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# Milford-Orange Times

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April 8, 2023

## Milford Holds St. Patrick's Day Parade

## Orange Land Trust Acquires 15 Acres



Milford held its annual St. Patrick's Day parade on March 11. Milford resident Lina Hardiman, a charter member of the Irish Heiritage Society, acted as the 2023 grand marshal. Additional photos on page 26. Photo by Robert Creigh.



The Orange Land Trust, in cooperation with the Town of Orange and the Lesniak family, recently celebrated the preservation of 15.38 acres of open space that borders the Housatonic Overlook. Pictured are board members George Lesko and Suzanne Anderson, family member Richard Lesniak, board member Jim Leahy, Land Trust President Dr. Lawrence Messina, First Selectman Jim Zeoli and board member Allen Grealish. Board members Jeanne Consiglio Hoin, Maria Sandillo, Julie Davis, Ron Wachter and Anna Sawicki were not able to attend. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

## School Closure Possible Under Milford Ed Cuts

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Milford's superintendent has warned that the closure of one of the city's schools is a strong possibility to cover a reduced allocation recommended by the Board of Finance.

The Board of Education had proposed a \$106.48 million 2023-2024 budget in January – a 4.39 percent over current spending. In March, however, the Board of Finance lowered that increase to \$2.61 million, or 2.58 percent.

The reduction, if adopted by the Board of Aldermen, would leave the BOE with a \$1.8

million gap to fill – and school officials say their options for doing so are limited.

At a special budget meeting of the Board of Education on March 29, Superintendent Dr. Anna Cutaia explained that there was no getting around significant cuts if the lower amount is approved.

“Three point four percent of the 4.392 represents \$3.5 million in increases in salaries and benefits,” she explained “That is a very important key to our conversation

Continued on page 4

## Orange Budget Would Lower Taxes Slightly

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Board of Finance has crafted a budget proposal for the town that would see taxes drop slightly for most residents.

The \$80,249,651 proposal is an increase by just under \$2 million from last year. However, that increase was offset by growth in the town's grand list from the previous year by \$63.74 million, or 2.83 percent.

If the budget as drafted is passed, the current 32.71 mill rate will drop by 1.2 percent to 32.31 mills.

“We have carefully designed this financial plan to balance the growing request for municipal services, the needs of the town's infrastructure, public safety, recreation and community health and welfare while maintaining our commitment to the education of our children: the leaders of tomorrow,” Finance Director John Cifarelli

wrote in his budget message.

Orange's budget is split into three major buckets: town operations; Orange Public Schools, which encompass the elementary schools; and the Amity Regional District budget, which is split between Orange, Bethany and Woodbridge and voted on in a separate referendum from the other two budget segments.

Spending increases were largest on the town side of the budget, where the cost of operations rose by \$1.4 million, or 5.5 percent, for a total of \$30,698,722.

Public school costs also increased by \$763,325, or 3.37 percent, to \$23,447,185. During his March 6 presentation to the Board of Finance, Superintendent Dr. Vince Scarpetti said major drivers of the increases

Continued on page 2

## Police Commission Chair Nominated To Replace Blake

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Democratic Town Committee has selected Police Commission Chair Richard Smith to succeed Mayor Ben Blake in the city's top position.

The DTC voted at a March 9 special meeting to pick Smith over the only other challenger, Kerri Rowland. Both are Democrats.

The selection now goes to the Board of Aldermen, who will vote on the DTC's pick.

Choosing a new mayor became necessary

after Gov. Ned Lamont on Feb. 7 nominated Blake to fill the post of Administrative Law Judge for Connecticut's Workers' Compensation Commission.

Blake announced that he would step down as mayor if confirmed by the legislature for the judge post. He is expected to be confirmed by the legislature before the session ends in June.

There will not be an election for the new

Continued on page 2

## Ospreys Return To Milford For Spring



The first osprey of spring was spotted on March 27 at the platform along the Indian River in Milford. It was joined by a second on March 29. Full story on page 12. Photo by Tim Chaucer.



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## Orange Budget (Continued From 1)

included salaries, support staff, technology and software, transportation and fuel, building repairs, furniture and utilities.

Costs for non-certified staff at the schools went up more than 12.83 percent, which Scarpetti noted could be partly attributed to the wage increases for school security officers.

“There’s an adjustment in their hourly rate,” he said. “I think we were one of the first to implement SSOs in our schools. Subsequently after that, many schools have done that, and it’s become competitive out there.” He added he didn’t want to lose good staff to other districts that were paying more.

Orange’s portion of Amity’s budget, on the other hand, will likely be reduced. Although Orange sends the most students overall to Amity, its enrollment dropped in the past year, from 1,091 students to 1,017. Because the Amity budget is apportioned between its three member towns based on enrollment numbers, Orange’s contribution to the budget would drop. The total the town would pay toward the Amity system would come down to \$26,103,744, a 1.77 percent decrease from last year.

Orange’s fund balance – a portion of the town’s finances set aside for unforeseen circumstances – is projected to be \$13.5 million in the 2023-2024 budget.

The town also has about \$2 million from the federal government from the American Rescue Plan Act. That money can be used in a variety of ways, but must be spent within a limited timeframe.

At the March 20 Board of Finance meeting during which the budget proposal was approved, Cifarelli also suggested setting aside \$1 million of ARPA funds to address flooding on Old Country Road. Other possibilities include replacing the 18-year-old roof on High Plains Community Center,

replacement of the steam header and valves in the community center’s boiler room, refurbishing four classrooms at Racebrook School and funding two police vehicles and two police motorcycles.

There are other considerations on the horizon for town taxpayers. A state-mandated revaluation of town property is scheduled for October. Since most municipal revenue comes in the form of property taxes, adjustments to property values based on the revaluation could increase or decrease individual tax burdens in future years.

There will be a hearing on the budget on April 20 at High Plains Community Center. Voters will have a chance to weigh in on the town budget during a referendum on May 17. There will be a separate referendum on May 2 for the Amity budget.

## Smith (Continued From 1)

mayor; Milford’s city charter requires the Board of Aldermen to appoint someone from the same party of the former mayor – in this case, Democrats.

Smith is currently serving a three-year term on the Police Commission that expires at the end of 2025. Members of the commission are appointed by the mayor and approved by the Board of Aldermen.

Smith is also the longest-serving chair of the Milford DTC, having helped shepherd his party to solid majorities on boards and commissions throughout city government.

Smith graduated from Trinity College in Hartford and Yale in New Haven, where he studied political science, public policy and American government.

If confirmed, he’ll oversee the city at a tenuous time. Budget negotiations that are currently underway could result in a small

Continued on page 4

## St. Mary Tops In Basketball



St. Mary School in Milford’s sixth grade girls basketball team won the state championship game at Kennedy High School on March 19 with a score of 34-27, and the sixth grade boys team also won the state championship in their game at Corpus Christi, ending at 41-33. Both teams are advancing to the regionals, to be held in Providence, Rhode Island in early April. Several of the teams also topped out the St. Mary School 47th Annual Invitational Basketball Tournament, which saw 43 different teams competing this year. The fourth grade blue boys team won the SMS Tournament at the JV level, and the sixth grade girls team for won the tournament at the JV level. The fifth grade boys team and the eighth grade boys team for came in second place. Pictured in top photo: Finley Gunning, Chloe Zietek, Lyla Leone, Maja Brown, Grace Dubin, Eleanor Flynn, Mary Sowitcky, Bella Cappelletti, Jessiamae Vanwilliams, Braelyn Roldan, Jady Forget, Dylan Gaglione, Blake Mcinnis and Ava Pellino. Pictured in bottom photo: Charles Edgerton, Jake LaFountain, Miles Caterbone, Gavin Garces-Ali, Jonathan Ssenyonjo, Evan Salamino, Sahaj Bhattm James Miller, Anton Falkenstein, Allesandro Zamora, Nathan Shields, Peter Ahmann, Derek Semrau and Eli DeCapua. Photos courtesy of St. Mary School.

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# Milford Cornet Band Gathered In 1890s On The Green

By Marilyn May

The Milford Cornet Band is pictured here at rest, which was, perhaps, for the best. When looking up information on such bands, it was said of the Ashford, Connecticut Cornet Band: “Those who could read music, played by note; those who could not, played by ear; those who could do neither, made what noise they could. Cats, screech owls, and bull frogs all left town. Dogs crawled under the barn or ran away to the woods every time the band played.”

Fortunately, in the photo it looks like most of the musicians had sheet music with them. No doubt, the Milford band was an enthusiastic and fairly large group of spirited men.

A cornet is a three-valved brass instrument of the trumpet family, but as you can see this band had a tuba, trombone, clarinet and a big bass drum.

The man standing to the left of the drum

was said to be among the last of the Paugussett tribe in Milford. His name was Henry Sherman. He had been on a reservation in Kent, but joined up during the Civil War where he lost his left arm. Because of his service, however, he gained “the freedom of the Town of Milford.” He remained in Milford, the home of his ancestors, and took immense pride in carrying the drum in the band.



You can almost hear the beat of the drum as the Milford Cornet Band members get ready to play. Photo courtesy of the Daniel E. Moger Photo Collection.



The bandstand on the Milford Green. There were several steps in front so that, as typical of most bandstands, the musicians were on a raised platform for all to see. Photo courtesy of the Daniel E. Moger Photo Collection.

He made his home in a hut along the Wepawaug River, above Kissing Bridge. It was said that sometimes late at night, he would let out a war whoop that “would make your blood run cold.” Never-the-less, he was peaceful and died peacefully.

### Band Members Built Milford’s Early Bandstand

A bandstand on the Green was built by the members of the Milford Cornet Band and was dedicated on Aug.

7, 1890. The Journal-Courier of Aug. 11 that year told the story: “The new bandstand was dedicated with much eclat and beating of symbols. It is situated near the soldier’s monument and about (the bandstand) was congregated the larger part of the town’s population. The Milford Band outdid itself in the part of the performance that it had to render. Appropriate addresses were made by Rev. Ferguson and Messers Gunn and Clarke.”

That day was a great success, but not everything went smoothly in the planning stages. The New Haven Register of July 2, 1890 had this report: “The injunction case of Henry C. Platt against L.C. Smith, town agent of Milford, was heard this morning. Mr. Platt claims that his dwelling will be greatly damaged by constructing a bandstand on the green just opposite.”

Judge Sanford denied the motion, and the builders went back to work.

That bandstand graced the green for many

years until the late 1990s, when someone lost control of a car and smashed right into it, causing a lot of damage. The plan was to rebuild it, but upon examination it was found that wood rot was affecting the whole thing, making it unsafe.

It was torn down and today the structure is at ground level and accessible to the handicapped. Old-timers still call it a bandstand, but now it is more like a gazebo. By definition a gazebo is open on the sides, has a permanent roof, and is built on a site that provides an attractive view. The origin of the word gazebo is not clear, but some have said it developed from the word gaze.

And to add to the confusion, a gazebo can also be a bandstand – you just need a band small enough to fit.

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

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(Continued From 1)

this evening and moving forward, because the 2.58 percent that was given to us above this year's budget doesn't even cover our contractual obligations in salaries.”

Cutaia added that fact alone meant that the Board of Education would be forced to make cuts in other areas, as well as cutting into the current workforce.

During her presentation, Cutaia argued that education is a human capital-driven system, so that maintaining and adding programs usually requires adding staff. Moreover, she said, yearly contractual wage increases for the next few years are expected to increase by an average around 2.7 percent – again above the amount approved by the Board of Finance.

“Even for the next three years, we'll be unable to meet our contractual obligations, which will mean reductions in not just staffing, but likely programming and services for our children,” she said.

According to Cutaia, closing an unspecified elementary school could save the district about \$1.2 million for the year, and closing a middle school could produce \$1.7 million in savings. Any such move would also likely increase class sizes and require layoffs.

Closing a school is not the only option on the table. In order to meet the \$1.8 million threshold, Cutaia offered a laundry list of cuts to programs and services, including deferring the normal replacement of servers and computers, abandoning the update to the middle school mathematics program that is already underway, increasing class sizes, dropping elementary world languages and eliminating freshman sports.

Board of Education member Cindy Wolfe Boynton suggested during the meeting that the elimination of several science, technology, engineering and math programs

at the same time would leave students little access to that type of experiential learning.

“It sounds like that with the elimination of all of these hands-on learning, that our students are going to have very little opportunity for that problem-based, problem-solving learning that we were seeing so much success with,” she said.

“If we're not closing a school, then we're dipping from a lot of buckets, and some of those buckets may be redundant in category” Cutaia replied. “The STEM work we've done for five years will take a huge hit. We're going to unravel STEM at the elementary.”

For its part, the Board of Finance in its 4-1 decision against the Board of Education's requested budget suggested that the system had too many administrators and counselors. The finance board also discussed declining enrollment in its decision – a topic that has been brought up in past budget negotiations. Milford school enrollment, like most schools across Connecticut, has been slowly dropping over the last few decades due to demographic changes in the state.

The Board of Aldermen now has the final say over how much the Board of Education receives as it reviews and finalizes the entire city budget. The Milford Ed Advocates, an organization of community members dedicated to supporting the city's schools, planned as of press time to rally in front of City Hall and push the aldermen to restore the funding for education.

Smith

(Continued From 2)

increase in taxes, breaking a streak of six consecutive reductions in the mill rate. The city's public school system is also under strain, with the possibility of spending shortfalls that could lead to cuts in programs and the potential closure of one of the schools.

Fundraiser Brings In Money, Food For Purple Pantry



Local Coldwell Banker realtor Wendy Barry hosted the 2nd Annual Purple Pantry Boxes Food Drive/ Fundraiser on March 24 at New England Brewing Co. in Woodbridge. The event was free and open to the public and this year's event doubled its fundraising over last year. The fundraiser took in over \$3,000 through the sale of tickets for over 70 raffle items. Donations and attendees brought in over 600 shelf-stable food items. Barry is also a member of the Orange Rotary Club, which has recently undertaken a service project to manage and stock one of the Purple Pantry's busiest pantries five days per week with volunteers from the club taking on various rolls to see to the success of the project. Devon Rotary, Milford Rotary and West Haven Rotary have contributed to the project as well. Purple Pantry Boxes is a nonprofit organization that provides easy access to food for people struggling with food insecurity throughout Milford, Bridgeport and West Haven. Photo courtesy of Wendy Barry.

Bridge Games Come To Orange Senior Lounge

A weekly duplicate bridge game is held on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Senior Lounge at High Plains Community Center. The entry fee is \$2.

This is a social game, and cash prizes are awarded. For more information, call Joan or Rick Roberts at 203 795-1591 or email joan@freemanroberts.com.

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For Nature’s Sake

Three Must-See Exhibits To Visit At Milford’s Earth Day

Earth Day, an annual event first celebrated nationwide in 1970 and now observed in 193 countries, will be celebrated on the Milford City Green on April 22 with several dozen exhibitors offering a variety of approaches to Milford’s Earth Day theme of “Fighting for Our Planet.”

The full list of exhibits and activities scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Green that day can be found on the event website at [MilfordEarthDay.org](http://MilfordEarthDay.org), including tables to be hosted by nonprofits like CT Audubon, a master wildlife expert on bears, volunteers and citizen groups offering craft activities for children and how-to demonstrations and explanations on gardening and waste reduction.

Representing the business community, the outdoor sports company REI and others with sustainable goals and products will be on hand. And those who have wondered, “What does the Milford Tree Commission do?” can speak with that group and others from the city.

To get the most from the day, the hosting group, Milford’s Environmental Concerns Coalition, encourages visitors to bring their sense of wonder and be prepared to ask questions. The first Earth Day, after all, was proposed as a “teach in,” equipping the public with much-needed information and inspiration.

With that in mind, a good place to start the day would be three especially impactful organizations: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Trout Unlimited and Save the Sound.

The modest exterior of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s research facility in Milford, one of a handful of NOAA’s coastal laboratories in New England, gives no clue to the exciting, essential work of the scientists within – including analyses and breakthrough innovations in shellfish nutrition, habitat and genetics that can help clams, mussels and oysters survive and support a vigorous aquatic ecosystem, even in the midst of climate stresses.

On the Green for Earth Day, visitors to the NOAA table will meet scientists from the NOAA Fisheries Milford Lab engaged in the abovementioned research. “The lab will bring some native shellfish to demonstrate how they eat algae, making the water both clearer and cleaner,” said Science Communications Specialist and NOAA affiliate Kristin Jablonski. “We will also show underwater video from oyster farming gear in Long Island Sound, demonstrating how native fish species use the gear as habitat.”

Whereas NOAA is a federal agency, Trout Unlimited is a nonprofit environmental group founded in 1959 in Michigan that today has over 300,000 members and 387 chapters across the country. Much more than a group of fishing hobbyists (although they offer satisfying workshops and events for that population), all Trout Unlimited chapters are working toward ideal management of the natural resources that foster healthy cold-water fish habitat. Their motto is, “If we take care of the fish, the fishing takes care of itself.”

At Milford’s Earth Day, Trout Unlimited will be represented by their local Nutmeg chapter, which has a particular interest in restoring and protecting landscapes that affect the Saugatuck, Mill, Aspetuck, Pequonnock and Farmill Rivers. The Nutmeg chapter members on hand at Earth Day will answer questions, and their table will include brochures and QR codes with the organization’s information, a video on conservation practices and a sample fly rod and tied fishing flies.

Meanwhile, anything affecting the quality of water and habitat in and around the Long Island Sound will attract the attention, and at times intervention, of the Save the Sound organization. They are watchdogs and advocates, keeping an eye on legislation in Hartford while also maintaining a presence, on the ground and in the water, conserving and restoring habitats that marine species depend on for survival.

The associate soundkeeper for Save the Sound, Emma DeLoughery, will be at the Milford Green and ready to answer questions and offer details on current soundkeeper projects and issues affecting the Sound. Visitors can view water quality results from a 2022 Long Island Sound report card and, for an interactive challenge, says DeLoughery, folks can play “a fun Long Island Sound trivia game with the chance to win Save the Sound swag items as prizes.”

In 1970, the first Earth Day was prompted by a sense of urgency to clean up polluted skies and waters and kicked off a chain of events that, among other things, saved bald eagles and made air and waterways cleaner. But pollution overall did not go away; some environmental risks remained, and others grew. In fact, carbon dioxide emissions, a prime driver of the climate crisis, have increased by roughly 90 percent since 1970, according to the EPA.

As we explore what to do and what conversations to have this 2023 Earth Day, we might think about what it would take to lead the anchor of the evening news to say something like Frank Reynolds did on CBS on April 22, 1970, while showing a map of the US: “On this Earth Day millions of Americans in the communities which dot this map have taken the first step to survival.”



PATRICIA HOUSER

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.

by Joseph Cole

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to handle or even address the situation

In 1958, Lung-chu Chen was considered one of the most remarkable figures in Taiwan and was believed destined for a communist

location on February 20.

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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Opinion & Editorial

Ponder This

The Relentless Drive Toward The Mean

In strategic planning and budgetary circles during my professional life we referred to flat budgeting as the relentless drive to the mean.

The budget process from start to finish is a planning tool. Done properly, as in the case of Milford’s Board of Education request, it is a strategic planning exercise that informs all participants and can be used to inform the public. Indeed, this is a primary purpose of budgetary hearings. Residents and elected officials may be expected and encouraged to ask the question: why are they receiving an increase when I have to cut back? The administration in any town has the responsibility to answer these questions, requiring the hard work of authentic discussion. Elected officials must meet the responsibility to help the community understand and interpret budget requests appropriately.

The role of the legislative body, the Board of Aldermen, is not to swear allegiance to a particular administration or to cut taxes and keep the mill rate flat. The goal is to provide essential services while remaining fiscally prudent. Milford’s democratic record has been stellar in this regard over a course of a decade, and we should be very proud. The Board of Aldermen has been an effective steward of the public purse and a generous

supporter of education. It is no longer feasible or desirable to keep an overly restricted mill rate steady without an examination of revenue streams. Flexible financial planning is helpful and necessary, but it is not the best practice to decide on particular rates or numbers and then engage in a budget process artificially designed to hold to these preset parameters. Flat budgeting is where the real hazard lies. Requests for cutbacks across the board are especially unkind to the future. The very act of thinking about the best future for the organization, department or agency is eclipsed by the immediate need to focus on the now of how and what to cut back. The attention shifts to survival or getting through without chaos. Sadly, this paring away of ideas and the resultant stagnation is then used to determine future funding. Research, experience and data demonstrate that what is cut during flat budget allocation are the ingredients to success. Without supportive services and resources, performance and outcomes start to diminish.

One memory stands as an example of flat



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

budgeting damage over time. The budget read as mostly labor and not much else. The real effect of the flat budget over a mere 10-year period had been to eliminate from the document all but the basic costs of salaries to run the expert enterprise. Cutting what was then known as “low-hanging fruit” had reduced the request to a stripped-down document by the request stage. Needs and plans were no longer evident. A glance by unseasoned eyes might inaccurately conclude that not much damage had been done.

Milford is commanding us to pay attention. Residents do not want mediocrity in their school system; no drive to the mean for our children. Parents want to continue the current path to excellence of Milford schools. They are proud, engaged and determined to provide the best for their children while retaining all progress made over the last several years.

We must listen to the kids through the voices of the community. Teachers are not a “cost” to the system of education; they are the system. Providing a flat budget, knowing that contractual obligations will not be cov-

ered, is a sleight of hand pure and simple. Costs for health care and benefits for each full-time position are funded by the city side of the budget but should not translate into a titling during the next budget request.

I am impressed by and grateful for the community uproar regarding the Board of Education budget. It has highlighted a fault line in the budgeting process that affects all units across the city.

It is spring all year round in the teaching world. Let’s give a round of applause along with appropriate, sustainable resources to those who make the flowers bloom.

*Dr. Ellen Russell Beatty is in her fourth term on the Milford Board of Aldermen. Sheserved 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

Should You Worry About The Health Of Your Bank?

Welcome to the time of the Great Depression. Most of us were not around from 1929-1941. Many affluent members of the community were suddenly found penniless when the 9,000 banks in which they had their money failed.

There are still many questions about this: too many banks with too few depositors, decline in economic activity, the decline of the rural banks because of the reduction in the value of farming economic activity, bad government policies, the interference of federal and state agencies.

So what is a person to do? The first thing is not to panic. Panic precipitates runs on financial institutions, many times causing the collapse.

That’s great you say, but it’s your hard-earned money. Silicon Valley Bank failed in

36 hours due to a depositor run on the bank. Those who have watched It’s a Wonderful Life remember how the savings and loan survived a run on its assets by Jimmy Stewart’s impassioned plea to his depositors to minimize withdrawals to only what they really needed. He reminded them of where their money really was: in their homes. He survived the day in the movie. SVB tried this same approach

in real life but didn’t have such luck, as its multimillion-dollar startups had their financial lifelines in those bank deposits. They bailed.

If you have money, you probably think FDIC insurance will cover your accounts. Yes and no.



THOMAS P. HURLEY

Since the 2008 economic decline, the FDIC expanded account coverage to \$250,000. You can increase the coverage further by having different accounts, such as a joint account. If you are a husband and wife, for instance, you would each be covered for up to \$500,000 (\$250,000 each, known as the per bank, per each account ownership category rules).

FDIC insurance coverage depends on two things: whether your chosen financial product is a deposit product; and whether your bank is FDIC insured. Stock investments, bond investments, mutual funds, crypto assets, life insurance policies, annuities, municipal securities, safe deposit boxes and their contents, US Treasury bills, bonds

and notes are not covered by FDIC insurance. Seek a financial adviser to review where your assets are.

SVB’s collapse was of a different sort. The bank had a high percentage treasury portfolio exposure at low interest rates – considered safe, low-risk assets. If they could hold onto them to their maturity date, they would not have been in any trouble. But due to the large number of these assets in their portfolio, they had to liquidate them in an environment of increasing interest rates in a short period. In other words, they had to sell the assets at a discount. This meant they started hemorrhaging losses to cover the withdrawals.

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

Letters to the Editor:

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

Cutting Kids Hurts All of Us

To the Editor:

When I first heard about the Milford Board of Finance slashing the education budget by \$1.8 million, I was stunned.

We have all been children. What we have not all been is children in 2023. Children living through a pandemic; children being policed in schools; children trained in active shooter drills. The Board of Finance wants to cut school budgets now?

I’ve heard some politicians claim they are looking out for seniors with these cuts.

I’m a senior – you are not looking out for me with these cuts.

I refuse to be pitted against my 4-year-old grandson. We are not enemies. We are the complete opposite.

I want the best for my grandson as he enters school; I want the best for every child in Milford. The only way we become a better city is by working together and looking out for one another. We may not all be seniors, but we have all been children.

Who will be hurt by this? All of us – children, parents, teachers, seniors, neighborhoods and communities.

I reject the portrayal of Milford as a city for only some of the people. I know and believe Milford can be a city where everyone can live and thrive.

Therese Eke  
Milford

Pause Needed on Playground

To the Editor:

As I watched the March 1 meeting of the Board of Selectmen on OGAT, since I was unable to attend, it is so concerning that the egos of the people that made a decision as to where the playground at Fred Wolfe Park is going means more than taking a pause and getting feedback from a safety consultant to be sure that the decision of the location of the playground is in the best interest of the children who will be using it. It has been two years without a safety study, two years without proper drainage placed, two years with things not being thought through. Why do we want to rush this and have a safety consultant come in and laugh at our lack of ability to plan appropriately and make a decision that is

actually sound and makes sense for the future of the town?

It is sad as a taxpayer that we have put the cart before the horse again. Old Tavern has little to no drainage on those baseball fields. Had it been done correctly, we wouldn’t be spending so much money as a town on Speedy Dry every season. Things need to be done the right way and this is our chance to do something

the right way and take a pause and have the safety consultant come in and help in the decision as to where the playground should go.

Please really think of the negative aspects of this decision and how it impacts the children and the people driving in and out of that complex. One of the people who spoke at the

*Continued on page 8*

Milford-Orange Times

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# Opinion & Editorial

## Caring Professionally



STATE REP. (D-114)  
MARY WELANDER

Over the past few years, we have seen a much-needed shift in the legislature’s priorities. The vital role of “care” professions and professionals, often overlooked by legislators, are taking their rightful place center stage.

The pandemic exposed weak points and inequities spanning various industries, but it became impossible to ignore the economic, community and cultural necessity of professions that had largely been ignored: child care, nursing, teaching, elder care and nursing home care givers.

I hope it’s not misplaced nostalgia, but I remember these careers being treated with respect and admiration, where individuals would create lifelong careers caring for and supporting our more vulnerable members of society. Many of us still do admire and value these professionals, but it is clear not everyone shares these values.

Meetings, public hearings, studies and personal stories have illustrated an alarming shift in how care professionals are experiencing complex changes in their careers with no easy solutions.

Nurses and teachers are leaving the profession in concerningly high numbers – not because they don’t care anymore, but because of low salaries, increasingly toxic and unsafe working spaces and general devaluing of the work that they do. Early childhood educators and child care providers are struggling to stay open because of staffing shortages linked to chronically low wages. Simultaneously, families are struggling to pay for increasingly higher child care costs. Even basic elder care is often only available to those who can pay the rapidly rising rates associated with it.

These women-dominated professions are quite literally the linchpins of our society.

If we want our economy to thrive then we need safe, abundant and affordable child care. In addition to state assistance, partnering with larger businesses and corporations to provide more on-site, flexible, affordable child care is a smart economic move. An April 2022 Forbes article spoke about the high return on investment that offering child care would bring in the recruitment and retention of employees, and the overall success of the company.

Another aspect to ensure community success is a supported and valued public school system. We need to allow our teachers – experts in education with multiple highly specialized degrees – to teach without fear and be treated with respect.

If we want our society to be one of dignity, then we need to ensure that seniors are cared for respectfully. Increased oversight of nursing homes and assisted living communities is critical, as well as the expansion of services that allow seniors to “age in place” in their own homes.

If we want a healthy existence, then we need to have balanced, safe, supportive, and adaptive health care facilities. Nurses need to know they are protected at work from violence and that any new policies are realistically implementable and enforceable.

There are no easy answers to any of these problems, but we are working collaboratively with care professionals to find comprehensive solutions. Please share any feedback you have at [mary.welander@cga.ct.gov](mailto:mary.welander@cga.ct.gov).

## Domestic Violence Protections



STATE REP. (R-119)  
KATHY KENNEDY

I wrote in January about the steps being taken in Hartford to increase protections for victims of domestic violence. This is a topic that especially hits home for us in Milford and Orange.

Recently, I submitted testimony to the Judiciary Committee as they considered legislation that would implement protections, victim services and stronger penalties for those who commit intimate partner and domestic violence crimes. I highlighted my support for three critical bills that have fostered bipartisan support to combat this issue.

The first bill I supported was HB 6887, An Act Concerning Additional Legal Protection for Victims of Domestic Violence. Objectives in this bill include permitting a life sentence without release, nor commuted sentences, for domestic violence murderers and expanding Connecticut’s GPS monitoring of those who violate restraining orders. The bill will require the Office of the Victim Advocate to participate on behalf of victims during court proceedings and demand the Victim Services Unit provide victims with information on criminal hearings. This bill will provide the necessary ingredients to reduce domestic violence crime and prioritize victim rights.

Many of these domestic violence crimes are committed by reoffenders. Current laws do not require certain criminals to contribute any amount when posting bail following an arrest, permitting them to quickly reenter their communities and freely commit crimes. That’s why I put my support behind HB 5824, An Act Reforming the Bail System, which strengthens our bond laws by frequently auditing bondsmen accounts and limiting when offenders can be released prior to a hearing.

The final bill I supported in my testimony was SB 5, An Act Strengthening the Protection Against and Response to Domestic Violence. This bill, proposed by my Democratic colleagues, is a prime example of how increasing protections for domestic violence victims is a bipartisan issue. Many of its provisions reflect the goals of our Republican-led proposal, including allocating funding for victim’s assistance grants to expanding GPS monitoring of perpetrators of family violence crimes. This bill will also prohibit a perpetrator of a family violence crime from receiving alimony from their victim.

These three proposals will implement the necessary safeguards to uphold and secure victims’ rights. However, there is plenty of work to be done. In my testimony, I also recommended we amend bill language concerning restraining orders. Right now, a restraining order can be extended in Connecticut if the victim is in “imminent and present physical danger,” while in Massachusetts, an extension can be approved based on the “likelihood of further abuse.” By recognizing the “likelihood” of abuse and danger in our bill’s language, we can protect the lives of many residents and families.

No one should live in fear because the law won’t protect them. I believe we can define our state not by a rising number of domestic violence cases, but by our commitment to protecting victim rights, family values and to enacting long-term solutions to prevent the proliferation of these heinous acts.

Thank you for demonstrating your support for these laws by participating in public hearings and contacting your elected officials. As always, please never hesitate to reach out to me at [Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov) or at 800-240-8700 with your questions, ideas and concerns.

## A Look At Your Tax Burdens



STATE REP. (R-117)  
CHARLES FERRARO

State lawmakers are wrapping up the final legislative committee meetings of the 2023 session as they prepare for a stretch of rigorous debates on the floor of the House of Representatives to cast final votes on bills before they’re sent to the governor to become law.

Among all the concepts discussed in legislative committees, on television news and at kitchen tables across Connecticut, that which we hear most often concerns affordability in our state. Residents are faced daily with difficult decisions at the grocery store and when paying their utility bills. A recent news article highlighted that when Milford families were offered a free-and-reduced school lunch program, over 90 percent opted to participate. That is one of many troubling metrics showcasing the real-life concerns of our friends and neighbors.

At the core of our affordability problem in Connecticut is a growing culture of high tax burdens on residents and businesses. Connecticut is among the three highest-taxed states in America and continues to find new ways to levy fees on those who call it home and those passing through.

In January, a new highway use tax on trucks took effect, causing a sharp increase in operating costs for local businesses and forcing many to pass additional costs onto consumers. I joined my House Republican colleagues to stand athwart this tax, petitioning for a public hearing on our bill to repeal it. We won our petition and heard your rallies against the fee, but the legislative majority still won’t take this cost-saving action.

The new truck tax, which is another tax on you, is among many unnecessary burdens placed on Connecticut residents. In fact, our state was not only rated by Wallet Hub as the second worst to be a taxpayer, but also worst in America to start a small business after Alaska.

Just in this session, majority legislators have proposed additional taxes on wealth, ammunition, capital gains, commercial and residential property, businesses and more. We are sending a message to all residents and guests that Connecticut is not an affordable place to live.

While the governor and majority lawmakers are calling for tax credits and sunsets to small cuts, my Republican colleagues and I are strongly urging more holistic approaches to affordability – comprehensive tax reform through permanent cuts, increased incentives and cutting red tape where necessary.

It is a vital priority that our tax plans take broad approaches with targeted relief to strongly benefit working- and middle-income earners and families and those with child care needs. We must offer our local business owners who sustain our economy tax policies which support them in return. Every new fee on them is a new vacant storefront in our downtowns.

We are proposing to reduce annual business reporting fees, repeal the highway use tax, allow long-term care insurance premiums to be deducted from state income taxes and cut the income tax for the middle class by one percent.

Please continue to reach out to me at [Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov) with your questions and concerns regarding state issues.

## Navigating The AI Waters



STATE SEN. (D-14)  
JAMES MARONEY

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is like a superhero with a dual identity. On one hand, it possesses incredible powers to process vast amounts of data, make predictions and even learn and adapt on its own. It’s like having a team of brilliant, tireless analysts at your beck and call, ready to crunch numbers and uncover insights at light-speed.

But with great power comes great responsibility, and the dangers of AI are also very real. Like a rogue vigilante, it can cause unintended harm if it’s not properly trained or monitored. Let’s not forget the classic fear of machines taking over the world, which may sound like a sci-fi cliché but is still a legitimate concern. As with any superhero, it’s important to keep a close eye on AI and ensure it’s using its powers for good.

I can’t take credit for writing the above paragraphs, though maybe that is debatable. They were written by ChatGPT after I gave it the prompt to “write a witty and engaging paragraph on the powers and dangers of AI.”

AI has been all over the news recently. If you haven’t heard of ChatGPT yet, it is a tool made by OpenAI that uses artificial intelligence to respond to user prompts. It can be used to write papers, emails, articles or any of a number of other tasks.

While the work product from ChatGPT may be impressive, AI is still in its nascent stages and presents us with both tremendous promise and perils. You present the topic and the chatbot can answer your questions, write, copy and even draft your emails. Recently, we saw in South Windsor that a fake newsletter was created using ChatGPT and then circulated. We have also seen fake images being created by AI and disseminated via social media.

While we can envision the many ways that AI will be able to help make us more efficient and improve our lives, we can also see real dangers. We don’t know what is coming next. At a public hearing on SB 1103, a bill I authored regarding the state’s use of AI, an expert testified that regenerative AI (AI that will write itself) is about 10 to 20 years away.

Unfortunately, often the way that we regulate as a government is wrong; we allow technologies to develop and embed themselves within society before regulating them. In many cases it may be too late by then.

I believe it is important that we start to regulate state government’s use of AI. We need to require impact assessments ahead of implementing AI in decision-making processes and ensure that there are no disparate impacts. We have already seen that AI can impact us all. Hiring algorithms discriminate based on age. Some algorithms give higher interest rates for loans based on race. Many government-used algorithms in other states, ranging from provision of SNAP benefits to deciding when to investigate reported incidences of child abuse, have been shown to discriminate based on income.

SB 1103 would require assessments ahead of the implementation of AI in specific high-risk incidences. It would create policies and procedures to govern the state’s use of AI, and it would create a task force to work on creating a Connecticut AI bill of rights for our residents. While there is tremendous potential for the use of AI to create significant efficiencies, we need to be certain we aren’t causing unintended harms before fully embracing the use of AI in state government.

Opinion & Editorial

Continue Praying For Our Leaders

By Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus

A significant number of Jews in Israel and in the diaspora are quite unhappy about Israel's newly elected government. Some rabbis have chosen, as a result, to change the wording of the traditional "Prayer for the State of Israel." One rabbi, whose words, I've abridged below, explained it as follows: "I'll never cease supporting the cultural, social and spiritual richness of Israel's beloved Jewish society. In fact, we should intensify our support for Israel. We should visit Israel. We should redouble and re-triple our efforts to know our Israeli brothers and sisters. We should support them in their very real challenges. But we should shun the incoming government of Israel. It deserves whatever small protest we can offer from afar. Here is mine: We will continue to pray that Israeli society succeeds. But we will not

pray that this new government succeeds." The opening sentences of the prayer the rabbi and others find unacceptable is reprinted below. I've italicized the two sentences they reject: "Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel: Bless the State of Israel, with its promise of redemption. Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth; help them with Your good counsel...." I, many rabbis, and many supporters of Israel – both Jewish and Christian – utterly disagree with the decision to alter the traditional prayer for Israel. We find it misguided and ill-advised. The prayer for the modern State of Israel, inspired by the age-old Jewish "Prayer for the Government," is a prayer for the welfare of the country. In praying for

the heads of state, we pray that those who govern make decisions aligned not with their own biased interests, but with biblical values – values that urge them to promote the welfare of all the country's inhabitants. Indeed, we've all invoked the Prayer for America during administrations we both liked and disliked. Yet, the opening paragraph of that prayer, found in many Jewish prayer books still, remains: "We ask Your blessings for our country, the United States of America – for its government, for its leaders and advisors, and for all who exercise just and rightful authority... May they administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom may forever abide in our midst...." Shouldn't that hold true with regard to our prayers for Israel's government? Shouldn't

we pray that her leaders "administer all affairs of state fairly, that peace and security, happiness and prosperity, justice and freedom abide in Israel's midst?" Speaking of the welfare of Israel and all her inhabitants, don't Israel's leaders need our prayers now more than ever? The sense of divisiveness in the Jewish state these days is, in some ways, even deeper than the divisiveness we currently experience here in the US. To my mind, there's no better time than now to collectively pray, "Guide Israel's leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth; help them with Your good counsel." This is why we continue praying for Israel's leaders at our congregation.

Alvin Wainhaus is rabbi at Congregation Or-Shalom in Orange.

Letters

(Continued From 6)

meeting has a degree in engineering and does this for a living and has a lot more knowledge. I couldn't agree more: it needs to pause while we have this study done.

Please think long and hard about this. Parents would rather wait a bit longer for the playground than to push something forward that is not safe and will need to be moved eventually anyway. It will end up costing the town more in the long run.

Erika Higgins  
Orange

Fred Wolfe Park Ad Hoc Committee's Hands Tied

To the Editor:

Over the last two years several Orange town residents complained about the location of the proposed playground at Fred Wolfe Park. Several people attended the Orange Board of Selectmen meetings and expressed concern about traffic safety. Orange selectmen then created a seven-person Fred Wolfe Park Ad Hoc Committee. Before the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, a land license for 14.4 acres was given out to Walter and Dorothy Hine for \$375 per year to plant corn at Fred Wolfe Park. This would eliminate any options to relocate the playground and Mary Tracy

soccer fields to the corn fields for two years. Also, on Jan. 19 at the first Fred Wolfe Park committee meeting it was announced that the relocation of the playground was off the table. Per the Orange First Selectman the playground will go in the location where he selected. Now the committee was told to correct the traffic problem created by the location of the playground.

Please help correct this misstep. Please sign a petition to stop planting corn at Fred Wolfe Park and change the location of the playground. There is a petition not to renew the lease for corn at the park. We want to keep getting signatures. Per the Town of Orange charter, section 3.6 allows voters to go to referendum on this issue.

Please sign and contact your selectmen. The petition is available at [change.org/p/termination-of-field-view-farm-lease](https://change.org/p/termination-of-field-view-farm-lease).

and two things probably top their list: our great public schools and the open spaces that are an essential characteristic of our town. When the town spends on either, it is a long-term investment that keeps our town a thriving and attractive place to raise a family.

This budget season brings great news – the companies that operate here have once again grown our property tax revenue, so it's easier to balance our priorities. We can fund quality K-12 education, lower our tax rate and invest in our roads and other town infrastructure and services.

However, we can't take our public education for granted. Each spring, we need to vote to support the Amity budget so that the Amity Middle School in Orange and Amity High School can continue to prepare our children for their lives ahead as young adults.

To me, this vote is an opportunity to say yes to our kids, their future, and the long-term future of our town. I hope you'll join me in making a plan to vote "Yes" for the Amity budget referendum at your usual polling location on May 2.

Tom Pisano  
Orange Soccer Association Co-President

Amity Budget an Investment in Our Community

To the Editor:

Ask anyone what makes Orange special,

Robert Lim  
Orange

We Regret The Error

The Recycling Tip column on page 16 in the March 9, 2023 issue carried an incorrect headline. The correct headline should have been "Proper Disposal Helps Orange Save Money."

Women's Summit Comes To Milford



At Bin 100 a large group of women met on March 10 for the annual Women's Leadership Summit sponsored by the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Network of Executive Women. The panel of women was moderated by Christine Gonillo, the chair of the board for the Milford Regional Chamber. Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz discussed the history of women in politics in Connecticut and let everyone know there is still much to be done to create an equal playing field for women in the workplace. Amy Grey discussed how being marginalized in the media industry for being a woman is something women cannot stand for and must make their voices heard. Fran Pastore discussed the role of women in business and the great strides they have made over the last generation despite still having a long way to go for full equality. From left: Ann Nyberg of News 8, Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, Amy Grey of Full Power Radio, Fran Pastore of WBDC. Photo by Tiffany Whitaker.

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Getting To Know You

I have two cats named Misty and Odin. If you're a cat owner, you already know that I have that backwards. I am owned by two cats named Misty and Odin.

Since I've been working from home, my cats and I have gotten a lot closer. They say familiarity breeds contempt, but that's not the case with cats. Cats only come around when they want to see you, so it's hard to get too familiar with them.

Misty is my quiet little gray cat. She has long fur and a cute little button of a nose, which is touchable unless I cheat and hold her head so she can't retract it. She doesn't talk much, and her idea of cuddling is to wait until I am comfortably seated and then walk all over me. If I attempt to hold her, she'll wriggle away from me, sit down just out of reach and wait. After what she considers a decent amount of time, she'll decide I need another bout of cat paw massage and tread all over me again.

Odin, on the other hand, is a love panther. He's a giant golden tabby who loves to cuddle and snuggle and smush his face into my face. He is chatty and will talk back to me when I talk to him. He also follows me from room to

room and lets me know that I am too far away from the empty food bowl that requires my immediate attention. Every sofa in my home has an immense cat-shaped dent in the pillows. After he has smushed my face with his face long enough he'll climb up behind me on the sofa and flop his tail on my head until the tip of it tickles in my ear.

Ernest Hemingway said with cats you get one hundred percent honesty. Frankly, I think Papa was a little low on that estimate. From my cat's honesty, I've learned a lot lately.

For example, I've learned that there is nothing as magical as a sunbeam. It's impossible to be in a bad mood once you've found a sunbeam. A sunbeam is great for sitting or sleeping, and if you've got some thinking to do, a sunbeam provides a great place for it. While having a sunbeam to yourself makes your day a little better, sharing one with someone you love makes it a great day.

I've also learned that if you sit in the kitchen and stare at your food bowl long enough, sometimes food magically appears in it. If



DAVID CROW

that doesn't work, if you stare at someone long enough, they eventually feel guilty and fill your food bowl. Just remember not to eat just any thing they throw in your bowl. Hold out for your favorite and refuse to eat anything else.

I've learned that when it comes to napping, any soft spot will do. Laundry baskets with warm clothes in them are especially prized. However, if you want a really good nap, a soft spot, a soft blanket and someone to lean on while you sleep is ideal.

I've learned that anything that moves, rolls or jingles can be a toy. Those toys are even more fun if you flip them into the air until they wind up under the furniture. Then the fun really begins, since you can spend endless hours rolling on the floor and trying to reach them.

I've learned that a good stretch, a good scratch or a nice bath should not be delayed. I've learned that you can always face away when you find someone annoying, you can hide if it ever gets too loud, you can leave the

room if something doesn't smell right and when faced with a problem, go find a friend who just might be working at the moment and sit in front of the computer screen until he gets up and solves that problem for you. To thank him you can bunt your head into his shins and purr while he tries to get back to work.

Best of all, I've learned that if you love someone it's much more meaningful if you let them see it in your eyes rather than telling them with your mouth.

I recommend a cat for a companion. You always know where you stand with them. In a world where it can be difficult to figure out what's going on, a friend who can teach you that a good stretch and a sunbeam will help you cope is a friend indeed.

Until next time, y'all come out.

*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.*

The Garden Spot

It's always interesting to see what new homeowners do to an existing property. I recently watched as some new owners of a home on a corner lot bring in heavy equipment to remove brambles which were at the side of the property, cut down at least 10 old-growth trees at the rear of the property, bring in fill, and then level the property – all in preparation for planting a lawn. Unfortunately, the end result will be increased noise, reduced biodiversity and increased maintenance, pollution and chemical use.

Trees and shrubs help reduce noise by absorbing, deflecting, refracting or masking sound waves. According to the US Department of Agriculture, a 100-foot tree barrier will reduce noise between five to eight decibels. A buffer closer to the noise source will reduce sound more than one further away, so the brambles on the street side of this property were creating an effective sound buffer as well as supporting birds and wildlife that would help mask unnatural noise. A back-

yard that once was a private, quiet, corner lot will sound like it's on I-95 as cars go around the corner.

Trees also help to reduce our carbon footprint. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, the average mature tree sequesters about 48 pounds of carbon annually while the average automobile releases about 9,200 pounds of carbon annually. Not removing those 10 trees would have offset 5 percent of the carbon released by driving. The extensive tree removal not only increased noise pollution but increased their family carbon footprint.

The situation is not improved by thinking, "Well, I'll burn the wood and use it for heat." You can do that, but burning wood generates more carbon emissions per unit of energy generated than fossil fuels.

The other unrealized benefit of trees is



PAT DRAY

that the shade they provide reduces your cooling bills in summer and the windbreak reduces heating costs in winter.

Removing existing habitat and replacing it with turf also reduces biodiversity. Lawns (turf) are monocultures which support very few insects and pollinators. What insects are there are probably killed by the herbicides and pesticides the new homeowner will probably use to support that new lawn. Earthworms are one of the most severely affected, so expect to need to aerate your lawn mechanically, since the earthworms are gone.

Watering that lawn for one hour three times a week will use about 12,240 gallons of water in a month. The use of a gas-powered lawn mower for one hour releases the carbon equivalent of a 100-mile car trip, while the noise from a leaf blower is ap-

proximately 112 decibels (a plane taking off is about 105 decibels). Hopefully the new homeowner will have a very deep well (or city water) and good ear protection while they increase their carbon footprint.

The question, of course, is what to do instead. Start by replanting with natives which will support biodiversity. Create habitats for pollinators by leaving some debris. Replace turf with native, deer-resistant ground covers such as amsonia, switchgrass or bee balm. Practice "No Mow May" so that the pollinators can leave their ground nests prior to mowing. Eliminate the use of broad-spectrum herbicides and pesticides and spot treat and hand weed.

To estimate your carbon footprint, go to the EPA website at epa.gov.

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

Your Health

Before the pandemic, I recall writing about the benefits of various diets and intermittent fasting. Since I am fasting during this month of Ramadan, I would like to share some history and insight.

During Ramadan, Muslims all over the world observe a month of fasting. This is a "dry fast" from dawn until dusk where no types of food or water are consumed. One must eat and drink before sunrise, fast during the day, and then resume eating and drinking after sunset.

In the Islamic faith, the importance of fasting is explained Quran: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may develop God-consciousness."

Looking through an evolutionary lens, fasting has been observed by various religions and cultures and has been practiced for centuries by the followers of the three Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), Hinduism, Confucianism and Taoism.

Some of the historical and religious figures linked with fasting are Prophet Dawud (also known as King David) used to fast every other day. Prophet Muhammad (peace

and blessing be upon him) used to fast two days per week. Buddha is known to have practiced extreme forms of fasting. Mahatma Gandhi fasted during India's freedom movement.

Although dry fasting may seem like an impossible or undoable task, there are many benefits linked with it. For example, recent studies have shown that fasting can prevent cardiovascular diseases by maintaining body weight, blood pressure, LDL cholesterol and other lipid profiles.

The findings showed that in people who are healthy, fasting can reduce inflammatory markers (IL-1, IL-6 and TNF-α), oxidative stress marker (malondialdehyde), body weight, abdominal circumference, fasting blood glucose, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure. Several studies of dawn-to-sunset fasting suggested it suppresses chronic inflammation and oxidative stress, improving the metabolic profile and remodeling the gut microbiome.

Over the years, we have seen different diets and lifestyle modifications that have



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

gained a lot of attention. You may have also heard about "intermittent fasting."

The term intermittent fasting is often thrown around loosely without proper understanding. According to the Mayo Clinic website, intermittent fasting means that you avoid eating for a period of time each day or week. Some popular approaches to intermittent fasting include:

- Alternate-day fasting in which you eat a normal diet one day and either completely fast or have one small meal (less than 500 calories) the next day.
- 5:2 fasting, in which you eat a normal diet five days a week and fast two days a week.
- Daily time-restricted fasting, in which you eat normally but only within an eight-hour window each day. For example, skip breakfast but eat lunch around noon and dinner by 8 p.m.

Dr. Michael Mosley in 2012 released his TV documentary, Eat, Fast and Live Longer, and published his best-selling book, The Fast

Diet, based on the 5:2 concept of intermittent fasting. In his book, he advocated a form of fasting called "time-restricted eating."

The physiologic basis of intermittent fasting occurs during extended periods of fasting when the human body shifts metabolism away from the utilization of glucose towards the use of fatty acids that are derived from fat storages throughout the body. During this phase, a detoxification process occurs. After a few days of the fast, higher levels of endorphins are released in the blood, resulting in a better level of alertness and overall feeling of mental wellbeing.

Intermittent fasting is safe for many. However, I don't recommend fasting for those with underlying chronic health conditions like kidney disease, coronary artery diseases or seizure disorders that require the timely intake of medications. Please consult your health care provider to find out if you are a suitable candidate to observe fasting.

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

Fasting And Its Benefits

Facing Ourselves

Time Limited To Protect The Earth

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature – the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

These were the words written by writer and conservationist Rachel Carson in her book, *Silent Spring*, one of the works that raised awareness of the link between pollution and adverse health outcomes. Written in 1962, *Silent Spring* helped promote environmental initiatives on a global scale. As recognition of the importance of taking actions to protect the environment grew, efforts to spread awareness via events across the US evolved into Earth Day on April 22. First celebrated in 1970, observance of Earth Day has continued to grow, and it is now celebrated globally.

Momentum from Earth Day initiatives in the US eventually led to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and passage of the Clean Air Act, as well as other environmental laws. Despite these initiatives, there is much concern that what is being done is not enough.

How much impact have these measures made on protecting the environment? According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s recent report, which analyzed decades of research conducted by hun-

dreds of scientists, we are currently in the midst of a growing climate crisis which is heading to the point of no return – one in which the damage to Earth will be irreversible unless substantial and rigorous actions are made now. Extreme weather patterns continue to increase, causing devastation and destruction around the world, as well as displacement of people in multiple regions worldwide which have already reached the limit in their ability to adapt to these dire changes.

The deleterious effects of pollution on our health are impossible to ignore. Severe water scarcity and drought, as well as loss of agriculture and property due to fires, flooding, storms and rising sea levels are also challenges. Increasing and irrevocable losses in crucial ecosystems are evident, leading to plants and animals pushed to permanent extinction.

The IPCC’s recent report also includes recommendations for policy changes and other actions needed to protect nature, decrease and offset greenhouse gasses, and increase the use of renewable energy. However, the IPCC has been issuing warnings of the disastrous impact of climate change for more than 30 years since its first report in 1990,



JENNIFER JU

and remediation actions have only been implemented slowly.

Per the IPCC, temperatures are currently approximately 1.1 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, with permanent damage to the planet if temperatures increase another 0.4 degrees Celsius higher. According to a study published in January in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, there is evidence that the planet will reach these temperatures by the early 2030s.

It appears that IPCC’s report is being taken more seriously now. United Nations secretary general António Guterres said, “This report is a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe. Our world needs climate action on all fronts: everything, everywhere, all at once.” Earth Day 2023’s theme calls for us to “invest in our planet.” We can do so, as individuals and as a country, by striving for net-zero emissions, as well as adopting a shift in mindset in which year-round actions are taken to protect the planet, including more mindful consumption of products and fossil fuels, significantly reducing the use of plastics, educating ourselves on the proper way

to recycle so that the majority of what we think we are recycling doesn’t end up in the landfill, investing in renewable energy and voicing our support for laws that help reduce pollution as well as protect our forests, water and other natural resources.

As Rachel Carlson wrote in *Silent Spring*, “We stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost’s familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth superhighway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road – the one less traveled by – offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of the earth.”

There is only one Earth. We must act now to save our beautiful, precious planet for ourselves and for our future generations.

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

Orange Board of Finance

Centrist Solution Needed For National Debt Crisis

The US Congress needs to take immediate action on the national debt ceiling within the coming months in order to avoid sending shockwaves through global financial markets and to avoid a significant recession within the country. The path forward is not easy; however, it is achievable by limiting future spending and borrowing to promote economic growth and reduce inflation.

The last time the US had a balanced budget was nearly a quarter century ago under President Bill Clinton from 1998-2001. Clinton ended the era of big government by working with Democrats and Republicans to enact the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

Today the national debt stands at \$31.4 trillion and has increased by \$8 trillion just within the last three years. The US Treasury has taken extraordinary measures to keep paying the government’s bills, but that could run out before July, according to new figures from the Congressional Budget Office released in March.

When federal government spending exceeds revenue, creating a budget deficit, the government covers the gap by selling securities, such as treasury bonds. The national debt is the accumulation of all past deficits and the interest owed on the resulting debt. Measuring the debt as a share of gross domestic

product allows for comparing the level of debt over time relative to the size of the US economy. It also allows for comparisons with other countries’ debt-to-GDP ratios.

During the 2008 financial crisis, the government spent about \$1.8 trillion on fiscal stimulus and economic support to stabilize the banking system. Meanwhile, between fiscal years 2007 and 2009, a weak economy caused receipts to fall 18 percent; the overall debt more than doubled between 2007 and 2018.

Within the past few years, the government spent nearly \$3.6 trillion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both on social safety programs and financial stabilization. Unlike during the 2008 financial crisis, tax revenue increased during COVID, bolstered by a strong stock market.

However, big expenditure increases in recent years have not only come from COVID-19 spending and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq within the past two decades, but also from covering the rising medical costs of an aging population. To make matters worse, last year the federal government put forward a \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending



KEVIN McNABOLA

package, which only fueled the fire for continued inflation.

Debt growth continues to outpace economic growth (as measured by GDP) and will reach 100 percent of GDP in 2024. It is projected to reach 118 percent of GDP by the end of the decade.

Unfortunately, there has not been much agreement within Congress to address the need for balanced budgets. The federal budget is largely made up mandatory entitlements, with close to 46 percent of the budget consisting of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Social Security is expected to grow to 24 percent of the budget by 2028 as an aging population pushes up costs. Only about one third of federal spending is labeled as discretionary, which includes defense spending and requires congressional approval through annual appropriations bills. The Congressional Budget Office also expects that net interest on debt payments will account for 13 percent of spending by 2028, up from 10 percent in 2023.

Debt within the US is financed through US treasuries – government bonds backed by the Treasury that are sold to investors inside and outside the US. Domestic or foreign inves-

tors, including foreign nations such as Japan and China, own about 75 percent of US debt.

So what would happen if the US defaulted on its debt? Although it has never happened, the US has come close to a default. In August 2011, for example, ratings agencies downgraded the nation from its top AAA credit rating to AA+ amid prolonged debate in Congress about whether to raise the debt ceiling. It sent the markets into a freefall.

An actual default would be much worse, most economists agree. Not only would the US likely be downgraded again, but government workers and Social Security recipients – among many others – would go unpaid. Financial markets could be significantly impacted. For businesses and average Americans, it could become difficult to borrow money. Without access to credit, a recession would be all but certain.

In the final analysis, a centrist solution is the only way to solve our national debt crisis. A bipartisan plan should lock Congress into balanced budgets moving forward and paying down debt slowly over the next few decades rather than paying it down quickly all at once.

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

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Interior Designers Can Create Amazing Spaces

Our lives have been dramatically changed due to the pandemic in ways we could never have imagined. The “new way of life” is that everything is purchased online: grocery shopping, home remodeling, decorations, home supplies, household goods and so on. Brick and mortar shopping only has mainstays in grocery stores, Walmart, Target, T.J. Maxx, HomeGoods and stores of this nature.

Is it me, or do they not have the same unique finds we used to be able to purchase? I miss my shopping days at Home Goods when I could find ornate pieces for my home and business. I truly miss the days of shopping with friends, looking at new items in stores. But it seems as though all the good products you want to see are online and the days of finding those great pieces in stores are gone.

Interior designers are the best remedy for

this problem. They have connections to vendors who have those one-of-a-kind pieces. Interior designers have access to thousands of vendors who put all their products in catalogs so they can research and find those pieces you so desperately want.

Homeowners have now changed up the “home office” to the workplace office. Even though things have calmed down with the pandemic, many of us still work from home. In a short period, the home has become the workplace, gym, relaxation and even the schoolroom.

Redesigning the spaces in one’s home has grown and construction layouts have changed. The days of open-concept homes are now decreasing, since we now need pri-



ANNAMARIE AMORE

vacy. Open floor plans are falling entirely out of fashion. They are just no longer as practical and desirable as they once were.

My clients still want big kitchens that open into the family room, but home office spaces with privacy are in big demand for Zoom calls, office meetings, school and college classes.

Interior designers have enough knowledge and experience in this area to create amazing spaces with dual functionality to give clients what they want when that they do not know how to do themselves. Interior design projects are like works of art; you need to understand all the properties of reflective surfaces, the utility of fabrics, textures and patterns and most importantly the psychology of color. An interi-

or designer can assist in all these aspects of design. There are also subtle nuances of the design elements that a design professional may be able to use to transform your house into your dream home.

If you decide you need an interior designer, they can take all the items, paint colors, pieces of furniture, lighting and framework to tie them together in a neat little bow. They have years of experience and formal training from interior design programs that taught them how to combine different design elements to create aesthetic value.

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

Walk In Orange For Gynecological Cancers

A woman’s passion to find a cure for gynecologic cancers lives on and a walk and festival fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday, May 7 at the High Plains Fairgrounds, located at 525 Orange Center Rd. in Orange.

Approximately 100,000 women in the US are diagnosed annually with a gynecologic cancer. In 2010, when Woodbridge resident Beverly Levy was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, she knew her life was going to be shortened by the disease. She was

determined to make the most of her time and try to do something to help future generations of women avoid what she was going through.

While in the midst of chemotherapy, Levy, along with a group of friends, started a walk in the greater New Haven area in 2013 to raise funds that would go directly to Yale research for women’s gynecologic cancers. Levy died in 2014, but thanks to her spirit and memories of her courage and a supportive committee, the event continued

and has been expanded to a full day.

The day starting at 10 a.m. will include a walk (this portion can be modified to walk as little or as much as each participant is comfortable doing) with MC Matt Scott, meteorologist at FOX61. Food trucks will be there, including the Big Green Pizza Truck, Saray Bakery & Ice Cream Café, Szabo’s Seafood and Liberty Tavern. Children’s activities will take place, including face painting, an obstacle course, games, a Read To Grow bookmobile, Lucky Dog Rescue,

and various craft and retail vendors. There will be performances by School of Rock Milford CT, Mulkerin School of Irish Dance and the band Lunch Box.

There is no fee for parking. There is only a cost to participate in the walk. The event is still accepting additional applications for vendors and volunteers. Walk-ins are welcome all day. For more information on participating and timing of scheduled events, visit [wizathon.com/discovery-to-cure/](http://wizathon.com/discovery-to-cure/) or email [ruthann.ornstein@yale.edu](mailto:ruthann.ornstein@yale.edu).

For more politics coverage, go to [milford-orangetimes.com](http://milford-orangetimes.com)

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BNK-66111-A

The Rotary Club of Orange

MOT Publisher Receives High Rotary Honor

Every year, Rotary clubs across the 58 Rotary clubs that comprise Region 7980 honor club members who have demonstrated service to the community “above and beyond.” The Norman K. Parsells Award is presented annually to honor the memory and spirit of Norman K. Parsells, a dedicated Rotarian who served his community and Rotary, demonstrating Rotary’s ideal of “Service Above Self.” This award is one of the highest honors to be bestowed upon a deserving individual in Rotary.

This year, Rotary Club of Orange has selected the publisher and founder of the Milford-Orange Times, Stephen W. Hechtman, as the recipient of the award. Hechtman has been the membership chairman of our club for a number of years and has worked tirelessly to ensure that our club has a regular infusion

of new blood through his extremely diligent recruiting efforts.

Adding new members who understand and are ready and willing to commit to the important work that Rotary does not only benefits our club, but ensures that the noble work we do to assist those in need through hands-on work and financial support can continue into the next generation.

In this Rotary year, Hechtman has brought in a particularly outstanding class of new members, all of whom have immediately rolled up their sleeves to work on important, award-winning service projects. Some have even taken on leadership roles in



ROGER TAUSIG

the club, building and securing the longer-term future of Rotary Club of Orange. These people engaged with Hechtman as their first Rotary contact and sensed his energy and passion for the mission of Rotary. This energy inspired them to pursue membership and join the club to help fulfill our mission.

Hechtman has also been quietly generous in guiding the club in its publicity efforts, and more importantly, providing ad space for our important club fundraisers such as the annual Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot, LobsterFest and the Mother’s Day Rose Sale, helping us to maximize the funds generated by these events. The money raised goes toward funding grants and projects that benefit underserved people

locally, regionally and internationally.

It should also be noted that Hechtman actively participates in our projects and pitches in on virtually all of them.

Lastly, it cannot be understated that Hechtman is a great promoter of Rotary itself. He has a strong belief in the mission of Rotary and extraordinary enthusiasm for the work that we do. He is an effervescent personality who almost always has a smile on his face and exhibits a “can-do” attitude. As club president this year, I have had the pleasure of working with him on the important work of increasing membership and I am truly amazed by the number and quality of new members that he has recruited.

Hechtman is truly deserving of the Norman K. Parsells Award and I am proud to have him as a key member of our club.

Ospreys Return To Milford

As the swallows return to Capistrano each spring so do the ospreys return to the platform and perch in Milford.

Members of the Milford Marine Institute spotted a solitary osprey on Monday, March 27 on the perch at the platform on along the Indian River, commonly referred to as Gulf Pond. The bird was most likely the male.

The institute spotted a female on the nesting platform and the male with a brown necklace on the perch. Soon the

male joined the female on the platform.

“The Milford Marine Institute chose the osprey as our logo back in 1983 because the osprey, or fishhawk as it is sometimes called, best illustrates the connection between the avian or bird world and the marine world,” said Director Tim Chaucer.

Osprey populations plummeted in the state during the middle of the 20th century because of the widespread use of DDT, reaching a low point in 1974 of only nine active nests, according to the state

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Their populations have steadily rebounded in the last few decades.

Ospreys first appeared on the platforms installed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, forerunner of the DEEP, in 1989. The birds were scared off by the cannon booms from the 350th anniversary mock naval encounter of the HMS Rose and USS Providence. Nevertheless, the ospreys returned in 1990 and have nested successfully ever since

then, raising dozens of chicks. Presumably 2023 will be no exception.

The Milford Marine Institute is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year with two marine biology science/art camps in late June and one bird ID art camp and two archaeology/native culture camps in July. The camps are run in conjunction with the Milford Recreation Department. Visit [milfordmarineinstitute.org](http://milfordmarineinstitute.org) or the Recreation Department website for more information.

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Travel Matters

Travel Through The Lens Of Food

On our current Avalon Waterways Danube river cruise, we have the option of Classic, Active and Discovery excursions – most of which are included in our river cruise package.

From Ybbs, Austria – a picturesque town in the heart of the Wachau Valley on the Danube – we selected a culinary baking adventure, which was a new experience for us. I guess we are foodies, because every time we look back at a trip we’ve taken over the last seven years the highlight is almost always something to do with food: either a tapas tour or a food walking tour or a cooking class.

When we arrived at the Braun bakery in Marbach an der Donau, I could immediately tell we were in a for a special treat. The delicious aroma of baked goods greeted us, and the owner asked us if we would like a

glass of prosecco to start the adventure. Vanessa, a student at the University of Vienna, was doing her certification in baking at this small family bakery and told us we would be making the house specialty: schaumrollen (foam rolls).

The dough had been rising for three days; we saw how it was rolled out and flattened by a state-of-the-art machine that took about three minutes. After cutting the dough into long strips, we were put to work wrapping iron rolls – making sure to put the egg-washed strips right-side up for golden browning. After they were baked, we stuffed them with meringue from a pastry bag – again a new experience for me – and were told we had to try at least one



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

while they were still warm. We had absolutely no problem complying with this suggestion.

Everyone commented that the Austrian and German pastries we have enjoyed on this trip were not overly sweet, and how much better they taste than pastries in the US. But then, the grass is always greener.

If you love to travel and enjoy food, I highly recommend the Netflix hit show Somebody Feed Phil, a comedic self-professed foodie who happens to be Phil Rosenthal, the writer of Everybody Loves Raymond and lover of people and travel. There are now six seasons of fabulous destinations where Rosenthal enjoys the local food ranging from street food and gelato to a guided tour

of local food markets to Michelin star restaurants. They do a great job of highlighting each destination as well. With over 48 destinations, Venice, Santiago and Singapore are three of my favorite episodes. This show not only gives you great ideas for places to go in these cities, but really whets the appetite for a longer bucket list of destinations – both here in the US and abroad.

So the next time you travel, consider taking a food tour or cooking class. You learn so much about the culture and people of the destination, as well as the food.

*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

The Power Of Coming Together

Purchasing a home has so many emotional segments. Some people combine chapters in their life that are recent with those that are from childhood memories. Each player fills in a small part of these ideas in the vision of what comes next in their living quarters. Each partner brings expectations, and together they strive to achieve the comfort of moving and resettling while supporting each other’s needs.

This transition is a complicated process, whether it is for new buyers, those with growing families or the empty nester downsizing to maximize their well-being, budget and convenience. These are all powerful reasons to change your home. Trust and stamina are character traits that help buyers and sellers along the way.

The organization of the transaction should

be a happy business experience, tying together good feelings with financial satisfaction. Although there can be hiccups along the way as you buy or sell, if you expect the unexpected these small disappointments can become an education on the process.

Evaluating your reasons to move and loving the nest you are leaving can interfere a bit with the adventure of a lifetime. Try to imagine life in each property you preview. Support each other as you visualize each potential property. After all, once the location and yard and space are enough (the most important basics of real estate), the rest you can make your own.

As you decide your reasons to move, just



BARBARA LEHRER

keep in mind that homes are like individuals: they have aches and pains and face makeup. You can give them a physical and hope you see beyond the blood test.

We take on variables and create our own upgrades. We buy into a new neighborhood and life is new and different. It is a celebration to complete this enormous deed, and it has so many benefits in the end. Just be a partnership with those who are part of this venture. Involve the whole family.

Whether selling your home, (as you have kept your current home fresh and updated), or buying someone else’s “as is” sale, share your concerns with each other and with your real estate agent. Don’t let any worries or un-

answered concerns spoil this process.

There are many reasons to sell right now; prices are up, it’s the spring market and lots of buyers with children would love one of the beautiful, large homes. Sit together and review the alternatives. The purchases that are possible and pertain to your own lifestyle and needs will become available. Do not wait for all the boxes to be checked on the properties you preview; nothing is perfect. But I can tell you for sure, with my 40 years of sales, I have had thousands of clients who love their individual move and never felt they sacrificed or made a wrong decision. That is a testament to each clients’ power of coming together.

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

St. Mary School Carnival Returning

St. Mary School in Milford will hold its annual carnival on Friday, April 28 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., on Saturday, April 29 from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sunday, May 30 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Back are food trucks, snack tent, games, 50/50 raffles, rides, music and fireworks at 9:30 p.m. on Saturday night. Wristbands for

rides will be available for \$35 on Friday and Sunday, and \$40 on Saturday for all day.

Sponsorship opportunities at all levels are available; contact kciuci@msn.com to learn more. Go to the school’s website for more details. Contact Chris at chris@tricityappliance.com for questions.

Country Fair Scholarships Available

The Orange Country Fair has announced that applications for the Connecticut Association of Fairs scholarship program are available at in the Amity High School guidance department, at the Case Memorial Library and at the Orange Town Hall.

The Association of Connecticut Fairs awards three scholarships of \$1,000 each to a graduating high school senior or a current college student to assist them with their education at an accredited institution of higher learning.

One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior or college student pursuing a course

of study in agriculture, family consumer service or a related field during the next school year. One \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior or college student pursuing a course of study in any field during the next school year. One \$1,000 scholarship will go to a graduating senior or college student to be chosen at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.

All applications must be received and returned to the fair secretary by May 15. Please mail it to Marianne Bauer , Secretary - Orange Country Fair, 1041 Beechlawn Terrace, Orange, CT 06477. For more information, call 203-795-6489.

Milford Artisan Market Coming

The Milford Artisan Market will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 13 and 14, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Milford Green at 168-176 Broad St. in downtown Milford. Eighty local artisans will be selling their handmade items, including art, jewelry, quilts, flower arrangements and metalworks. The event

will also feature Mother’s Day photo opportunities, kids’ activities, live music, food vendors and artist demonstrations. Admission is free. The event is sponsored by LeafFilter and Renewal by Andersen, and is organized by Artisan Events by Ally. For more information, visit facebook.com/milfordartisanmarket.





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Here’s To Your Health

What You Can Do About Allergy Season

Spring is here, and luckily we can say we have put another winter behind us. Some of us, however, dread the springtime due to allergies kicking in. The sneezing, itchy, watery eyes, coughing and more. It is understandably frustrating.

But rather than seeing your allergist and popping tons of allergy meds, why not try something different for relief – eat. Indeed, medicines will help keep your symptoms at bay but eating tomatoes, strawberries and sauerkraut can help too.

Eating foods high in vitamin C, such as strawberries which contain 85 mg per cup, will not only give you a healthy boost of antioxidants but may help reduce allergy symptoms as well.

Walnuts are amazing for brain health, but can also help alleviate allergy symptoms. According to a 2017 study published in the

Journal of Clinical Investigation, the high amount of omega-3 fatty acids it contains can help reduce these symptoms. When snacking on walnuts, be sure to use good portion control, as they do contain fat. It’s a good fat, but fat nonetheless.

Broccoli, shitake mushrooms and sweet potatoes also make the list of top foods to eat when battling allergies. The old saying “an apple a day keeps the doctor away” has a good reason. Apples have quercetin, which has been found to help reduce inflammation that comes hand-in-hand with allergies. Just like apples, turmeric is a spice that should be used regularly to reduce inflammation. If you don’t like the taste of the spice, you



MICHELE TENNEY

can simply put turmeric root into a smoothie instead.

Adding local honey to your diet can also counteract allergy symptoms and may even prevent them from happening in the future, according to a randomized controlled trial published in the Annals of Saudi Medicine.

Food is medicine. I know people who suffer from severe allergies and have tried everything they know. My heart goes out to those sufferers. It’s important that we do what works best for our bodies by listening to our bodies. There are more foods to add to this list, but I encourage to at least try what I’ve proposed.

I am looking forward to the spring season. Watching all the new growth come back to

life after what seems to be a dead season is exciting and brings along with it hope, vibrancy and adds a little skip to my step. Let’s not take a single day for granted in admiring the nature surrounding us. Let’s put those allergies behind us so that we can truly enjoy being outdoors. By gaining control over our allergies, they won’t be able to control us and keep us from outdoor activities and enjoying some fresh air.

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.

Milford Library Bringing Cameron To Talk Transportation

The Milford Public Library is hosting a virtual program with long-time commuter advocate and newspaper commentator, Jim Cameron, who will discuss the future of Connecticut’s transportation.

Will riders ever return to commuter rail? Who will pay to keep the trains running when federal money is gone? Where will money be found to repair our highways? How will new residential and workplace trends affect Connecticut’s economy? Cameron explores these questions in a workshop with plenty of time to hear participants’ ideas and answer their questions.

Cameron has been called “the transportation guru,” having spent over 25 years working and reporting on the issue.

A former NBC News anchor, Cameron was a recipient of the George Foster Peabody Award. A Connecticut resident for over 30 years, he served 19 years on the Metro-North Commuter Council. He also authors a weekly newspaper column, “Talking Transportation” which runs in the CT Mirror and other online news sites. Cameron is also author of the book Off the Record: Confessions of a Media Consultant.

The talk takes place virtually on Thursday, April 13 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Registration is required. The Zoom link to the event is <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/tZluf-uqrjIvE9Ssf8pg0HWMFX5-eeaw0J1>.

Earth Day Celebration Happening On Milford Green

The Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition will host an Earth Day 2023 celebration on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the downtown Milford Green.

This family-oriented event is free to the public and will feature numerous how-to exhibits including recycling, composting and how to start your own “plogging” club. There will also be numerous activities for children. Sweet Louise & the Monkey River Band will perform from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The ECC welcomes nonprofit environmental groups, musicians, artists, educators, civic organizations and businesses to set up a table. No fee is required to participate, but each group must

supply and set up its own table. Organizers are encouraging groups that will feature activities and/or displays to inform and engage the public on environmental issues. To reserve space, go to [milfordearthday.org](http://milfordearthday.org) and complete the online exhibitor’s application.

According to ECC President Ann 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 and Beth-El Center. The City of Milford has provided planning and logistical support.

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Questions? [info@jamiehulleyartsfund.org](mailto:info@jamiehulleyartsfund.org)  
Raffle license #23-02 issued by Town of Orange, CT Police Services  
**[www.jamiehulleyartsfund.org](http://www.jamiehulleyartsfund.org)**



# Orange Town Budget 2023-2024

Town of Orange, Connecticut



FINANCE DIRECTOR'S BUDGET MESSAGE

April 2023

On behalf of the Honorable James M. Zeoli - First Selectman, and the Orange Board of Finance, I submit our recommended Town of Orange General Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. This document is the result of many hours of careful consideration by the Board of Finance, Department Heads, Town Boards, Commissions, Management and Staff. The focus of the 2024 budget is to continue to offer the level of services to which our citizens have become accustomed, tempered by the ability of our taxpayers to pay for those services. As the affects of the Pandemic lessen on our lives it is the hope that the town will return to normal operations in all departments restarting programs and services that had to be halted.

Federal pass-through funds and State initiated funding have remained level. The state passed a law last spring only allowing Cities & Towns to charge a mill rate of \$32.46 per thousand on the value of your vehicles. The State will reimburse the Town \$54,078 this upcoming year for lost tax revenue on motor vehicles. The Town & Board of Education have received some funding from The American Rescue Plan. In the past, the State Legislature and Governor have proposed many pieces of tax legislation that if passed could have a very significant impact on the Town of Orange. The October 1, 2022 Grand List reflects an increase of 2.83%. However, in the past, increases in interest investment earnings, licenses, permits and fines and other revenue has helped to offset some of the state funding losses. We have carefully designed this financial plan to balance the growing request for municipal services, the needs of the Town's infrastructure, public safety, recreation and community health and welfare while maintaining our commitment to the education of our children: the leaders of tomorrow.

The Budget Process

The budget process begins in late September when each department prepares and then reviews with their Board or Commission, the department budget request for the new fiscal year. After Board or Commission approval, the department submits their budget to the Director of Finance. Each departmental request is reviewed and evaluated together with the First Selectman for submission of a recommended budget to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance then spends a day

in town hall to conduct individual hearings and discussions with department management as required. The Town has employees covered by six union contracts which expired either on June 30, 2021 or June 30, 2022. The contracts for two of the unions (Supervisors, Dispatchers) remain under negotiations. Salary budget lines carry the last wage contract salary for those union positions. The town has settled the contracts with the Police, Public Works, Nurses and Clerical unions. There are inevitably unanticipated costs that occur when projecting expenditures eighteen months into the future. Toward that end, it is incumbent on the administration of any municipality to maintain a sufficient undesignated fund balance to provide for such unforeseen events and circumstances.

Fund Balance

The Town's Fund Balance is a measure of its capacity to withstand financial emergencies or to provide for unforeseen emergent projects and expenditures. I am projecting the undesignated portion of the fund balance at July 1, 2023 to be approximately 13.5 million dollars, or 16.93% of the 2023-2024 operating budget, which may be used to offset any revenue loss or unexpected expenses.

Revenue

The net taxable grand list for October 1, 2022 equaled \$2,313,176,955 which is compared to the October 1, 2021 net taxable grand list as below:

Category	2022 Net Grand List	2021 Net Grand List	\$ Change	% Change
Real Estate	\$1,865,207,910	1,848,585,850	16,622,060	0.90
Motor Vehicles	205,518,650	191,862,310	13,656,340	7.12
Business Personal Property	242,450,395	208,990,720	33,459,675	16.01
	\$2,313,176,955	\$2,249,438,880	63,738,075	2.83

Departmental Operating Expenditure:

The budget for general town operations has increased by 5.50% or \$1,412,333. Debt service contribution decreased by 0.65% or \$22,325 while our share of the Amity budget decreased by \$556,183 or 2.10%. This number \$556,183 includes \$207,142 which was the decrease when Amity was able to pass their Budget Referendum. The Orange Board of Education costs increased by 3.37%, or \$763,325. The aggregate increase in the budget for the fiscal year ended 6/30/2024 is \$1,881,961 or 2.40%. If no adjustments are made to this budget the mill rate will decrease from \$32.71 to \$32.31 or 1.2%. The auto mill rate will drop from \$32.46 to \$32.31 or .05%.

Capital Replacements and Expenditure:

Several years ago at the recommendation of the Town's auditors, the Board of Finance developed a Capital Fund Account to pay for future capital expenditures. The auditors recommended this fund for future capital purchases to avoid bonding and borrowing cost on some items. The funded items for the 2023-2024 fiscal year include \$155,475 for the Orange Board of Education for replacement shingles at Peek Place School concrete step repair at Turkey Hill School and school furniture refurbishment plan. This is in addition to the \$200,000 allocated in the Capital Account in the General Fund budget for school security. The Town side includes \$358,500 funding for computer accounting software maintenance for the Town, a new communication tower at the police station, HVAC repair and upgrades at High Plains Community Center and Fire Station 2 on the Boston Post Road. Total Capital outlay is \$513,975. The Board of Finance has already allocated \$1,000,000 for this current season paving program from the Capital Fund. The Board is expected to allocate funds for further Capital outlays in the coming months.

The annual budget development is an intensive task that requires a concerted and coordinated effort on the part of all. I want to express my personal gratitude for the support and cooperation from all of our professional department managers and their dedicated staff. I would also like to thank my staff in the Town's Finance Department, specifically Audrey Geer, Karin Lewis, and Arthur Williams. It takes a team effort to compile this budget. On behalf of First Selectman Zeoli, and the Board of Finance, I want to acknowledge the many committed professionals who selflessly serve on our Boards and Commissions without compensation. It is that kind of public spirit that makes Orange a unique and special community in which to live.

Respectfully Submitted,

*John M. Cifarelli*  
John M. Cifarelli  
Director of Finance and Administration

*Audrey Geer*  
Audrey Geer  
Assistant Finance Director

Members of the  
Orange Board of Finance

Kevin Houlihan, CPA - Chairman James Leahy - Vice Chairman  
Ajcet Jain, Kevin McNabola, Kevin T. Moffett, Joseph Nuzzo,  
Meghan Rabuse, Alternate  
Deborah Satonick (Recording Secretary)

TOWN OF ORANGE  
NOTICE OF HEARING  
TOWN BUDGET

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the statutes in such cases provided, the Orange Board of Finance will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the High Plains Community Center Cafeteria, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT 06477 relative to the expenditures and proposed budget of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024. Citizens may present oral and/or written comments. The proposed budget will be available for examination in the Office of the Town Clerk in the Orange Town Hall on Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

Dated at Orange CT this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2023.

Orange Board of Finance

*Kevin Houlihan*  
Kevin Houlihan  
Chairman

TOWN OF ORANGE, CONNECTICUT PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-24						
GENERAL FUND REVENUE						
Classification	FY 2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Budget	FY 2023-24 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount    Percent		
Property Taxes	70,260,539	72,667,576	74,066,460	1,398,884	1.93%	
Property Taxes Prior Years	258,888	280,000	260,000	-20,000	-7.14%	
Tax Interest & Liens	207,264	210,000	210,000	0	0.00%	
Intergovernmental Revenue	1,609,517	1,740,248	1,732,741	-7,507	-0.43%	
Licenses, Permits & Fines	766,253	663,525	956,000	292,475	44.08%	
Investment Interest	55,346	32,300	938,600	906,300	2805.88%	
General Government Revenue	1,589,140	1,284,591	1,287,200	2,609	0.20%	
Fund Balance & Amity Revenue	1,427,275	700,000	0	-700,000	-100.00%	
Other	1,047,710	789,450	798,650	9,200	1.17%	
Total General Fund Revenue	77,221,932 ✓	78,367,690 ✓	80,249,651 ✓	1,881,961	2.40%	
BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT						
Classification	FY 2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Budget	FY 2023-24 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount    Percent		
<u>General Government</u>						
21-100 Selectmen	177,783	184,446	186,171	1,725	0.94%	
21-101 Assessor	219,226	259,099	274,882	15,783	6.09%	
21-102 Board of Assessment Appeals	203	10,000	11,000	1,000	10.00%	
21-103 Director of Finance & Accounting	379,145	377,200	393,717	16,517	4.38%	
21-104 Board of Finance	5,946	3,000	7,600	4,600	153.33%	
21-105 Building Inspection	185,227	187,474	241,166	53,692	28.64%	
21-106 Conservation Commission	3,031	5,460	4,750	-700	-12.84%	
21-107 Economic Development	81,597	82,950	88,750	5,800	6.99%	
21-108 Director of Technology	425,965	474,286	530,743	56,457	11.90%	
21-109 Legal	226,457	260,000	260,000	0	0.00%	
21-110 Planning & Zoning/Wetlands	144,321	148,416	151,616	3,200	2.16%	
21-112 Zoning Board of Appeals	2,274	3,290	3,290	0	0.00%	
21-113 Pension	0	300	500	200	66.67%	
21-114 Probate Court	5,958	5,997	11,272	5,275	87.96%	
BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT						
Classification	FY 2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Budget	FY 2023-24 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount    Percent		
21-115 Tax Collector	163,246	156,900	166,080	9,180	5.85%	
21-116 Town Clerk	188,428	238,525	263,575	25,050	10.50%	
21-117 Town Hall	153,563	175,900	201,500	25,600	14.55%	
21-118 Treasurer	99,358	102,165	113,010	10,845	10.62%	
21-119 Voter Registrars	104,758	117,050	123,250	6,200	5.30%	
<u>Total General Government</u>	2,566,485 ✓	2,792,448 ✓	3,032,872 ✓	240,424	8.61%	
<u>Public Safety</u>						
21-200 Police: General Services	884,796	766,863	791,828	24,965	3.26%	
21-201 Police: Uniformed Patrol	3,585,220	3,785,755	4,077,134	291,379	7.70%	
21-202 Police: Investigative Services	477,183	559,660	603,147	43,487	7.77%	
21-203 Police: Communication/Dispatch	334,918	390,623	380,796	-9,827	-2.52%	
<u>Sub Total: Police Services</u>	5,282,118 ✓	5,502,901 ✓	5,852,905 ✓	350,004	6.36%	
21-220 Fire Marshal	257,816	260,830	283,870	23,040	8.83%	
21-221 Emergency Medical Service	287,055	297,000	315,000	18,000	6.06%	
21-223 Physicals By Physician	5,330	14,000	14,000	0	0.00%	
21-223 Volunteer Fire Department & Utilities	208,135	212,200	250,500	38,300	18.05%	
21-230 Emergency Management (Civil Def.)	4,774	7,300	15,100	7,800	106.85%	
21-235 Animal Control	75,000	75,000	75,000	0	0.00%	
<u>Total Public Safety</u>	6,120,228 ✓	6,369,231 ✓	6,806,375 ✓	437,144	6.86%	
<u>Public Works &amp; Public Buildings</u>						
21-250 Administration & Engineering	984,446	987,852	1,067,568	79,716	8.07%	
21-255 Roadways	1,171,850	1,238,308	1,356,348	118,040	9.53%	
21-257 Snow Removal	178,713	230,000	247,000	17,000	7.39%	
21-258 Vehicle Maintenance	316,798	318,234	366,718	47,484	14.92%	
21-261 Refuse	1,060,823	1,183,838	1,397,525	213,687	18.05%	
<u>Sub Total: Public Works</u>	3,712,630 ✓	3,958,232 ✓	4,434,159 ✓	475,927	12.02%	
21-271 Community Center	401,308	416,500	472,600	56,100	13.47%	
21-272 Clark Building	30,347	47,675	69,425	21,750	45.62%	
21-273 Case Library Building	119,089	138,500	166,500	28,000	20.22%	
<u>Sub Total: Public Buildings</u>	550,744 ✓	602,675 ✓	708,525 ✓	105,850	17.56%	
<u>Total Public Works &amp; Public Buildings</u>	4,263,374 ✓	4,560,907 ✓	5,142,684 ✓	581,777	12.76%	
BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT						
Classification	FY 2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Budget	FY 2023-24 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount    Percent		
<u>Culture &amp; Recreation</u>						
21-280 Library	659,858	713,804	773,646	59,842	8.38%	
21-300 Parks & Recreation - Admin	155,603	154,927	165,295	10,368	6.69%	
21-301 Parks & Recreation - Maint	283,669	284,943	324,943	40,000	14.04%	
21-302 Parks & Recreation - Pool	288,402	308,671	328,071	19,500	6.32%	
21-303 Parks & Recreation - Programs	4,546	7,500	7,500	0	0.00%	
21-320 Town Contributions	37,000	27,000	27,000	0	0.00%	
<u>Total Culture &amp; Recreation</u>	1,429,078 ✓	1,496,745 ✓	1,626,455 ✓	129,710	8.67%	
<u>Health &amp; Welfare</u>						
21-330 Environmental Health	193,691	212,248	216,544	4,296	2.02%	
21-333 Drug & Alcohol Action	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	
21-334 School Nursing	317,091	353,562	373,475	19,913	5.63%	
21-335 Director of Health	56,300	31,464	31,970	506	1.61%	
21-336 Board of Health	6	850	50	-800	-94.12%	
<u>Sub Total: Health Services</u>	567,088 ✓	598,124 ✓	622,039 ✓	23,915	4.00%	
<u>Community Services</u>						
21-341 Community Services-Administration	149,422	159,885	153,715	-6,170	-3.86%	
21-346 Community Services-Counseling	92,296	100,000	100,000	0	0.00%	
21-342 Community Services-Disabilities	2,642	6,830	6,830	0	0.00%	
21-345 Community Services-Elderly	81,353	149,115	154,015	4,900	3.29%	
21-344 Community Services-Transportation	91,656	84,300	84,300	0	0.00%	
21-343 Community Services-Youth	44,508	45,450	48,050	2,600	5.72%	
<u>Sub Total: Community Services</u>	461,876 ✓	545,580 ✓	546,910 ✓	1,330	0.24%	
<u>Total Health &amp; Welfare</u>	1,028,964 ✓	1,143,704 ✓	1,168,949 ✓	25,245	2.21%	
<u>Employee Benefits</u>						
21-400 Employee Benefits	8,575,361	8,686,465	8,626,448	-60,017	-0.69%	
<u>Total Employee Benefits</u>	8,575,361 ✓	8,686,465 ✓	8,626,448 ✓	-60,017	-0.69%	
<u>Town Services</u>						
21-420 Property Insurance	355,101	478,000	524,500	46,500	9.73%	
21-425 Government Access TV	85,755	78,000	78,900	900	1.15%	
21-430 Town Services and other	147,174	74,900	85,550	10,650	14.22%	
<u>Total Town Services</u>	588,030 ✓	630,900 ✓	688,950 ✓	58,050	9.20%	
<u>SUBTOTAL - TOWN BUDGET</u>	24,571,521 ✓	25,680,400 ✓	27,092,733 ✓	1,412,333	5.50%	
BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT						
Classification	FY 2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Budget	FY 2023-24 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount    Percent		
<u>Capital Projects &amp; Debt Service</u>						
21-450 Capital Projects	66,740	0	200,000	200,000		
21-460 Debt Service	3,502,393	3,428,314	3,405,989	-22,325	-0.65%	
<u>Total Capital Projects &amp; Debt Service</u>	3,569,133	3,428,314	3,605,989	177,675	5.18%	
<u>Education</u>						
21-410 Orange Public Schools	22,009,416	22,683,860	23,447,185	763,325	3.37%	
21-415 Amity Regional Schools	25,236,005	26,575,116	26,103,744	-471,372	-1.77%	
<u>Total Education</u>	47,245,421 ✓	49,258,976 ✓	49,550,929 ✓	291,953	0.59%	
<u>Total Budget</u>	75,386,075 ✓	78,367,690 ✓	80,249,651 ✓	1,881,961	2.40%	
<u>control totals</u>	75,386,075	78,367,690	80,249,651			

Homelessness

Deadly Intersection Of Climate Change And Homelessness

Every winter, Beth-El Center opens an additional shelter program that offers overnight respite to individuals experiencing literal homelessness in greater Milford. This program closed on April 1 after serving over 90 individuals in greater Milford for the 2022-2023 winter season. Some came just for a few nights, while others stayed every night this season.

The program started because our community suffered a devastating loss nearly 10 years ago. With nowhere in Milford to go on a freezing cold night, a veteran died outside.

Today, due to the impact of climate change, deadly weather events occur all year round. As homeless service providers, we are responsible for leading our communities in providing support far greater than a seasonal cold-weather program. We must understand the close link between climate change and homelessness, and work toward sustainable solutions that address both simultaneously.

As we approach Earth Day, we must reflect on all the ways in which we rely on our planet to continue providing safe, consistent resources to us all. We build whole communities around this understanding with no backup plan for when that assumption fails.

Unfortunately, the impacts of climate change are increasing housing instability and homelessness across the country. As reported by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, 40 percent of the 339 heat-related deaths in Arizona in 2021 occurred among people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Drought and wildfires in California have destroyed long-standing communities and homes, disproportionately affecting people living in poverty and making it more difficult to recover. Driven in part by these disasters, hundreds of poor households migrated to the Mojave Desert, where they endure life-threatening heat and cold and no running water for miles.

Most recently, the devastating tornadoes in Mississippi eliminated entire towns. The result



JENNIFER PARADIS

is a massive loss of affordable housing and a growing displacement of people experiencing climate-caused homelessness. Older adults, Black and brown communities, and those living in low-income housing are especially vulnerable to this type of homelessness.

Rather than an overnight crisis, the impacts of climate change on homelessness can feel like a gradual spiral into poverty. Extreme heat and cold cause nearly immediate economic instability – raising the price of energy, water and food, increasing financial burdens on people already at risk of homelessness. These high energy bills can lead to utility shutoffs which can (and do) lead to evictions, housing instability and homelessness.

As we work to end homelessness throughout the country, local and sustainable efforts are necessary. As you have heard me say before, the two-pronged approach of crisis-response coupled with long-term strategic planning are

key.

Today, we need to ensure that financial resources are available year-round for weather-related shelter response. Sadly, the death that spearheaded the opening of our cold weather program was not the last. Days before our program opened for the winter in 2020, another man experiencing homelessness died in the fire he lit to keep himself warm on a deeply cold fall night. Now, with unpredictable weather occurring across all seasons, lives depend on immediate access to these life-saving services.

At the same time, we need to plan ahead by building eco-friendly and affordable housing that focuses on resiliency. Green communities are our future, and that future will be brightest if we focus on ensuring the health and stability of both our planet and of people experiencing homelessness.

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

Job Fair Added To Orange Artisan Fest And Vendor Fair

The third annual Orange Artisan Fest & Vendor Fair is scheduled for Thursday, June 22 from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Orange Fairgrounds at High Plains Community Center, located at 525 Orange Center Rd. The all-outdoor event is rain or shine and free and open to the public.

“The event is a nice kick-off to the summer, and I would like to welcome the public and business population to stop by and shop, network, and enjoy the day,” said Annemarie Sliby, executive director of the Orange Economic Development Commission.

For the first time, the event will include a job fair, which will be contained under the pavilion from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors looking for employment are encouraged to attend. Recruiters and employers wanting to reach the regional skilled workforce should register for a table. Industries highlighted are health care, hospitality, information technology, professional services, manufacturing and more. The job fair is being promoted through Workforce Alliance and the American Job Center.

Visitors will also encounter a mix of

artisans selling homemade specialty products, business vendors selling their products and services, product demonstrations, raffles, food trucks, activities, and the sounds of the Sabb’s Brothers, who will be performing from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. under the gazebo.

Vendor space in all categories is still available. Vendor space is limited and Sliby said they expect to be sold out by the end of April. Anyone interested in becoming a vendor can register online via the OEDC website at OrangeEDC.com/events\_activities or call the OEDC office at 203-891-1045 for an application. All vendors will have their marketing materials included in event welcome bags, their business name listed in the Artisan Fest ad in OrangeLife Magazine if they register by April 10 and their contact information listed in the event program, which is given to all visitors and vendors.

Businesses can still have a presence if they are unable to participate. For \$75, their marketing materials will be included in the event welcome bags. They can also place an ad in the event program; sizes and prices vary.

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Mental Health

Blue Space: Healing The Body And Mind

As warmer weather approaches, many of us look forward to the opportunity to enjoy beach time and vacations close to the water. The beach is considered a place to gather with friends and family, relax, walk, jog, swim and surf.

It is fairly well known that there are a number of health benefits to being close to the ocean. The therapeutic effect of blue space makes beach time all the more appealing as a place for healing and rejuvenation.

Awareness of the ocean's benefits on the body and mind dates as far back as ancient times with the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. There have been many studies conducted globally to test the effects of living in coastal areas and spending time in the ocean. Sea water is rich in minerals such as iodine, potassium, sulfur and magnesium which can have anti-inflammatory and rejuvenating effects on the skin. Salt is a natural antibacte-

rial that cleanses sores, cuts or skin irritations. It has also been found that ocean water can help to improve immunity by increasing red blood and white blood cell counts after a swim.

A study published in the Health and Place journal from October 2019 illustrates the link between living by the ocean and the positive impact it has on the mind and body. A survey of 26,000 people measured the mental health well-being of living close to the coast and found that 22 percent are less likely to experience mental health symptoms if they lived less than one kilometer from the sea when compared to those who lived 50 kilometers away.

The calming sound of the ocean works to decrease the stress hormone cortisol and can put you in a meditative and relaxed state. Ma-



JENNIFER FIORILLO

rine biologist Wallace J. Nichols points to evidence in his 2014 book, *The Blue Space*, of how people find themselves in a meditative state when they are in or under water. Our breathing patterns during swimming stimulate our parasympathetic nervous system, which controls organ function and quiets the brain. This quieting of the brain helps to improve mental clarity, offers relief for mild anxiety and depression and improves the quality of our sleep.

Being by the water gives us an opportunity to disconnect from the stimuli we are exposed to on a daily basis, including our offices, devices, home lives and traffic. The ocean offers white noise that gives the brain a break from distraction. With less information to

process and the therapeutic effect of the ocean on the mind, we open ourselves up for more creativity, connectedness and grounding. Positive electrons that we are exposed to daily from free radicals are balanced out by the Earth's negative charge, another reason why we feel energized and relaxed outdoors and by the ocean.

When planning your next vacation this summer, think of the many benefits blue space has on your health and well-being. You'll be happy to have buried your toes in the sand and shut down everything around you.

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

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](http://orangerecycles.com) or follow [facebook.com/ORCinCT](https://www.facebook.com/ORCinCT).

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Orange Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Bringing Family Fun With Cornhole Tourney

“Cooperation is always more powerful than competition.” – Bob Proctor

**Save the Date for the First Annual Orange Chamber Cornhole Tournament & Family Fun Day:** The chamber is kicking off a new annual family event with something for everyone on Saturday, May 6 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the beautiful Paugusset Club located at 837 Dentree Dr. in Orange. The chamber and the Paugusset Club are partnering to bring the Cornhole Tournament & Family Fun Day to the Orange community.

We are combining the best of cooperation and competition to create a fun family-oriented event that includes cornhole competitions for both adults and children, a Shop Local Village where you can shop and visit with local businesses and children’s activities sponsored by local organizations. There will also be food for sale, and the Mister Softee ice cream truck will be there, too. Huge thanks to main sponsor AVANGRID SCG UI, venue sponsor The Paugusset Club and media sponsor the Milford-Orange Times. This event would not be possible

without your generous contributions.

Event admission is free for the public. Registration for the adult cornhole tournament is \$40 per team (no singles). All equipment will be provided. Registration is limited to the first 32 teams. First place prize for the adult competition is \$500. Email [director@orangechamber.com](mailto:director@orangechamber.com) to reserve your team’s spot. The children’s cornhole competition is free with no pre-registration required. Special thanks to Matt’s Homestead Foundation, The CT Healing Center and Keystone House for organizing and running the cornhole tournament.

If you own a business or are a nonprofit organization, there are sponsorship opportunities and space available in the Shop Local Village for you to have a table and connect with community members. Call Kathy at 307-654-1336 for details.

**Orange Senior Center Lunch Talk:** The



KATHY  
CONVERSE  
CHARBONNEAU

chamber is partnering with the Orange Senior Center to provide presenters for monthly Lunch Talks. The next presentation features chamber member Sarah McGovern of Halcyon Travel in Orange, whose topic will be, “Multigenerational Travel - The Importance of Traveling with Family.” McGovern will provide valuable information about great multigenerational destinations (with enticing photos) and tell participants how Halcyon Travel can assist with getting them to their dream destinations so they can create lifelong family memories. This Lunch Talk takes place on Wednesday, April 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Lunch Talk series is designed to provide ideas, information and resources specifically designed for seniors and their families. The public is invited to attend. If you are not a member of the Senior Center, email [director@orangechamber.com](mailto:director@orangechamber.com) to register.

**Deadline Approaching for Phase 2 Bicentennial Brick Orders:** If you haven’t al-

ready, I encourage you to stop by to see the chamber’s brick installation in front of the gazebo at the High Plains Fairgrounds. The stories the bricks tell pull at the heartstrings and spur the imagination. The inscriptions on the bricks make this installation a heart-felt addition to our town that will touch people for years to come. If you would like to be part of this new town treasure, we have great news: phase 2 is planned to be installed in June 2023. An engraved brick is a unique idea for a meaningful gift to give loved ones for Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day or graduation. We provide an electronic custom gift certificate upon request for you to present to the recipient. If you already ordered a brick for phase 2 you will receive email updates as we get closer to the engraving and installation. If you wish to order a brick, visit [bricksrus.com/donorsite/orange-chamberbricks](http://bricksrus.com/donorsite/orange-chamberbricks).

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

Milford Announces Spring Bulk Waste Pickup Schedule

Milford has announced its schedule for its spring bulk waste pickup program.

This residential pickup service requires the homeowner to prepare and separate the acceptable bulky waste items. Similar items should be placed together in bags and containers. All acceptable items placed at the curb will be taken, including containers.

There are some stipulations to the program. Small bulk waste items must be bagged or boxed; yard waste must be placed in disposable paper bags (grass clippings are not permitted); brush and wood must be cut, tied and bundled in lengths four feet or less; passenger car tires (four tires maximum) must be separated from other waste; metal must be no longer than four feet long and separated from other waste; electronics and white goods must be separated from other waste; bulk waste must be placed away from regular trash/recycling containers; and bulk waste must be set out for collection no sooner

than the Saturday prior to the scheduled pickup.

Prohibited items include hazardous waste; liquid waste including oil-based paint; propane tanks; grass clippings, logs and stumps; and sheetrock, concrete/cement, bricks, porcelain tubs, sinks or toilets and other demolition material.

For those with garbage pickup on Monday, bulk waste pickup will begin on Monday, April 17. For those with trash pickup on Tuesday, bulk waste pickup will begin on Monday, April 24. For those whose trash day is Thursday, bulk waste pickups begins Monday, May 1; and for those whose trash day is Friday, bulk waste pickup will begin on Monday, May 8.

The Milford Transfer Station will also return to normal operating hours starting April 8, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday through Saturday.

Questions should be directed to the Public Works office at 203-783-3265.

New Pastor Joins OCC



Nada.

Orange Congregational Church has welcomed Rev. Nada B. Sellers as designated term pastor. Sellers has served in similar capacities in other United Church of Christ congregations in this region. As minister and spiritual leader, she joins the church during a phase of transition and recommitment to the church’s goal of demonstrating love of God and love for neighbors, according to the works and teachings of Jesus Christ. Orange Congregational Church is located at 205 Meeting House Lane on the Orange Town Green.

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Book Reviews

The Hummingbird By Stephen P. Kiernan

Deborah is a hospice nurse whose skills and empathy are valued by her patients and their families. When she meets retired history professor Barclay Reed, those skills and empathy are sorely tested.

Reed's area of specialty is World War II, with emphasis on the action at the Pacific front. Reed is a noncompliant patient, cantankerous and demanding, who delights in ridiculing his caregivers on their physical appearance or, in his view, their lack of educational accomplishments. He grudgingly allows Deborah to read aloud his last unfinished book dealing with a little-known story about a Japanese pilot who allegedly bombed Oregon forests. This story was discredited in all academic circles, especially at his university.

It's in the reading of this book that Deborah gains insight into how best to help her husband, Michael. He has recently returned

from his third deployment to Iraq and is a changed man. Ordinarily a loving, passionate, doting partner, those traits have seemingly disappeared. He spends most of his time sleeping. At other times he makes grandiose plans and purchases items the couple can't afford. Their physical intimacy is nonexistent. Michael can't understand why Deborah isn't more supportive or understanding of his plans.

It is on one of Deborah's and Reed's outings to the Reed's garden that they engage in a discussion of suffering. At first Deborah isn't sure how to respond, but she gradually begins to understand that in his own way the professor is imparting a valuable lesson. Reed is quite resistant to discussing some areas, including the history of a humming-



CARMELA DEVITO

bird bowl. Deborah believes that hummingbirds represent the core of her profession in that each patient, regardless of race, creed or economic status provides their caretakers with valuable gifts.

Although initially undiagnosed, Michael exhibits symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. At a loss as how to best help her husband, Deborah receives advice from the professor: to immerse herself into what Michael experienced during the war. She agrees to go with Michael to a shooting range run by another war veteran. It's during this trip that two positive results occur: she gains a better understanding of what it feels like to hold and shoot a gun and Michael's symptoms abate a bit. They quickly return, though.

Reed's estranged daughter comes to visit

and paints quite a horrid picture of her father, including her unshakable belief that he caused her mother's death. It's only when Deborah investigates the story of the Japanese bomber (which is interspersed between other chapters of the novel) that the truth becomes known and gives her a better understanding of the professor's actions.

I absolutely loved this. Stephen P. Kiernan's depictions of post-traumatic stress disorder are compassionate and sensitive. He shows a deep understanding and appreciation of hospice workers and the challenges they face and the rewards they gain through their work.

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

Foodie Foursome

Reimagining Milford's Citrus Restaurant

You know how sometimes things are not what they seem? Cindy and I have been to Citrus Restaurant many times over the years, as had our guests Meg and Joe. Usually we went to meet friends for a drink (at the giant horseshoe bar and ice rail) and a burger and fries or sandwich. Even on this evening we ran into at least a half dozen different friends. As we perused the menu, we were amazed at the creative versions of some very Americana fare.

The owner, Ken Benson, previously owned and operated a popular donut shop. In 2001 he opened Citrus in what was the Saybrook Fish House, Armory Square and Warner's Harborview on Broad Street. What he created over 20 years ago has thrived among downtown locals. Our discovery that this establishment was more than bar food led us on a tasty culinary journey.

We started off with both an espresso and chocolate martinis. They were smooth and tasty with a signature design in the light foamy surface. Our apps were the first clue that this was going to be an unexpected treat. We decided on the tuna tartar, blackened scallops, shrimp tempura and crusted crab cakes. The tuna tartar was nice-sized freshly diced tuna, mounted by avocado slices and atop mango, chive, wasabi tobiko and a teriyaki drizzle. It was served with oversized house-made tortilla chips. Next up was the blackened scallops. They were fresh sea scallops perfectly charred on the top and

bottom with a great internal doneness and texture inside. They were served with an avocado salad with crispy shallots, bacon dust and a tequila lime crème fraiche which was spot-on.

Next we had the shrimp tempura, which was perfectly created with a delicate yet crispy coating. It was served with a fuji apple salad with a sweet ginger aioli and citrus ponzu. The salad was divine and the pairing worthy of any Japanese restaurant.

Our last app was the crab cakes. They were corn chip crusted, which gave the scrumptious crab filling a crisp and tasty crust. It was served with a unique fingerling potato salad with a grain mustard aioli.

As we progressed to our entrees, we decided to share an organic greens salad. It was hearty, with greens, tomatoes, candied pecans, dried cranberries, sprinkled with gorgonzola and served with a fruity, acetic balanced passion fruit vinaigrette.

Our first entrée was a nine-ounce filet mignon, prepared perfectly to a medium temperature. It was flavorful and melt-in-your-mouth tasty. The filet was served with whipped Yukon gold potatoes, asparagus and a wonderful demi-glace. That was followed by the pineapple calypso barbeque salmon. The salmon steak was thick, with an expertly barbequed skin, yet moist interior



STEVE COOPER

flesh. It was adorned with a teriyaki glaze and bits of pineapple. The dish was served with a dome of jasmine rice, glazed asparagus and three barbequed shrimp – a flavorful fusion of tastes.

We also had two separate side dishes. The lobster mashed potatoes was perfectly smooth and creamy and loaded with pieces of lobster meat. The mac and cheese was constructed of al dente pasta shells coated in a creamy cheese sauce. While I could take an educated guess as to the types of shells, it was at least three or four varieties. It had a slightly smoky flavor and a rich and velvety complexity.

Our third entrée was a classic: chicken marsala. Two full breasts were served over whipped Yukon potatoes and asparagus. It was bathed in a luscious sauce of mushrooms, garlic and marsala wine. It was savory and on point. Our last selection was the grilled swordfish. It was a perfectly grilled white-meat swordfish steak. It was tender with a buttery glaze. The steak was served over lemon dressed arugula and a roasted corn and quinoa potato hash. It was elegant in its simplicity with balanced flavors.

A sauce can make or break your culinary experience, as it can create different levels of flavor. Citrus's chef, Roberto Martinez, showed off his cooking skills in presenting

a collection of well-constructed, well-balanced, great-tasting and well-plated dishes with a wide variety of sauces and fresh ingredients.

The evening concluded with a sweet explosion of confection and cake. The two house favorites are the crème brûlée and the chocolate truffle cake. The crème brûlée was creamy with an expertly caramelized top. The truffle cake was served with ice cream and fresh whipped cream. As you sliced into it, the warm, oozy chocolate almost tasted like an ice cream sundae.

The wonderful food, service and casual ambiance of Citrus is a great choice for meeting friends, family or a date night. There is also a private dining area for small groups and an outdoor deck as the season changes.

Citrus is located at 56 Broad St. in Milford, in the plaza behind the Old Harrison's Hardware building. For reservations call 203-877-1138. They are open Sunday through Thursday from at 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. including food at bar.

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

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### Amity Students Participate In Rotary Speech Test

Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Orange and Woodbridge, the 2023 Speech Contest involving Amity Regional High School students was recently held at the Case Memorial Library. Based upon the Rotarian's 4-Way Test, this annual event is open to each level of students. The four students selected a topic of their choice for a five to seven-minute speech to be delivered without notes. Their challenge was to incorporate the four points of the 4-Way Test: is it the truth, is it fair to all concerned, will it build goodwill and better friendships, and will it be beneficial to all concerned, into their speech. Earlier this month, a special award ceremony was held in the Library/Media Center at Amity honoring the students. Participants were: Andre Hauser (Principal), Richard Dumbrill (Past President and Youth Services Chair), Evelyn Chen (2nd runner-up), Annie Yun (Winner), Hannah Ghou (First Runner-up), and Robert Catalde (Speech coach and mentor). Annie Yun has been invited to share her speech with club members at a Rotarian Friday luncheon later this spring. Photo courtesy of Richard Dumbrill.

Senior Life

Helping Those With Parkinson’s Disease

Parkinson’s disease is a degenerative illness caused when the cells in the brain that make dopamine stop working or die. Dopamine is a chemical that coordinates movement. Because its symptoms include things like muscle tremors, freezing, stiffness and loss of balance, it is classified as a movement disorder. However, it is important to understand that Parkinson’s disease also can cause constipation, memory problems, depression and a host of other non-movement symptoms.

There is no cure for Parkinson’s. However, medications can help many with symptom management. Because it is a progressive disease, it will get worse over time. We typically associate Parkinson’s disease with aging, but it can affect young people as well.

People living with Parkinson’s disease generally experience a good quality of life, although going through the diagnosis and acceptance phase of any life-limiting illness is difficult.

Those of us who work with people living with Parkinson’s have a saying: “If you know one person with Parkinson’s, you know one person with Parkinson’s.” What

we mean is that the presentation of the disease is highly individualized, and two people diagnosed with Parkinson’s can appear different and experience very different journeys.

Anyone diagnosed with this disease will likely be immediately overwhelmed. There are some important steps to take when you are diagnosed. The first is to build your care team – a group of professionals and supportive caregivers who can help you now and/or later as symptoms progress. This will typically include a movement disorder specialist – a neurologist that specializes in Parkinsonian diseases – other allied care professionals such as physical therapists, speech pathologists, counselors, and nutritionists, and identifying who will be your care partner (usually a spouse or family member). Thinking about and ensuring this group functions as a team will greatly reduce the stress of all the appointments, prescriptions and lifestyle challenges that will come with a new diagnosis.



SUSAN ODERWALD

The person with Parkinson’s is at the center of this team and should always be wholly included in its deliberations and decisions.

It is important to realize that medicine in general, and treatments for Parkinson’s disease in particular, are not “perfect.” It is a practice. Medication regimens, lifestyle adjustments, assistive devices and other treatment options can make finding the right solution for symptom management complicated. There is always going to be some trial and error to see what works and adjustments as the disease moves forward. It is critical that patients and their supporters are actively involved in designing a plan that works for them and not give up or fail to communicate to their team when things are not working or change.

People living with Parkinson’s usually need some professional help at home as the disease progresses. Finding both medical and non-medical support is an essential part of building out your support team as needed.

Finally, seek out only credible information. With a 24/7 news cycle and a multi-billion-dollar scamming industry out there, you will likely start noticing emails and articles on new and breaking research almost every day. Even if this information is legitimate, much of the research reported is initial and years away from the creation of viable treatments or cures.

Seek out sources of information from places like the Michael J. Fox Foundation, the National Institutes of Health or the American Parkinson’s Association. Avoid general information from undocumented sources on the internet and even the advice of family and friends who went through something similar, if only because their experience may not be anything like your experience.

People with Parkinson’s disease have every reason to be hopeful and live full lives, especially if all of us around them are knowledgeable about the disease and supportive on their journey.

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

Orange Entertainer And Author To Sign Books At Area Record Store

Charles F. Rosenay of Orange will be signing copies of his latest book, The Book of Top 10 Beatles Lists, at a meet-and-greet at Merle’s Record Rack on Thursday, April 20 from noon to 3 p.m. Merle’s is located at 307 Racebrook Rd. in Orange

Rosenay has been entertaining at events and functions as a party MC/DJ for over four decades, and he’s well known as a Beatles festival and music producer.

Last year, Mike Papa celebrated Merle’s Record Rack’s 60th anniversary, and this

summer Rosenay celebrates 40 years of bringing Beatles fans to Liverpool and London on his annual Magical History Tour. Rosenay and Papa have been friends and colleagues for as long as they can remember.

The Book of Top 10 Beatles Lists, issued by Kiwi Publishing in March, contains 64 top 10 lists of favorite songs, albums, films, appearances and a whole lot of memories and insights from music legends, actors, athletes, authors, disc jockeys and many friends and relatives

of The Beatles – including two former Beatles themselves.

Every submission contains a list plus additional comments as to why the choices were made. The lists run the gamut from brief, fan-based opinions straight through to thesis-worthy chapters on The Beatles’ legacy. The book is fully illustrated with photos, and at over 200 pages sells for \$19.99.

Rosenay will also be signing copies of his book at the Gary Puckett concert coming to the Milford Performance

Center on Saturday, April 22. Puckett is one of the 64 celebrities with a top 10 list in the book. Concert-goers will have the rare opportunity to get their book signed by both the author and one of the famous rock & rollers with a chapter inside the book.

The book’s website is [BookOfTop10BeatlesLists.com](http://BookOfTop10BeatlesLists.com). More information on the title or the book-signing event is available at Merle’s Record Rack by calling 203-795-4737 or by emailing [BookOfTop10BeatlesLists@gmail.com](mailto:BookOfTop10BeatlesLists@gmail.com).

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## Planet Fitness Honors Long-Time Orange Business Owner



State Rep. Kathy Kennedy presents Orange businessman Joseph Pepe Sr. with a citation from the Connecticut General Assembly. Photo courtesy of Planet Fitness.

Ignite Fitness Holdings – one of the largest Planet Fitness franchise ownership groups operating more than 100 locations across the US and Canada, including 34 clubs in Connecticut – on March 7 honored Joseph Pepe Sr. during a ceremony at the Orange Planet Fitness club. The ceremony included a plaque being placed in the gym to highlight Pepe’s long-standing commitment to Planet Fitness and the community.

Pepe has been in the fitness industry for over 45 years, starting as a personal trainer and membership consultant at European Health Spa in 1975. He became one of the first Planet Fitness franchisees in 2003 when he converted his four World Gyms in Connecticut to Planet Fitness.

The event began with a speaking program including remarks from Joseph Pepe Jr., chief operating officer at Ignite Fitness Holdings; Ryan Berk, chief executive officer at Ignite Fitness Holdings; CJ Bouchard, CEO of Excel Fitness Partners, a current Planet Fitness franchisee and former business partner of Pepe Sr.; Ray

Coassin, a long-time friend of Pepe Sr.; and state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, who presented Pepe Sr. with an official citation from the Connecticut General Assembly.

“I’m incredibly grateful for the Orange community – home of Ignite Fitness Holdings’ headquarters – for its continuous support of Planet Fitness over the years,” said Pepe Sr. “I look forward to seeing the remarkable things this community and organization accomplish for health and fitness in the future.”

As part of its ongoing commitment to the Orange community, Planet Fitness donated \$1,000 to St. Barbara’s Church, where the George Chatzopoulos scholarship fund is offered. Chatzopoulos owned the popular Chip’s restaurants across Connecticut and was a dear friend of Pepe Sr.

“Ignite Fitness Holdings would not be the franchise group it is today without the hard work, diligence, and vision of Joe Pepe Sr.,” said Berk. “Our team is inspired by Joe’s dedication to health and fitness and strives to model his standard of excellence in all we do.”

## THS’s “Beauty and the Beast” Gets Standing Ovation



The Jaime Hulley Arts Foundation presented a sponsorship check to the Turkey Hill School Drama Club cast of “Beauty and the Beast,” which was performed on March 10 and 11. Photo courtesy of THS.

The Turkey Hill School Drama Club put on a performance of “Beauty and the Beast” on March 10 and 11 with 105 actors from the school. The main sponsor of the show was the Jaime Hulley Arts Foundation, who has supported the club for more than a decade.

The show was sold out and received a standing ovation from the audience. The cast began preparations in January, with

props made by parents. “We are incredibly proud of our students and the amazing production they put on,” said THS Principal Denise Arterbery. “It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to put on a show like this, and they truly gave it their all. We are also extremely grateful to the Jaime Hulley Arts Foundation for their unwavering support of our club.”

## Orange Firefighters Honor A Century And Half Of Service At Annual Meeting



Firefighter Scott Reichbart, right, received an award from Selectwoman Judy Williams and Fire Chief Vaughan Dumas during the Orange Volunteer Fire Department’s annual meeting March 14. Reichbart was honored for his years of service and for rescuing a fellow firefighter. Photo courtesy of the OVFD.

Firefighters honored seven members who have given a total of 145 years of service to the town and celebrated the rescue of one firefighter by another. The tributes came at the March 14 annual meeting of the Orange Volunteer Fire Department held at Grassy Hill Country Club.

In addition to the length-of-service awards, firefighters and guests heard the fire chief’s annual report, a greeting from town officials and shared other information.

Fire Chief Vaughan Dumas said the department responded to 695 calls in 2022. That’s up from 681 calls in 2021. And while the total number of runs, including actual fires, was up, false alarms were down.

Dumas said the department remains financially stable and accomplished several important goals during 2022. A new pumper was put in service at the department’s Boston Post Road station that reinforces the department’s capabilities while using greener technology than previous trucks. The department also continues to improve its radio technology, a move that also creates a backup system for the Police Department.

Goals for 2023 include additional station improvements, continued work toward a new fire station to replace the Orange Center Road facility, and working on specifications for a new tower truck. Dumas also said the department is preparing for its 100th anniversary celebration in 2025. Part of that celebration will be hosting the Connecticut State Firefighters Convention.

Dumas made special mention of firefighters’ families, noting the sacrifices they make to allow their family members to volunteer. And he praised the department’s partner agencies, especially the fire marshal’s office, police department and citizen’s emergency response team. He thanked the Orange Economic Development Commission for continuing to support OVFD through its annual golf tournament.

Jillian Gagel, president of the OVFD Auxiliary, reported that the auxiliary was back to doing all of its fundraising events. Money raised by the auxiliary helped pay for portable radios, air packs and turnout gear. This year, she announced, the auxiliary was able to give a record amount of money to the department.

Selectwoman Judy Williams thanked the firefighters on behalf of the town

government. She spoke about the importance of volunteerism, especially in a small town.

“You do it because you enjoy it,” she said. “You do it because you want to give back. You deserve the recognition.”

Dumas and Williams recognized firefighters for their length of service. They were: past Assistant Chief Michael Esposito, 30 years; Firefighter Steven Douglas, 30 years; Firefighter Scott Reichbart, 25 years; Firefighter Dan Johnson, 20 years; Fire Chief Vaughan Dumas, 20 years; Lt. Dan Abrams, 10 years; and Assistant Chief Eric Auscavitch, 10 years.

Reichbart was also recognized for a rescue he was involved in several years ago. Dumas said the rescue wasn’t reported until recently. Reichbart and firefighter John Rossi were overhauling a room after a structure fire. That involves pulling down ceilings and checking behind walls to make sure there’s no fire still burning anywhere. The floor under Rossi collapsed and Rossi started falling into the basement. He caught himself on the edge of the hole. Despite the knowledge that the floor near the hole was compromised, Reichbart crawled to the edge of the hole and pulled Rossi out of the hole, preventing him from falling into the still-hot rubble in the basement. For his actions, Reichbart received an award of merit.

Two other groups of firefighters received awards for special work in 2022. Lt. Vaughan Dumas Jr. and Firefighter Will Clemens were honored for refurbishing a fire engine. Capt. Dave Tufano, Lt. Dan Abrams, Lt. Eric Demeraski and Lt. Dumas were recognized for special training sessions they created at buildings in town that were due to be demolished. More than 750 hours of training, including specialized training about rescuing firefighters, were conducted at one of those sites.

Treasurer Bert Gallant and Firefighter Peter Goodwin, together, were named Firefighter of the Year. Assistant Chief Dan Cole was named officer of the year in a special recognition for work he has done with personnel operations, the 100th anniversary and other achievements.

The department also named Marsha Addil and Patricia Abrams as honorary members because of the support they and their late spouses have shown the department over the years.

Chambers Celebrate St. Patrick's Day At Orange Ale House



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Orange Chamber of Commerce came together at Orange Ale House in Orange to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Photo courtesy of the MRCC.



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AMSO Student Wins National Map Contest

Amity Middle School Orange student Monica Chen has won this year's Jr. Scholastic Map Man contest. A runner-up last year, Chen's map submission was selected as the grand prize winner out of over 1,500 entries from across the US. Her map will be published in Jr. Scholastic in the coming months. Several AMSO students participated in this contest with the support of their social studies teachers.

Orange Resident Makes Deans List

Orange resident John McNabola, a freshman at the University of South Carolina, made the dean's list for the fall 2022 semester with a GPA of 3.7. McNabola is a finance major and Spanish minor within the Darla Moore School of Business. The university recognizes undergraduate students with a grade point average of 3.50 or higher (on a 4.0 scale). Students must have earned a minimum of 12 credited semester hours. McNabola is the son of Orange Board of Finance member and Milford-Orange Times columnist Kevin McNabola.

Town of Orange Legal Notice

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec 7-394, there is on file for public inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk, the Auditors report covering the Town of Orange for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut, this the 26th day of January 2023.

Mary Shaw  
Orange Town Clerk

Milford St. Patrick's Day Parade



Milford held its annual St. Patrick's Day parade on March 11. Photos by Robert Creigh.

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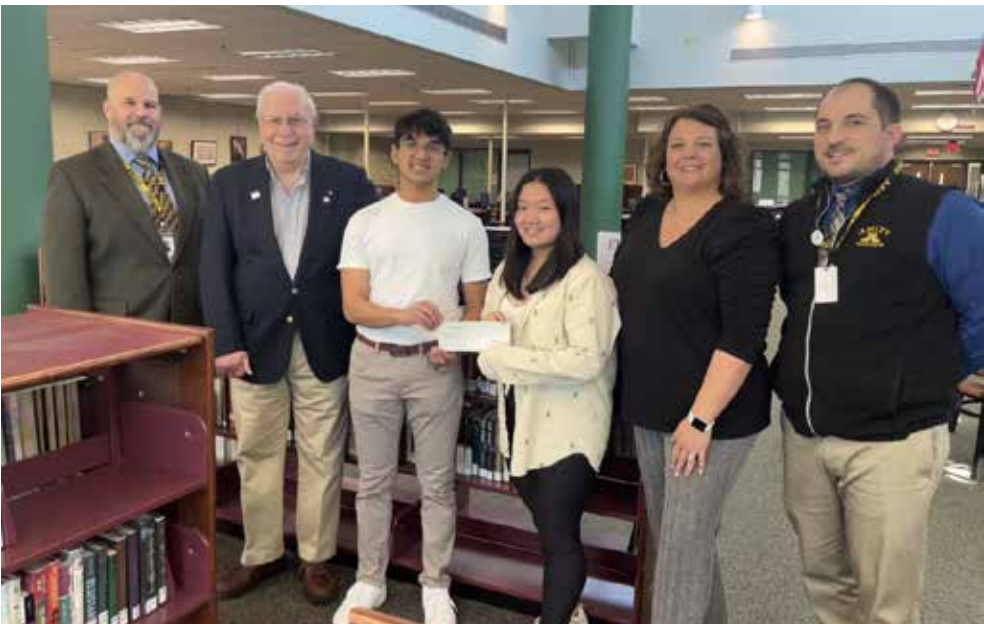


## Lions Club Grant Night



The Orange Lions Club presented community mini grants to nonprofit and government organizations at High Plains Community Center on March 27 for the 20th year as part of the club's commitment to return a portion of its annual fundraising to the local community. For 2023, some \$7,000 in grants were provided. Front row, from left: Ginny Reinhard, Orange Historical Society; Dennis Marsh, Orange Senior Center; Kelly Cronin, Kelly's Kids, Inc.; Susan vonRabenstein, Orange Food2Kids; Marlene Silverstein, Orange Historical Society; Stacey Johnson, Orange Youth Services; Nicholas Bencivengo, Orange Lions Club president; and Tony Vitti, Rape Crisis Center of Milford. Second row, from left: Edward Kasey, West Haven Veteran's Museum, George Lesko, Orange Lions Grants Committee member; Kevin Hadlock, Orange Lions Grants Committee Chair; Fred Turner, Orange Lions Grants Committee member; and Robb McCorkle, Orange Lions Grants Committee member. Other recipients of grants not pictured were the Case Memorial Library, Orange Police Department's S.O.A.R. Program, Orange Volunteer Fire Department, Orange Elementary Schools Olympic Festival, Lexi Crocco and the Orange Juniores. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

## Orange Rotary Donates To Amity Science Program



The Rotary Club of Orange on March 20 presented Amity High School Science Department Chair Dr. Angela Amato with a donation in support of the many activities the school's Science Research Program undertakes during the academic year. On hand to witness this event were Principal Andre Hauser, students Sheehan Munim and Annie Zhan holding the donation check, teacher Catherine Piscitelli and Amato. Amity students participate in this ongoing program in conjunction with their regular science courses. The first year is devoted to learning the components of scientific research including the scientific method. These concepts are then applied in various settings, including the design and conducting authentic science research projects. The results obtained are communicated in at least one local science fair. Students also explore various applications of science topics through field trips, guest speakers and class projects. Research methodology is explored and appropriate analyses of data on an in-depth research project is performed. In the second tier of two to four years, advanced students select their science research topic, locate an out-of-school mentor either in industry or at a local university such as Yale. They also compete in a variety of science fairs. Photo by Richard Dumbrill.

## Orange Land Trust Awards Student Scholarships



The Orange Land Trust recently awarded scholarships to University of New Haven students. Each student received \$1,000 to assist their pursuit of a degree in environmental science. Student Alexa Gabriel was not present to receive the Richard Wright Scholarship, due to her studies abroad. Also note pictured is scholarship recipient Nicholis Imbrogno. Back row: OLT board members George Lesko, Suzanne Anderson and Eva Kendrick; front row, scholarship recipient Nicolette Poirier, Land Trust President Dr. Lawrence Messina and board member Allen Grealish. Photo courtesy of the Orange Land Trust.



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## Scholarships Available To Graduating Orange Students

The Orange Scholarship Foundation Association is offering several scholarships to graduating seniors from Orange. Among them is the Ashlie Krakowski Memorial Scholarship of \$4,000. This scholarship is awarded to a student who intends to pursue a career in health care or a related health care field.

Applicants must meet criteria for receiving scholarships which include financial need, academic achievement, community service and leadership roles in organizations and activities.

Application information is available through high school guidance departments, through the Orange Scholarship Foundation Association Facebook page or by calling 203-668-5428. The deadline for applications is April 15.

# Obituaries

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

**Martha Bartha**, age 93, of Milford, died peacefully on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at Milford Health & Rehab. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Glenn Roger Bell**, 77, of Milford, CT passed away on Friday March 10, 2023 after a courageous battle with cancer.



**Bruce William Bolduc**, age 58, of Milford, passed away on Friday March 17, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Betty J. Brennan**, 86, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Edward Brennan Sr., passed away on March 26, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Tyler John Breuler**, 22, of Orange, passed away on March 17, 2023. Born on October 18, 2000, in Milford. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Antoinette Turro Buccieri**, age 90, of Milford, beloved wife of Joseph A. Buccieri, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 28, 2023. (A briola Parkview Funeral Home)



**Donald "Donny" Dean Byrne**, 84, formerly of Milford, passed away on March 18, 2023 in Pompano Beach, FL. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Carolyn H. (Marcovich) Contardi**, 74, of Orange passed away February 24, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**George John Fino**, 98 years old, born February 22, 1925 in Bridgeport, CT passed away peacefully on February 25, 2023 in Milford, Connecticut. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Thomas G. Forlano Sr.**, 84. Our beloved father and husband passed away on March 17, 2023.



**Dr. Frank G. Fortunati, Jr.**, 58, of Milford, beloved husband of Karen (Angelo) Fortunati and adored father of Jenna and Frankie, passed away on March 5, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Raymond Garcia**, 94, of Orange, beloved husband of the late Vera Garcia, passed away peacefully on March 3, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Elena L. Garet**, 61, of Milford, beloved wife of Ken Herbert, passed away on March 24, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Eric Carl Gerlander**, 71, of Milford, passed away on March 25, 2023. Eric was born on July 25, 1951, and he was the son of the late Eric G. and Lillian Gerlander. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Lawrence Francis Griffin**, 89, of Milford, passed away peacefully at home on April 1st, 2023 surrounded by loved ones. (Dennis & D'Arcy Funeral Home)



**David J. DeRubeis**  
– Managing Partner

<b>Thomas J. Cody</b> – Funeral Director	<b>Amanda Veccharelli</b> – Funeral Director
<b>Kevin W. Cody</b> – Funeral Director	<b>Carly Ericson</b> – Funeral Director
<b>Jaclyn Cody D'Auria</b> – Funeral Director	<b>Molly Vargo</b> – Funeral Director
<b>Brian Garrity</b> – Apprentice	<b>Renate K. Eastman</b> – Office Manager

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# Obituaries

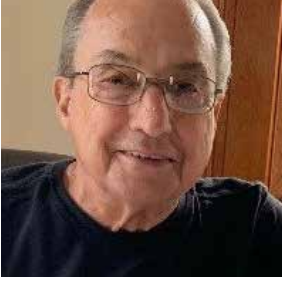
It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, **Jeanette Hafner** of Orange, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



You might have called me JOE or some called me Frank, some as **JOE FRANK (Honeck)**, but when GOD called on March 1, 2023, that was a call I had to answer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Ronald A. Kuhl**, 83, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Josephine (Plavcan) Kuhl, entered into eternal rest on March 14, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Elvira C. Prokoski**, age 105, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Raymond J. Prokoski, entered into eternal rest on March 16, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Ursula Ann (Wallace) Hayes**, 89, passed away on February 24, 2023 at her home. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Brian Robert Hulse**, 81, of Milford, beloved husband of Delena (Herron) Hulse passed away peacefully at home on March 17, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



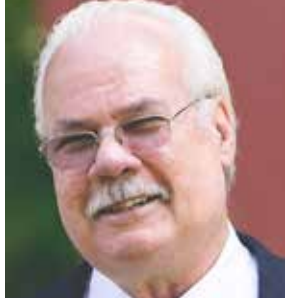
It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of **Patricia Mary Lucia** age 77 of Milford, on March 19, 2023 surrounded by her family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Thomas (Tom) Protsko**, 81, of Milford, passed away peacefully on March 5, 2023, after battling illness. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Edward Charles Henning**, age 73, of Milford, beloved husband of Joni (Troxler) Henning, passed away unexpectedly on March 27, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



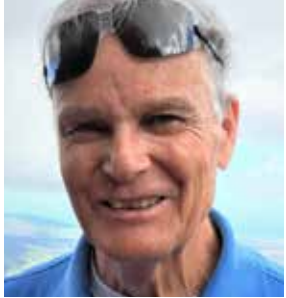
**John Iaffaldano**, age 59, of Milford, died on Thursday March 9, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Irene J. Nolan**, 62, of Milford, CT died Monday, February 27, 2023 at Bridgeport Hospital after a period of declining health. (Adzima Funeral Home)



**John Enright Reynolds**, 86, passed away peacefully on March 19, 2023, under the loving care of his wife Ethel Ann Reynolds (née Lynch) in his Milford home. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Carolyn Holmes**, 90, of Milford, CT, passed away surrounded by her loving family on March 15, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Carolina Jaser**, 55, of Milford, beloved, passed away peacefully with her family present on March 19, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Mary Anne O'Connell**, R.N. of Milford, CT, wife of John 'Jack' O'Connell Sr., peacefully left us to join other angels on Saturday, March 18, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Kenneth R. Robinson Jr** of Woodbridge, CT, born December 12, 1953, passed away on March 14th, 2023 at Griffin Hospital at the age of 69. (Cody-White Home)



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# Obituaries

**Concetta Mary Rooney** was born on April 1, 1934 and passed away on December 14, 2022 at age 88. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

**Hanna Atallah Basil Samander** of Milford, passed away peacefully in his home on March 2, 2023, at the age of 72. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

**Maria Therese Savko**, age 64, of Milford, passed away unexpectedly from a blood clot in her lung on March 26, 2023, with her family by her side. (Adzima Funeral Home)

**Michael A. Solemene Jr.**, age 62, of Milford, beloved son of the late Michael and Rosalie Leopardi Solemene, passed away peacefully on March 17, 2023. (Galello-Luchansky Funeral Home)

**Chad Michael Stryker**, 48, of Ansonia, beloved father of Fallon, Kendal, and Chad Jr., entered into eternal rest on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

**Frank Tondora**, 82, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Marguerite "McGee" (Ryan) Tondora, passed away after a brief illness on March 3, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

**Peter William Trapani**, age 73, of Milford, beloved husband of Connie Innamorato, died on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

**Ronald F. Unger**, 78, of Orange, beloved husband of the late Roberta "Bobbie" Unger, passed away peacefully on March 23, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

## OCC Holding Easter Services

Orange Congregational Church will hold its Maundy Thursday service on April 6 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. 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 church's bell choir and senior choir. The church office can be reached at 203-795-9749 and is open weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Regular worship services are on Sundays at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. Services are also livestreamed on the "Orange Congregational Church, UCC" YouTube page. OCC is located on the corner of 205 Meeting House Ln. and Orange Center Rd.

## Oil Change Service Holds Ribbon-Cutting



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on March 24 at Take-5 Oil Change in West Haven with Mayor Nancy Rossi and other officials to celebrate the grand opening of its first Connecticut location. Take-5 Oil Change customers are greeted with a bottle of water and the quick oil change is done while the customer stays seated in the car. Take-5 Oil Change is located at 1083 Orange Ave. and is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. From left: Council member Gary Donovan, Council member Colleen O'Connor, Mayor Nancy Rossi, general manager Frank Buffone, co-owner Adam Kimberly, co-owner Jeff Kimberly and MRCC Director of Membership and Marketing Simon McDonald. Photo by Greg Geiger.



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