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Milford Holds Annual Tree Lighting



Milford held its annual holiday tree lighting on Nov. 24 on the Green in downtown. In addition to the lighting, the event featured music and family activities. Additional photos on page 10. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Orange Community Gathers Against Hate, Antisemitism

By Brandon T. Bisceglia



Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus of Congregation Or Shalom speaks on Dec. 10 while flanked by state and local leaders during a vigil against hate and antisemitism at High Plains Community Center in Orange. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

P&Z Approves Warehouse At Former Subway Location

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

FCP Euro's plan to build a 160,000 square-foot warehouse for its online auto parts business on the Milford land being vacated by Subway won a key victory during the Dec. 5 Planning and Zoning Board meeting, despite environmental concerns from some opponents.

As Subway moves its headquarters to Shelton, FCP had struck a deal with the fast food giant to take over the Milford land and consolidate its own headquarters

and warehouse into one facility.

Making FCP's goal a reality would require a text amendment to the zoning rules around the property, as well as a special permit and site plan review for the proposed warehouse.

Most of the opponents of the project objected to the effects they saw it having on the nearby Mondo Ponds nature preserve, an area home to sensitive wetlands and

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Members of the Orange community braved harsh weather to take a stand against antisemitism and hate during a vigil on Dec. 10 outside the High Plains Community Center.

Heavy rains did not deter over 100 people from attending the event, which featured faith leaders from the area along with local and state politicians.

US Sen. Richard Blumenthal drove up from his home in Greenwich to speak at the vigil. Blumenthal, who is Jewish, talked about his father coming to the US

in 1935 to escape persecution under the Nazi regime with the hope that his new country would give him a chance. He related how his father had warned him that the same kind of hate could occur here.

"He also warned me, when I said to him it can never happen here, that it can happen anywhere," Blumenthal said, "because there's hate everywhere. And it will happen if good people don't stand up."

Continued on page 15

Holidays Come To Orange



Orange held its annual holiday tree lighting and lighted tractor parade on Dec. 9 in the historic downtown. Additional photos on page 11. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Orange TPZC Denies Reg Changes For Apartments

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Town Plan & Zoning Commission on Dec. 5 denied an effort to change the town's planned residential district zone regulations to accommodate the development of apartments on Peck Lane – in part because it would have lowered the amount of new affordable housing.

The regulation changes, brought by attorney John Knuff on behalf of developer Commonwealth Newington LLC and the estate of Helen Cunningham, were aimed at easing the development of a single building of 75 one-bedroom apartments behind the retail plaza that

houses Raymour & Flanigan. Beyond the part of Peck Lane facing the Post Road, the street becomes residential with single-family homes.

Knuff had initially brought the proposal before the TPZC on Nov. 21. That version would have lowered the threshold of affordable housing units from 30 percent to 5 percent. Members of the commission had criticized that number as too low at a time when the state and town are seeking to increase the availability of affordable housing. So

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Juice Bar Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on Nov. 18 to celebrate the opening of Robeks Fresh Juices & Smoothies. Located at 1319 Boston Post Rd., Robeks opened their first juice and smoothie restaurant in 1996 and have been promoting healthy living ever since. This is owners Patrick Kovac's and Mark Henriques's fifth Robeks. From left: Robeks manager Nicole Cora, Kovac, wife Rachel Kovac, Ava Henriques, Alexander Henriques, owner Mark Henriques and wife Patricia Henriques. Photo by Greg Geiger.

Milford Mitsubishi Opens



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce celebrated the grand opening of Milford Mitsubishi on Dec. 6 with a ribbon cutting at the dealership's location at 750 Bridgeport Ave. Owners Richard Osiashvili and Franco Onelli are both experienced in the automotive industry and will be offering a lineup of Mitsubishi cars and SUVs. This was Mayor Tony Giannattasio's first official ribbon cutting as Milford's new mayor. From left: Simon McDonald of the MRCC, Giannattasio, Osiashvili and Onelli. Photo by Greg Geiger.

Orange Community Women Offering Handmade Mugs



Orange Community Women has a limited number of mugs featuring the town seal for sale during the holidays.

The mugs are handcrafted by expert pottery artisans, using a ceramic scrimshaw process for precision detail and high-end quality. They feature a medallion picturing the Orange plowman and his team of oxen, symbolizing the town. No two of these

custom-crafted mugs are exactly alike. They are being sold for \$20 each.

Contact Orange Community Women at Orangecommunityw@gmail.com to purchase one of the mugs and arrange to have it delivered. Visit [facebook.com/orangecommunitywomen/](https://www.facebook.com/orangecommunitywomen/) for more information and color pictures of the mugs.

Tango Gala Coming To Milford New Year's Eve

Tango Sueño and the Milford Arts Council will present a concert of tango music with a touch of dance on Sunday, Dec. 31 at 7 p.m. at the MAC, located at 40 Railroad Ave. in Milford.

The world-renowned Hyperion Ensemble visits Connecticut to welcome the new year with tango and champagne. The six-piece band featuring bandoneon, voice,

piano, double bass, flute and violin will play traditional tangos as well as works by Piazzolla. Tango dancers Dale Ellison and Gem Duras will accompany the group with several dance numbers as well, plus a champagne toast to open the event.

Seats are limited and assigned. Tickets are \$48 (rows A-G) and \$38 (rows H-L) on sale at cttangofest.org or at 203-584-4480.

Adopt A Pet: Lazlo



Lazlo is a young, neutered male American Staffordshire mix. He is up to date on all his shots and is housebroken. Lazlo is a sweet boy and is dreaming of finding his forever home for Christmas. Lazlo can be adopted from Milford Animal Control, located at 664 East Broadway in Milford. For more information, call 203-783-3279. Photo courtesy of Milford Animal Control.

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Leaders Inaugurated In Orange



Orange officials were sworn into their new terms in office on Nov. 17 at High Plains Community Center. It was the 10th inauguration of First Selectman James M. Zeoli, who will be serving his 19th and 20th years in that position. Dominick Lombardi was the master of ceremonies for the event. Honored guests who participated in the event included Father Peter Orfanakos of St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church, Orange Police Department Honor Guard, Commander Lewis Merritt of American Legion Post 127, singers from Amity High School. State Rep. Kathy Kennedy was the guest speaker. Attorney Win Smith III swore in all the candidates. Other guests in attendance included state Rep. Mary Welander and Milford mayor-elect Tony Giannattasio. Photos courtesy of the Town of Orange.

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Opinion & Editorial

Ponder This

How Do We Create A Culture Of Peace?

An important lesson emerged from the US involvement in Vietnam: a demand for peace and end to war does not equate to a lack of patriotism. The Vietnam protests in the US during the 60s and 70s started with political radicals and moved on to college campuses. These initial protests soon became a more widespread antiwar movement and part of a broader cultural shift.

Vietnam-era antiwar protests brought about successful outcomes directed at a particular war rather than affecting long-term lifestyles or government policy. A global peace movement should aim to diminish all war, and guarantee safety and security for humankind. There is an intersection of women's rights embedded in food, home insecurity and climate change effects. A broadly constructed peace movement can act as a combined call to awareness about these essential issues affecting human security and stability.

Through the graciousness of Sen. Chris Murphy's office, in September 2015 I obtained an audience ticket during Pope Francis's visit to the US Congress. This world leader used his position of influence to admonish the US for what he termed a shameless and culpable silence on arms sales. As the largest arms dealer in the world, the US generated approximately \$28 billion in sales in 2014. The pontiff challenged the congressional leadership to consider the question of why deadly weapons are being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on others.

Pope Francis was speaking of US involve-

ment with Saudi Arabia. The answer to why, he unequivocally and courageously stated, is money. The pontiff directly confronted the false notion that arms sales promote stability in conflicted regions. Our arms sales to Saudi Arabia put weapons in Yemen, creating the worst humanitarian crisis in memory. The arms race takes away resources for fighting hunger and poverty while hastening the self-destruction of humanity.

This format is too brief to relay the extensive history of the peace movement across time and geography. The involvement of women is threaded through all peace movements dating through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries until the present. This is an obvious indicator that human strife, conflict and instability land squarely on the lives of women and families. Women must rise up and exert our agency in a demand for peace for all children.

Peace advocacy should be a part of mainstream political discussion. Safe places are necessary to dialogue about war, violent conflict and the resultant trauma affecting the physical, economic, educational and emotional health of communities. Our best ideas will emerge if protected from alignment with any particular group or cause, regardless of the legitimacy and severity of their grievances and experiences of brutality.

Discussion of peace and advocacy actions must not be risky or politically costly. One can



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

agree with longstanding grievances and threats to the existence of a population yet still work diligently toward peaceful paths forward. Devastating military superiority cannot be the gauge of success, especially when civilian casualties are involved. Even legitimate conflict based on existential threats to a nation cannot stop our pursuit of peaceful paths forward. The costs are great and time is dear.

Some scholars report that peace movements of the 20th century have become an integral part of policy formation and social change. This can and should continue if such discussions are clear of positions on ongoing world conflicts, allowing the best resources and intellects to study and analyze peace.

There is a body of scholarly work on peace research – not only disarmament, but also related to economic and ecological issues. We must gather as idealistic, well meaning pragmatists against gender-based violence and for the elimination of war and unresolved conflicts. The factors driving war and violent conflict must be examined to develop an emerging culture of peace.

What is needed is a framework for peace. David Attenborough, the renowned biologist and naturalist, urges the world to look at all activities, expenditures, policies and programs through the lens of climate change. He advocates that only such a consistent worldview

will bring about lasting and positive changes.

Society must adopt a similar lens of peace through which we examine all endeavors. What effect does this have on human stability? How do the long-term effects of this policy, program, funding or endeavor assist peace and human security? This must be done as a critical intellectual process without fear of political, professional or personal alienation. Peacemaking goals do not equate to taking sides on issues, especially those causing heartbreak and destruction in communities and nations.

It is our duty to help confront problems and diminish the arms trade. This is no longer a utopian goal, but a reality to avert further damage to humanity. What would it take? This is the question to ponder and to act upon soon.

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

Commentary

Good Things Have Arrived In Town Hall For The Holidays

If you haven't looked at the town website in the last few days, you need to go now. The newly reformatted website is up and operational. Go to orange-ct.gov to check it out.

The tax department is proud to roll out our new payment website as well; go to orange-ct-mytaxbill.com and have a look around. Sturgis, a Catalis company, is our new credit option provider in the tax department. Sewer bill payment is on schedule for a January rollout.

Before you check out the new tax site, you may want to look around the tax collector's updated site on the town's website as well. Instructions on using the new website have been made available as well. You may now set up an individual account.

Services currently available when you set up your account include providing your phone number and email account so that the tax of-

fice can contact you more quickly if there is a problem with your account. It could save you interest charges by alerting you to problems such as forgetting to sign or date your check or leaving the cents off your written amount line. It can give you alerts and notifications to remind you of your upcoming tax bill.

We are now accepting American Express, Visa, MasterCard or Discover branded credit and debit cards, including appropriately branded affinity cards such as Carte Blanche and Diners Club cards. You may also use electronic checks to pay your outstanding tax bills. The new system requires some setup on your part to make sure your bank identifier and account number are



THOMAS P. HURLEY

entered properly.

The e-check option is cost effective at \$1.95 and uses the ACH system like your regular checks do. It should also be possible to use your savings accounts as well as your checking accounts. Check with your bank to make sure they allow for withdrawals from your savings account.

For those of you who wish to put money away so it is available at tax time, this is a very attractive option.

For those of you wanting to make your payments by phone, we have a new internet voice response system. Call 203-902-0387; convenience fees apply. The town does not share in convenience fee revenues. The fee is 2.5 percent with credit cards bearing the Visa, Mas-

terCard, Discover or American Express logos. The fee is 1.5 percent for debit cards bearing the same logos, or \$1.50 for an ACH e-check as of Dec. 4.

We are now accepting credit and debit cards at the tax windows as well. As this is a new system for us in the Tax Department, we ask you to bear with us as we transition with you on all the new capabilities. Call the tax office if you are having difficulties at 203-891-4736.

We are planning to mail the supplemental motor vehicle tax bills on Dec. 15. Remember, if you are paying your real estate or personal property second installment, they are due on Jan. 1.

Thomas P. Hurley is the tax collector for Orange.

Letters to the Editor:

Our Good Samaritan In Orange

To the Editor:

I have always enjoyed being a resident of our uniquely welcoming Town of Orange. Recently, this sentiment was reaffirmed for me.

Our Indian (from India) community had requested a date to rent the community center gymnasium for a fun cultural event with prayers, ethnic dancing and delicious snacks. We were told to fill out paperwork and return, but time flew by, and when the event volunteer went to Parks and Recreation, they were told that the event had been canceled. It didn't help that this occurred the day before the event.

The volunteer called me in a state of panic as flyers had been sent out and snacks arranged, with 100 people expected to attend. Parks and Recreation apologized profusely, agreeing that no calls had been placed on either side to confirm the event. I begged the Parks and Recreation officer to reconsider,

agreeing that the volunteer should have come earlier, but he said that it was impossible.

We walked out, stunned, wondering what we were to do. I refused to believe that we would have to cancel the event. So off I went to the Town Hall, not totally certain of my approach. As I pulled up, I ran into someone I knew from Public Works. I poured out my dilemma. He was very kind, regretted that he could not really help, and advised me to go to the Public Works office.

I walked up the stairs, praying and hoping that someone would wave a magic wand and solve our problem, and that is exactly what happened.

I walked into the office and explained what had transpired to the ladies at the desk. One of them, Sylvie Napoli, asked a few questions, noted down particulars, and then, with the most beautiful smile I have ever seen, assured me that after a few necessary phone calls she would be able to allow us to proceed with our event.

On this Thanksgiving, our whole organization gave thanks to Napoli, our true angel, who went "above and beyond" for us.

We celebrated our event the next day with heartfelt joy and gratitude. We are so indebted to Napoli, and I feel more convinced than ever that the town of Orange is the best place to

live in.

**Dr. Anjali Mehta
Orange**

Milford-Orange Times

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Opinion & Editorial

What To Expect In The New Session



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

Although the 2024 legislative session will begin on Feb. 7 and conclude on May 8, new laws will go into effect on Jan. 1. These laws address a wide variety of issues, many of which are bills passed during the recent 2023 legislative session. Below, I outline what important bills will go into effect starting in January.

State budget: As you know, the recent \$51 billion state budget agreement included several Republican-led proposals that fostered bipartisan support. The most important of these is significant tax relief, a \$150 million education statewide investment, a one-time bonus in funding to nonprofits, freezing the diesel tax and eliminating the “retirement benefits cliff” by phasing out the income tax exemption for pension and annuity income and individual retirement accounts. For my full outline on the state budget, visit my website at RepKennedy.com.

Early voting: The Connecticut election landscape in 2024 will be evolving as our state takes on new early voting regulations. Specifically, for general elections, voters will be allowed a 14-day voting period prior to election day. The agreed period for primaries is seven days, while special elections will have a four-day early voting period. It is critical to know how our state elections will be changing and I encourage you to learn more at myvote.ct.gov.

Bottle bills: One law will increase the bottle redemption value from 5 cents to 10 cents, while also exempting certain beverage containers (juice, tea, coffee, sports or energy drinks) in a retailer’s inventory from the labeling requirements associated with the state’s beverage container redemption law. The other law requires the Council on Environmental Quality to include a review of the programs and measures local governments implemented with funds received from the state’s nip surcharge in the annual environmental quality report.

Vision Zero Council: The main component of this law is the new implementation and installment of speed and red-light cameras in school and pedestrian zones across various municipalities, based on the recommendations of the Department of Transportation’s Vision Zero Council.

Online privacy: Initially proposed to protect minors from online harassment, this law specifically establishes a framework and sets requirements for how individuals or entities offering certain online services, products and features manage and process personal data for minors. This demands the utmost online security from social media companies and online marketing firms for youth usership.

Other notable laws going into effect include PA 23-137, which expands resources for individuals with intellectual disabilities and PA 22-139, which studies the best methods for providing accessible cancer relief and treatment for local and state firefighters.

Find the full list at cga.ct.gov.

Looking ahead, after state Democratic leadership withdrew their proposal to ban the sale of new gas-powered vehicles by 2035, it is certain that this proposed mandate will return in an upcoming legislative session. As a longtime environmental advocate, I am hopeful that both parties can convene to address an eco-friendly solution that does not put the interests and needs of our small businesses, busing companies, schools and consumers on the back seat.

Moving Against EV Mandate



STATE REP. (R-117)
CHARLES FERRARO

At the end of November, the state’s Regulations Review Committee was set to meet and vote on a proposed regulatory package which would have phased in a ban on the sale of new gas-powered cars in Connecticut by 2035. Two key members of the 14-member committee, which is evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, expressed their intent to disapprove of the regulations in a vote, causing Gov. Ned Lamont to withdraw them at the eleventh hour.

This marks a serious setback in their “ban with no plan.”

The opposition to this electric vehicle mandate came from every corner of Connecticut, with residents expressing a range of concerns, from affordability to grid infrastructure to charging accessibility. Additionally, industry leaders and experts from our local business community amplified these concerns and how they would affect their businesses, employees and families.

Together with your support, we pumped the brakes on this gas car ban.

Just as quickly as the Lamont administration rescinded these proposals, they joined many of my Democratic legislative colleagues and expressed their intention to further pursue this ban in the upcoming legislative session.

Many top majority party legislators have gone on to acknowledge many of the concerns that House and Senate Republicans brought to the table through strong public input. While I am glad that they are finally talking about hurdles like electric generation and expansion of charging infrastructure, I am still skeptical that they will develop a comprehensive plan before they restart their push shortly after the start of the new year.

A weekend editorial in the New London Day hit the nail on the head in stating, “If the governor and the Democrat-controlled legislature want public backing, they need to demonstrate there are realistic plans to improve the power grid to meet the demand. They must provide assurances, with concrete policies and not promises, that there will be adequate recharging stations to serve a new generation of electric cars.”

If you have not had your say on the issue, please visit my website to take my legislative survey at repferraro.com/EVsurvey.

As the majority continues their attempts to mirror California’s model of carbon emission standards through lofty environmental goals and restrictive mandates, I will continue to ensure that your voices are being heard in Hartford, not squashed in Sacramento.

The 2024 legislative session begins on Feb. 7 and will end on May 8. You can follow along with business at the State Capitol live by visiting ct-n.com.

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

Leading On Child, Maternal Health



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

I recently participated in a special conference focused on the anticipated public health issues surrounding children and mothers. Hosted by the National Conference of State Legislators, this bipartisan event, titled “Maternal and Child Health: Forecasting 2024 Priorities,” included expert panelists from across the country serving in state and federal agencies and organizations. I joined legislators from 27 other states in Austin, Texas to dig deeper into a number of issues, some of which I will highlight here.

It was reassuring to see that Connecticut once again is leading the way on children’s mental health. Many states are just starting to create pathways to care and are looking to states like us for solutions.

I shared legislation that I wrote in 2021 that identified areas lacking in student access to mental health services and the subsequent allocation of funds to create school-based mental health clinics to address that need. While we still have more work to do and need to secure stable funding sources, I am proud of the work that we have done to help our kids at home.

I was not as familiar with the topic of maternal mortality review committees. Presenters Dr. Lisa Hollier of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Adwoa K. Nantwi, a maternal and child health epidemiologist from New Jersey, shared this heartbreaking national statistic: 84 percent of maternal deaths could have been prevented.

To combat this, the CDC has awarded funding to 44 states (including Connecticut) and two territories to create MMRCs. Their goal is to review and identify pregnancy-related deaths and create prevention plans.

Following the presentation, I immediately reached out to the Connecticut House chair of the Public Health Committee to learn more about our MMRC and to express my commitment to working with those involved on both the committee and with community-led organizations.

I also learned about a 24/7, free and confidential hotline that offers mental health support for mothers and families before, during and after pregnancy. 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262) is a national hotline but can also provide local information for referrals/continued care.

The low point of the conference was learning about the lack in progress in affordable pediatric/general dental care. It’s proven that your oral health has a marked impact on your overall health, yet most dental insurance plans are expensive and cover very little. If you receive dental coverage through HUSKY, then your challenge starts with simply finding a dentist. Addressing this so that all residents have access to quality dental care is complicated – it requires collaboration between federal and state level agencies, and private insurance companies just to start. But it is clearly needed.

I am grateful to Speaker of the House Matt Ritter and Majority Leader Jason Rojas for nominating me to attend this important event and I look forward to using this new knowledge to better serve the district and the state.

Please reach out to me at mary.welander@cga.ct.gov if I can be of any assistance.

Ways To Give Back Locally



STATE SEN. (D-14)
JAMES MARONEY

I don’t know about you, but it is hard for me to believe that it is already December. I don’t know where this year has gone.

But with the shorter days come the holidays right around the corner. This time of year creates a sense of giving in many people. As gifting to our loved ones or children is part of the holiday tradition, we must also think of the precious gift of giving back.

One way to give back is to support our local nonprofit organizations. We are fortunate that we have many great nonprofits in our community that help to take care of those who may be in need of housing, food assistance or a helping hand.

Many of these nonprofits are integral parts of our community, hosting annual events that help to make Milford and Orange even better places to live, work and raise families. Through food drives, community meals, partnerships with local business, toy drives, coat drives and more, these organizations work to create a sense of community.

Some equate the joy of unwrapping a gift with the holiday season. If you would like to help make it possible for a child who might not otherwise be able to open a gift, consider making a donation to Milford Toys for Tots. Every year the Milford Professional Firefighters Association Local 944 runs this drive. You can drop off toys at 980 New Haven Ave. in Milford.

Unfortunately, for some people opening a toy is the last of their concerns, as they are more worried about finding a warm shelter. We are lucky to have the Beth-El Center homeless shelter in Milford. You can learn more about how to support their efforts at bethelmilford.org.

While many of our nonprofits help the neediest, there are times when we are all in need of entertainment and enrichment. Both the Milford Historical Society and Orange Historical Society enrich our communities by helping to keep our histories alive. You can learn more about the Milford Historical Society at milfordhistoricalsociety.org and you can learn more about the Orange Historical Society at OrangeHistory.org. Don’t miss the Stone Otis House Museum holiday store on Dec. 16, 23 and 30 from noon to 3 p.m.

The arts serve as a unifying force and help to bring us together. The Milford Arts Center is a great resource that offers many great programs for all ages. You can learn more about their programs at MilfordArts.org, but over the next month be sure to check out the buoy tree at Lisman Landing, the Members Art Show gallery viewing and open mic night, among other events. We also can’t forget the many great shows that are provided by the Orange Players.

These are just some of the many treasures of nonprofit organizations that we have in our community. In this season of giving, please consider supporting them so they can continue to support our community throughout the year.

For Nature's Sake

An Anniversary Quiz For The Endangered Species Act

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the US Endangered Species Act. Congress passed the act with overwhelming bipartisan support, and President Richard Nixon signed the ESA into law on Dec. 28, 1973, noting, "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

To honor the occasion, the quiz below, with answers provided, can serve as a self-challenge or a supplement to trivia games at holiday gatherings.

1. The main purpose of the U.S. endangered species act is to...

- a) protect humans from dangerous animals
- b) prevent the extinction of species
- c) bring back species that have already become extinct

2. Which of the following types of living things are protected by the ESA?

- a) fish
- b) insects
- c) coral
- d) mammals and other vertebrates
- e) plants
- f) all of the above

3. Which of the following is false?

- a) Federal agencies are not supposed to fund or participate in actions that can harm an endangered or threatened species.
- b) It is against the law to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect an endangered species.
- c) The import or export of endangered species is illegal.
- d) It's against the law to degrade or alter the habitat of an endangered species in a way that threatens their survival.
- e) Hiking or birdwatching in areas inhabited by endangered or threatened species is forbidden.

4. Which two of the following federal organizations are the lead agencies (other agencies must consult with them) in managing the ESA?

- a) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- b) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

ministration

- c) US Fish and Wildlife
- d) US Food and Drug Administration

5. True/False: Even non-endangered species benefit from rules under the ESA.

6. The most endangered animals in the US today, according to earth.org, includes the following list. Which one of the species below was reduced to a population of six animals in the wild in the 1980s – in part because of lead poisoning?

- a) Florida panther
- b) California condor
- c) Florida manatee
- d) black-footed ferret
- e) Franklin's bumblebee

7. Which two of the following bird species were once labeled as endangered (nearly extinct) and are now "delisted," or totally removed from protections because they now enjoy healthy, self-sustaining, numbers?

- a) brown pelican
- b) ivory billed woodpecker
- c) American eagle
- d) whooping crane

8. The five states listed below have the highest number of endangered species in the country, based on US Fish and Wildlife data and reported by USA Today. Which one of the five has the highest number of endangered species?

- a) Florida
- b) California
- c) Tennessee
- d) Hawaii
- e) Alabama

9. Which of the following species, found in New Haven County, are listed under the ESA as animals in need of special protection?

- a) bog turtle
- b) monarch butterfly
- c) northern long-eared bat
- d) piping plover
- e) roseate tern



PATRICIA
HOUSER



f) all of the above

10. According to recent research from the nonprofit nature-serve.org, what percent of animals in the US are currently at risk for extinction?

- a) 5 percent
- b) 20 percent
- c) 40 percent
- d) 80 percent

Answers

1. b

2. f; all of the above. Although we sometimes think of insects as pests, they also play a crucial role in making the Earth habitable for humans. Pollinators such as bees and butterflies, among other things, are essential for our survival.

3. e

4. b and c

5. True. When land developers adjust their designs to protect an endangered species, other local plants and animals benefit. Individual species play a role in overall ecosystem health, as illustrated by the reintroduction of grey wolves to Yellowstone National Park in the 1990s. In the decades since the return of wolves, the elk population at Yellowstone has been hardier and more stable, according to National Geographic. Another benefit, say wildlife biologists, is the increase of willow and aspen trees in the park, formerly over-browsed by elk. In a series of cascading benefits, the increase in trees has enabled beavers to create dams which has, in turn, helped create a healthier system of streams and ponds for a broader array of wildlife. For more on this, see the article titled "Wolf Reintroduction Changes Yellowstone Ecosystem" at yellowstonepark.com.

6. b; the biggest threat to California condors is lead poisoning, according to the National Park Service. Inhabiting regions where hunting and ranching are common, the condors scavenge animal remains that tend to be contaminated by fragments of lead ammunition. For other species, according to experts, the most frequent cause of extinction is habitat loss – including habitat degraded by cli-

mate change. Other major factors of species loss include over-exploitation of wildlife for commercial purposes, invasive species, pollution and the spread of diseases.

7. a and c; in addition to measures taken under the ESA, both the brown pelican and American bald eagle benefitted from the federal ban on the general use of the pesticide DDT in 1972. The eagle was declared recovered, and delisted, in 2007 and the pelican in 2009. The whooping crane, on the other hand, is still severely endangered. Even more tragically, the ivory billed woodpecker has been officially declared extinct and is delisted for that reason.

8. d

9. f; all of the above. Residents of Milford and Orange are fortunate to have examples of these rare species in our midst. We can do our part to help them recover, even on the neighborhood level, by sharing sightings with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and, for instance, offering friendly plantings for the monarch butterfly.

10. c

There's much to celebrate about the ESA, including the fact that 99 percent of species listed on it have been saved from extinction. Still, threats to ecosystems and wildlife in succeeding decades have multiplied, and certain refinements to wildlife policy are needed. In this new era, experts like Jenny Dickson, acting chief of the Bureau of Natural Resources at the state DEEP, refer to the vital importance, for instance, of passing the Recovering American Wildlife Act.

Among other things, says Dickson, we need to "proactively protect species and their habitats before they reach the point of what is essentially emergency room care."

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.

Bankruptcy

D-Day Is Coming

The first working day of January each year is considered D-Day in my world. Lots of couples who "just wanted to get through the holidays for the kids" file for divorce on that day. Hence why it is called D-Day.

There are two main ways to get divorced in Connecticut: litigation and mediation. In a litigated divorce, each party is represented by counsel. If the divorce is not amicable, it can be acrimonious. In fact, it can become like a war.

Mediation is the complete and total opposite: it is cordial and collaborative.

If you are contemplating a divorce in 2024, ask yourself these questions:

Are you struggling with your marriage?

Do you wish you could get divorced quickly?

Has it been difficult to hire a lawyer?

Do you have some semblance of an agreement?

Have you often wanted to get a divorce but just didn't know where to start?

Mediation is the answer to all of these questions. Divorce mediation is a simple, quick and powerful way to dissolve a marriage in a non-adversarial way. It's also incredibly discreet. In mediation, you will

have the opportunity to negotiate your own settlement privately rather than have one imposed on you publically by the court.

In mediation, you retain control of your own future and that of your family, if you have children.

The process of mediation is based on a mutual agreement to come together and end your marriage on terms that are acceptable to you both.

I am a lawyer and divorce litigator and mediator, so I can speak from years of experience. The function of a mediator is to assist you and your spouse in reaching a settlement. The mediator's task is to get you to a settlement that you both can live with; and if there are children involved it will include a parenting plan that you can operate with while co-parenting.

The mediator will use negotiation, facilitation, dispute resolution and legal skills to help you identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and areas where legal issues may arise. When you disagree, the mediator will point out how a court might look



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ROSE DEGRAY



at the issue and provide you with alternative solutions. All final decisions will be yours and your spouse's.

The mediator is not your lawyer (and doesn't cost as much as having a lawyer). The mediator will not represent either of you and cannot be your individual lawyer or the lawyer for both of you.

You may need other professionals during your mediation, but most likely you won't. In some rare cases, complex legal issues may arise; the need to value property and tax questions may come up. Therefore, you or your spouse may need to obtain your own independent legal counsel, seek tax advice or hire a real estate agent or appraiser.

The mediator will conduct mediation sessions with you (I do them virtually or in person at my office in Orange). The mediator will assist you in drafting the initial dissolution paperwork, separation agreement and parenting plan.

This is the way I work: the legal fee for the mediation is a flat fee to be quoted after

a free initial consultation. You will also be responsible to pay all fees and costs associated with the dissolution action, including but not limited to the court filing fee, and marshal's cost of service, if service is not waived. All divorces, whether mediated or litigated, must be filed in a court of law for a judge to render a judgment of dissolution, dissolving your marriage and adjudicating you single and unmarried.

I shepherd you through the entire process.

If the mediation is done correctly, you will never have to see a judge and you will be divorced "on the papers."

Not all mediators are the same or operate the way I do. You should interview a few mediators and make sure you are comfortable with the person you and your spouse choose to hire.

Attorney Theresa Rose DeGray is the owner of Consumer Legal Services, LLC, a debt relief agency in Orange helping people file for bankruptcy relief under the bankruptcy code, among other legal services. She can be reached at TRD@ConsumerLegalServicesLLC.com or 203-713-8877.

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The Garden Spot

Keep That Amaryllis Blooming

Did you know that your amaryllis can rebloom with little care or feeding? I had left a “spent” bulb on my basement workbench over the summer and was surprised that it had new growth a few weeks ago. I brought it upstairs to my plant shelf, and within a few weeks it was reblooming.

Amaryllis are native to Africa and were brought to Europe in the 1700s. Some of these original bulbs bloomed for as long as 75 years, so having mine bloom a second year shouldn’t be a surprise. However, most of the bulbs we purchase now are native to Central and South America; they are a hybrid without that long a history.

Your first step for long-lasting flowers is to purchase a healthy bulb. Choose the largest bulb available for the specific variety,

since the larger bulbs will produce more flowers. Make sure that the bulb is firm and dry; if it is “squishy” when you give it a gentle squeeze it most likely has mold, decay or some injury. You may see an offshoot growing from the base. If so, split it off and plant it separately.

When planting the bulb, choose a pot that’s no more than one inch wider than the bulb and about twice as tall. You’ll have plenty of room for root growth while still leaving the bulb a bit root bound. Make sure that the pot has good drainage so that your bulb does not rot. Fill the pot about halfway with sterile soil medium, bury the bulb roots if there



PAT DRAY

are any, and gently pack the soil around the bulb, leaving about the top third of the bulb uncovered. Water it well and put it in a sunny location.

Keep watering the bulb when the top several inches of soil feel dry. You should also feed it with half strength plant food and leave it in full sun until buds appear. Once the buds appear, move it to indirect light and enjoy the beautiful flowers.

To get your bulb to rebloom, cut the flower off, leaving the stem until it turns yellow. This allows the green stalk to promote photosynthesis and store the energy in the bulb for a new bloom. Once the stem turns yel-

low, cut that off and either let the bulb go dormant (like mine in the basement) or keep feeding and watering it. You may not get a rebloom the first year if your bulb didn’t store enough energy to create new blooms, but it should bloom the next year.

Should you choose to let the bulb go dormant, leave the bulb in the dark for eight to 12 weeks and don’t water it. After the dormant period, move the pot to a sunny location and start to water and fertilize it. You will have a rebloom to enjoy in four to six weeks. Happy winter gardening.

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

Insuring Your Future

End Of Year Insurance “To Do” List

As we come to the end of the calendar year, there are a few insurance items to attend to.

First, if you have a family savings account, spend it. Any unused funds will not carry over to next year. HSAs carry forward, but FSAs do not.

Second, if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, use the over-the-counter benefit before Dec. 31.

Third, submit receipts for dental work or eyeglasses to your Medicare Advantage insurance company for reimbursement.

Fourth, schedule any unused wellness benefit such as mammograms, blood work or physicals (if you can) before the end of the year.

If you get your health insurance through the Access Health CT, the time to renew is

now. Open enrollment for Jan. 1 ends Dec. 15. However, you can still enroll or renew for 2024 until Jan. 15. This year’s plans do not renew automatically; you must log in to AccessHealthCT or call to renew coverage for next year.

Did you miss the Medicare Advantage renewal deadline? No worries; you have the first three months of the year to make a change. The television and internet ads will remind you constantly that you have another bite of the apple.

Be proactive and join the gym now before the New Year’s resolution crowds show up. For Medicare Advantage subscribers, Silver Sneakers works at most gyms in our area.



TRISH PEARSON

What are you waiting for? Some plans are now offering additional fitness benefits for 2024 that are worth considering.

Get vaccinated. Most insurance plans cover the cost of vaccinations, including COVID, RSV, flu, pneumonia and shingles. Some locations require an appointment, but it is time well spent.

Plan your next vacation. As we approach the dark, cold days of winter, a getaway to a brighter, warmer place is just what the doctor ordered.

While your health insurance won’t pay for it, you could end up healthier. Remember, if you leave the US it is wise to get travel insurance just in case.

Finally, take time to enjoy friends and family, whether in person or remotely. Meet for a drink, a meal or email, call or do FaceTime. The holidays are an opportunity to reconnect, refresh and remember.

However you celebrate, I hope you have a happy and joyous holiday. I am so appreciative of you, the readers of my column. I am glad that you find value in the content and appreciate your feedback. This year has been quite the adventure in insurance. Hold on to your hat, because there is more to come. Wishing you good health and happiness in the year ahead.

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

Here’s To Your Health

The Benefit Of Pilates

Joseph Pilates was a man ahead of his time. He really helped change the wellness industry. He truly was an exercise pioneer.

Pilates was German-born, living in England. While incarcerated in a detainee camp during World War I, he began to develop floor exercises that evolved into what we know today to be Pilates mat work.

Pilates helped rehabilitate other detainees from illness and disease. When the Spanish flu came through the camp, not one person in his ward lost their life.

After the war, Pilates landed himself in New York City, and his studio put him close to the dancing community. Many of them grew to depend upon his techniques for strength as well as for their rehabilitating effects. Dancers and elite athletes soon

caught on to the benefits of this programming and kept his work alive until the exercise science community caught up.

The foundation of Pilates is to create core and spinal health. Your core is the center of your body, and your spine houses your central nervous system. Keeping these healthy is critical to maintaining overall wellness.

A year ago, I received my Pilates reformer certification. Having a dancing background with the Connecticut Ballet company, I was inspired to expand my knowledge regarding his life’s work. I find him as inspirational as another exercise pioneer, Jack LaLane. Both



MICHELE TENNEY

had troubled childhoods filled with illness, and both understood the importance of developing a healthy spirit, soul and body mindset. We are three dimensional human beings, who need to grasp this concept to not just live but to thrive.

Today Pilates is a popular form of exercise. It can help benefit those who have suffered back injuries, those who battle scoliosis and women who are interested in building back their pelvic floor after childbirth. Pilates can also benefit golfers, football players and all kinds of athletes. Everyone wins. All fitness levels can be accommodated in a Pilates class, whether it be reformer or mat work.

It’s my wish for you and yours this holiday season to really embrace wellness on all three levels. You are a spirit that has a soul that lives in a body. Make yourself your first priority and start living the best life possible. I believe in you. From the Tenney family to yours, have a blessed and healthy Christmas/Hannukah season.

Michele Tenney is a Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist & Wellness Coach. She is a member of the Orange Board of Health. Her website is www.elevatePTW.com. She can be reached at 203-668-2969 or email at Hmgbrd3@gmail.com.

Recycling Tip: State Bottle Deposits Increase To 10 Cents

By Susan Wineland

Connecticut’s bottle and can redemption will increase on Jan. 1 from 5 cents to 10 cents. Doubling the redemption amount on eligible bottles and cans is intended to incentivize consumers to redeem more bottles and cans and thereby increase recycling rates.

In the 1970s our state was, with Oregon, Vermont, Michigan, Maine and Iowa, at the forefront of adopting container deposit bills known as “bottle bills” to combat litter.

Some of us might remember when local milk and soda companies delivered glass containers to homes and picked up the empties to reuse them. (Some of these companies still use glass bottles that can be recycled back to the company.) In the 1950s and 60s, most companies shifted to using cheaper aluminum and plastic. Returning glass containers was no longer an option.

These throwaway, no-deposit beverage containers created litter everywhere – in landfills, roadsides, farms and oceans. The concern for the amount of waste and the hazards it caused spurred the development of the bottle bills.

The new bottle bill reflects the same concern about environmental litter that spurred the 1970s bottle bill. This bill also recognizes that states with deposit programs have the highest can/container recycling rates compared to non-deposit states. And those with a 10 cent deposit have by far the highest redemption rates of all.

The deposit applies to the following bottles and cans: carbonated beverages such as beer or other malt beverages, hard seltzer, hard cider and mineral waters, soda water and similar carbonated soft drinks, noncarbonated beverages such as any water (including flavored water), plant or nutritionally enhanced

water, juice, juice drinks, tea, coffee, kombucha, plant infused drink and sports or energy drinks.

Bottle and can returns can be made to retailers who are only required to redeem deposits on brands that they sell. However, some stores accept other items as well. In addition, Connecticut has 24 bottle redemption centers that accept a wide variety of bottles and cans. Two local redemption centers are the Orange EZ Bottle Return at 392 Boston Post Rd. and the Stratford Returnable Container Facility at 1855 Stratford Ave.

Bottle bills alleviate waste contamination. Such contamination is characteristic of single-stream systems where a lot of sorting and contamination take place, thereby increasing costs and reducing the amount of material that can actually be recycled. On the other hand, when consumers bring cans and bottles to collection centers already cleaned and

sorted, the recycling process is efficiently managed from the start. This pre-sorting of clean items saves money for recycling operations and means a high amount of essentially uncontaminated material can be recycled.

Container deposit programs increase the incentive to return recyclables, recovery and recycling rates, awareness of litter, conservation, and waste management issues as well as the conservation of energy and natural resources. They thereby reduce roadside litter and solid waste and the enormous environmental impact of beverage container waste everywhere.

Bottle bills have proven to be the most successful and cost-effective systems to encourage consumers to recycle. Return your empties and redeem your deposit refunds.

For more information about recycling, visit orangerecycles.com or follow [facebook.com/ORCinCT](https://www.facebook.com/ORCinCT).

Orange Chamber of Commerce

Orange Chamber Adds Board Members

Let's begin by welcoming three new members of our Board of Directors. I am excited to welcome Tina Mason from Milford Bank, Sarah McGovern from Halcyon Travel Company and Mary-Ann White from Coldwell Banker to the Orange Chamber of Commerce. These three board members join President Ted Novicki from Avangrid, Dr. Rob Rubino from Rubino Family Chiropractic, Jennifer Schempp from Beers, Hamerman, Cohen & Burger, Annemarie Sliby from the Orange Economic Development Corporation, Robert Craft from Sentinel Asset Management, Silvi Siboui from Ion Bank, Vincent Marino from Marino, Zabel & Schellenberg and Wiktor Wozniak from UBS.

If you are a chamber member and are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please email Director@orangechamber.com to be forwarded to the nominating committee.

The chamber is also pleased to announce

two Business After Hours in January. The Orange Chamber of Commerce, along with Elevate Style Lounge, will be welcoming the community on Jan. 16 for barber services along with empanadas and refreshments at 6 p.m. The chamber, along with Maplewood at Orange, will be hosting another Business After Hours on Jan. 18 with food and refreshments. Details and registrations will be on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

You are always invited to our monthly ONET series. ONET is a networking and leads group which meets at 8:30 a.m. on the second Thursday of every month at The Homewood Suites by Hilton, located at 99 Marsh Hill Rd. Each month we have received a larger turnout for this event with energetic local professionals. Information and location for these meetings



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can be found by liking and following our Facebook page. In addition to networking, each ONET meeting has a business-specific topic.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Orange Police Chief Robert J. Gagne and Assistant Chief Max Martins for taking the time to meet with me and discuss issues pertaining to our local businesses. Our conversation left me with a great understanding of what the department is doing to secure Orange's businesses, and I am looking forward to sharing this information with business owners during chamber visits.

Chamber memberships for 2024 are available for you to join or renew now. You may join online with a credit card at orangechamber.com, or if you would like an invoice and a W9, please email Director@orangechamber.com.

com. If you would like to advertise with the Orange Chamber of Commerce, we have digital advertising options to fit your needs as well.

To schedule a time to meet with the chamber, email Director@orangechamber.com. I am looking forward to meeting with people and discussing their business needs and how the chamber may help.

As we begin to look and dream beyond the conclusion of the holiday season it is important to remember that thinking and shopping locally does not stop just because seasonal gift giving is over. Our local businesses will depend on your support more in 2024 than ever before. Please try to shop within town lines to help keep local families thriving.

Liam Ohlmann is the executive director of the Orange Chamber of Commerce. Contact him at 203-795-3328 or director@orangechamber.com.

Book Reviews

Best Reads Of 2023

Every year I compose a best of list of books that I absolutely, positively, without a doubt loved and recommend wholeheartedly to anyone who expresses an interest in them. Here are my top 5 selections for 2023.

#5 Perfect Stranger by Katherine Center. Center is one of my favorite authors and firmly enshrined in my personal "Mt. Rushmore" of favorite authors. Her female characters are struggling with contemporary issues: juggling family and career, making it in a man's world and reinventing life after a traumatic event. Her male characters are, well, gorgeous. She infuses all of her characters with humor and likability and her books always end on a positive, joyful, happy note. I've read all her books and adore every one.

In this gem Sadie is a portrait artist about to enter a contest which would bring her much-needed cash. As she is preparing for the contest, she suffers brain trauma and wakes up in the hospital not knowing how she got there. She comes to the awareness that she doesn't recognize anyone, including her best friend. I promise if you read this you'll love it as much as I do.

#4 The Inside Story of Baseball's Greatest Team The 1998 New York Yankees by Jack Curry. Curry has been covering the Yankees for what seems like a gazillion

years, and his insights and commentary are always spot-on. He doesn't hesitate to criticize the entire team, from management to players, when things are not going well. Being a Yankees fan of 50-plus years, I needed to include this.

The 1998 team started off slowly, having a losing record in April. When Hall of Fame manager Joe Torre called a team meeting, the Yankees took off winning their division easily and making mincemeat of their playoff rivals. This team was a joy to watch as you knew they would find ways to win. The team was anchored by two Hall of Famers: unanimous choice the great Mariano Rivera and equally great (and who should have been another unanimous choice), the captain and still my favorite Yankee of all time, Derek Jeter.

#3 The Hummingbird by Stephen Kiernan. This treasure catapulted Kiernan onto my Mt. Rushmore. Kiernan is a fabulous writer and I've loved every book of his that I've read. His characters are damaged in many ways. While they try to come to terms with whatever troubles them, they are written with sensitivity, compassion and hu-



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mility.

Deborah is a hospice nurse whose husband Michael is a returning veteran. She begins to realize that he is not the same person he was before his military service. Deborah is at a loss at how to help him when his post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis is revealed. Her work with hospice patient Barclay Reed and his many life stories helps Deborah discover ways to help Michael.

#2 Between Two Moons by Aisha Abdel Gawad. Bay Ridge, Brooklyn is home to many different ethnic groups and cultures. It really is Brooklyn's melting pot, with many fabulous Middle Eastern shops and restaurants. That is the home of twin sisters Amira and Lina are about to graduate from high school and are not fully prepared for the challenges life has in store for them. Set during the holy month of Ramadan, the teens try to adhere to the requirements of the month as much as possible but experience many challenges and difficulties. That adherence becomes even more difficult when their older brother returns from prison, disturbing the family structure.

There are many reasons I loved this book. I lived in Brooklyn in an area not too far from Bay Ridge and am familiar with the restaurants and other neighborhood highlights. I love learning about other cultures and traditions, and I love books about Brooklyn.

#1 The Glass Chateau by Stephen Kiernan. Once again Kiernan tackles a difficult topic and does it with humility, compassion and sensitivity.

Former French resistance fighter Asher has lost everything in the war: his wife, daughter and cobbler shop. Full of anguish and despair, he sets off to take his life. He is stopped by a woman (and her dog) who informs him of Le Chateau Gardain, a place where he can recuperate and perhaps learn the art of glassmaking. When he arrives, he meets a group of other physically and emotionally damaged men who begin to teach him their craft.

There are not enough superlatives in this world to describe how much I love this book. All I can say is read it and turn yourself over to Kiernan's remarkable story telling.

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

Homelessness

The Power Of Pets In The Homeless Response System

I have recently befriended someone experiencing homelessness who panhandles for additional income to his disability benefits; we'll call him "George."

George stood out to me as he is always joined by a red-nose pit-bull named Logan. Their bond is palpable. Logan carefully watches his owner approach me and wags his tail excitedly when his owner returns to him. George greets Logan as we all greet our pets, with equal love and excitement.

During our last conversation, I asked George if Logan was a certified emotional support animal or a licensed service animal.

"No, but he should be," George said. "I can't live life without him and he also helps me because I'm blind in my left eye."

I then shared the resources Beth-El Center offers to ensure each pet can become an emotional support animal. This is an important distinction for people experiencing homelessness who would otherwise face surrendering or abandoning their beloved pets – or, more frequently, pet owners not entering shelters and "choosing" to remain outdoors in order to not lose their pets.

There are many barriers for people experiencing homelessness with their animals. Many shelters around the state do not allow

emotional support animals or pets in emergency homeless programs, although the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect the right of people with disabilities to keep emotional support animals.

Very little communication occurs to assist owners in navigating the homeless system with a service or emotional support animal. We can and must do better. The motivations of the homeless response system should and must expand beyond the legal obligations of our sector.

Homeless service providers should look at homeless individuals and their pets as the family unit they are. We would and should be appalled at the thought of separating a mother or father from their children, because we understand the trauma that would cause to all family members. Such a separation would work against the goals of self-sufficiency and healing. Why do we accept this as an option for people with animals?

Today, one out of two Americans report being lonely. US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek



JENNIFER
PARADIS

Murthy said in May, "Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation has been an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health. Given the significant health consequences of loneliness and isolation, we must prioritize building social connection the same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues such as tobacco, obesity and substance use disorders."

The Surgeon General's Advisory on Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation reports that the physical health consequences of poor or insufficient connection include a 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, a 32 percent increased risk of stroke and a 50 percent increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Overall, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60 percent.

In addition to facing an increased risk of premature death simply because one is unhoused, people experiencing homelessness experience both financial poverty as well as relational poverty. Relational poverty, as outlined in Kevin F. Adler and Donald W. Burnes in their book "When We Walk By: Forgotten Humanity,

Broken Systems, And the Role We Can Each Play in Ending Homelessness in America," is a profound lack of nurturing relationships combined with stigma (and often, shame) that makes fostering social ties incredibly difficult.

Relational poverty is considered, similarly to Murthy's conclusion, a deadly form of poverty.

Seeing George with Logan and the dozens of other owner and pet bonds come through Beth-El Center make it clear that these relationships are real and must be supported. We must expand access to support the bonded relationships between owner and pet within the homeless response system and in the permanent housing solutions that aim to support vulnerable populations.

This includes universal access to emergency food and shelter programs, funding to support ensuring owners and pets remain healthy and have access to critical health care such as vaccines. It includes meeting homeless people and their pets with compassion and gratitude, for they are expressing connection and unconditional love of family while overcoming trauma and hardship. That is a desire we can all relate to.

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

The Arts

Holidays Come To The Arts

The holidays can be a great time to celebrate with family and friends, gathering by a warm fire or enjoying a fabulous meal. But what happens when you need a break from all the hustle and bustle that the season brings? If you find you need a last-minute gift, a getaway from the chaos, a moment to enjoy the season's offerings or need motivation to get back into the spirit of the holidays, the arts community has you covered.

Treat yourself to dinner and dancing in big band swing style, the ballet, theatrical performances, comedy, musical concerts, vocalists and symphonies throughout the state. Enjoy a leisurely drive and take in the lights and holiday decorations along the way to your favorite event. Happy holidays to you and have a joyous new year.

New Haven Symphony Orchestra will play George Frideric Handel's "Messiah" in two performances, in New Haven and Madison. The orchestra will feature Handel's traditional oratorio along with the Christ Church Choir, led by Conductor and Music Director Alasdair Neale with special guest soloists Adrienne Lotto (soprano), Daniel Moody (countertenor), Albert Lee (tenor) and Jared Swope (baritone). The first event is Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church of Madison, located at 26 Meeting House Ln. in Madison. The second is on Dec. 17 at 3 p.m. at Woolsey Hall at Yale, located at 500 College St. in New Haven. Tickets range from \$15 to \$69. Those under 18 are free with an adult ticket purchase, and students/children are \$10. Get tickets at newhavensymphony.org or call the box office at 203-693-1486.

The **New Haven Ballet** will put on a production of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" in December. Lisa Kim Sanborn's full-length production returns to the Shubert Theatre. The shows stars Sarah Adams and Harrison Coll of the New York City Ballet as the principal dancers and young dancers from New Haven Ballet School with guest

artists Michael Requena and Alejandro Ulloa. With beautiful sets, costuming and local voices adding to the "Waltz of the Snowflakes," this production is one to be remembered. The show runs from Dec. 15 to Dec. 17, with matinee and evening performances. Tickets start at \$29 at shubert.com or by calling the box office at 203-562-5666. The Shubert Theatre is located at 247 College St. in New Haven. More information is available at newhavenballet.com.

The **Shoreline Ringers** will hold their handbell concert on Dec. 17 at 4 p.m. at Tabor Lutheran Church, located at 45 Tabor Dr. in Branford. Come listen to the beautiful sounds of handbells this season with several selections to ring in the holidays. Donations will be appreciated. For more information, visit shorelineringers.org.

String Of Pearls Big Band will be playing a "Have A Cool Yule" show on Dec. 22 at 6 p.m. at the Westbrook Elks Lodge at 142 Seaside Ave. in Westbrook. Dance the night away with this big band swing and enjoy a three-course meal. Tickets are \$52 (advance sales online only) at stringofpearlsbigband.org or by calling 860-304-5062.

The **Milford Arts Council** is continuing its "Locals Only Series" with Nathaniel Hintz, a local singer/songwriter with influences of country/western, rock and gospel. The Locals Only Series, hosted by Frank Critelli, gives opportunities for local songwriters and bands to perform in a concert-style venue. There will be cabaret seating. The Speakeasy Lounge will be open to serve beverages and snacks. The show is on Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the MAC, located at 40 Railroad Ave. in Milford. Tickets are from \$10 to \$15 at milfordarts.org.

The **MAC** is also hosting "Laugh Tracks" with headliner Alexandra McHale and featuring Rick Roberts. Join host Roberto Valez



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at the new comedy series offered on the third Wednesday of each month. McHale's credits include a performance on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and an appearance on Premium Blend on Comedy Central, among others. The show is on Dec. 20 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at milfordarts.org.

New Haven Academy Drama will be putting on a play titled "Heart: The Holiday Play," written and directed by Ty Scurry. An affluent businesswoman, cold-hearted and heartbroken, wants nothing to do with Christmas. She discovers the meaning of Christmas past, present and future through the spirit of her grandmother. This story of love and acceptance will warm the hearts of all who see it. It is presented by NHA's Legacy Studios Drama Club. There are shows on Dec. 14 and 15 at 7:05 p.m., as well as shows on Dec. 16 at 11:35 a.m. and 4:05 p.m. The shows take place at the New Haven Academy, located at 444 Orange St. in New Haven. Tickets are \$10 at nhadrama.com or by calling the box office at 203-444-7269.

New Haven Academy of Performing Arts will put on its "Christmas Spectacular" on Dec. 16 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., as well as Dec. 17 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Now in its sixth season, this holiday celebration is filled with toe-tapping dance numbers and dazzling performances of music and song. The new special effects will transport you to a winter wonderland as you experience this joyful journey of holiday classics. The show will be at the Cabaret On Main Theater, located at 597 Main St. in East Haven. Tickets for children are \$25 and for seniors they are \$30. Adult tickets are \$35 at cabaret-on-main.com or via the box office at 475-238-8119.

Downtown Cabaret Theatre is putting on a production of the Charles Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol." Perfect for the whole

family, the show offers a new twist on the timeless tale of Ebenezer Scrooge as he finds the true meaning of Christmas and learns about kindness and generosity. The show runs from Dec. 16 to Dec. 30 with matinee times. Tickets are \$35 at dtcab.com or by calling 203-576-1636. Downtown Cabaret Theatre is located at 263 Golden Hill St. #3 in Bridgeport.

Connecticut Ballet will also be performing Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker." A holiday tradition for the whole family, this Brett Raphael production includes guest stars from New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and Pennsylvania Ballet with a meet-and-greet after each performance. It's happening at two venues, in Stamford and Hartford. The first Stamford performance will be on Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. starring Unity Phelan and Chun Wai Chan of the New York City Ballet as the principal dancers. The second Stamford performance will be on Dec. 17 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., starring Oksana Maslova and Jack Thomas of the Philadelphia Ballet as the principal dancers. These shows will be at the Palace Theatre, located at 61 Atlantic St. in Stamford. Tickets are available at palacestamford.org.

The first Hartford performance will be on Dec. 22 at 7 p.m., starring Unity Phelan and Andrew Veyette on the New York City Ballet as the principal dancers. The second Hartford performance will be on Dec. 23 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., starring Christine Shevchenko and Aran Bell of the American Ballet Theatre as the principal dancers. These shows will be at the Belding Theater, located at 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. Tickets are available at bushnell.org.

Cyndi Consoli is an actor/director in her seventh term as President and Producer for Orange Players. She can be reached at TheOrangePlayers@gmail.com and 475-227-7547.

Orange Board of Finance

Key Drivers For The Next Budget Cycle

It is clear that most municipalities within Connecticut, including Orange, weathered inflationary pressures, high interest rates and events of the COVID-19 pandemic quite well. While some of the same challenges of municipal budgeting remain, next year the Board of Finance will need to consider and factor the impact of revaluation.

The Board of Finance met last month and has already started to lay the groundwork for the upcoming budget process for fiscal year 2024-2025, which essentially starts in January with formal budget reviews. The upcoming budget contains a few key drivers, including the impact of revaluation, the student enrollment shift within the Amity Regional School District and the upcoming Amity teachers' contract.

The student enrollment shift includes an increase in the number of students from Orange attending Amity for the upcoming year, which will increase the budget by \$438,853 before a single dollar of additional funding is

proposed and approved within the Amity budget.

The Amity district also has recently negotiated their teachers' contract, which contains a 13.5 percent increase over the three-year term of the contract (a 4.5 percent average per year, which includes both general wage increase a step increase). This increase is commensurate with the current labor market within Connecticut and the current standard of 12.9 percent based on recent negotiations of other districts throughout Connecticut.

The good news within the Amity budget is that debt service continues to decrease, so there will be somewhat of an offset to the wage increases.

Revaluation, which is conducted every five years for all municipalities throughout Connecticut, is a program that values all



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property, including real estate as well as residential and commercial properties. Based on current market conditions, it is highly likely that a single-family home in Orange could see an assessment value increase anywhere from 30 percent to 50 percent from the previous revaluation in 2017, depending on the style and condition of the home versus the previous revaluation.

It is important to note that the revaluation was delayed by one year with the expectation that home prices would fall between 2022 and 2023. That was an assumption that many experts in the field expected based on increasing interest rates and mortgage rates. We are now at a 30-year high for mortgage rates, hovering around 7.25 percent. But the housing market in Orange has continued to exceed expectations, increasing 6.5 percent from 2022 to 2023.

Where the property assessment land will ultimately determine the new mill rate for the upcoming budget year. It is highly likely that we will be looking at a major downward shift from the current mill rate of 32.31 in order to mitigate any potential tax impact from higher property values.

It is important to understand that the economy here in Orange is good. Property values Orange are strong because we have excellent and highly competitive school districts at both the elementary and regional high school, which has driven high demand for single-family home ownership, particularly among those aged 24-40. People from this group have left other communities throughout Connecticut and New York to reside here in Orange, making Orange a great place to raise a family.

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

Milford Chamber To Hold Bridal Expo

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Grassy Hill Country Club and Milford Med Spa, will present its Second Annual Bridal Expo on Sunday, Jan. 28 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Grassy Hill Country Club, located at 441 Clark Ln. in Orange.

This bridal expo will include all facets of weddings, from tuxedos and brides

dresses to desserts and venues. Fashion shows, food tastings, honeymoon ideas, DJs, wedding advisors and more will be available for guests.

Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$10 on the day of the event. Get tickets in advance on the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce's website at milfordct.com.

Milford Holding Acting Classes

Milford Recreation is offering winter break acting/scene study workshops with television and film actor Kevin McCormick for kids ages 9 to 15.

Students will hone their acting skills by performing cold reads, monologues and a scene with another student.

The classes will be on Wednesday, Dec. 27 and Thursday, Dec. 28 from 9 a.m. to

noon. They are open to students of all skill levels, who may sign up for one or both days. The cost is \$45 per session for Milford residents and \$50 for non-residents.

For program questions, contact Kevin McCormick at decbrook3@gmail.com. For registration info, contact Brooke Carlson at 203-783-3391 or bcarlson@milfordct.gov.

For more local coverage, go to milford-orangetimes.com

Milford Holds Annual Tree Lighting



Milford held its annual holiday tree lighting on Nov. 24 on the Green in downtown. In addition to the lighting, the event featured music and family activities, including a visit from Santa Claus. Photos by Robert Creigh.

Surprisingly great rates that fit any budget.



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Orange Holds Holiday Activities



Orange held its annual holiday tree lighting and lighted tractor parade on Dec. 9 in the historic downtown. The event also featured activities at the Case Memorial Library, a gingerbread house contest and a visit from Santa Claus. *Top two photos by Robert Creigh. Bottom photos by Lexi Crocco.*



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Foodie Foursome

Paolo Ristorante Offers A Taste Of Italy

It is always fun to dine out with friends and explore new restaurants, as well as re-invented ones. Cindy and I were joined by friends Steve and Tammy for a fun night out at a Paolo Ristorante, a restaurant established in 2019 on Amity Road in Woodbridge.

The renovated space was done well, using the space efficiently that the restaurant that had previously been at that location, providing for more seating while relieving the former closed-in feeling. This made for a great dining experience.

This Italian restaurant has a romantic feel, in a Venetian and Tuscan style. It has a spacious bar, the main dining room and a cozy private dining area. The cuisine is modern and classic while respecting the traditions and flavors of Italy.

Paolo Iannaccone is the executive chef. His wife and restaurant owner Elena Iannaccone, along with their staff, made us feel like family as soon as we walked in the door. Paolo's culinary pedigree stems from his family lineage; members of his family are owners of a number of well-respected family restaurants in the New Haven County area.

The evening started with four appetizers. We shared these "family style," trying some of this and some of that. Doing this allows us to talk about each choice.

The appetizers were all generous portions and each had its own personality. The first, for instance, was fried mozzarella – but with a wonderful twist. The mozzarella in

carozza was like a marriage of a Monte Cristo (without ham), and a grilled cheese with mozzarella. The healthy portion of cheese was sandwiched between bread, egg battered and lightly fried. This was served with marinara and was a pleasant change of pace from the norm. The calamari fritte was delicately fried with a light and crispy outer crunch, yet fresh, tender and sweet calamari served with marinara.

One of the things we instantly noticed was the chef's attention to detail. The ultra-consistently thin-sliced eggplant, for the melanzane ripiene, was layered with prosciutto, egg battered and cooked with marinara sauce to achieve a wonderful tenderness and taste with each bite. This dish almost melted in our mouths. Our last hors d'oeuvre was the saute di gamberi. These were jumbo, plump and beautifully prepared shrimp sautéed with garlic, lemon and parsley in a white wine sauce. They were plated impeccably and adorned with a slice of lemon and a colorful flower.

Between courses we had the salad. It was made from baby spinach, gorgonzola, granny smith apples, caramelized walnuts and creamy Italian dressing. It was a well-balanced salad with textural and taste-based differences from sweet to salty and fresh, crunchy and creamy.



STEVE COOPER

Our first entrée was the capesante mare mio. This exquisitely crafted dish was simply divine. The pan seared scallops were served over a primavera risotto with lobster sauce. While that might sound like something you've had before, you haven't had it like this. These were really large dry sea scallops, cooked to perfection with the searing an exemplary vison. The inside had a texture that was tender while maintaining its integrity and firmness. The risotto was cooked to enhance its texture by giving it a crispy edge that kept it from getting mushy, like most risottos, as it soaked up the tastes of the scallops and lobster sauce. The lobster sauce pulled it all together with a velvety sweetness that helped make this one of the best seafood dishes I have had this year.

Our next choice was the lasagna, which was baked lasagna noodles, layered with ricotta, mozzarella, parmigiana and marinara sauce. While you can order it meatless, we chose to have it with meat. It was a nicely layered lasagna in a traditional layering of cheeses, sauce and ground beef, which took on a Bolognese style.

Continuing with the classics, we had the pollo Milanese parmigiana, a classic chicken parmigiana served with penne. The chicken was a large breast, nice and plump (not pounded too thin) juicy, tender, breaded and

pan fried and then finished in the oven to render the cheese to a soft texture with crispy edges. The pasta was al dente and the sauce had a fresh house-made taste.

Our last entrée choice was the vitello ve-suvio. These egg-battered veal medallions in a caper lemon white wine sauce served over spinach with mashed potatoes was a pretty dish with the medallions of tender veal artistically layered, overlapping around the plate meeting up with the volcano stack of mashed potatoes and slathered with the silky and extremely tasty white wine sauce. While I am usually a veal parm guy, from the first bite, it was easy to see how I could be converted to this choice.

We finished the evening with espresso and cappuccino with a wonderful array of classic desserts, all delicious, from the cheesecake, cannoli to the crisp cannoli shell stuffed with a fresh, house-made ricotta filling. After this evening Paolo's has four new fans.

They are open from 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday through Saturday. Call 475-209-9296 for reservations.

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.

Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Clarity For Closings

Purchasing a property has so many moving parts, and as you get near to the closing there are important segments that should not be slighted.

It is such a busy time. Packing and planning the actual move is now in motion and can be quite a distraction. Checking and re-checking the contingencies under which negotiations were made a few months ago can seem unimportant now, but the follow-up for these items is crucial.

Your realtor should have a punch list recalling all your concerns and written commitments from the seller during the home inspection period. If you have requested repair work to be done by the seller, now is the time to review the invoices and have your own representative confirm that all was done correctly. Seek out and confirm explanations for the way work was done. Was there a warrantee on the job? Did you request a warrantee at the time of negotiations?

Take the time to visit the property, making sure all utilities are on. Gather information on who and what you are responsible for at this point.

If there is oil in the tank, the seller will present a bill from their oil company requesting the amount that they paid and the measurement to confirm how much oil is in the tank. You can usually visually check the float on the tank. Perhaps there is also a propane tank outside which also has fuel that you must reimburse the homeowner for. If the tank is a rental, you will need a new contract with the propane company.

Information on the alarm service, if there is one, will be helpful to you. So will a list of maintenance workers who previously did work on the property, such as for snow and lawn care.

While walking through the home you are looking to see that there is no new damage. Exposed flooring can have normal wear and tear, just as painted walls, with pictures missing, will look a little shabby. Be prepared to see the home looking quite different, as it is now completely vacant. Your tour is really to look for damage – anything



BARBARA LEHRER

changed since you had the offer accepted. Running hot water, flushing toilets and asking about appliance usage and booklets are typical inquiries.

The property outside should be acceptable based on the season, meaning, if it is November the leaves should not be overwhelming. We assume the seller has been keeping up, just as we would with snow removal if we were in the dead of winter and under stormy conditions.

Your inspections time frame has long expired, so as long as the mechanics are working and there is no damage, you should be fine. You cannot ask for something now. However, if a tree fell or there is water in the basement, for example, you must prove that this is a new condition. You have had a complete inspection portfolio to fall back on, which you received back during the end of the inspection timeframe. This document will show water seepage, for example. Refer to this information. In the event that you

have any new concerns, call the inspector you used and invite them to return. It may cost you to have them check the property again, but this is your last opportunity to negotiate with the seller.

The closing attorney will work closely with you as you repay the seller for taxes paid in advance, for example. You may have purchased a home warrantee or received a credit for work you will do yourself after closing. The closing documents will have all this information in writing, as it is the legal portion of your future loan information and deed which passes to you.

Take the time to close properly. Many a buyer has regretted rushing through the end process because they were excited or just too busy. This is such a special time. It is business though, so work closely with your real estate agent to maintain clarity in those last days.

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

Orange Lions Serve Thanksgiving Dinner



The Orange Lions Club, along with local Girl Scouts, served Thanksgiving dinner to local seniors at High Plains Community Center in Orange. Photos by Lexi Crocco.

Travel Matters

New Ship Review: Silver Dawn

We are cruising for the first time on the luxury cruise line Silversea to test out the one-year-old Silver Dawn – and hopefully, it won't be the last. We were invited to sail on this beautiful ship, which is one of three new Silversea ships offering their new SALT program and the new Otium spa concept.

Starting with the ship itself, Silver Dawn's size of 596 guests with over 400 crew makes for an enjoyable experience since there is a high staff-to-guest service ratio. The dining is pretty exciting with nine venues to choose from. Always included at Silversea are WiF, gratuities, premium spirits and beverages and (just within the last year) a selection of included excursions in each port of call.

Our accommodations are the signature silver suite, which at 765 square feet offers an entrance foyer, separate large living area with dining table for in-suite breakfasts

or anytime dining and a double-sized balcony. The large bath has double sinks, a separate step-in shower and an oversized oval jacuzzi bathtub.

On Silversea, all suites have a butler and you truly have the opportunity to experience the Otium spa in your suite. Otium boasts a state of total relaxation, enjoyment and comfort: "the finest spa since ancient Roman baths."

Getting back to that bathtub, just call your butler one hour before you are ready for the most luxurious bath you've ever indulged in. The Otium bathing experience features perfect-temperature water with comfortable back and neck rest pillows; a choice of three types of bath salts for an immersive bath experience; a



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

yummy selection of delicacies to nibble on with your champagne; and candles, low level lighting and a music menu to sooth both body and mind.

Perhaps you would prefer a balcony experience with cashmere blankets and hot chocolate. They even offer a unique take on comfort food for the room service experience (including truffle fries and lobster rolls).

SALT refers to sea and land taste – and Silversea delivers on this concept in three different ways. A SALT lab offers 45-60 minute cooking classes for about 14 guests – two times daily – focused on the cuisine of the destinations we are experiencing on our cruise, complete with recipes. The SALT bar features craft cocktails

that use the spices and ingredients found in these locations, and the SALT kitchen is a restaurant featuring menus that change every two days based on these ports of call. It's a winning concept.

The entertainment onboard is varied and includes musical performances, comedians and jazz performers – who are featured at a supper club, Silver Note, each night. Enrichment talks on history, politics and world events are featured on sea days.

The pool is a salt-water lap pool, and many sailings feature bridge and bridge classes. There is truly something for everyone on this floating boutique hotel.

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

Your Health

December Health Awareness Campaigns

Following the trend of highlighting monthly health campaigns, December hosts several health observances and awareness campaigns. Although it doesn't have a prominent overarching national health campaign like Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October or Movember for men's health in November, December does spotlight various health-related themes and observances.

World AIDS Day on Dec. 1 is a globally recognized day to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, remember those who have died from the disease, and support individuals living with HIV.

National Influenza Vaccination Week

from Dec. 4 to 10 highlights the importance of getting vaccinated against the flu to prevent its spread and reduce its impact. The purpose of National Influenza Vaccination Week is to encourage people, especially those who have not yet been vaccinated, to get vaccinated against the flu. The campaign emphasizes the significance of flu vaccination as a preventive measure to protect individuals, families and communities from the flu virus and its potential complications. Public health organizations, health care providers and communi-



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

ties across the country conduct educational activities, vaccination clinics and awareness campaigns.

Seasonal Affective Disorder Awareness Month happens in December, focusing on raising awareness about SAD, a type of depression related to changes in seasons, often occurring in the winter months due to reduced sunlight. It is important to detect any behavioral changes and seek help as necessary to prevent severe symptoms.

Handwashing Awareness Week is in the first week of December. Although this campaign should be promoted year-long, it does

highlight the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of all types of contagious diseases and illnesses, including but not limited to viral illnesses during the flu season. It is a good idea to instill this habit during childhood.

Finally, **Safe Toys and Gifts Month** is in December. This campaign encourages safe toy choices and gift-giving practices, especially for children, to prevent accidents and injuries during the holiday season. It is important to avoid any hazardous packaging that accompanies any gifts.

Have a safe and healthy holiday.

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

Former Orange PD Officer's K9 Graduates Training



Former Orange resident and police officer Jake Pollock, currently with the Bristol Police Department, and his K9, Hero, graduated Capitol Region Canine Training on Dec. 6. Pollock previously worked with the Orange Police Department and is the son of Orange resident and Milford-Orange Times columnist Michele Tenney. Photo courtesy of Michele Tenney.

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Turkey Trot Arrives In Orange



The Rotary Club of Orange held its annual Turkey Trot 5K run/walk on Nov. 23. Photos by Lexi Crocco.

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FCP

(Continued From 1)

threatened species.

But others, including former Mayor Richard Smith and members of the economic development community, argued that it was exactly the kind of proposal that would help Milford stay relevant as a place to do business.

The two sides took turns making their cases during a marathon Nov. 8 board meeting that lasted nearly four hours.

FCP appeared to be on their back feet at the conclusion of that meeting, after two petitions were delivered in opposition, in an attempt to trigger a law that would raise the threshold for approval from a simple majority to two thirds. Chair Jim Quish also raised questions about the handling of motor oil and other potentially hazardous chemicals on the site.

However, neither of those proved to be much of an obstacle when the board considered the proposal again on Dec. 5.

Board member Robert Satti said it was a difficult choice, but that he was sure the developers would be cognizant of the sensitive areas surrounding the property.

"This proposal appears to indicate that it's going to show growth in the city of Milford, and I think that we should approve this," he concluded.

"I don't know that we really saw facts that supported that this – either the regulation change or the regulation change combined with the special permit – will actually do harm," Quish noted. "I know that there's a lot of people who passionately believe that it will, but I'm not sure that that is what will really be the outcome."

Despite his skepticism, Quish came out against approving the site plan.

"I think that the applicant can work with the neighbors and try to find a special permit site plan that makes some peace, because I think it's important that the people who live in that area are considered and I also think it's good neighborly policy," he explained.

Quish, however, was one of only two board members to vote against the plan, along with Marc Zahariades.

FCP did, however, agree to a condition on the approval that barred them from engaging in the receipt, collection, storage and recycling of used automotive fluids, including used motor oil.

Vigil

(Continued From 1)

Blumenthal said there was a "throughline" of hate connecting incidents around the country, citing the killing of a 6-year-old Palestinian boy in the Chicago area in October, the shooting of three Palestinian students in Vermont in November, the defacing of various houses of worship and the Yale student who climbed up a menorah on the New Haven Green on Nov. 9 to stick a Palestinian flag to it.

He called the current rise in hate "a moment of more peril and danger than I can recall at any time in my life."

Other speakers echoed that sentiment. Gayle Slossberg, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven and a former state senator for the district in which Orange sits, said she never thought she would have to be giving such a speech about antisemitism as she was delivering.

"My kids say to me, 'Mom, can I wear my Jewish star out in public? Am I safe?' I'm saying this out here publicly because

this is what we're saying at home around our dining room tables," Slossberg said.

She added that many Germans in the 1930s ignored the rise of antisemitism in their country, thinking that it wasn't their problem.

"We're at that place where we get to rewrite the ending to this movie," she said. "Call out antisemitism and hate when you see it. Do not be afraid to stand up and say, 'Hey, that's not okay.'"

First Selectman Jim Zeoli described how the tendency to avoid responding to hate could also extend to local leaders. He said that he had decried the Oct. 7 terror attack that Hamas had carried out in Israel during the announcement portion Board of Selectmen meeting that following week.

"It was just shocking because everybody there wanted to say something, but we didn't know whether we should or not," he said.

Zeoli added that much of the hate he has seen around him in his life has stemmed from misguided beliefs and jealousy of others.

"There's no room for that – certainly not in the town of Orange, not in the state of Connecticut, and it should not be in the United States," he said.

Matthew R. Bailey, pastor at St. Joseph of Arimathea American National Catholic Church, said that he came to the vigil not just as a pastor, but as a fellow citizen who was troubled by the rise in hate he was witnessing.

"Our faith teaches us that every person is created in the image of God," he said. "To harm another through deeds or words is to forget the divine imprint in each of us."

Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus of Congregation Or Shalom in Orange pointed out that Hannukah is a holiday about hope in the

midst of darkness. It purposefully falls in the darkest time of year, following not just the shortest period of daylight in December but the time of month when the moon is at its dimmest.

"We gather because we refuse to be paralyzed by the darkness. We gather to defy the darkness, to condemn the hate, to condemn the bigotry, to condemn evil, so that the hate will not be unanswered," he said. "We gather as well to keep hope alive."

Rabbi Michael Farbman of Temple Emanuel in Orange also spoke of hope in difficult times, relating the story of Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who was a child in Auschwitz during the Holocaust. When his father on Hannukah melted their meager margarine rations to fashion a makeshift menorah, Gryn protested that it was a waste of the tiny bit of food they had.

Gryn later said his father replied, "My child, we know you can live three days without water. You can live three weeks without food. But you cannot live for three minutes without hope."

"Standing with each other in a time of pain, and acknowledging it, and pulling it out and saying we have to do better, fills me with hope," he said.

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Apartments

(Continued From 1)

Knuff came back with a draft that would raise it to 10 percent – still well below the current requirement.

Another matter that resulted in some back-and-forth was a change to the density requirement. The regulations that apply to the Peck Lane parcel would limit the building to about 50 units. But Knuff noted that 50 two-bedroom units could contain a lot more people than the 75 one-bedroom units his client wanted to build.

But Vice Chair Judy Smith said that the commission generally defines density by units per acre, not people per acre.

“For example, Smith Farms Road is 46 units on five acres. That’s 9.2, if I did my math right. Silverbrook is 45 on five – that’s nine. This proposal, if it’s 3.3 acres, it’s 22.72 units per acre,” she explained. “So this is really an aggressive units-per-acre density.”

“It is different from what you have previously approved,” Knuff conceded. He noted, however, that the project would not put any undue burdens on town services and that the property had already gotten approval for sewer hookup.

“Those standards – they wouldn’t only apply to this parcel, but any other eligible parcel,” Chair Oscar Parente said, “so it’s not like we would just be saying yes to you on this level of density. If it doesn’t work out for some reason, we’re stuck with it.”

Knuff agreed that there is always some risk with a regulation change. But he pointed out that all the currently eligible pieces of land have already been developed, and it’s unlikely that they would be converted to something like this in the near future.

“You sort of have to deal with what’s reasonably likely,” he said. “Our point

is that it’s not likely that someone is going to convert a currently-developed commercial parcel on the Boston Post Road to multifamily.”

“All we hear through the community and abutting towns is malls are becoming apartments,” Smith replied. “So it’s a hot use right now.”

“I am leery of doing this ad hoc based on the impacts related to a piece (of property),” commissioner Kevin Cornell said, arguing for a broader look at the planned residential development regulations. “All the education we’re getting on affordable housing is saying that we still need something like this. But I think that it should be done on a more holistic basis, and perhaps even with some public input.”

Parente pointed out that the whole purpose of the PRD regulation was to increase the availability of affordable housing in Orange, which is well below the 10 percent target the state has been pushing for. That’s why the regulation asks for projects to include 30 percent affordable units.

“The proposed amendments actually run counter to what’s in the plan of conservation and development, where it says on page 73 that we should be considering ways to provide for housing that is more affordable,” he said. “So to reduce that number to me runs counter to the stated intent of the regulations and the plan of conservation and development.”

The commission unanimously voted to deny the change.

MOT
Milford-Orange Times

Boston Tea Party Coming To Milford

On the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, the famous colonial protest will be reenacted by Milford’s Sons and Daughters of Liberty.

The original Boston Tea Party took place on Dec. 16, 1773. On Saturday, Dec. 16 at 1:30 p.m., the reenactors will perform at Milford’s Minuteman House, also known as the John Downs House, located at 139 North St.

The Minuteman House will become “The Old South Meeting House” for the afternoon. Richard Platt will portray wealthy merchant John Hancock; Richard Inzero will portray Paul Revere; Bill Roots will portray Dr. Joseph Warren; Kiefer Cooper will portray the 16-year-old Connecticut fellow, Elisha Horton, who was at the Boston Tea Party; and Tim Chaucer will portray Sam Adams. Jim Attardo will portray Frances Roach,

the son of the loyalist owner of the ship Dartmouth who tried repeatedly to secure a waiver to sail the ship out of the harbor with the tea aboard.

Kelley Cummings, a Daughter of Liberty, will apply war paint and a feather to the Sons of Liberty to disguise them as Mohawk Indians when they vow to destroy the East India Company tea rather than allow it to be unloaded to favored consignees. The Sons respected the Mohawks for their “independent spirit.”

At approximately 2:30 p.m., the group will proceed to Griffins Wharf at Milford Harbor and board the mock Delaware to dump the “tea” into “Boston Harbor.”

The public is invited to join as participants or bystanders. Call Tim Chaucer at 203-988-0918 for more information or e-mail tchaucer@msn.com.

Temple Emanuel Donates Turkeys



Jeffrey Levison, chair of Temple Emanuel of Greater New Haven’s annual turkey collection program, stands among the turkeys being gathered by temple members. This is the 22nd year for the turkey drive. Last year, the temple donated 93 turkeys to New Haven’s Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen. This year, 125 turkeys were sent to New Haven, along with fixings donated by some temple members. Temple Emanuel, in Orange, is a small, but growing, Reform synagogue with members from many parts of the New Haven and the lower Naugatuck Valley. Photo by Doug Fenichel.



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Orange Garden Club Decorates Town



The members of The Garden Club of Orange have been busy decorating the Case Memorial Library rotunda and making wreaths for the town buildings to help brighten up the dark winter days. The purpose of the Club is to promote and encourage garden skills and knowledge, both individual and civic. If you are interested in learning more about the Club, visit gardenclubfororangect.com or call membership chair Lisa Stackpole at 203-795-1343. Top photo by Pat Dray. Bottom photo by Margherita Lisi.

Amity Cheerleaders Perform At Disney World



Abby Blair, Taraji Carter-Gore, Sophie Glassman and Makenzie Rowland from Amity High School are four of more than 800 high school cheerleaders and dancers from across the country who represented the camp brands of Varsity Spirit in the Varsity Spirit Spectacular at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida from Nov. 17 to Nov. 20. The individuals invited to perform are part of a select group of captains, co-captains, officers and seniors who attended a Varsity Spirit summer camp this summer. The four students performed in an exclusive performance at Disney's Magic Kingdom Park before hundreds of fans. Performers had the opportunity to meet cheerleaders and dancers from across the nation and enjoy the Walt Disney World parks. Photo courtesy of Varsity Spirit.

Town of Orange Legal Notice

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 10-153d(b) there is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk the signed copy of the labor contract between the Amity Education Association and Amity Regional Board of Education. This contract is for the period of July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2027.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut this the 1st day of December 2023.

Mary Shaw
Orange Town Clerk



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Obituaries

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

Mario "Chick" Andrew Alberghini, age 64, of Orange, CT, passed away November 12, 2023 surrounded by family. (Cyril F. Mullins Funeral Home)



Barbara Calosso, 88, of West Haven passed away peacefully at CT Hospice on Nov. 20, 2023. (Maresca & Sons Funeral Home)



Gary Charles Curtiss of Branford, CT, 72, passed Friday November 24, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Martha A. Fallanca was born on December 30, 1953 and passed away on November 28, 2023 at age 69. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Roberta "Babe" Cerrone, age 88, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Nicholas J. Cerrone, entered peaceful rest on Sunday, November 19, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Paul Howard DeCoster, of Woodbridge, Connecticut, died on Wednesday November 1, 2023, at Yale New Haven Hospital, at the age of 89.



MSGT. Richard C. Finn, 65, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved husband of Connie (Toledo) Finn, passed away on November 20, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Elizabeth D. Barbano, 94, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Guy R Barbano Sr, passed away peacefully on Nov. 16, 2023 surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Jessica Frances Braun Ciola, 46, of Bethany passed away into eternal rest on November 25, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Linda Marie DelPrete, 66, of Milford, beloved wife of Joseph DelPrete, passed away on November 29, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Carl "Buzz" Ernest Gissel, 92, of Milford, CT, passed away on December 2, 2023, at the VA hospital in West Haven after a short illness. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Miriam F. Bull, age 80, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Anthony F. Bull, passed away peacefully on November 30th, 2023 surrounded by her family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Devoted Husband, Father, Grandfather and Brother, **Dan Clifford** 90, was born on April 14, 1933, in New Haven to the late Patrick and Mary (Sullivan) Clifford. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Meta Dziezic was born on April 27, 1922 and passed away on December 8, 2023 at age 101. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Donald James Holly Sr., 89, of Milford, beloved husband of Carol Ann Holly, passed away on Monday November 13, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Christian T. Holmes, 51 of West Haven beloved husband of Bridget Carofano passed away on November 21, 2023 with his family by his side. (Porto Funeral Home)



Teresa Lea Mello, 61, of Milford Connecticut, beloved wife of the late Mark Mello, passed away on November 17, 2023, surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Vera Jean Overchuk, 79, passed away November 30, 2023 at Bridgeport Hospital. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Walter "Bucky" Symanski, 79, of Milford, entered eternal rest on November 26, 2023, with his loving family by his side. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Carmelite Jean Pierre, 40, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved wife of Marcio Rene Aguilar, passed away on November 17, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rhoda (Freedman) Myers, 96, of Milford, devoted wife of the late Peter Myers, died at Yale-New Haven Hospital on Nov. 14, 2023. (Robert E. Shure & Son Funeral Home)



Eufstratia Niki Papadopoulos, 82, of Clearwater Beach, FL, passed away peacefully at her home in Woodbridge, CT on November 30, 2023. (Celentano Funeral Home)



Rev. Hal Vink was born on September 15, 1933 and passed away on November 30, 2023 at age 90. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



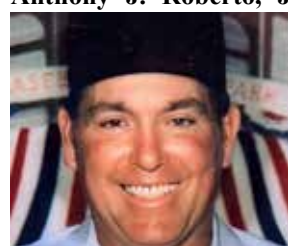
Diana Elizabeth Edelman Kleiner, affectionally "D E E K", passed away peacefully on November 12, at the age of 76. (Wakelee Memorial Funeral Home)



Mrs. Maddalena (Maddie) Mylen, age 91, passed away peacefully on November 15, 2023 at Mozaic Senior Life in Bridgeport CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Anthony J. Roberto, Jr., passed away peacefully on November 23, 2023 at Milford Hospital. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



William A Weirsman was born on April 30, 1948 and passed away on December 1, 2023 at age 75. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of **Paul "Buzzy" McGovern**, of West Haven, on November 19, 2023. (West Haven Funeral Home)



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the unexpected death of **Mary Lou O'Connell** of Milford, on November 23, 2023 at the age of 77 years young. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Patrick "Pat" F. Smith, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed away peacefully in his home on November 29, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Patricia A. Winzer, 79, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Alfred Winzer, passed away on December 4, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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