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Orange Kicks Off 2024 With Chili Run



Runners set off from High Plains Community Center in Orange on Jan. 1 for the 26th annual Chilly Chili Run, a five-kilometer run/walk that raises money to support 10Selden, formerly known as the Amity Tenn Center. The race was followed by a chili brunch. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Orange To Get Travel Center, EV Showroom

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Town Plan & Zoning Commission on Jan. 2 approved a plan for a travel center and electric vehicle showroom to be built near the I-95 entrance on Marsh Hill Road.

The plan, submitted by Monroe-based Solli Engineering on behalf of developer Noble Gas, calls for an 8,400 square-foot travel center at 88 Marsh Hill Rd. with a drive-through that would house a convenience store, coffee, sandwich and ice cream shops, along with outdoor patio dining. It would have 16 gas pumps and eight electric vehicle chargers.

The largest portion of the 4.5-acre

property would be taken up by a 27,500 square-foot EV showroom. The entire complex would have 96 parking spaces.

The fuel pumps and convenience store would be open 24 hours; the showroom would be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The property is across the street from special education school Hope Academy, and about a block from the exit and entrance ramps to I-95.

An earlier version of the plan had called for adding a traffic light at the entrance to the travel center. However, that had met with disapproval from the town's

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8000 Pizza Opens In Milford



Pizza restaurant 8000 Pizza celebrated their opening with a ribbon cutting on Dec. 13 hosted by the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Anthony Giannattasio was on hand to congratulate owners Sky Coronel and Tommy Nguyen. 8000 Pizza offers self-service delivery system for beverages like beer and wine – instead of having to wait for a server to come to you, you are able to serve yourself whenever you need a refill using a bracelet provided by the restaurant. The pizza is cooked in a cast-iron pan. The venue also serves wings, over 30 beers, four wines and cocktails. 8000 Pizza is located in the Connecticut Post Mall next to the main entrance on the Boston Post Road side near Macys. From left: Simon McDonald of the MRCC, Coronel, Nguyen and Giannattasio. Photo by Greg Geiger.

Milford Lays Wreaths For Veterans



Milford held its annual Wreaths Across America event on Dec. 16 at Kings Highway Cemetery to honor local veterans by laying a wreath at each grave and reading their names aloud. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Wetlands Board Approves Founder's Walk Plan

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Inland Wetlands Agency at its Jan. 3 gave its go-ahead to the city for its Founder's Walk project in downtown.

The project involves significantly reconfiguring the area behind the Milford Public Library, which includes Shipyard Lane, parking lots, Fowler's Field, tennis courts, various walkways and boat ramps

along the Wepawaug River.

Shipyard Lane wends its way through these heavily used pedestrian spaces, curving around the library, then cutting between the parking lot and the fields to travel parallel to the water before looping back on the other side of the fields.

Continued on page 2



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Adopt A Pet: Russell



Russel is a large, young, mixed breed pup who was found running around a park as a stray. Though initially shy, he has blossomed out of his shell and loves walks and people. He has short hair, is very friendly and has had all of his shots. Russell 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.

Children’s Singer Coming To High Plains

Will Parker and the Make Believe Band will perform on Saturday, Jan. 20 at 1 p.m. at High Plains Community Center as part of the Orange Community Women’s annual family show.

Parker is an award-winning children’s songwriter and teaching artist who writes and performs music for “kids ages 1-100.” During his whimsical and interactive shows, Parker plays guitar and harmonica and sings original songs that engage the audience in singing along, dancing, high-fiving and

imaginative play. The kids also help Parker create an improvised song.

Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$7 at the door; children under one year old are free. Contact Michelle Bailey for tickets at fbailey1@optonline.net or 203-605-4383, or any OCW member.

Proceeds from the show will be used to fund Orange Community Women projects. High Plains Community Center is located at 525 Orange Center Rd. For more information, email Orangecommunityw@gmail.com.

Health Fair Coming To Post Mall

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual Health and Wellness Fair, presented by Yale New Haven Health, on Saturday, Jan. 27 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Connecticut Post Mall in Milford.

The fair will feature a plethora of health and wellness resources and information

about local fitness and wellness initiatives. There will be guidance and interactive vendors to help visitors along their health journey.

This fair will be held at the lower level of the mall near Target. The mall is located at 1201 Boston Post Rd.

Founder’s Walk (Continued From 1)

The city has called the road unsafe, since it requires pedestrians to cross the street to get to the library, the fields or the nearby walking bridge along the water.

The plan would shift the road east to avoid the library parking lot and curve more gently toward the marina.

The current path of Shipyard Lane would become a walking path with more soil and plantings that could absorb runoff from the street and parking lot so that oils and other chemicals don’t flow into the river as easily.

Because the Founders Walk project is under the auspices of the city, it does not need traditional planning approvals. It did, however, need approval from the MIWA.

The agency had looked over the project plans at its Dec. 20 meeting and raised several questions. Inland Wetlands Officer MaryRose Palumbo said a main concern with the project was making sure that sediment from the construction did not end up in the catch basins or the river itself – both during the building of the eastward portion of Shipyard Lane and in the creation of the footpath where the old road will be removed.

“It’s a staging project to make sure that some of the sediments from here

will be removed. They’re not suitable for creating a roadway. So it’s getting dirt in and out without getting into the catch basins,” she explained, noting that the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will also be monitoring work on the area closest to the waterway.

There have been several invasive species identified in the area of the project – most notably invasive reed grasses and tree-of-heaven. Commissioner Stephen Munson had asked whether they could include a condition to require the city remove these plants as part of the project.

Palumbo said that the landscape architect had agreed to watch out for invasives, but she noted that she wasn’t sure if the all of them could be removed from the area within the scope of the project.

“I read something up on the tree-of-heaven,” Munson said. “With the other plantings I think over time whatever can’t be pulled out or removed shouldn’t be a problem because tree-of-heaven does not do well in the shade. The other plantings I think will overcome that.”

Chair Brendan Magnan said he was comfortable adding a requirement for removal of invasives as a condition for approval, which made it into the motion that ultimately passed.

“I believe it’s a very well-designed plan,” Magnan said.

Amity Improves In Student Survey

The Amity Regional School District’s annual school climate survey shows overall improvement in students’ perceptions of the middle schools and high school, with the total district score rising from 2.94 in 2022 to 3.07 in 2023. Scores over 3.0 meet the district’s benchmark for success.

The district met its goal in several

categories: peer social support, character, school safety, and order and discipline. Areas for improvement included cultural acceptance, adult social support, physical environment and school connectedness.

The full executive summary is available on the district website at amityregion5.org.

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The Arts

New Year A Good Time To Get To Know The Arts

The new year is a great time to make a resolution to become more familiar with the many offerings of the arts and culture in our local and surrounding communities. Take some time to be inspired by visual art, music, dance or a play. Treat yourself to a Broadway touring show or a classic ballet.

Pair an arts event with a new eatery you've been meaning to try. Take the back roads instead of the highway and enjoy the ride. You'll be glad you did. Happy new year.

The **Milford Arts Council** will present "Figurative: The Portrait" in January. This annual figurative juried art show will feature a central theme of the portrait, celebrating the beauty and diversity of the human form through the lens of portraiture. Local entrants will present artworks of varied mediums and styles that capture the essence of a person through conveyance of their character, emotions, complexities and identity. The artists will explore traditional or contemporary approaches to portraiture, encouraging experimentation and innovation within the realm of capturing the human form. Artistry will include, but is not limited to, painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, mixed media, fiber, ceramics, glass and digital art. Works are original, with the artist's own concept and design. The opening reception will be on Jan. 18 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and the show will be open to the public during gallery hours on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. through Jan. 28 at the MAC Firehouse Gallery, located at 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. For more information, visit milfordarts.org.

Saybrook Stage Company presents "The Matchmaker" by Thornton Wilder from Jan. 18 to 21. This is the story of "Hello, Dolly!" Thornton Wilder's hilarious comedy set in 1880s New York City. A wealthy merchant

decides to take a wife and employs a matchmaker, Mrs. Dolly Levi, to find him the perfect woman. Before long, Dolly also becomes involved in the lives of two of his clerks, several lovely ladies and the headwaiter at an expensive restaurant where this entertaining farce runs headlong into uproarious complications. The show will be at The Kate – Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center, located at 300 Main St. in Old Saybrook. Tickets are \$19-\$29. For more information, visit saybrookstage.org or call 860-510-0473.

The **New Britain Museum of American Art's** two-part exhibition, "Ellen Carey: Struck by Light," spans three decades of work by the acclaimed Hartford-based artist, presenting experimental and abstract works that expand the boundaries of photography using innovative photo-objects and lens-based artworks and varied hues and shapes to celebrate the artist's contribution to the field of photography through her pioneering explorations of light, color and shadow. The exhibit is on display now through Jan. 28. Part one is on view in the Helen T. and Philip B. Stanley Gallery; part two is on view in the Maximillian E. and Marion O. Hoffman Foundation Gallery. The New Britain Museum of American Art is located at 56 Lexington St. in New Britain. For more information, visit nbmaa.org or call 860-229-0257.

Shubert Theatre presents "Company," music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by George Furth, and directed by three-time Tony award-winning director Marianne Elliott ("War Horse," "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," and "Angels in America"). The phone rings, door chimes, in



CYNDI CONSOLI

comes company. This smash hit musical comedy is a winner of five Tony awards, including Best Revival of a Musical. This revelatory new production of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's groundbreaking musical comedy is boldly sophisticated, deeply insightful and downright hilarious. It's Bobbie's 35th birthday, and all her friends keep asking why isn't she married? Why can't she find the right man and isn't it time to settle down and start a family? As Bobbie searches for answers, she discovers why being single, being married and being alive in the 21st century could drive a person crazy. The show runs from Jan. 31 to Feb. 4 at Shubert Theatre, located at 247 College St. in New Haven. Tickets are between \$58-\$123 at shubert.com.

Long Wharf Theatre presents "A View From The Bridge" written by Arthur Miller and directed by James Dean Palmer. Set in 1950s Brooklyn, longshoreman Eddie Carbone harbors a subconscious and jealous affection for his niece, Catherine, whom he is raising with his wife. When distant cousins arrive unexpectedly from Italy and one of them falls for Catherine, Eddie takes drastic measures to protect his fragile American dream. Deeply relevant, "A View From The Bridge" wrestles with truths about family, the complexities of how we assimilate and, ultimately, how we view ourselves as Americans. The show runs from Feb. 10 to March 10 at the Canal Dock Boathouse, located at 475 Long Wharf Dr. in New Haven. Tickets are \$39 for members, \$49 for non-members, \$10 for college students and free for children in kindergarten through 12th grade. Pay-it-

forward tickets are available for \$125; by purchasing these you are supporting lower-priced admission for others. Email boxoffice@longwharf.org or call 203-693-1486 Monday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m. More information is available at longwharf.org.

World Ballet Series presents Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake." This new production is choreographed by Nadezhda Kalinina, who retouched the oldest Marius Petipa's version of the ballet considered the foundation of the classic version of the iconic ballet. Hand-painted sets and over 150 hand-sewn costumes were created by Sergei Novikov in the tradition of the great masters. Special effects make-up developed by award-winning Irina Strukova ("Crazy Rich Asians") will make ballet devotees feel as though they have seen the beautiful "Swan Lake" for the first time.

First soloists are Konstantin Geronik, Ekaterina Malkovich, Sofia Matiusenscaia, Egor Burba, Anton Kravchenko, Andrea Lassakova, Irina Sapozhnikova, Leonardo Celegato, and Kanat Nadyrbek.

Audience members ages five and older will enjoy the story, music, dance and visual artistry this classic ballet has to offer. The show is on Feb. 11. Doors open at 5 p.m., and the show begins at 6 p.m., lasting two hours and 30 minutes with a 20-minute intermission. The show is at the Garde Arts Center, located at 325 State St. in New London. Tickets are \$35 to \$95; call the box office at 860-444-7373 x 1.

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.

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Facing Ourselves

Building Nets Proactively

Spanning 1.7 miles, nets made of stainless-steel mesh, built to withstand harsh attacks from saltwater and gusts of winds, flank the Golden Gate Bridge. These suicide prevention nets, built along the length of the bridge, are a labor of love that have been almost a decade in the making, overcoming construction delays and objections from those who resisted alterations to this famous structure. Finally completed on Jan. 1, these nets, placed 20 feet underneath the bridge, are visible to those standing by the rails and serve as a visual and physical deterrent for people contemplating suicide.

For those who still jump, the nets decrease the likelihood of death, although due to the hard and inflexible nature of the mesh, people may still sustain painful injuries. Modeled after other suicide nets built around the world, such as in Switzerland, the Golden Gate Bridge suicide prevention nets have already reportedly reduced the number of jumpers by more than 50 percent in 2023 while under construction.

Human deterrents have also been set up in the form of bridge patrols, who scan for and try to prevent people from taking their own lives, resulting in almost 150 saved lives last year. In addition, firefighters and bridge workers have received training on how to rescue those who have jumped into the nets.

The monumental undertaking of this project was made possible through extensive efforts of families who lost members to suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge. They say that the presence of these nets would have saved their loved ones. Many survivors who have attempted suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge also later say they regretted their decision the moment they took the leap. Others cite studies which report that a majority of those who have survived a suicide attempt do not try to take their lives again, pointing out that deterrents like the nets are important in the fight to save lives.

Although these physical nets can save lives, what other kinds of nets can we build as a society? Data shows the crumbling of social networks has led to an unprecedented epidemic of loneliness and a sense of disconnection. Unsurprisingly, the rates of

depression and anxiety in all age groups have soared to levels never seen before. Plans to build more parks and other public spaces that encourage people to gather are often delayed by bureaucratic red tape or cost. The work to reduce the stigma around mental health has begun, but many still report suffering in silence or hiding behind images of perfectly curated social media posts.

Access to affordable mental health services remains elusive to many, as more mental health providers elect to not participate in health insurance plans, citing low reimbursement rates for the challenging work they provide. Oftentimes, calls to mental health providers are met with advice to call 911 if it is a true emergency. If individuals do seek urgent services, some face first responders who are sub-optimally trained in mental health and who inadvertently escalate rather than de-escalate the situation, sometimes with disastrous and tragic results.

Others who are greatly suffering yet do not meet the insurance criteria for hospital admission are often discharged from the emergency room with instructions to seek outpatient services which had been unattainable in the first place. Even if accessible mental health services are found, the wait times are often weeks to months, and many report they do not have the job flexibility to attend appointments weekly or biweekly, nor can they afford the copay or out-of-network costs.

More work needs to be done to build proactive, not just reactive, nets in which mental health services are truly affordable and accessible, and to work with employers and legislators to ensure those seeking help are given the time to pursue it. In addition, a cultural shift is needed to really believe and embrace that mental health is no different than physical health and to reduce the barriers we build around discussing and seeking treatment for it.

There are also nets we can offer others, at a one-on-one level. We can put down our phones and be truly present so we don't miss



JENNIFER
JU

the subtle signs of struggle, such as noticing a loved one's gradual withdrawal from others or hobbies they once enjoyed. Instead of saying, "If you need anything, call me, I'm here," we can recognize that for those in the throes of depression and anxiety, they feel as though they are in a cold, dark, bottomless ditch, trying to dig themselves out, teaspoon by teaspoon, and may be too physically and emotionally exhausted to have the wherewithal to reach out.

We can work with our own discomfort when we witness another's struggle and ask them what they need most in the moment, whether it's to be heard, hugged or helped.

There are nets we can build for ourselves, where we can seek shelter until we can ride out the waves of despair or overwhelming sense of hopelessness and helplessness. Emotion is based on the Latin word *ēmoveō*, which means to move. When we feel overwhelmed with depression and anxiety, we forget that these emotions are not permanent, but rather ebb and flow. We lose sight that our emotions change; we are not stuck or trapped in a permanent state of despondency. We can remember that when we are suffering, our fight, flight or freeze system takes over, rendering the ability of our frontal lobes and other regions of the brain to help us make good decisions and think logically less effective, and making it difficult to access our wise mind.

We can move from a mindset that we are broken or "less than" and instead explore what it is like when we pursue self-improvement motivated by genuine care rather than attacking a deficiency. We can practice a different kind of self-care – one that does not resemble an endless list of to-do items that people are already too worn out to try to undertake. Rather, we can exercise the practice of self-compassion, recognizing that we all struggle, struggle is a part of life and we are connected by our shared humanity.

We can bear in mind that life is not about being perfect or avoiding failure, but rising each time we fall. We can challenge the de-

visions marketed to us about what makes us valuable and remember that each of us have inherent self-worth that no amount of money, acquisitions or the number on the scale can add or take away.

We can remember we all carry invisible scars, but we are not broken. We can practice perspective building and employ the power of "and," in which we notice our struggle and at the same time can find even the smallest blessing, even if only the miracle of breathing without having to think about it. We can spend more time being in nature, which is a perpetual reminder of resiliency, weathering countless storms, ongoing climate change and ceaseless human threats.

We can work on building connections through acts of service, recognizing the multiple benefits of altruism supported by research. We can be mindful that our hedonistic pursuit of happiness is never ending, as the nature of happiness is fleeting, and perhaps instead take time to slow down, quiet the mind and listen to what our hearts tell us will bring a deeper sense of peace and joy.

We can hold space for suffering, whether in ourselves or others, and learn from it, with the belief that we are more than our emotions and that "this too shall pass." We can recall that we belong to each other and that we are not truly alone. We can have faith that, as author Albert Camus wrote, "In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer."

As we begin this new year, let us all proactively build nets, connecting more deeply and authentically with each other, and to ourselves.

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

Getting To Know You

A Bowl Of Oatmeal For 2024

2023 just slid under the hood like another mile of two-lane blacktop, and now we're on to the mid-winter start of 2024. Another holiday season has come and gone.

To me, the holiday season is like dessert for the year of work. Once again we've finished our dessert and now it's time to get back to our routines.

I know everyone loves dessert. Be it cookies or cakes or candies or pies or trifles or some other treat, dessert is the sweet reward at the end. We all look forward to it, and when it arrives it tastes so good. Dessert is the sweet taste of victory.

But now dessert is over and it's back to our regular diet. To me that means oatmeal for breakfast. Plain old lump-in-the-bottom-of-the-bowl oatmeal. It probably won't surprise you that I don't look forward to my oatmeal as much as I do my dessert. Not that I have anything against oatmeal in particular, mind you, except for the fact that it had the misfortune to be the breakfast I came to associate with work.

My dad always made oatmeal for breakfast when we were about to start a big project. Around this time of year we would eat oatmeal and then split logs into firewood to feed the wood stove in the living room. That cast-iron monstrosity had an insatiable appetite for dried firewood, and we'd burn two cords of it every winter. Every time I smell a fire, my arms get a tiny ache in them as a reminder of the hours I spent on winter days swinging an axe and then carting in enough wood to stoke the fire for the night.

Once after an oatmeal breakfast we dug a dry well near the basement door because the runoff from the gutters pooled down on the south side of the house and backed up into the basement through the sliding glass door. Four feet didn't sound that deep. Then we hit the rocks that populate the New England soil and progress slowed to a crawl. It took a full week to hollow out the hole, plumb the drainpipe from the house to the drywell, fill the hole with rocks and then cover it with dirt and grass seed.

We ate oatmeal when we painted the house. We ate oatmeal when we built the shed in the backyard. We ate oatmeal before we plowed snow off the driveway in the winter. We ate oatmeal before we raked the leaves in the fall, and we ate oatmeal when we de-thatched the grass in the spring. We ate oatmeal that summer day when the well pump quit and we had to hall the pump and the pipe up out of the well so the plumber could install a new pump. We ate oatmeal before we changed the brakes on the car. We ate oatmeal before we re-plumbed the kitchen, moved the refrigerator and installed a new stove. If it required elbow grease, back work or brute force, we fortified ourselves with oatmeal for breakfast.

I took that habit with me as I got older. In college I ate oatmeal while I studied for exams. I ate oatmeal the morning of an exam. I kept that up through law school, and the two days of the bar exam I ate oatmeal for breakfast. The night



DAVID
CROW

before I proposed to my wife, I was too excited to sleep so I stood in the kitchen and ate a bowl of oatmeal. It settled my nerves enough that I got some sleep that night.

I still eat a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast when I've got some big project around the house or at work. Something about the warm thickness of oatmeal is comforting and reassuring. It reminds me to buckle down, achieve and get my work done, so I can get home for

supper and, hopefully, dessert.

Welcome to 2024 everyone. Time to get to work. Here's to you with a bowl of oatmeal.

Until next time, y'all come out!

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

Milford-Orange Times

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Opinion & Editorial

Letters to the Editor:

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

Against Republican Disinformation in Orange

To the Editor:

Not even one week after we all gathered for a vigil against hate, the Orange Republican vice chair had a letter to the editor printed spewing inaccuracies and misinformation.

He called himself the campaign chair as well. Campaign chair of what campaign? The Orange Republicans run the same campaign every year, just changing the photos to accommodate a new crop of the same old candidates.

I read the letter and found the usual Republican misinformation continues here in Orange. Let's start with Republican candidates, and now current Amity Board of Education members, including the vice-chair's own mother. None of these people as candidates would answer standard questions on where they stand on the issues. I guess you can't get critiqued for what you don't answer, right out of the MAGA playbook.

He then criticized the slate of Democratic education board candidates. Tell me how a high school principal is unqualified as a candidate for the Amity Board of Education? How is a candidate with a background in special education unqualified? A candidate with a background in journalism and theater is unqualified? An incumbent, who was once again voted to chair the Amity Board of Ed, is unqualified? The Republican candidates' lack of transparency left us wondering what their qualifications are.

And let's address the claims that the Democrats refused a joint debate. First selectman candidate Mark Moyher did participate in two independently sponsored debates, one by the Milford-Orange Times and one by the Men's Club at Congregation Or Shalom. The third so-called debate was a Republican ploy to try to get their own sponsored debate. They knew it would be rejected so they could use it as a campaign lie and ploy, again right out of the MAGA playbook.

But let's talk about more misinformation in the letter. The Republican vice chair listed me as campaign co-chair with Trish Pearson. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Did I help with the campaign? Yes, but there were many times I wasn't even part of meetings, so to refer to me as a co-chair is woefully inaccurate.

I only hope that the vice-chair's call for civility and respect in political discourse will be respected by him and his party as well.

It's amazing how 20 years in control gives the Orange Republicans the arrogance to believe they can put out so many false claims.

Jody Dietch
Orange

Protecting Those With Alzheimer's



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

I want to wish you all a happy and healthy New Year. Before we get caught up in preparing for the 2024 legislative session, which begins on Feb. 7, I want to take this opportunity to share a newly developed program that hits home for me and for many of us.

The Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter in December partnered with the Connecticut State Police to create the "Bring Me Back Home" registry. The goal: locate and return any missing or wandering residents who suffer from Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease predominantly affects seniors. As a person who currently cares for a loved one with Alzheimer's, I can attest that this condition requires intense care especially with an increased potential for those with dementia to wander. Wandering can be extremely dangerous, and often life-threatening.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, six in 10 people living with dementia will wander. The reality is that Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia often cause people to lose their cognitive recognition ability, meaning they struggle to identify familiar faces or places. Sadly, most records show that those not found within 24 hours are more likely to suffer serious injury, or even death.

Thankfully, through the BMBH registry, law enforcement will now have shared access to information to assist in the relocation of missing Connecticut residents with Alzheimer's and other cognitive challenges. In collaboration with the COLLECT criminal justice and safety program, the registry will confidentially compile resident identities, including hobbies, workplaces and former addresses to allow police to respond to missing person calls swiftly and effectively.

It is imperative that we support the seniors in our community who are affected with cognitive challenges. Through this program we can continue to do just that. I want to personally thank all our health care workers, law enforcement officers and dedicated family members who work hard to maintain a good quality of life for those living with these conditions.

Both the State Police and the Alzheimer's Association recommend that families register loved ones who are affected by these conditions, even if they feel wandering may not occur. To register your loved one today, visit ct.gov/BMBH.

Our seniors represent the backbone of our communities, and it is our responsibility to care for those who once cared for us. My office is always open for questions concerning this or any other programs that support our Connecticut seniors. Please never hesitate to contact me at Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov or call me at 860-240-8700.

New Laws, Programs In 2024



STATE REP. (R-117)
CHARLES FERRARO

With the holiday season wrapped up and the new year underway, I hope that you and your families are staying warm in these winter months. The cold season can bring many challenges, with concerns of home heating, food insecurity and access to vital services.

A new state prescription drug discount card program was launched in October. All residents can register online for the free discount card to receive savings on certain prescription drugs. Visit arrayrxcard.com.

The program is part of a new law – Public Act 23-171, which I supported in the last legislative session – and will be administered by the Office of the State Comptroller. Connecticut is now part of a multi-state consortium known as ArrayRx, which also operates in Nevada, Oregon and Washington. When purchasing prescription drugs, consumers present the card at their pharmacy and can receive discounts up to 80 percent on certain medications. All FDA-approved drugs are eligible for a discount.

Several new laws took effect on Jan. 1 that could have an impact on you, your business or our community. I have highlighted some of the following, but you can access a full list, along with summaries, by visiting repferraro.com/newlaws2024.

Tax cuts: I supported the new state budget, adopted in June 2023, which cuts the bottom two marginal tax rates from 3 percent to 2 percent and from 5 percent to 4.5 percent. Income taxes on the first \$50,000 in taxable income will be lowered for single filers and married people filing separately, \$100,000 for joint filers, and \$80,000 for heads of household. Additionally, Jan. 1 started the easing of the cliff on income tax exemptions for retirement income.

I/DD community supports: Several provisions of a comprehensive bill concerning resources and support services for residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities have taken effect. This will expand job opportunities, limit waitlists for services and housing and improve emergency response encounters.

Online dating safety: This new law requires online dating services to have safety centers, reporting procedures for harassment and improved standards to promote healthy relationships.

Other notable acts effective on Jan. 1 include acts related to mental health, relief benefits for firefighters, and financial support in divorce and custody proceedings.

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

MOT
Milford-Orange Times

Together We Will Make A Difference



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 15 will mark both the actual birthday and the holiday that commemorates the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. To honor his commitment and belief of the importance of service to others, this day is also seen as a National Day of Service.

With so many of us living lives that just seem to get busier and busier, and so much emphasis on 'going big,' it can feel almost impossible to volunteer or give back in a way that will actually make a difference. I know that I have felt that way. It can be hard to remember that many small actions can lead to big results – that together we can 'crowdsource' community service and help in ways that fit both our schedules and our resources.

I was reminded of that on Friday, Jan. 5 when I joined a handful of colleagues at Amazing Grace, a food pantry in Middletown, in honor of the memory of our friend and my mentor, Rep. Quentin Williams.

For two hours the seven of us helped organize shelves, check best-by dates, break down boxes and prepare the space for the day ahead. Nothing fancy; we just took care of simple tasks for a combined 14 hours of work that crossed off a bunch of tasks on the staff's to-do list and helped people in the process.

One of my favorite things about serving on the Orange Board of Education, besides the people, was the motto: Together we will make a difference. This intention is applicable to all parts of our town. Perhaps the Historical Society needs help at the Bryan-Andrew House, or the Country Fair Committee is looking for volunteers, or the Food Bank needs support. We are fortunate to have many wonderful groups and organizations that help make Orange such a special place. Reach out to one and see if they have a project day coming up, or a task that you and your family can help with for a couple of hours. Houses of worship are also a great resource for options.

If your schedule is flexible or hard to predict, there is a terrific organization called Haven's Harvest that works to reduce food waste. Volunteers do "rescue runs" to pick up excess food from local businesses that would otherwise be thrown out. One of the best parts: it's all done through an app on your phone. You can sign up and just check if runs are needed when you have time, or get alerts for one-time or recurring weekly rescues. For more information, visit havensharvest.org.

King also said, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." That is a lovely way of framing how every deliberate act of service can help our neighbors and our community and make the world a little bit better.

Rotary

The Rotarian's 4-WAY TEST
of the things we think, say, or do

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and better FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

The Garden Spot

Attracting Wild Birds

Now that the deciduous trees and shrubs have dropped their leaves, it's much easier to do some winter bird watching. The sight of the cardinals on the bare branches really helps brighten up a cold and cloudy day.

As you may have read recently, millions of birds have disappeared from our skies over the past few decades. So how do you safely attract the birds?

There are several things that will make your property more attractive to birds. Of course, a readily available food source is a big draw, but the birds also need a water source and a place to shelter that is safe and close to the food source. Don't be in a big rush to do a cleanup – a fallen tree will provide not just shelter but food via insects in its bark. Many native shrubs and trees such as pagoda dogwood, American

beech and pokeberry will provide berries and insects for the birds.

You can learn more about native plants that attract birds by going to audobon.org and searching their native plant database by zip code for more information on natives and the bird species they attract.

You can also feed the birds seed. Different birds have different seed preferences, but almost all will eat the black oil sunflower seed. These seeds are high in fats and light enough for most birds to pick up and carry away. Another excellent source of fat (and energy) for birds is suet. You can purchase suet at the grocery store and place it in a mesh bag – the type that



PAT DRAY

onions come in is perfect. Or you can purchase suet blocks, which may also include some seed or nuts to go in to a suet feeder. Fruits and vegetables are also good for the birds. Almost any type of fruit will disappear quickly. When I have old, dried out raisins, I'll soak them to soften them up and then put them near the feeders.

Different birds also have different eating preferences. Some are ground feeders and will eat off the ground or a platform feeder. For the ground feeders, scatter some seeds along the woodland border or in sheltered areas. One thing you might want to avoid for ground feeders is cracked corn. This is a favorite of squirrels and will attract them

to your feeders. Keep the snow packed down around the feeders so that the seed remains available for the birds.

If you do use feeders, please remember to practice good hygiene. You should disinfect your feeder occasionally using a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.

Finally, turn off the outdoor lights so that the birds do not fly into the windows and kill themselves.

Enjoy the birds over the winter. And remember, feeding them may mean some surprise plants in your garden in the spring, depending on what they've eaten and where they might have left some seed behind.

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

Bankruptcy

Recently Engaged? Consider This

Lots of couples get engaged around the holidays: Christmas, New Years, Valentine's Day. It's such an exciting time and an absolute whirlwind of activity. After you have popped the question (or said "yes," depending which side of things you are on), posted all the pictures on Instagram and changed your relationship status on Facebook, you should consider the following amid all the fun:

1. Ring insurance: The engagement ring is now one of your most prized possessions. It has immense sentimental value and probably a whole lot of monetary value, too. You should contact your personal lines insurance agent as soon as you purchase the ring to have it insured under its own policy to protect against loss, theft or damage. I would advise against putting it on your homeowners insurance as a rider because a claim could affect your insurability and cost of premiums in the future. This tip may also help you get a multi-policy discount.

In order to get ring insurance, you will need an appraisal of the ring. I would also advise taking very close-up pictures of the ring to

have for your records. From time to time, the ring should be brought to a jeweler for a "safety check" to make sure there are no loose stones or missing prongs. As time goes on, you can add your wedding bands to the policy.

2. Pre-nup: This is the thing that no one wants to talk about, but everyone should at least consider. There is a huge misconception that you need to be rich or own a business or lots of real estate or be a celebrity to necessitate a prenuptial agreement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Pre-nups are just insurance policies. They are meant to protect you in case of divorce no matter what your financial status is going into the marriage. And since 50 percent of marriages end in divorce, it would be smart to do.

Procedurally, four people are required for proper execution of a pre-nup: you, your future spouse and one lawyer for each of you. One lawyer will prepare the agreement and the other



THERESA ROSE DEGRAY

will act as review counsel. Yes, this costs money, but it does not cost nearly as much as a nasty divorce.

3. Finances/bankruptcy: Even if you do not get a pre-nup, you should fully disclose to each other your entire financial picture before your wedding day. It is only fair for each of you to go in with eyes wide open for richer, for poorer. If one or both of you is carrying a lot of debt, you could consider a bankruptcy. It will help you start fresh and go into the marriage debt-free.

4. Estate planning: Frankly, every adult human being over the age of 18 years old should have a simple estate plan whether they are getting married or not. But since you will be changing your marital status and your spouse will in essence be replacing your parents or next of kin, a simple estate plan is essential. A basic estate plan consists of a last will and testament that operates upon your death and a power of attorney and living will that both operate while

you are still alive but unable to make your own legal and medical decisions.

I don't want to seemingly put a damper on this joyous occasion in your life. So I will stop with the how-to's on adulting and end on a happy note about all the enjoyable parts of getting married and having a wedding, such as saying yes to the dress, cake taste-testing and selecting a honeymoon destination (don't forget the trip insurance). The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce will be hosting its Second Annual Bridal Expo on Sunday, Jan. 28 at Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. I will have a table there and I hope to see you and have a chance to say, "Congratulations and best wishes."

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.

Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Is Zillow A Good Barometer Of Value?

Everyone is familiar with Zillow, a fast-paced website geared toward giving statistics concerning the state of real estate. There are many fascinating sections of Zillow. They forecast changes in rates, the options concerning trends for buyers and renters across the nation, and they profess to give accuracy to the question of how much your home is worth in today's market.

We love information about our nation. It reminds us that no matter where you are in the country, there are families out there attempting to buy and sell homes – hopefully at prices they can afford. Whether suggesting more new construction for buyers and renters or quoting

national economists on the struggle for rate reduction, Zillow is up to date with ideas and information, making it a popular website for the public.

However, taking statistics from different locations and joining them together for an overall average selling number is a drawback. The trouble is that the worth of your property cannot be determined strictly by the numbers. Many homeowners pop in their address on Zillow and get a number that is not really accurate, then are later disappointed when they meet with a local real



BARBARA LEHRER

estate agent. For example, urban homes and suburban homes with the same square footage cannot be compared, although they may be in close proximity. Numerous important factors that play into the value cannot be omitted.

A recent the front page story in the New Haven Register quotes Zillow saying that the average price of homes in US last quarter was \$440,000. Imagine all the sales that went into that number.

I advise you to get your own number. Finding that sweet spot to market your

property at is a numbers-plus game. Through a careful comparative property study, using comparable homes, you can then justify real value. Location still drives the bus in the real estate market, followed by condition and topography. A true price is determined using this method.

Zillow can give you a range, a ballpark in which to then move up or down around, along with the help of current, local information. Remember, those bank appraisers will use the information the professional local agent helps you with, thereby remaining accurate.

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

Milford-Orange Probate Court

Time To Review Estate Plans

The new year is a good time to review your estate plan or to start thinking about putting one in place.

If you have a will, you should review it periodically to make sure it still makes sense and still matches your wishes. For example, an old will may leave money or assets to someone you no longer want to receive it. It may appoint an executor (the person or entity who manages the estate) who has passed away, moved out of state or is otherwise no longer the best person for the role.

There are generally two ways to change your will. You can revoke your current will and make another one if you want to start over. If you only want to change parts of your will,

you can modify your will by properly executing a codicil. A codicil is a written document that supplements or modifies an existing will.

If you do not have a will or estate plan, the new year is a good time to determine if a will or other estate planning tool, such as a trust, is appropriate. If you pass without a will, your assets get distributed in accordance with state statute. Therefore, a will may give you more flexibility to distribute your assets. A will may also provide other benefits. A will allows you to appoint an executor of your choosing, waive bond and bypass court



BEN GETTINGER

approval for certain transactions.

Here is a list of events that may necessitate a change to your current estate plan: 1. the birth of child; 2. a child, heir or beneficiary reaching the age of majority; 3. receiving a large sum of money; 4. incurring a large debt or liability; 5. a death in the family; 6. a divorce in the family; 7. a falling out with a family member, heir or beneficiary; 8. the marriage of an adult child, heir or beneficiary; 9. the expectation of the need for state or federal financial assistance or programs by you, a child, heir or beneficiary; or 10. your

remarriage.

Below is a list of how your current estate plan may need to be changed: 1. making your first will; 2. revoking your current will; 3. modifying your current will; 4. establishing a trust; 5. adding, deleting or changing the beneficiaries to your will or a trust that has yet to take effect; 6. changing your executor or naming a successor executor; 7. adding, deleting or changing trustees to a trust that has yet to take effect; or 8. checking in with your estate planning professional to provide any updates and review your estate planning documents for potential changes.

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

Insuring Your Future

It's A New Year And A Clean Insurance Slate

One of the best parts of January is that all benefits reset. But so do deductibles. It is good news, bad news.

The good news: no more donut hole for prescriptions. Medicare plans all reset in January to original copay for medications according to tier. The new cost of medication maximum has increased to \$5,000 before the cost share changes. Over-the-counter benefits are fully loaded.

The bad news: deductibles reset to zero. You will be responsible for the negotiated rate for all services that are subject to the deductible. Take a minute to look at the benefit guide to avoid unexpected surprise charges.

Know the benefits included in your health insurance plan, such as healthy rewards. Many insurance plans – both group and individual – offer rewards in the form of gift cards or merchandise for completing health profiles and for fitness activities. Medicare

beneficiaries have gym memberships through Silver Sneakers or similar fitness companies. Some plans are also offering a cash reimbursement for fitness activities such as yoga, Pilates or personal trainers, or for equipment like sneakers, treadmills or golf clubs and skis.

Most Medicare plans include dental benefits that range from cleanings and x-rays to money toward other dental procedures. There are no excuses, so make that appointment for a dental exam.

All insurance plans cover an annual physical and screenings such as blood work, mammograms, pap tests and PSA. However, be aware that there are limits on what a wellness visit includes. For example, if during the appointment the provider examines you



TRISH
PEARSON

for a specific issue, it can become a “sick” visit for which you could have a copay or more if the insurance plan has an upfront deductible.

Not sure you made the right choice for a Medicare Advantage plan, or have your medical needs changed since last year? Medicare recipients have an opportunity to make a change to another MAPD plan or a supplement plan with a standalone prescription drug plan through

March 31. Those under 65 who need individual insurance can enroll in a plan through Access Health until Jan. 15. If you missed the deadline or did not renew your coverage, there is still time. Start the process by calling Access Health or contacting a certified broker who can assist with choosing a plan

and enrolling.

Take the time to set up an online account with your insurance plan. It is the best and easiest way to find the answers to questions about coverages, claims, benefits and processes for reimbursement.

Create a file for the explanation of benefit reports that come in the mail each month. They contain valuable information about how much the insurance company paid for a medical appointment or procedure, an estimate of what the patient might owe as well as cost of medications to date. They are important documents if questions arise down the road.

Here's hoping that 2024 is a year of good health and happiness.

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

New Year, New Level

I do not and never will support New Year's resolutions, fad crash diets or the latest and greatest workout equipment. This is a \$97 billion a year industry that makes false claims of success and unfortunately sets people up for complete failure because it's not a realistic, balanced approach to wellness.

Don't get me wrong: it's excellent to set goals. I do and you should too. However, make them realistic, make them small baby steps toward the finish line and make them fun. If there was one goal I could pick for you, it would be to eat more plant-based foods.

If your goal is weight loss, eat more plant-based foods. If your goal is to add muscle, eat more plant-based foods and add beans or lentils to the dish. If you are looking to live a longer, healthier life, eat more plant-based foods.

I cannot tell you how much it warms my heart to finally see truth and positive things about the foods we eat coming to the surface of mainstream media. Back in the 60s and 70s, many young people decided they

felt the middle class lived a life dominated by materialism and repression, so they chose to live life differently. Many of them adopted a vegetarian lifestyle and they chose more holistic approaches toward wellness.

World War II and the first Piggly Wiggly supermarket changed how we ate and what we ate. The “enrichment” processing of our foods has changed how our bodies react to such foods. I could go on forever about the importance of understanding what you put into your body and how important it is to become an avid label reader. However, I'd rather tell you about the benefits of eating more plant-based meals.

There are these things called flavonoids. They are compounds present in fruits and vegetables. Quercetin is a widely occurring flavonoid found in different plants. Studies have shown that it plays a crucial role in the prevention of age-related disorders. That in



MICHELE
TENNEY

and of itself should be enough motivation for you to eat more plant-based foods.

But there is more. Some research has shown eating more plant-based meals reduces inflammation and lowers the odds of frailty. For those who suffer from allergies, eating more plant-based foods can reduce symptoms of itchy eyes, sneezing, nasal congestion and more.

In my 17-year career in the wellness industry, I have heard more times than I can count how people know they should eat more fruits and veggies but they just don't. I certainly realize as a mother of a sports-playing teenager that time is not on our side for sit-down dinners and homemade meals. That's why at this time of year I love “one pot wonders” for a meal on the go.

Did you know that there is no portion control on the amount of vegetables you eat? According to the Mayo Clinic, we should try the 1, 2, 3 approach. That means one serving

at breakfast, two at lunch and three at dinner. That may sound like a lot, but it's really not. It's also not that difficult to do. So many resources are at your fingertips for easy and delicious vegetarian dishes. Put your eggs over a bed of spinach, make a vegetable stew, eat your burger over a salad and get creative.

You are worth every effort you put into yourself and wellbeing. Let this be the year you take yourself to a new level of wellness. Whether that means reducing stress, getting more quality sleep, drinking more water – all are super important. Adding a few more vegetables to your meals would be a bonus.

Here's to living your best life, not just hobbling through but thriving in every way. I believe in you. You got this. Happy new year.

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.

The Rotary Club of Orange

Rotary Peace Fellowships

Many people are familiar with local Rotary clubs' community efforts to support youth, seniors and disadvantaged groups. Less well known is the support that Rotary International provides for a number of global causes dedicated to building international relationships. These include ending polio, fighting disease in developing areas, supporting education and public health initiatives, sustainably growing local economies and promoting peace.

The ongoing trauma and destruction in Ukraine, Israel/Gaza, Ethiopia, Sudan and elsewhere prompt me to focus this month on Rotary's specific efforts to promote peace. In recent decades, Rotary members have successfully negotiated humanitarian ceasefires in conflict-torn regions to allow polio vaccinators to reach at-risk children. Other members have served as advocates in post-conflict reconstruction. And many are active currently in supply chain activities delivering food and medical supplies in Ukraine, as well as supporting that nation's disabled civilians and soldiers.

Proactively, one of Rotary's cornerstone goals is to foster understanding and provide communities with advanced skills to resolve conflicts. In practice, this is carried out via training offered at Rotary Peace Centers and

sponsorship of Peace Fellowships. Since 2002, Rotary's Peace Centers have trained over 1,700 Peace Fellows who are now working in more than 140 countries as leaders in government, the military, law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, humanitarian assistance groups, international governance organizations and education.

Each year, Rotary funds up to 130 fully-funded fellowships to dedicated individuals from around the world to study at one of the Peace Centers. The centers operate in partnership with premier universities around the world. Five of the fellowship programs enroll up to 50 participants in master's degree programs, and two provide professional post-graduate training to up to 80 individuals.

The master's degree programs include one jointly delivered by Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as well as programs at University of Bradford in England, Uppsala University in Sweden, University of Queensland in Australia and Japan's International Christian University. All courses are held in English, and each site hosts an international cohort. Each university has spe-



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cific areas of emphasis, and their full-time degree programs range from 15 to 22 months. All provide extended applied field experiences and shared workshops that develop skills in peacebuilding and development. Candidates need to possess an undergraduate degree and at least three years of full-time relevant experience in peace in economic development work.

The professional development certificate program is intended for more experienced professionals actively working in regional settings with pressing needs. Current certificate programs are based at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, which focuses broadly on African projects; and at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey, which addresses projects in the Middle East and North Africa. Candidates need at least five years of relevant experience in the geographic regions. The one-year certificate programs are delivered in a hybrid format, with an initial online course followed by a 10-week field study that lays the groundwork for an independent nine-month social change initiative. The capstone experience is a one-week seminar that overlaps with the next

incoming cohort.

Rotary's best-known initiative has been its Global Polio Eradication Initiative. GPEI has immunized more than 3 billion children in 122 countries since it was launched in 1988, and has worked closely with the World Health Organization to progressively eliminate this disease. That global reach informs Rotary's goals for peacebuilding initiatives. Conflict resolution is a more complex challenge than limiting the spread of a virus, but Rotary's Peace Fellows and trainees from other international public service organizations are actively working to address root causes, reconstruction and restorative justice.

The need now is perhaps as great and widespread as it has been since World War II. If you or someone you know would be interested in pursuing a Rotary Peace Fellowship opportunity and career in conflict resolution, contact me or an officer at any local Rotary Club to learn where to obtain more information. Application steps for 2025 cohorts begin this spring.

Dan May can be contacted at dmay@newhaven.edu.

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

Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

A Slew Of Opportunities In 2024

As we stride into the promising avenues of 2024, it's with tremendous excitement and dedication that I, on behalf of the entire Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce team, extend my warmest greetings and anticipation for what lies ahead.

Our commitment to fostering growth, embracing opportunities and staunchly supporting our local businesses remains unwavering. Over this past year, we provided more than 200 networking, event and educational opportunities for our members – a membership that is approaching 600 businesses of all sizes and industries across the Milford and West Haven regions. We produced 18 free concerts for the communities we serve and held over 50 ribbon cuttings for our new member businesses. As we reflect on the achievements of the past and the challenges that have shaped us, it's clear

that the coming year is teeming with possibilities for advancement and success.

Our foremost priority lies in expanding our support for local businesses. These enterprises drive our economy and enrich the fabric of all the communities we serve. This year, our focus remains steadfast on empowering them with the tools, resources and educational platforms they need to thrive.

In line with this commitment, I'm thrilled to announce the relaunch of our "Lunch and Learn" series. This program, a cornerstone of enhanced small business education, is designed to equip our entrepreneurs and business owners with practical insights, strategies and expertise vital for navigating the dy-



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amic landscape of commerce. We believe that by providing a platform for continuous learning and skill enhancement, we fortify our local businesses for sustainable growth and resilience. If you're interested in learning more about this opportunity for 2024, please reach out to Simon McDonald at smdonald@milfordct.com.

Moreover, 2024 heralds a slew of new opportunities. We aim to expand our programming, curate innovative networking events and forge strategic partnerships that amplify the visibility and viability of our local enterprises. Our objective is to create an ecosystem where businesses not only survive but thrive, where collaboration and innovation intersect to chart a prosperous

future for all.

As your chamber, we are steadfastly dedicated to being your advocate, your ally and your partner in progress. Your success is our success, and together we forge ahead into this year brimming with hope, enthusiasm and unwavering support.

I encourage you all to engage actively with the chamber, seize the opportunities presented and let us work hand in hand to shape thriving, vibrant business communities in both Milford and West Haven.

Here's to a year of growth, opportunities and unyielding support for our local businesses.

Michael Moses is the president of the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. Contact him at 203-878-0681 or mmoses@milfordct.com.

Orange Chamber of Commerce

Orange Chamber Holding After Hours Events

As we begin 2024 and are now past the holiday season, the Orange Chamber of Commerce implores you to continue to think and shop locally. Our Orange-based businesses will depend on your support more in 2024 than ever before. Please shop within town lines to help keep local families thriving.

The Orange Chamber of Commerce is looking to expand our Board of Directors. Our board meets quarterly after hours. If you are a chamber member and are interested in serving on the board, please email director@orangectchamber.com to be forwarded to the nominating committee.

We're pleased to announce two Business After Hours in January. On Jan. 16, the Orange Chamber of Commerce along with Elevate Style Lounge will be welcoming the community for barber services along with empanadas and refreshments at 6 p.m. On Jan. 18 at 6 p.m., the Orange Chamber of Commerce along with

Maplewood at Orange will be hosting a Business After Hours with food and refreshments. Details and registrations will be found on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

The chamber, in conjunction with the Orange Senior Center, is launching a new recurring event titled "Senior Connect" at High Plains Community Center. This event will allow one chamber member per month to exclusively spend an hour with Orange's seniors. This event will be held on the fourth Wednesday of every month. Our first event will feature Soundview Landscape Supply's Brooke Parlato, who will share her gardening and outdoor living tips. To sign up or register to present at this event, email director@orangectchamber.com.

Another fantastic member benefit is the Chamber Member Highlight, authored by Sen-



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OHLMANN

tinel Asset Management's Matt Salem. This month's highlight features Merchant ICS, a local credit card processing partner. Salem creates a beautiful narrative to describe chamber members' businesses, which they may keep and use on their own digital platforms to help tell their story.

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

Chamber memberships for 2024 are available for you to join or renew now. You may join online with a credit card at orangectchamber.com, or if you would like an invoice and a W9 email director@orangectchamber.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@orangectchamber.com. I am looking forward to meeting with you and discussing your business needs and how the chamber may help.

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

Foodie Foursome

Camacho Garage Brings High-Quality Latin Fare

Cindy and I ended our 2023 culinary exploration with friends Will and Deanna at an establishment that opened in 2020: Camacho Garage.

Chef Arturo Franco-Camacho has been a major player in the culinary scene in the New Haven area for a while in such restaurants as Geronimo Tequila Bar and Southwest Grill and Shell and Bones Oyster Bar and Grill. Through those restaurants and the chamber of commerce I have known Franco-Camacho to be creative in coming up with both visual and tasty spins on classics as well as original creations.

In a recent conversation with him we shared a similar ability to read a recipe, make changes in our heads and know exactly what it would taste like. I had mentioned for me it was like reading music and knowing what it would sound like. He smiled, nodded in agreement and said, "Like Beethoven creating masterpieces – and he was deaf."

The transformation and use of space at Camacho Garage – which once was actually a garage – is inviting and designed specifically for a wonderful restaurant experience. The props and use of industrial architecture works into the flow of each area in the restaurant. The best example of that is the center bar that divides the space into two dining areas.

We sat in the middle area against what used to be the huge glass garage doors from the old garage. These can open onto the spacious enclosed patio area, providing yet a third different feel, almost like a street-style restaurant you may have witnessed in many Latin American countries.

The food choices were expansive, making decisions difficult. Our server was extremely helpful and knowledgeable. We started out

with a fan favorite: the shrimp ceviche called aguachile. This beautiful dish of lime, cucumber, cilantro, mint, serrano chili, red onion and radish was marinated perfectly to meld the flavors. The shrimp were fresh, butterflied and substantial. This splendiferous creation was served with large tortillas.

Next up was the herb guacamole, which was presented in a decorative ceramic vessel filled with creamy avocado adorned by red onion, cilantro, a mindful touch of jalapeno, fresh lime and oversized tostadas inserted on one side of the dish. It was fresh, and a perfect beginning, with the ceviche, to start our evening.

It would not be a Mexican meal without a few signature libations. Ours were the white sangria, Cruzan "shell and bones" single barrel rum, mango rum, wine and citrus fruit. We also had the Camacho single barrel paloma, El Tesoro Camacho single barrel reposado, grapefruit liqueur, house-made grapefruit soda and lime, which was as tasty and fresh as it sounds.

Next up was an impressive choice and Foodie Foursome favorite. The queso flameado arrives in a deep stone molcajete, a three-legged large cooking vessel. It did not just arrive at the table; it made an entrance. It was a volcanic eruption of cheese, bubbling hot, and running down the sides of the molcajete. The cheese engulfed the unctuous collection of mushrooms, poblano peppers and succulent steak served with flour tortillas (you can, instead of steak, choose chorizo, shrimp or chicken).

We finished our apps with the chorizo cro-



STEVE
COOPER

quettes, small delicately breaded and fried balls of plantain, chorizo, shrimp, Oaxacan cheese and chipotle remoulade salsa – a treat in a bite or two.

In between apps and entrees we had the mercado salad. This beautiful dish was so well designed and tasty that it may be my favorite salad from this past year. The quinoa, crumbled queso fresco cheese and baby arugula, was adorned by seasonal fruit, toasted almonds and drizzled with a subtle smoked chili vinaigrette. We chose not to include a protein, but it is available.

Our starting point for our entrees was the tacos de birria. Made with beef, Chihuahua cheese, salsa verde, onion, cilantro and served with a beef "dipping" consommé, this unique and scrumptious taco configuration was encased in double soft tortillas and toasted/grilled to perfection. Continuing with Camacho's unique takes on established Mexican fare was the lobster and chorizo enchilada. This large enchilada was served in a cast-iron plate which looked great and served to keep it hot. The main ingredients were accompanied by pistachio green mole, Oaxaca cheese, pico de gallo and cream. Our next choice was the lamb barbacoa flautas. This expertly, French-style cut lamb was braised to a succulent perfection. Served with flour tortillas, queso, mezcal salsa borracha, pork chicharrón and cream, this pretty dish tasted as good as it looked. Our last dish was the very creative chili relleno made with pork, beef, apples, pears, raisins, cotija cheese, walnuts and a nogada white sauce adorned with a creative scattering of pomegranates.

We finished the evening with several wonderful desserts, each recommended by our server. The churros were infused with a caramel filling and served with vanilla ice cream with abuelita, a Mexican chocolate. Next we had the ultimate palate-cleansing and confectionary exquisite, a fruity trio of sorbets. What we had next was a house special called dulce lava. As soon as you cut into this decadent mini cake, it explodes with a warm chocolate sauce. The cake is topped with fresh whipped cream, a sprig of mint with sliced ripe strawberries and sprinkled with a confectionary sugar and cinnamon. If that wasn't enough, it was served with a creamy gelato and house-made delicate cookie.

Next, we had a wonderful Mexican tiramisu which was constructed in layers using espresso, galleta, mascarpone, espresso whipped cream and fresh berries. We finished our Latin trip with their take on a classic, the tres leches, which looked like a giant upside-down cupcake but was actually a delicate sponge cake made with condensed milk, evaporated milk and whole milk. The controlled sweetness and moist texture of the cake was awesome. It was topped with banana ice cream, fresh whipped cream and served with sliced bananas and berries.

This award winning, destination style, restaurant is right in your backyard. Camacho Garage is located at 36 Fountain St. in Westville, just minutes off Rte.15. Call 203-691-1969 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.

Travel Matters

Travel Trends For 2024

The mantra for the new year is “travel more in 2024,” and if 2023 is any indication, that may very well come true. With the pandemic causing two, three or in some cases four-year delays in booking that special trip, more people are traveling and more people are traveling on longer vacations.

The other trend we are seeing is more people traveling with other people – be it friends or family. The multigenerational cruise is back, and more couples are traveling with other couples – whether it’s on land, sea or rivers.

Although new cruise ship expansion has slowed down a bit since the 2022/2023 post-pandemic explosion, there are still at least 11 new ships on the horizon for 2024. Here are some of the highlights.

Arguably, one of the most highly anticipated new cruise ships this year will be the Icon of the Sea, first in an all-new class of

ship for Royal Caribbean. It will feature the largest waterpark at sea and a new neighborhood dedicated to kids younger than 6 years old. Guest capacity is 5,610, with its inaugural sailing on Jan. 28 to Eastern Caribbean.

A second new ship, Utopia of the Seas, will be the sixth ship in the Oasis class, but first in its class to be powered by environmentally friendly liquified natural gas. Utopia of the Seas launches July 22 from Port Canaveral for three and four-day Bahamas cruises.

Princess Cruises also offers a first in an all-new class of ships. Sun Princess launches Feb. 8 with a Mediterranean sailing. Princess will be debuting The Dome, a geodesic dome that offers an indoor pool by day and entertainment stage by night. It will also be



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

the first Princess ship to offer a ship within a ship – a suites-only complex. Guest capacity is 4,300.

Cunard is introducing its first new ship in 12 years – the Queen Anne – which will have a completely redesigned interior blending traditional Cunard with a more modern design element. It will feature a two-deck theater and 15 restaurants. Debuting May 3 in Europe, it has a guest capacity of 2,996.

American Cruise Lines, one of three cruise lines to operate on US rivers, will be featuring American Liberty and Legend, new catamaran-style cruise vessels designed for coastal sailing. These are all-balcony ships with outdoor space for scenic cruising and a water sports platform at the back with kayaks. Guest capacity is only 100. Liberty

debut June 17 for an eight-day Chesapeake Bay itinerary from Baltimore.

Disney Treasure, debuting for the holiday season on Dec. 21, is the second in the line’s new Triton class. Carrying up to 4,000 guests, Treasure will feature some of the popular features on Disney Wish, such as Worlds of Marvel and 1923. New to Disney Treasure will be a dining venue and entertainment inspired by the Disney film “Coco.”

With something for everyone, the cruise industry continues to grow by leaps and bounds providing some of the best value vacations you can find.

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

Recycling Tip: Recycling Resolutions

By Susan Wineland

Considering some New Year’s resolutions? Think about incorporating more and better ways to recycle.

We can all start by learning our local recycling rules and making sure that we all comply. One of the worst things we can do is wishcycling. That’s when we optimistically put non-recyclable objects into recycling bins. When we do this, we contaminate all of the otherwise recyclable material.

Contamination is one of the biggest problems with the recycling process. When recyclable material is contaminated, it renders the whole load useless, which means it becomes trash and goes into landfills. Not only does the contamination negate other people’s efforts to recycle correctly, the fee for trash

hauling is costly for towns and taxpayers. Make everyone’s recycling efforts pay off by not contaminating any recycling home or store blue bins, or the transfer station recycling trailer.

What are some common contaminants in recycling? Plastic bags are the number one contaminant. Plastic bags act as tangles, getting caught in machinery equipment and shutting them down. That would include sandwich-type bags of any size, bubble wrap and plastic wrap, which all are prime candidates for commercial drop-off areas. You can drop off plastic bags at store bins specially dedicated to that purpose, or at the Orange Transfer Station plastic bag shed.

So don’t include any plastic bags in any recycling container and don’t bag your recyclables.

Small items can also cause machines to go awry. Don’t recycle anything smaller than a credit card. This includes straws, bottle caps, coffee pods, plastic cutlery, paperclips and many other tiny things that creep into our daily lives. These objects are too small to be sorted and can jam the recycling equipment. Plastic caps go back on the bottle, but not metal bottle caps which can be taken to companies that take scrap. Otherwise they should be thrown away in the trash. Plastic straws are also too small and too often end up in the environment posing a hazard to fish and other animals.

Food waste can also send an entire load of recyclables to the landfill. Food also leads to odors and attracts rodents. Clean and dry your recycling materials. You can compost at home with one of many types of composting

systems. Or take your food compost to the Orange Transfer Station green compost bins. Do keep them out of landfills, though. Not only do food wastes weigh a considerable amount, they produce methane gas, a potent pollutant which contributes to the forming of ozone, decreases air quality and leads to various health issues in animals and humans.

Enlist everyone in your family and make the habit a convenient process. Know the rules of recycling and be conscious of what you throw into the recycling bin. If we all endeavored to recycle wisely, more materials could and would be recycled and not end up as waste in a landfill. Now that would be something to celebrate.

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

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Mental Health

The Role Of Optimism On Our Health

There are very few people I've encountered who haven't been challenged by the many curveballs life throws our way. We have all heard the old adage, "life is 10 percent of what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it." Some may be skeptical of this statement, and others argue that it really is all about your attitude and how you view life's curveballs. So what role does optimism play in managing personal challenges and our health?

Optimism is a mental attitude that involves having confidence and hopefulness about successful outcomes and the future. Optimistic people tend to anticipate good results, even in the most difficult of situations. They share a number of key characteristics that include believing they will succeed in the face of challenges, viewing the future as bright and expecting that things will work out for the best. Optimists view setbacks as learning experiences

and opportunities for growth.

There are a number of studies that have reported a positive effect of optimism on anxiety and depression. Optimism has been seen as a way to protect mental health by offering cognitive resources that aid in coping and reducing the negative effects of stressful life events. And because optimism helps to reduce these negative effects, it also has a positive impact on our health by reducing the likelihood of increased inflammation and chronic illness that are directly linked to our emotional health.

Research has explored potential links between optimism and other positive health outcomes. A 2019 review and meta-analysis published in JAMA Network Open outlined results of studies conducted to analyze the association



JENNIFER FIORILLO

of optimism with cardiovascular events and all-cause mortality. Out of the 15 studies reviewed that included almost 230,000 participants (10 studies reported on data of cardiovascular events and nine reported data on all-cause mortality), optimism was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular events and mortality of all causes.

Optimistic people are more likely to practice healthy behaviors including eating right, staying active and not smoking. The connection between the mind and body can be powerful in improving our own physical and mental health.

Can a pessimistic person by nature work on becoming more optimistic? The answer is yes. Optimism can be cultivated by working on our

internal thoughts and allowing ourselves to experience gratitude or appreciation of what is important in life. Something as simple as spending a few minutes journaling the things we are grateful for can help us to see the world a little differently. Practicing mindfulness and being present in the here and now can help to ground us and help us worry less about the future and things beyond our control. It's also helpful to challenge negative or limiting thinking and work to replace that with positive thoughts. Developing a better understanding of the situations that generate negative thoughts and questioning their validity with objectivity can help aid in this process. A little healthy mental exercise can go a long way.

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

Your Health

Young-Onset Dementia And Associated Risk Factors

A recently published medical article captured my attention. In this study, researchers identified four new risk factors for young-onset dementia within the prospective UK Biobank study.

The study, published in JAMA Neurology, included participants below 65 years without a dementia diagnosis at the baseline assessment, conducted from 2006 through 2010. Those aged 65 and older or with dementia at baseline were excluded. Lead author Stevie Hendriks of Maastricht University and colleagues analyzed data from 356,052 participants, following them until 2021 or until reaching age 65.

During the eight-year follow-up, 485 new cases of YOD were identified, with an incidence of 16.8 per 100,000 person-years. The

incidence increased in five-year age bands from 40 to 64, with a higher rate in men than women.

The cohort study revealed multiple modifiable and nonmodifiable risk factors for YOD. Higher education and lower physical frailty were associated with lower YOD risk, while increased risk was linked to factors such as low socioeconomic status, alcohol use disorder, social isolation, vitamin D deficiency, high C-reactive protein levels, hearing impairment, orthostatic hypotension, stroke, diabetes, heart disease and depression.

Notably, this study identified four novel risk factors for YOD: orthostatic hypotension,



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

vitamin D deficiency, high C-reactive protein levels and social isolation.

The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating these modifiable risk factors into future dementia prevention initiatives, offering new therapeutic possibilities for YOD.

According to Hendriks, "Young-onset dementia has a very serious impact because the affected individuals typically still have a job, children and a busy life."

With many individuals facing young-onset dementia in their 40s and 50s, it is crucial to adopt healthy lifestyle choices early on. Recent

estimates indicate that approximately 200,000 people in the US are affected by young-onset dementia.

To reduce the future risk of dementia, individuals in their 40s should consider maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol intake, managing chronic diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, and staying mentally and socially engaged.

As the year begins, it is an opportune time to consult your health care providers, discuss personal risk factors and develop strategies to prevent dementia.

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

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Book Reviews

The Guncle By Steven Rowley

Patrick and Sara were college friends. When Sara married Patrick's brother, Greg, she and Patrick became even closer. Patrick became the guncle (gay uncle) to Greg and Sara's two children, Maisie and Grant.

After a lengthy illness, Sara passes away. Greg confesses he has a substance abuse problem and will be entering a 90-day rehab program. He begs Patrick into caring for his children for the summer. Against his better judgement, Patrick agrees.

Patrick is initially appalled by the idea of caring for his niece and nephew, citing a gazillion reasons why this isn't a good idea. His sister, Clara, believes she would be the more appropriate caretaker for the kids, and they engage in a heated conversation reminiscent of their battles as they were growing

up. That makes Patrick dig his heels in, coming out the victor in this sibling confrontation.

To say Patrick is totally unprepared for this new role would be an understatement. Patrick has no idea of how to address the kids grieving their mom while he is not only sharing in that grief but dealing with the loss of his partner. For their part, the kids are confused by their loss as well as the modern conveniences in Patrick's ultra-modern home.

As the summer progresses, Patrick and the kids develop a routine: swimming in the morning, a walk and ice cream in the evening. Maisie and Grant discover a pink



CARMELA DEVITO

Christmas tree in Patrick's garage. The group decides to throw a spontaneous Christmas party. The festivities are in full swing until Clara returns once again, demanding to take the children back home.

Patrick begins to suspect there's an underlying reason for Clara's behavior. Clara reveals some previously unknown information to Patrick and an uneasy truce develops between them.

A level of comfortability settles over this makeshift family. Patrick decides it's time for all of them to begin healing. To that end, he talks about his own loss and the group bonds even closer.

When Greg arrives to take his children home, Patrick feels a great sense of loss and loneliness. Having won a Golden Globe for a TV role and needing to take time off, Patrick implores his agent to find him a role which would ensure he can care for his family financially, as well as be closer to them geographically. He turns down one role but readily accepts another.

I love this book. It's warm, funny and honest in its depiction of grief and what comprises a modern American family.

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

Wine Talk

Great California Cabernets From Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon was first planted in California in the 1850s. It was planted in Santa Clara Valley and later made its way to Sonoma. Cabernet was difficult to grow; however, it was very aromatic. Because of its big nose it was well received.

In the 1880s the grape was hit with a disease called phylloxera that rotted the root stock. It made a comeback, then was struck in the 1920s by Prohibition, which was destructive to the wine industry. It took until the early 1960s to make a comeback once again. Cabernet became the third most planted grape in Napa.

The quality of Cabernet was improving with all types of experimentation. The Judgment of Paris in 1976 saw Cabernet and Chardonnay from Napa score higher than all their French

competition. This aided in Cabernet's popularity. By the late 1990s, it had become the most planted variety in Napa Valley. It remains so today.

For a wine to be called Cabernet, at least 75 percent of the grapes used to make it must be Cabernet. Merlot and Cabernet Franc frequently make up the remainder of the wine. To be called Napa Valley Cabernet, all the fruit used in making the wine must come from that region.

Cabs are grown all over the world. In Woodbridge, the Savino Vineyards on Ford Road make some pretty good Cabernet.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is known



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

for its richness and its varied, complex flavors. It is also known for being high priced. Some of the most prestigious Napa Cabs cost hundreds of dollars per bottle, putting them out of the price range of most wine enthusiasts.

But there are plenty of high-quality, more affordable Napa Cabernets. Some of them include Beaulieu Vineyards Napa Cab, which is \$39, and Raymond Napa Cab at \$50 for a great 2020 vintage. Charles Krug 2019 Napa Cab is \$41 and is a treat.

My favorite is a bit more expensive at \$85 per bottle. It is Caymus, and it is produced by wine icon Chuck Wagner. Despite its price it

is a popular wine.

If you are treating yourself to a big steak or a special veal dish, match it with one these great Napa Valley Cabernets. That meal will truly be something special.

Ray Spaziani is the former chapter director for 25 years of the New Haven Chapter of the American Wine Society. He is a certified wine educator who worked for the American Wine Society, Amete de Vino and Winemaker Magazine judging wines and conducting wine judging. He is an award-winning home wine maker and has written wine articles for newspapers and magazines for the past 20 years. Spaziani teaches wine classes for the Milford Board of Education at Citrus Restaurant in Milford. Email Ray with wine questions and anything wine at realestatepro1000@gmail.com.

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Travel Center (Continued From 1)

traffic authority, as there are already traffic lights on either side of the property at the intersections of West Campus Drive on one side and Salem Lane on the other.

The new plan dropped the new traffic light. As Solli Professional Operations Traffic Engineer Luke Mauro explained to the commission, any queuing of cars would happen on the site and would not affect Marsh Hill Road.

“During the busier times, people are going have to wait for a gap,” Mauro said. “Considering we do have signals at 250 feet on either side, when that light turns red on the main line, it does provide that opportunity for people to get into the flow of traffic.”

The commissioners agreed that removing the traffic signal was an improvement.

“Now to the extent that there would be or can be a problem (with traffic backing up), it’s going to be contained on site and borne by the people using the facility,” said commissioner Kevin Cornell. “That’s a significant difference to me personally.”

Patrons to the EV showroom will likely not be able to purchase cars there any time soon. State law forbids car manufacturers to sell vehicles directly, requiring them to go instead through licensed dealerships. This arrangement has come under scrutiny in recent years as companies like Tesla have been rebuffed in their attempts to conduct direct sales in Connecticut.

Noble Gas owner Michael Frisbie has nevertheless been pushing EV showrooms like this around Connecticut, pairing them with his company’s travel centers in an effort to help grow EV infrastructure and awareness.

“I believe EV cars are coming,” he told the Hartford Business Journal in May. “This is an investment in the future of transportation.”

Frisbie explained to the commission that there will be a limited number of vehicles being brought to and from the showroom.

“It’s not a real dealership,” he said, “so you’re not going to have big trucks coming in with multiple vehicles at the same time. It’s going to be on a per-purchase basis that they bring and deliver vehicles.”

Beth-El Center Awarded \$10,000

The Connecticut Housing Advisory Committee in early December announced that Milford’s Beth-El Center was awarded \$10,000 to support their mission to serve in-need residents of the greater New Haven area.

The announcement was part of a group of funding allocations for several nonprofits that provide shelter and housing resources for refugees, the homeless, victims of domestic violence, and more.

Applications for the funding were submitted to the Housing Advisory Panel who collaborates with the Housing Finance Authority to finalize a grand list of qualified nonprofits. Funding for the program is then

issued through the Interest on Real Estate Brokers Trust Account program, which has been known to support middle- and working-class homebuyers throughout Connecticut.

“I am excited to see this funding support Milford’s own Beth-El Center,” said state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, who represents parts of Milford. “Beth-El sets a tremendous example not only as a nonprofit, but as a community resource for so many of our residents and families.”

The Beth-El Center offers services including a shelter program, family program, homelessness outreach, supportive housing, no-freeze shelter, and a soup kitchen.

Amity BOE Chooses Leadership

Following the 2023 municipal elections, the Amity Board of Education swore in new members and chose its leadership at its annual meeting on Dec. 11. Sworn in as new members were Cathy Bradley of Orange (who is also a Milford-Orange Times columnist), Dana Lombardi of Orange, Michael McDonough of Orange

and Donna Schlank of Bethany.

Paul Davis of Orange was reelected as board chair, Sean Hartshorn of Orange will serve as vice chair, McDonough was elected treasurer, Donna Schuster of Woodbridge was chosen as deputy treasurer, and Bradley was selected to be secretary.

Orange Kindergarten Registration Open

If your child is turning five on or before Sept. 1, it is time to register them for kindergarten for the 2024-2025 school year.

Register by Feb. 28 on the top of the Orange Public School homepage at oess.org.

Parents of children who will be five years old between, Sept. 2 and Jan. 1, 2025, and are interested in a waiver can go to the same location on the Orange Public Schools webpage.

Orange Chiropractor Celebrates 30 Years



Arnel Family Chiropractic in Orange is celebrating 30 years in business. The practice, led by Dr. Jeffrey Arnel, was founded at its location at 233 Boston Post Rd. on Feb. 1, 1994.

“I can’t imagine ever having practiced anywhere else. This town and surrounding areas are beautiful,” Arnel said.

“The triple combination of all of the people I have served in 30 years, the relationships that I’ve developed from that, and the results we’ve achieved for everyone has made my journey a self-proclaimed absolute joy,” he added. “My purpose is to educate my patients; to teach them how the body works; to resolve pain and restore them to alignment for longevity and a better quality of life.”

To honor the anniversary, the chiropractic office is offering new patient consultations, exams and all necessary x-rays at \$89 (valued at \$300) through Feb. 28. For more information, call 203-799-1234.

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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.

James Lewis Benton Jr., born July 5, 1924 NY, New York passed on December 21, 2023 in Milford. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Theresa M. Cuming, referred to lovingly as "Sugar", passed away peacefully on January 1, 2024 at Maplewood Assisted Living in Orange, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dorothy (Dottie) Doyle was born in Bridgeport, CT in 1924 to Marian Gemza and Joseph Kitlas. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



James "Jim" Armstrong, 92, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of the late Elizabeth Turton Armstrong, passed away on January 2, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



It is with heavy hearts and profound sadness that we announce the passing of **Kathryn "Kathy" (McArdle) Boskello**, who departed this world on Dec. 10, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Barbara Cupole, 88, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Nicholas Cupole, passed away on December 11th, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Russell W. Edwards of Milford, passed away at home surrounded in the love of his family on Tuesday December 12, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



It is with great sadness that Kristen and Daniel Arsenault announce the birth and passing of their son, a beautiful baby boy, **Gary Albert "OB" Arsenault**, on December 15th, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Halina (Helen) Zamielska Bugaj passed away on Thursday, December 28, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Ralph Bernard Curd, 71, of Guilford CT, died at home from respiratory complications on December 13, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Jean Marie Finney, 99, of Milford, beloved wife of the late W.W. Finney, passed away January 1, 2024, surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rosalie "Terry" Attardo, 85, of Milford, passed away on December 24, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Betty Burman was born on April 9, 1931 and passed away on December 28, 2023 at age 92. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Richard Patrick DelVecchio passed away peacefully on December 12, 2023 at Yale New Haven Hospital with his wife Linda by his side. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Elizabeth "Betty" Franze passed away peacefully at home on December 24, 2023 surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Gregory F. Doyle

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Obituaries

Thomas S. Griggs Sr., 87, of Orange, passed away peacefully on December 9, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Anderson B. Kent, age 41, of Milford, passed away unexpectedly on January 3, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Annette T. Lessard, 92, of Milford (previously of Springdale/Stamford), beloved wife of the late Robert J. Lessard, passed away on December 18, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



James "Monty" Montrose, 52, of Milford, passed away on December 16, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Carol Dunn Holmes of Milford, passed away peacefully at home on December 22, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Donald George Kosa, 81, of Milford, beloved husband of Nancy (Bokina) Kosa, passed away peacefully at home on December 14, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Barbara R. Luedee passed away on January 3, 2024. Beloved wife of the late Raphael Luedee. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Frank Pataky was born on February 3, 1934 and passed away on January 4, 2024 at age 89. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



John P. Huber of Cheshire, Connecticut, passed away peacefully on December 19, 2023, surrounded by his loving family.



Sara "Sally" (Kruger) Kramer, 99, formerly of Orange, devoted wife of the late Sherman Kramer, died at her home on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



Frank R. Melanson, Sr., age 90, of Milford, passed away on December 31, 2023 at his home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Edward Thomas Reilly, 71, of Milford, CT, passed away on December 26, 2023. (Toohey Funeral Home)



Bessie Ann Iassogna, age 79 of Milford, beloved wife of the late Michael Iassogna entered peaceful rest on December 25, 2023. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Paul Leparik II, also known as Paulie, 25, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away on December 15, 2023. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Kathleen M. Mendola, 77, left this world on December 24, 2023, surrounded by the love of her family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Helen Irene Solomon Rusanowsky passed away on December 23, 2023 in Milford, CT. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Nancy K. Savisky, age 88, of Milford, beloved wife of the late William M. Savisky Sr., passed away peacefully in her home on January 3, 2024. (Adzima Funeral Home)



Deborah Ann Trumpower passed away peacefully on December 23, 2023 at Milford Hospital in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Marietta Schembasri, 98 (that's not a typo), a seven-decade resident of Milford, died on December 24, 2023 at Milford Hospital after a brief illness. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Jean Marie (Ponton) Virshup, a longtime resident of Orange and dedicated member of the community died at home on Dec. 27. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



Vincent P. Schmidt of Orange, CT peacefully entered eternal rest on December 15, 2023, at Milford Hospital, the place of his birth on Christmas Day in 1944. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Donald A. Vitale, a lifelong resident of Orange, entered into eternal rest on December 28, 2023. (West Haven Funeral Home)



George J. Smith age 78, of Orange, CT, formerly of Stratford, passed away peacefully on December 5, 2023 at St. Vincent's Medical Center. (Adzima Funeral Home)



It is with deep sorrow and much love that we mourn the passing of **Thomas ("Tom") Ward**, 70, of Milford, beloved husband of Pamela (Slavin) Ward (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Notice of Democratic Caucus

Pursant to the By-Laws of the Orange Democratic Town Committee, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 7:00 pm to endorse proposed members of the Orange Democratic Town Committee for a two-year term. The caucus will be held in person at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT. All registered democrats in the Town of Orange are welcome to participate.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut on the 2nd day of January 2024.
Orange Democratic Town Committee, Joe Marulli, Chair.

Tax Collector's Legal Notice Town of Orange

Per CGS 12-145, the second installment of the town tax on the 2022 Grand List of 1 October 2022 and the Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are due and payable on 1 January 2024. Payments received after 1 February 2024 are considered delinquent and are subject to the rate of 18% per annum, 1.5% per month, \$2.00 minimum CGS 12-146, dating back to the original due date. Supplemental Motor Vehicle bills are payable in one installment. ALL TAXES ARE DUE 1 JANUARY 2024. We DO NOT rebill for second installments. Your tax bill has a January tax bill attached. FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF ALL INTEREST CHARGES AND COLLECTION COSTS, per CGS 12-130, 12-148. Payments may be processed in person at the Town Tax Window in Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Rd, Orange, CT, Monday-Friday except holidays from 8:30 a.m. -12 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring your entire three-part tax bill if you wish a receipt. A payment coupon or duplicate bill must accompany each payment. There is a \$2.00 fee charged for each duplicate bill requested. Payments may also be made by US Mail. Only USPS stamped dates are considered valid for timely posting otherwise the dates will be as we receive them! If a receipt is desired a self-addressed stamped envelope must be included with your payment. We do not accept CASH payments through the mail, only in person at the tax window! Credit and Debit Card payments are accepted on-line, by interactive voice response(phone) 1-203-902-0387 or at the window (convenience fees apply). NOTE NEW VENDOR, Sturgis, a Catalis™ Company! See the Town of Orange website for details.

Town of Orange - C T - Tax (orange-ctmybill.com) <https://orange-ctmybill.com/#/>
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Thomas P. Hurley, Tax Collector

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