has steadily climbed. Today's marijuana has three times the concentration of THC compared to 25 years ago. The higher the THC amount, the stronger the effects on the brain, likely contributing to increased rates of marijuana-related emergency room visits.



ROB CRAFT

Marijuana affects timing, movement and coordination for all ages. Yet with teens and young adults we excuse marijuana use as a type of rite of passage. The reality, though, is more grim, as millions of young adults are living with a mental or substance use disorder and many either do not realize they have one or are not paying attention to the signs and not seeking help.

In fact, SAMHSA reports, of the 8.9 million young people who reported having a mental illness in 2018, more than two in five went untreated. Of the 5.1 million young people with a substance use disorder, nearly nine in 10 did not get treatment.

These stats, as telling as they are, were before the isolation, fear, anxiety, depression and dysfunction associated with the past three years we as a society have been managing through COVID.

The reality is that we are in uncharted territory with drugs far more accessible than we think to youths, and with consequences not fully grasped.

Pay attention to your children. Watch their demeanor, energy levels, connectivity to their family and peers, and have a conversation with them. As best we can manage, listen without judgement. If they are using the most accessible and commonly used federally illegal drug – marijuana – find out why they are using. Typically, children are trying to find outside solutions to inside problems.

Robert A. Craft, CIMA is an investment advisor representative at Sentinel Asset Management. His passion outside of work is helping the recovery community, people suffering from mental illness and helping children/families who are effected by the totality of these concurrent diseases. He can be reached at 973-809-9716 or racraft44@msn.com.

Local Author To Speak About 'Impossible Histories' In Milford

Author Hal Johnson will be at the Milford Public Library on Saturday, March 18 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. to discuss his newest book, Impossible Histories: the Soviet Republic of Alaska, the United States of Hudsonia, President Charlemagne, and Other Pivotal Moments of History That Never Happened. Books will be available for sale and signing.

The book, published by Macmillan in February, is described as an exciting and humorous take on 20 pivotal moments of history and what would have happened if things had gone differently – from

World War I (What if Kaiser Wilhelm had stopped the war?) to Alexander the Great (What if the world's greatest conqueror had a male heir?) to the European colonization of North America (What if the Vikings had stayed?). Readers will not only learn what really happened and why, but also how tiny differences could have set off totally different series of events. It's history expertly and entertainingly explained.

The talk takes place in the Library Program Room. The event is free; no registration is required.

MRCC To Host Panel Honoring Women Storytellers

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Network of Executive Women, will celebrate National Women's History Month in March with an event titled "Making History Visible: Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories" on Friday, March 10 at 1 p.m. at Bin 100 in Milford.

Throughout 2023, the National Women's History Association will recognize women, past and present, who have been active in all forms of media and storytelling including print, radio, TV, stage, screen, blogs, podcasts, news and social media. This

theme honors women in every community who have devoted their lives and talents to producing art and news, pursuing truth and reflecting society decade after decade.

The panelists will include Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, WTNH News Anchor Ann Nyberg and Radio 104.1 on-air personality Amy Grey.

The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$50 for chamber members and \$65 for non-members. Bin 100 is located at Lansdale Ave. Reservations can be made at milfordct.com. For more information, contact Simon McDonald at smcdonald@milfordct.com.

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Amity Advances In National Academic Decathlon Competition



Amity Regional High School's Academic Decathlon team. Photo courtesy of Amity Regional District No. 5.

Amity Regional High School's Academic Decathlon Team qualified on Feb. 25 for this year's National Academic Decathlon Competition after winning the title of Connecticut state champions.

The team includes seniors Anchal Bahel, Elise Sheehee, Sophia Liu, Selin Ho and Sena Ho, as well as juniors Bridget Lowder, Ali Khan and Shaofei Ong. The team is advised by Laura Roessler.

Each year Academic Decathlon elects a theme, with this season's focus being the American Revolution. Students had to study the relevance of this event on the nine subject areas which include science, math, literature, art, economics, social sciences and music. In addition, each student was also required to participate in a speech, interview and essay section which occurred online a week prior. Academic Decathlon splits students up into varying teams based on their past academic achievement, creating an honors, scholastic and varsity category. This year, however, every member was able to be awarded a medal.

Khan and Ong, who are members of the varsity category, were able to win first place prizes in science, essay, literature and interview. Bahel and Lowder competed among the scholastic group and placed first in speech, interview, music, art and the essay portion. Liu and the Ho twins achieved first in essay and music, as well as second place in speech.

Team captain Anchal Bahel said, "This experience has been incredibly rewarding. Everyone sharing their differing strengths allowed the team to foster a community with unity and respect. I am grateful that we achieved this opportunity during my senior year. It will definitely be one to remember."

Sena Ho recalled the experience as "a time to put to work what we had been studying and working towards for the entire year. Everyone is able to excel at different areas, and this competition allows each member to shine in their own way."

Nationals will occur on April 28, 2023, in Frisco, Texas.

Maplewood Senior Living Receives Award

Maplewood Senior Living has received 2023 Best of Senior Living Awards for 14 of its communities, many for the sixth year in a row. The award was given by A Place for Mom, the premier online ratings and reviews site for senior care providers in North America.

Virtually all of the Maplewood properties in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio were recognized as the top 2-3 percent of all senior living communities nationwide. A Place for Mom also awarded Maplewood the 2023 Best of Senior Living Customer Engagement Award and the Esteemed Organization Award.

"Since opening our very first community, we have been on a mission to redefine expectations for the later years in life by offering senior living communities that provide the very best hospitality, care and lifestyle," said Gregory D. Smith, president and CEO of Maplewood Senior Living. "Receiving positive reviews from our residents and their families is the greatest form of compliment and offers validation that we are fulfilling our mission. We are honored to have 14 of our communities recognized with Best of Senior Living Awards and look forward to continuing

to help fulfill each resident's personal vision of the good life."

Six communities in Connecticut – Maplewood at Danbury, Maplewood at Newtown, Maplewood at Southport, Maplewood at Stony Hill, Maplewood at Strawberry Hill, Maplewood at Darien – as well as all of the Massachusetts communities – Maplewood at Mayflower Place, Maplewood at Weston, Maplewood at Mill Hill, and Maplewood at Brewster, and Maplewood at Princeton in New Jersey – are among the awarded communities.

The Best of 2023 Award winners represent the highest caliber of senior living providers, based on the online reviews written by seniors and their families across the US and Canada. To qualify for inclusion in the Best of 2023 Awards, care providers must have maintained an average overall rating of at least 4.5 stars while receiving at least 10 new reviews on A Place for Mom during the award period, as well as offer assisted living, in-home care, independent living, skilled nursing or memory care. In order to qualify for the Customer Engagement Award, the organization must have five or more communities win the Best of Senior Living award.

Amity Students Place In Scholastic Arts Awards

Several Amity Regional School District High School students placed in this year's Regional Scholastics Art Awards. The Gold Key winner will go on to compete nationally. Among those students receiving recognition were Michael Aversa, Grade 10 Gold Key & CAAA Best in Category

– Photography; Amanda Koola, Grade 11, Silver Key – Photography; Fiona Jaimes, Grade 12; Silver Key – Mixed Media; Deborah Luo, Grade 11, Honorable Mention – Photography; Selin Ho, Grade 12, Silver Key – Painting; and Nora Losty, Grade 12, Honorable Mention – Photography.



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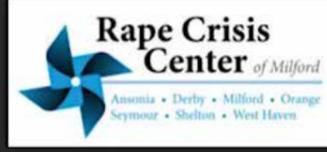
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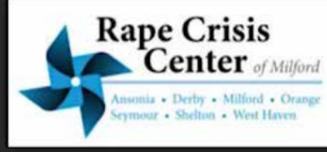
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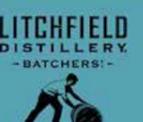
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Obituaries

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

William L. Apfel, 68, of Hanson, formerly of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully at home on February 16, 2023, surrounded by his loving family. (Sullivan Funeral Homes)



Jeanette Lena Aronson, age 91, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Donald "Michael" Aronson, entered peaceful rest on February 17, 2023 at her home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Joan (Robison) Astle was born on November 5, 1930 and passed away on February 2, 2023 at age 92. All services will be private. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Carol Bennett, 84, wife of 62 years to her loving, devoted husband Ellsworth, passed away suddenly and peacefully at home on February 14, 2023.



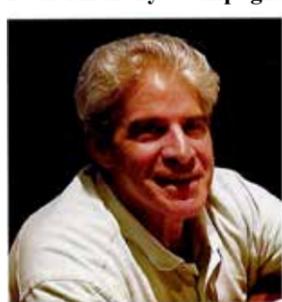
Ted Brosius, 81, of Milford, passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 11th, 2023. (North Haven Funeral Home)



Virginia Lee Bryan, age 94, of Milford, beloved wife of the late William Austin Bryan, died on Tuesday, January 31, 2023 surrounded by her family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



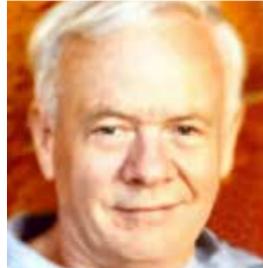
Paul Anthony Campagna, 69, of Manchester, passed away on February 6, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Lucille Cassella, 87, of Orange, passed away peacefully at her home on February 8, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Sidney Dalaker, 92, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Olga Dalaker, passed away peacefully on February 19, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dana Ellen Doran, age 66, of Milford, entered into eternal life on Monday, February 20, 2023. (Lesko & Polke Funeral Home)



Patricia "Pat" Marie Fabian, 84, entered her eternal rest on February 16, 2023 with her family by her side. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Mark Fisher of Milford passed away unexpectedly on February 9, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Christian A. Fricke, 52, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away on February 22, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Betty T. Gagel, 93, lifelong resident of Orange, beloved wife of the late Edward Gagel, passed away on February 9, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Giesman Lawrence C. "Larry" Feb. 3, 2023, age 84, formerly of Milford, currently of Philadelphia, while being treated for medical complications from a fall in his home. (Monti-Rago Funeral Home)



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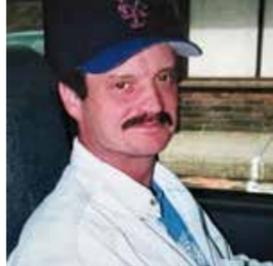


Obituaries

Ursula Greta Hindel, born October 18, 1928, in Berlin, Germany, passed away peacefully on February 17, 2023, in Silver Spring, MD. (Francis J. Collins Funeral Home)



Troy S. LeRoy, 62, of Milford passed away February 11, 2023 at the VA in West Haven, Connecticut after a long illness.



AJeanine Cathryn Myatt, age 69, of Stratford, entered peaceful rest on February 19, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Lorraine E. Scheele (nee Stubbs) of Milford, CT, passed away on February 22, surrounded by her loving family after a short illness. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Britta Karen (Schneider) Kivell, 65, of Milford, CT passed away too soon, on February 12, 2023, after a courageous, four-year battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



David J. Marasco of Milford and formerly of Lordship passed away peacefully on February 23, 2023 at the age of 66 after a courageous battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Jeannette Mary Parshall, 88, of Milford and formerly of Silver Spring, MD, beloved wife of the late Col. Gerald H. Parshall, passed away on February 7, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Annabelle Torres "GGMA," 94, of Milford, CT, beloved wife of the late John Torres, passed away on February 1, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



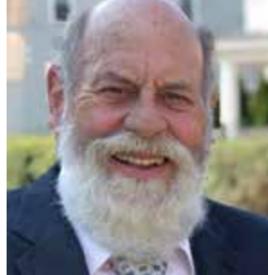
Thomas A. Krosky was born on January 18, 1958 and passed away on February 8, 2023 at age 65. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Mildred "Millie" Mirabile, age 93, of Orange, entered into rest on Thursday, February 23, 2023 in her home, surrounded by her loving family. (Adzima Funeral Home)



Walter E. Perry, Jr., 75, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved husband of Lynn (Buckley) Perry, passed away on February 18, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Martha Ann Tynan, age 87, of Milford, died at home on Wednesday February 8, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Mary "Marge" Larkin, 90, of Orange, CT beloved wife of John "Jack" Larkin, passed peacefully on February 27, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dorothy Agnes Molnar, 90, of Orange, passed away on February 21, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Timothy B. Price, 47, left this world suddenly on February 3rd, 2023, to return to the loving arms of OUR LORD. (Adzima Funeral Home)



Katherine B. Banyay, age 44, of Milford, died on Friday, February 10, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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Fruit Baskets & Gifts

Earth Day Is Shredding Day In Orange

In celebration of Earth Day on April 22, the Orange Recycling Committee will host their twice-yearly recycling and shredding event at High Plains Community Center from 9 a.m. to noon. Known as “Shredding Day,” the event offers residents free secure document shredding as well as collection of household hazardous waste, mattresses and box springs, clothing and household goods.

Confidential personal documents such as tax papers, bank and credit card statements, medical records and other sensitive papers will again be shredded on-site by Affordable Solutions of Orange. This is for residential files only and is not intended for businesses. As

this free service is funded by the Rotary Club of Orange, residents may show their appreciation by donating to the Orange Rotary Club Scholarship Fund. Rotarians will be on hand to collect donations.

Mattresses and box springs will again be collected by the Mattress Recycling Council’s “Bye Bye Mattress” team. Residents may bring items to the event and workers will load them into the collection truck. Alternatively, volunteers from the Orange Lions Club will pick up items from residential homes for a donation of \$15 per item. Anyone interested in this service should contact Ken Lenz at 203-795-3906 to arrange pickup. Items must be outside

and dry or in a garage for easy access, as volunteers will not enter homes.

Hazardous household chemicals will be collected by the Regional Water Authority’s HazWaste Central mobile unit. Residents may bring certain cleaners, pesticides, auto fluids (no auto batteries), simply drive to the designated area, and HazWaste Central employees will retrieve items from vehicles.

The Orange Community Women will collect clothing and household goods. Used clothing, shoes, accessories, sheets, blankets, towels, stuffed animals and other household textiles should be bagged. Toys, dishes, small appliances, sporting goods, household décor, DVDs, CDs, tapes and knick-knacks

should be boxed, with books boxed separately.

Orange Recycling Committee Chair Mitch Goldblatt asks residents to follow signs and directions when entering Tribute Way (just south of the community center near the grassy parking area). Paper shredding and mattress/box spring collection will be in the front parking lot, hazardous waste collection will be at the lower pavilion behind the building, and clothing and household item collection will be at the upper pavilion.

High Plains Community Center is located at 525 Orange Center Rd. For more information, visit orangerecycles.com or follow facebook.com/ORCinCT.

Orange Park and Recreation: Summer Camp Counselors

Applications are being accepted from April 1 to April 30
Program runs June 19 – August 11

Must be at least 16 years old

Must be available Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Must be available for all 8 weeks of program

Enjoy working with children

Have the ability to lead activities such as: sports, games, and arts and crafts, both outdoors and indoors

Should be enthusiastic, responsible, dependable, level-headed and calm in all situations

Fun loving and able to make sure the campers are having a BLAST!!

For application:

www.orange-ct/497/forms

**OVFD Auxiliary
EGG MY YARD!**

The Easter Bunny is making their annual early trip to Orange! We will hide plastic eggs in your yard on the night of Saturday, April 1st, 2023 (weekend BEFORE Easter) for your kids to wake up to Sunday morning!

\$18 for the first 2 dozen eggs, \$7 for each additional dozen
Can only be delivered within Orange CT
In case of rain or snow, eggs will be left on front porch or steps

Or, pre-order your eggs for pickup on Saturday, April 1st, 2023, 3-5 PM
\$15 for the first 2 dozen, \$5 for each additional dozen
Great option if you'd like to set-up your own Easter Egg Hunt on a different day, or are from outside of Orange!

Sign up at <https://egg-my-yard-2023-ovfd.cheddarup.com>
For more information please contact OVFDAuxiliary@hotmail.com
Order Deadline: Must be received no later than March 18th, 2023

There will be a limit of 90 houses for delivery. Make sure to sign-up early to guarantee your spot

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To be there no matter the time, or the conditions.
To be there with words of comfort and concern.
To be there to give quiet guidance through the storm.
To be there for the final tribute that honors a life.
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-Doug Manning

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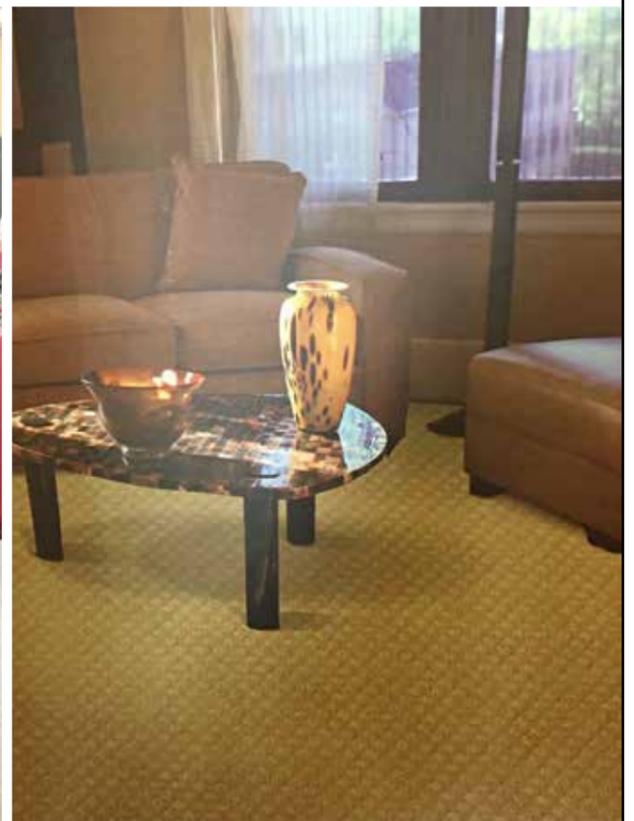
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