

# Milford-Orange Times

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February 8, 2024

## Milford Chamber Hosts Annual Awards



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual awards dinner on Jan. 25 at Riverview Bistro in Stratford. Arnold Peck, pictured left, owner of Property World in Milford, was given the Kapusta Award for Lifetime Achievement for his decades as a leader in the community in the realms of business, philanthropy and civic engagement. Additional photos on page 12. Photo by Greg Geiger.

## Bridal Expo Comes To Orange



Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange was the site of the second annual Bridal Expo on Jan. 28, hosted in conjunction with the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce and Milford Med Spa. Additional photos on pages 10-11. Photo by Greg Geiger.

## Milford BOE Passes Budget With 4.7 Percent Increase

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Board of Education passed a \$111.3 million budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year – a 4.7 percent increase over the previous year's amount.

Contractual salaries and benefits make up the largest portion – \$3.1 million – of the increase. These items make up more than three quarters of the overall budget.

The board voted 8-2 to approve the

budget, with Republicans Scott Firmender and Christina Prete the two “no” votes.

“I think there was a lot of thoughtful time and effort put into this budget,” board member Una Petroske said in supporting the budget generally and additional funding for a career pathways program in particular. “We had a lot of digging across

*Continued on page 16*

## Residents Weigh In On Fred Wolfe Park Road Designs

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Dozens of Orange residents came together in the lower level meeting room at town hall on Jan. 24 to see – and weigh in on – a plan for redesigning the traffic flow within Fred Wolfe Park.

The presentation, hosted by Meriden-based civil engineering firm BL Companies, offered four designs for the layout of the roadways and parking in the portion of the park immediately surrounding the recently-completed playscape. This area is also adjacent to parking for the soccer and lacrosse fields.

Dominick Celtruda, the senior project manager from BL, explained that there

were simple things – like painting lines to demarcate parking spots – that could improve the traffic and parking situation in the park.

“When we first met with the committee out there, I purposefully parked at a different angle in the parking lot, and everyone who showed up fell in line with what I did,” Celtruda said. “It’s not a good, organized space within that.”

Some concepts would make only minor changes to the current design. Others went further, rerouting roads to the outside perimeter of the playscape and breaking up

*Continued on page 15*

## Sushi Restaurant Opens In Orange



The Orange Chamber of Commerce celebrated the opening of Sayori sushi restaurant in town with a Jan. 26 ribbon-cutting. The restaurant, located at 464 Boston Post Rd, is open for lunch and dinner. It specializes in sushi, also offering Asian soups, salads and appetizers. Included in the photo are state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, First Selectman Jim Zeoli, Orange Chamber of Commerce President Liam Olhmann, chamber member Rob Robino and members of the Sayori staff. Restaurant review on page 16. Photo by Robert Creigh.

## Orange Buying Land To Expand School Parking

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Mary L. Tracy School may soon have some additional parking.

The Orange Board of Selectmen voted at their Jan. 10 meeting to allow First Selectman Jim Zeoli to enter a contract with the owner of a property at 643 Orange Center Rd. with the aim of buying the land and turning it into more parking for the school.

The lot sits directly across the street from Mary L. Tracy on the corner of Orange Center Road and Schoolhouse Lane.

It is also adjacent to the school's current parking lot, which contains about 50 spaces. There is a house and a shed standing on the property.

*Continued on page 2*

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# OEDC Donates To Fire Department



The Orange Economic Development Corporation presented the Orange Volunteer Fire Department with a donation of \$3,750 at the OEDC's Dec. 14 executive committee meeting. The funds are proceeds from the OEDC's annual golf tournament held in September. The OVFD plans to purchase apparatus and equipment instrumental in providing fire and life-saving services to the town. The OEDC began partnering with the OVFD on the golf tournament in 2021 and plans to continue the partnership. From left: Tom Cavaliere, OEDC secretary; Fire Chief Vaughan Dumas; Mike Latella, OEDC vice president; Roy Cuzzocreo, OEDC board member; Brian Stone, OEDC board member and Silveras Sboui, OEDC treasurer. Photo courtesy of the OEDC.

## Adopt A Pet: Ashley



Ashley is a large, mixed breed dog who has been given all her vaccinations/shots and has been spayed. She 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.

# School Parking (Continued From 1)

The town has offered the owner \$375,000 for the property, which the selectmen recommended the Board of Finance spend out of the capital line in the budget.

"We've discussed clearing the back lot of it and expanding the parking over there. It will hopefully alleviate the teachers and paras and aides that are parking across the street in the Orange Congregational Church parking lot," Zeoli said. "The structure we have opportunities with, but nothing has been decided as of yet."

Zeoli also suggested cutting down the arborvitae trees at the corner so that people entering Orange Center Road from Schoolhouse Lane can see oncoming traffic.

"It's pretty near impossible there, trying to pull out of that spot," he added.

"I think it's a great idea. I think we should do it," said selectman Mitch Goldblatt in prefacing his motion to move forward with the plan.

Selectman PJ Shanley – who is a Milford-Orange Times columnist – asked whether

the plan for the area might go further by turning Schoolhouse Lane into a one-way road that loops all the way around.

"We have our youngest kids going there," he said, "and people are flying in and out both ways."

Zeoli said the Board of Education had studied it and weighed the needs of the school buses, but he wasn't certain what conclusions they had come to.

Goldblatt presented another alternative in which the corner of the property could be paved over to allow a widening of the exit onto Orange Center Road into a left-turn and right-turn lane.

"It's a possibility," Zeoli said, and asked Orange Soccer Association president Tom Pisano to offer his thoughts.

Pisano was largely positive about expanding the parking and said he believed there was a traffic plan with school officials. He noted that it's dangerous for people to have to park at the church and cross Orange Center Road to get to the school.

"You don't want to cross that street," he said. "It's a state highway, so we can't put a crosswalk."



The property at 643 Orange Center Rd., as seen from Mary L. Tracy School. Photo by Brandon T. Bisceglia.



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For Nature's Sake

# Know Your (Climate) Numbers

To the many numbers we carry around in our heads – whether it's the price of gas, historical dates or a recipe for hot chocolate – we might consider adding a few key climate statistics. While not as diverting as a fine golf score or as immediately useful as a phone number, there are at least a few numbers related to global warming and the problems of fossil fuels that each of us, as earth inhabitants, owe it to ourselves and each other to know.

Consider the three numbers below, for instance, as part of a starter kit in climate literacy. Like medical statistics for individual health, they may help us make sense of the news and better weigh needed interventions to promote planetary health.

**1.5°C:** The 1.5°C number, equivalent to 2.7°F, refers to a possible global average temperature rise that experts have cautioned us to avoid. During the 2015 Paris climate talks, the 1.5°C increase over pre-industrial temperatures was agreed upon as a danger zone – like a speed limit – above which planetary damage and suffering will be unconscionable. Because overall increasing temperatures at the earth's surface have been definitively linked to fossil fuels, the ominous prospect of a 1.5-degree rise has been used as an incentive for ending support for coal, oil and gas and more quickly shifting to renewable energy sources.

This may seem like a small temperature rise if considered in terms of daily weather, but when it comes to average annual rises across the globe since the preindustrial era, even changes in tenths of a percent have caused extreme weather disturbances and environmental changes. "1.5 to stay alive," has been a rallying cry of island nation residents and others on the front lines of most recent so-called climate shocks.

Not that we need wait to exceed 1.5 degrees to see disastrous outcomes of Earth's warm-

ing. Last year, when the average temperature rise at the earth's surface, over the preindustrial era, was 1.18°C, there were near-constant record-breaking heat waves, floods, fires and storms around the world, including the fires and heat dome in Canada that sent smoky air our way in the spring and summer.

If we don't reduce carbon emissions soon enough, how soon could we reach the 1.5 limit? Scientific American suggests we have a 50 percent chance of reaching that average temperature rise in six years. Meanwhile, the picture of habitat loss and human suffering predicted, depending on whether the earth heats 1.5 degrees or up to 2 degrees, amounts to a sliding scale of suffering. In the case of coral reefs, for instance, according to NASA's climate change website, a global average temperature rise of 1.5°C would lead to the loss of 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs, but at 2°C degrees of warming (3.6°F) there would be no coral reefs left in the world.

**COP 28:** COP stands for Conference of the Parties, which seems a bland name for a global group that meets yearly to, no less, rescue the planet. "28" refers to the number of years that the world's nations have been meeting to follow up on an early treaty to address the threat of climate change. The countries that have signed onto that treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, are called "parties" to the treaty, and the first conference of the parties, or COP 1, to help implement the UNFCCC took place in Berlin in 1995.

Other international groups that meet to follow-up on treaty requirements are also called COPs; for instance, countries that are working



PATRICIA HOUSER

to implement a biodiversity treaty held their "COP 15" in Montreal in 2022.

Countries that have signed onto climate reforms take turns as hosts for the United Nations Climate Change Conference. The 2023 meeting, or COP 28, was held in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. This earned it some well-deserved critiques, including the Wall Street Journal's Nov. 29 article, "Welcome to COP28, the U.N. Climate Conference Hosted by an Oil Giant." Meanwhile the meeting scheduled for later this year, or COP 29, will be hosted by Azerbaijan, a country where the main exports (90 percent) are oil and gas.

One takeaway on the number 28 is that, at the very least, the global community has agreed on the seriousness of climate disruption for several decades. As people with a stake in the outcome, we should understand what is going right, and wrong, at these meetings. To start, a useful short summary of COP 28 can be found in a Dec. 13 article from the Guardian titled, "Good Cop, bad Cop: what the COP 28 agreement says and what it means."

**40 Percent:** This is the number we could impact most directly in our communities. Forty percent of greenhouse gas emissions in Connecticut come from transportation, the largest source in the state. That's according

to a report on emissions released by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in April 2023.

To the extent that pollution, like politics, is local, residents of Milford and Orange have an opportunity to focus on this last statistic in a way that could help us set an example to other parts of the state. We can take our cue, in lowering transportation emissions, from a Yale Climate Connection piece that implied any plan to lower carbon pollution from transportation should include both a switch to electric vehicles and strategies to reduce driving.

While the state is now providing incentives (rebates) for citizens to purchase

EVs, that leaves room for local communities to make crucial further reductions in pollution from cars through a mixture of anti-sprawl zoning strategies, constructing bona fide protected bike lanes and reducing idling drastically.

Hopefully, the above numbers will provide insights to help us better participate in our community's efforts to survive and avoid the worst of climate challenges. Succeeding may afford future generations the luxury to mull less ominous numbers.

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

## Send Us Your Poem

In celebration of National Poetry Month in April, the Milford-Orange Times will run selected poems from area residents in the April 11 issue. Submit your poem no later than Monday, April 1 to [editor@theorangetimes.com](mailto:editor@theorangetimes.com). Include your full name and address (only the name and town will be printed).



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# Opinion & Editorial

## Amity Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Surplus Was \$2,487,391

By Jim Leahy

Amity Budget Facts FY 2022-2023	
FY 21-22 Budget	\$51,698,207
FY 22-23 Budget	\$53,349,805
Budget Increase (\$)	\$1,651,598
Budget Increase (%)	3.19%
<b>Budget Surplus FY 22-23</b>	
	<b>\$2,487,391</b>

Looking at the Amity Budget Data	
Actual FY 22-23 Budget Spent	\$50,862,414
Actual FY 22-23 Increase Needed (\$)	(\$835,793)
Actual FY 22-23 Increase Needed (%)	-1.62%

The goal of balancing town needs with taxpayer affordability is a challenging one. One of the requirements of being a member of the Orange Board of Finance is to inform the public. I consider this an obligation of this elected position. What we are talking about is the spending of tens of millions of dollars of hard-earned money of the people who reside in the town.

Being a member of the OBOF requires not only monthly review of the budget expenditures but analyses of a significant volume of data. The job also requires a questioning perspective of funding requests, with a keen awareness of the difference between “wants” and “needs.” This method not only applies to the town budget but also to the budgets of both Amity and Orange schools, which take up a major portion of our resources.

Over the years, one way to achieve that balance of needs and affordability is to communicate a message of “doing more with less,” to set a culture by which we strive to operate. This approach is consistent both with the town’s heritage and with what we all do in our personal lives.

In this piece, I will address two topics that impact all residents in the Amity member towns who pay taxes. The topics are: 1) the fiscal year 2022-2023 Amity budget and learnings from the data; and 2) the current fiscal year 2024-2025 Amity superintendent’s proposed budget and key points about it.

### 2022-2023 Budget: The Results Are In

Late in 2023, the Amity fiscal year 2022-2023 was closed. The results are in and are instructive to all taxpayers. As many may recall, in June 2022 the budget of \$53,349,805 passed on the third referendum

vote. The budget increase was \$1,651,598, a 3.19 percent increase over the prior year’s budget of \$51,698,207. Now, at the end of fiscal year 2022-2023, we learn that the budget surplus was \$2,487,391.

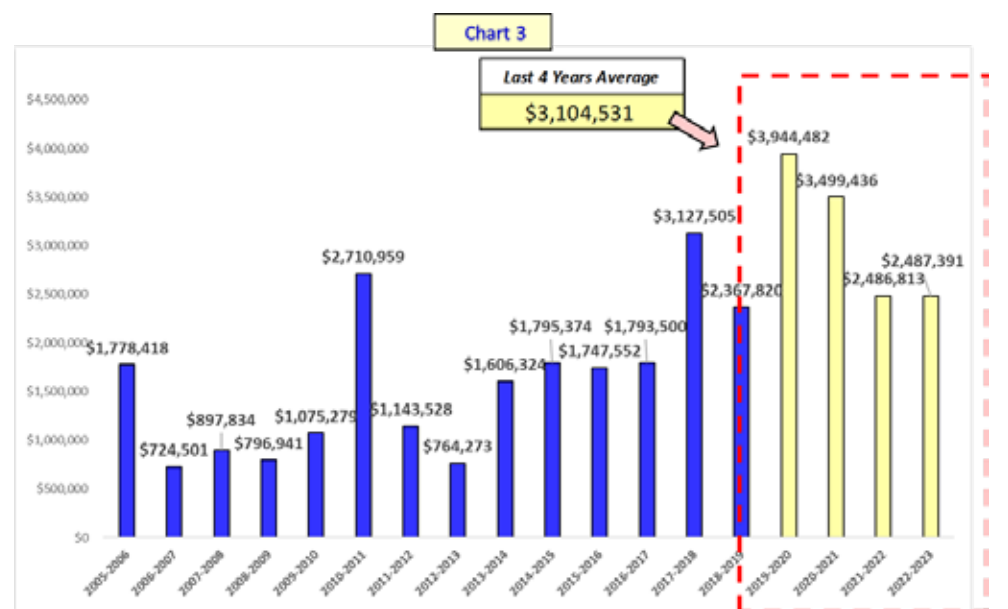
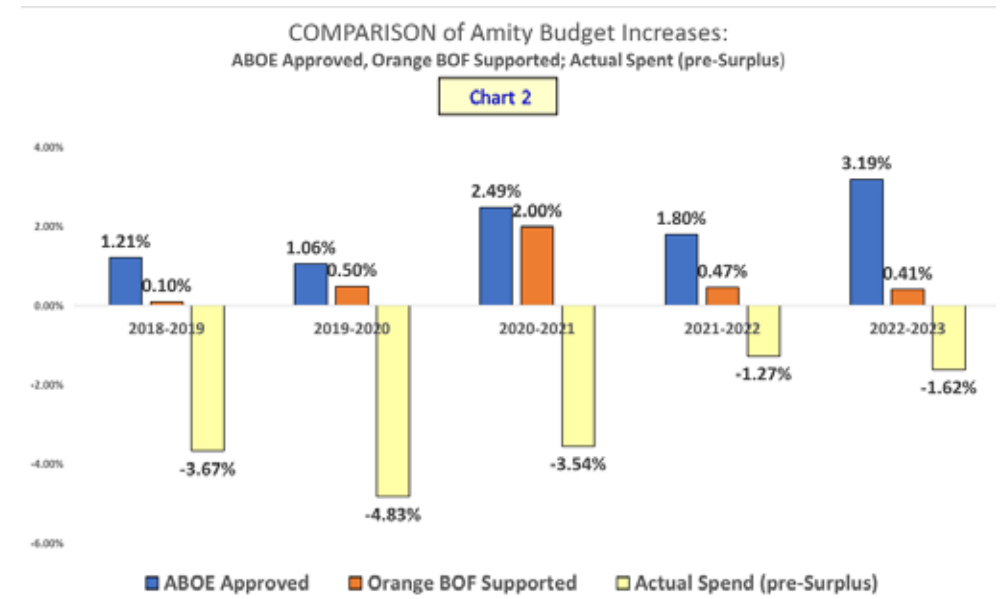
This surplus of \$2,487,391 means that for fiscal year 2022-2023, Amity spent \$50,862,414, which is the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget of \$53,349,805 less than the fiscal year 2022-2023 surplus of \$2,487,391.

Moreover, the money spent in fiscal year 2022-2023 was \$835,793 less than the entire prior year’s budget of \$51,698,207. Therefore, the amount spent in fiscal year 2022-2023 was a 1.62 percent decrease from the fiscal year 2021-2022 budget.

To visualize this, see Chart 1. During the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget development process, we started with a superintendent’s budget with a proposed 4.99 percent increase. The Amity Finance Committee approved a 3.99 percent increase. In two referenda, voters rejected both the 3.99 percent and 3.59 percent increases. Then, the voters approved a 3.19 percent increase, which was an increase of \$1,651,598. While the OBOF supported up to a 0.41 percent increase, the amount spent for fiscal year 2022-2023 was a decrease of 1.62 percent.

For handy reference, the data table lists the dollar increases for each of the percentage increases.

But this circumstance was not a one-time thing; it has been a yearly occurrence. See Chart 2. Over the last five-year period, the story was the same: the Amity BOE approved a budget increase (blue bar). The OBOF indicated what increase it would support (orange bar). And the actual percentage spent was not only lower than the



other two (yellow bar), it was a negative percentage.

That means in each of the last five years, like the fiscal year 2022-2023 data detailed earlier, Amity got its job done spending less than the prior year’s budget. In effect, in each year over the five-year period Amity demonstrated that it could have operated with a 0 percent budget increase in any particular year.

Moreover, surpluses from Amity have increased significantly over the past four years. See Chart 3.

“The most important point is that Amity has highly excessive surpluses which lead to tax increases that we shouldn’t have to impose,” OBOF Chairman Kevin Houlihan has said. “We are expecting Amity to budget for what they need and not continually over budget.”

### Amity Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Superintendent’s Proposed Budget

Amity Superintendent Jenn Byars on Jan. 22 presented to the OBOF a superintendent’s proposed budget for fiscal year

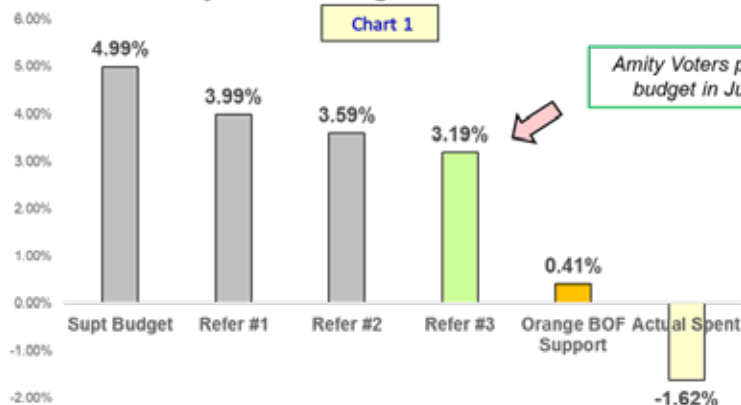
2024-2025. Summary elements below are intended to keep member town taxpayers informed:

- The budget-to-budget increase would be \$2,673,884, or 4.90 percent.
- An increase of \$2,673,884 would be over three times the average budget increase (from the last 16 years).
- Debt service is down \$433,964.
- Non-debt service increase is \$3,107,848, or 6.20 percent.
- The staff increase request is 7.58 positions.
- The impact to Orange: \$1,715,489, or a 6.57 percent increase.

To view the fiscal year 2024-2025 Amity superintendent’s proposed budget as presented to the OBOF and the extended discussion about this proposal, search online “OGAT YouTube” and locate the Jan. 22 OBOF meeting.

Jim Leahy is vice chair of the Orange Board of Finance.

Amity FY 22-23 Budget: The Facts Are In



Dollar Increase for each % increase

	4.99%	3.99%	3.59%	3.19%	0.41%	-1.62%
\$51,698,207	\$2,579,741	\$2,062,758	\$1,855,966	\$1,651,598	\$211,963	(\$835,793)

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# Opinion & Editorial

## Getting Your Voice Heard



STATE SEN. (D-14)  
JAMES MARONEY

Many times we feel that our voice doesn't matter. We see things happening in DC or Hartford, or even in our hometown, and feel that we would have done them differently. Often, we wonder why something happened and whether we could have changed it.

For those of us who are up in Hartford, we may forget that it took us time to learn how the process works. As we get ready to embark on a new legislative session, I want to use this opportunity to give you a brief overview of the process and show you how to make your voice heard.

The session officially starts on Feb. 7 and ends at midnight on May 8. Every law starts in a committee of cognizance, or understanding. This year laws can be proposed in two ways: an individual legislator can only submit bills that make changes to the budget, while committees can vote to draft bills. The next step is that the submitted bill will get a public hearing. At a public hearing, you have the opportunity to have your voice heard.

During the pandemic, we added the opportunity to testify by Zoom. We found that it gave more people access to testifying, so we kept that opportunity. To find out about bills that are getting a public testimony, you can visit [cga.ct.gov](http://cga.ct.gov). You can visit committees of interest to you and see the schedule of hearings and the agenda for bills that will be heard that day.

In addition to testifying in person or via Zoom, you can also email testimony. Each committee has slightly different rules, so you need to visit the committee page to find out how to sign up for testimony or to submit testimony via email. Most committees allow people three minutes to testify on a bill that is on the agenda, and then legislators can ask questions.

I have been attending conferences around the country over the past year to learn from other legislators and work on legislation. In Connecticut, each representative represents 25,000 residents and each senator represents 100,000 residents. In most other states, each representative and senator represents significantly more residents, which means as elected officials in Connecticut we have more opportunity to interact directly with our constituents.

Over the course of the year, I run numerous coffee and conversation events, telephone town halls, and evening meetings, recognizing that not everyone can meet at the same time. During these interactions I often get ideas or suggestions for legislation.

One such idea came from a coffee and conversation when a constituent asked Rep. Frank Smith and me what the state was doing to help us recruit more police officers. From that question, I had the idea to create a loan forgiveness program for police officers' student loans and was able to work with my colleagues to get that program created and funded.

In World War II, the German enigma code was cracked at Bletchley Park by incorporating puzzlers, gamers and other diverse voices. The key was bringing together diverse perspectives and voices. The same goes for legislation. The best legislation is crafted when we incorporate diverse voices. I encourage you to reach out if you have an idea and to make your voice heard through testifying on issues that are important to you.

## Legislative Goals: 2024 Session



STATE REP. (R-119)  
KATHY KENNEDY

The 2024 Legislative Session is here. Beginning on Feb. 7 and ending on May 8, this shorter session is ramping up to address resident concerns on electric vehicles, affordability, public safety and education, to name a few.

This session will primarily include bills and regulations that fall within the state budget agreement, passed last June. That means any new bills or funding adjustments cannot exceed the limits of the budget for fiscal year 2024-2025.

My session goals are simple: support our police and first responders, reform juvenile justice policy, invest in our nonprofits, incentivize quality education and teacher retention and promote safer road and driving initiatives.

Stories of crime continue to populate our headlines. With a sharp rise in juvenile crime statewide and the existing limits the police accountability bill has placed on law enforcement officers, there are only two responsible steps forward. First, enact policy that once again holds all criminals accountable, cracking down on repeat offenders. Second, eliminate unnecessary barriers on the investigative duties of our police, supporting those who protect, serve and support our communities.

Our first responders represent the backbone of our community. Far too often, larger municipalities attract newly trained officers from our local staff, making it harder for our towns to operate their emergency services. That's why I will be supporting new retention initiatives that motivate our local emergency staff to stay local, assuring a safe and more responsive community at home.

Milford and Orange have been home to many nonprofit organizations that serve us and our surrounding communities in a variety of ways. Last year, I supported the state budget's one-time 2.5 percent bonus for certain nonprofits; I am continuing my support in extending this bonus for the upcoming fiscal year.

Although our budget agreement invested a dynamic \$150 million in education funding, there is more work to be done. Constituents have contacted me with policy concerns about kindergarten age requirements and where our towns fall under state reading level expectations. I will work with my colleagues to revisit the Right to Read Act and kindergarten age regulations to protect already successful students and districts from more unfunded education mandates.

Finally, as ranking member of the Transportation Committee, my passion is to make Connecticut safer for all drivers. Catalytic converter, tire and vehicle thefts have become more common throughout our state, not to mention intoxicated and wrong-way driving and street takeovers. By eliminating limits on our law enforcement, bolstering criminal penalties and encouraging more police recruitment and retention programs, we can secure our roads, communities and state.

Don't forget: you also play a role in the legislative process and there are multiple ways to participate. Follow my Facebook page @StateRep-Kennedy and subscribe to my brief email updates at [RepKennedy.com](http://RepKennedy.com) to receive information on public hearings, proposed bills and how you can share your voice.

As always, never hesitate to reach out to me with your questions, ideas and concerns about any state issue by emailing me at [Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov) or by calling me at 860-240-8700. Together, we can make Connecticut a more affordable, safe and prosperous state.

## 2024 Legislative Session Resources



STATE REP. (R-117)  
CHARLES FERRARO

With the New Year's holiday behind us, state lawmakers have shifted into preparing their legislative initiatives, proposing bills and gaining all the essential public input to make informed decisions at the State Capitol.

Our best decisions are made with strong public input, through public hearings, community outreach and when you contact us directly. As your voice in Hartford, it is critical that we amplify your concerns into meaningful public policy.

This was especially evident in a recent push from the majority to pass a ban of new gas car sales in Connecticut. After a thwarted attempt to pass the electric vehicle mandate through the bipartisan Regulations Review Committee, Democrats in the majority pivoted to calls for a special session. A unified backlash from residents, businesses and bipartisan lawmakers diverted the radical proposal until further action is taken in the legislative session.

The 2024 legislative session began on Feb. 7 and ends on May 8. On even years like 2024, there is a "short session" mandated by the state's constitution and legislative rules to limit proposed bills to adjustments of the budget, revenue and legislation related to financial matters.

Our state's financial health is a top priority for me and my House Republican colleagues. We are focused on maintaining our budget sustainability by upholding the fiscal guardrails enacted in 2017 in a bipartisan deal and upheld in 2023 by a wide margin. The implementation and recommitment to these spending, borrowing and volatility caps have yielded a cut on state income taxes and a roughly \$10 billion decrease in Connecticut's debt.

Meetings, hearings, news conferences and other legislative business are always available for livestream or on demand by visiting the Connecticut News Network online at [CT-N.com](http://CT-N.com).

You can track legislation and find out information about the legislature's committees by visiting the Connecticut General Assembly's website, which can be found at [cga.ct.gov](http://cga.ct.gov). The CGA site features access to the nonpartisan Office of Legislative Research, which publishes an annual Major Issues report to preview the upcoming session. Additionally, the nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis provides reports on passed legislation throughout the session.

For updates on community events, highlighted legislation, state funding for Milford and Orange, and much more, you can visit my website at [RepFerraro.com](http://RepFerraro.com) or follow my legislative Facebook page at [facebook.com/RepFerraro](https://facebook.com/RepFerraro). Please continue to reach out to me at [Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Charles.Ferraro@housegop.ct.gov) with your questions and concerns regarding state issues.

## Let's Talk About It



STATE REP. (D-114)  
MARY WELANDER

One of the challenges of this work is providing enough information to constituents about complicated policies and proposals that leads to greater understandings instead of distrust and dismissal.

I realized that I had not done enough during a recent coffee hour when the current debate on hybrid and electric vehicles came up. The resulting conversation allowed Sen. James Maroney and myself to share information that answered some questions for those able to attend. In hopes of clarifying parts of this complex subject for more constituents, here is some of the information we shared:

States have two options, either adopt the California standards or be under the federal Environmental Protection Agency standards. Connecticut has been working toward the California standards for almost 20 years. One goal of those standards is to hit a certain percentage of hybrid and electric vehicles sold by a set date, thereby reducing our air pollution levels and reliance on fossil fuels. Connecticut – and specifically New Haven County – has one of the highest rates of pollution levels and childhood asthma in the country. This is important for everyone.

Under the California plan, if the sales goals are not met then the car manufacturers will be fined. The manufacturers don't want that, so they continue to work to make those vehicles more affordable to buyers.

If we leave the California plan and go under the EPA plan, then two things will happen. First, manufacturers will have no incentive to reduce costs. Second, the state of Connecticut will be fined because our air quality won't meet federal standards. Under the California plan we get a "pass" right now because we are actively working toward a higher air quality goal. The most recent vote in the Regulation Review Committee was just to reaffirm the choice of the California plan.

A possible next step is to commit to the California standards for three years (avoiding fiscal penalties to the state) and create a bipartisan commission of auto experts, environmental experts and policymakers. The commission would, in part, look at the realistic cost of building out more charging stations and providing affordable in-home charging units, the potential fines that the state and taxpayers would have to cover under the EPA plan, as well as ensuring that our grid is able to support the increased use. At that point a new vote would be taken to either stay or leave the California standards based off the commission's findings.

This was new information for most in attendance. From there we talked about potential reasons for setbacks or why it made sense that some industries (like trucking) were excluded.

My main point here is that a diverse group of people from all political leanings were able to sit down and talk about potentially controversial subjects with respect and curiosity for different opinions.

When we don't talk about issues, we put ourselves further from solutions. To encourage more discussions, I will begin holding "office hours" in the evenings in hopes of being more accessible to constituents; you can also schedule time for a call or Zoom by emailing me at [mary.welander@cga.ct.gov](mailto:mary.welander@cga.ct.gov).



# Opinion & Editorial

## Commentary

### There Is A New Marshal In Town

I would like you to welcome the new state marshal joining the Orange tax collection team. Holly A. Bryk will be joining our staff along with the constables in collecting delinquent taxes owed to the Town.

Bryk brings years of experience to the collection scene and is a former resident of Orange with family still in town, so has deep roots to the Orange community. She is another quality graduate of Amity Regional High School.

The same rules that apply to our constables also apply to state marshals, so collection assistance fees of 15 percent plus expenses (minimum \$50) apply if you choose to avail yourself of this service.

To avoid a visit from our constables or from Bryk, please check to see if you have any outstanding tax bills. Go to orange-ct.gov and click on the box on the lower left

side of the screen to pay your taxes. Since your 2020 bills going forward are available for viewing here, you can easily see if you have a payment due (a green cart will show on the bill line). You can view any bill by clicking on the magnifying glass (good to know if you are filing federal or state tax returns as well).

We have officially changed our front-end tax credit payment provider as of December, so the use of our old payment site is no longer active. The old site will still be found on your July tax bills. Some taxpayers are still trying to use the old site and are getting error messages when they try and complete the transaction.

Access the new site from the town web-



THOMAS P. HURLEY

site only. Remember, we are also offering interactive voice response telephone services for the first time as well, at 203-902-0387. Convenience fees apply. Our automated clearinghouse option (or e-check) is also becoming a very attractive way to pay your tax bills. Payment directly from your checking or savings account is provided for \$1.50 if your bank supports such transfers on the account. We are now verifying the bank routing and account numbers before accepting payments, so don't wait to the last minute when setting this up. Consider opening an account on the service so we can get back to you if there is a problem. You can also receive alerts when new bills are issued. See the setup documentation online at the tax collector website for

more detailed instructions.

We have moved over 50 years of tax records to the Orange Historical Society research center in our phase one records transfer. We still have some records to transfer in phase two, when the society is able to handle them.

Support of the Orange Historical Society by residents is highly encouraged so that we do not lose our historical roots. The society provides a valuable service to the community so that records that would otherwise be destroyed are now available for research. The tax office only has to keep these records for 15 years by law.

Thomas P. Hurley is the tax collector for Orange.

### Blaming Israel Benefits Hamas

By DeForest W. Smith

Give Hamas credit. They choreographed the Gaza Nakba (Arabic for catastrophe) to disrupt the peace talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Hamas accomplished this goal, and they knew that if they killed, raped, burned, mutilated and beheaded 1,200 Israelis, Israel would have no option but to respond to these atrocities. A Hamas miscalculation? The extent to which Israel would take the retaliation to them.

Make no mistake, Hamas has never hidden its intentions. It is an Islamic organization dedicated to eradicating Israel and killing the Jewish people who live there. Its objective is the annihilation of the Jewish state.

When one country attacks another, the people killed and wounded are generally innocent civilians. Think Japan bombing Pearl Harbor and the resulting casualties at Nagasaki and Hiroshima, or Germany declaring war on the US and the resulting casualties of Berlin and Dresden.

Hamas considers civilians as expend-

able. That is why they hide in hospitals – such as Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City – schools and mosques. That is why they fight to prevent Israelis from discovering their tunnels, arms caches and headquarters in these “neutral” areas.

Hamas knew that the worldwide media, TV and newspapers would soon relegate the butchering of innocent Israelis to the back pages or discontinue that coverage altogether. In its place would be the photos of Palestinian women and children suffering under attack. Immediately, the people who were savaged are the people who are now to blame for injuring and killing civilians.

The news coverage also gave license to antisemites the world over to vent their vitriol. Thirty groups at Harvard signed on to the “Hate Israel” bandwagon, as did a Cornell professor, who referred to Hamas’ butchery as “exhilarating.” Students throughout the US and throughout the world are marching in support of the Palestinians – because of Israel’s retalia-

tion.

Hamas, founded in 1987, has been designated as terrorist organization by the US. The Hamas charter declares that Islam “will destroy Israel.”

Hostages? Hamas kidnapped more than 200 civilians, including a number of non-Israelis, aged 4 to 85. They treat these hostages not as people, but as currency, to be used for negotiating purposes. The world cheers as these terrorists release one hostage – usually for three or more Palestinian criminals in Israeli jails. It is somehow heroic for terrorists to release a kidnapped civilian.

The occupation of Gaza by Israel? Yes, after Egypt, Jordan and Syria attacked Israel, Israel occupied the Gaza strip. In 2005, in an effort to enhance the peace process, Israel vacated Gaza and moved more than 100,000 Jews out of Gaza. It was then left to the Palestinians to govern. The result? A Hamas takeover and more than 36,000 rockets launched against Israel.

Occupation of the West Bank? Israel is not occupying it. They have lived there for more than 3,000 years. A cease fire? There was a total cease fire, until Oct. 7, when Hamas attacked Israel.

How is Hamas funded? It is agreed that Iran funds Hamas. Iran, to which then-president Barack Obama send \$1.7 billion dollars in cash, released \$100 billion in frozen assets and loosened an additional \$10 billion in sanctions. A large part of these assets goes to funding Hamas and terrorists around the world.

A solution? I don't have that. However, declaring Gaza as a Palestinian state might be a start. Developing a demilitarized zone of 1,000 yards in northern Gaza could help. Such space would have no structures, other than Israeli sensors, to identify new attempts to dig tunnels into Israel.

DeForest W. Smith is president of George J. Smith & Son Realtors in Milford.

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**Insuring Your Future**

# A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Pharmacy

I was recently away and discovered that I had not picked up a prescription at my local pharmacy. So I began the process of transferring it to the local CVS in Florida. After two days of calling, sitting on hold or standing in line at the pharmacy, I found that I could arrange for it to be transferred by using the CVS app and requesting the change.

When I went to pick up the prescription I also discovered that the cost had gone from \$140 for three months to \$37. Imagine my reaction to this pleasant news. What lessons does this hold for us?

First, it is important that your health coverage and prescription drug coverage will work easily in another state. This is particularly important if you will be away for an extended period, such as a month or more. Take the time to set up an online account with your insurance provider(s). If you have a Medicare Advantage plan you only

need one account; if you have a Medicare supplement plan and prescription drug plan with two different companies, set up an account with each.

There is so much information pertaining to coverages, costs and frequently asked questions, such as: how do I fill a prescription if I am out of town? Some plans allow you to change your network to the area where you will be for a month or more. Again, having an online account can save time on hold waiting to speak to member services. If you need help setting this up, ask for guidance from your agent or your children or grandchildren.

Second, if your prescription drug plan has a coinsurance for name brand medications, it might end up costing you less than the



**TRISH PEARSON**

standard \$45-per-month copay. All medications are assigned a tier by the prescription benefit manager, such as Express Scripts or CareMark. Not all medications are classified as tier three or higher because of cost. The demand for that medication may be less, which also impacts the tier assignment. Such was the case with my prescription.

The cost could vary from month to month, depending on the retail cost. Medications are a commodity like gasoline, with equally frequent price changes. The easiest way to estimate the retail cost of a medication is to look at one of the prescription discount card sites, such as Good Rx or Single Care. The site will show the retail cost as well as the discount. Generally, if the retail cost is less

than \$200 per month, the medication will cost less if the coinsurance is 20 percent.

Medicare insurance plans today are designed to be more flexible and tailored to a variety of lifestyles. Even if your premium is \$0, you are entitled to good service and competent answers without spending hours on the phone. Have your member information handy (take a picture and save it to your phone along with the online sign-on information), and call the agent first. Very often we can answer questions or get the answers quickly. Your time is valuable, even if you are retired.

*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**

## Metabolic Workouts

A metabolic workout is a type of training that is designed to elevate your heart rate, increase calorie burn and build muscle in less time than a typical strength training session. This type of training needs to start slow, with low impact, and slowly progress into a more challenging workout over a period of several weeks. Using proper form is essential in every workout. However, in faster-paced high intensity interval training it is critical for success and preventing injury.

These types of workouts are truly designed to help create an "afterburn" effect. Oxygen burns body fat, and metabolic workouts instigate compound exercises to raise your metabolic rate during and after your workout. While resting, your body uses ox-

xygen to burn fat – thus the term "afterburn."

Another benefit of metabolic workouts is building lean muscle. These workouts target muscles in the upper and lower body, like chest and back muscles and legs and glutes, as well as the smaller muscle groups in the shoulders and arms. A head-to-toe metabolic workout combines cardio, bodyweight training, weight training and resistance training, which is considered circuit training and includes moving from one station to the next.

I found this method of exercise to be bene-



**MICHELE TENNEY**

ficial to my clients who are dedicated to staying in the ring for the long haul, those who may have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and those who are looking to add lean muscle for longevity of health. I have also found that my aging population clients enjoy these types of workouts, especially in a group setting that builds comradery.

I would not recommend metabolic training for anyone coming off an injury or someone new to the fitness and wellness industry.

Of course, good nutrition, proper hydration and sleep must be incorporated into this type of training. Dynamic stretches prior to

the workout and static stretches post workout are a must. Articulation movement of joints will help prevent injury. Resetting ourselves to a parasympathetic state is the only way to get the maximum results from metabolic workouts.

I believe in you. You can do this. If you get knocked down, get back up again. Every day we are given a new opportunity to begin again. Here's to your health.

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

**Financial Planning**

# Financial Planning Process Vs. Ad-Hoc Product Purchasing

Financial planning means different things to different people. Some view it as a look on their investments. Others see it as help with budgeting or other financial goals, and still others consider planning to be related to insurance.

Regardless of your thoughts on planning, I feel that everyone can benefit from going through the financial process irrespective of where you are on your financial timeline. Whether you are just starting out in your career, a few years from retirement or somewhere in between, most people could benefit from a comprehensive review of their financial position. If you are just buying an investment here and an insurance policy there, you may be inadvertently doing more harm than good.

So where do you start? If you Google "financial planning," you will get about 3.7 billion results. It's no wonder that people can feel intimidated by the process; they don't even know where to begin. You should look for this to be a multi-step process, not just one meeting.

The initial meeting should be exploratory, where you and the financial advisor are getting to know each other. I always tell my clients that this meeting gives me the opportunity to get to know them better from a financial point of view and it gives them the opportunity to ensure that I am someone that they will feel comfortable working with. The advisor should also provide you with a bio, information about the company they work for and have ready a list of references if requested.

The financial advisor should conduct a thorough financial checkup, asking you questions about all aspects of your finances. The focus of the conversation should be about your goals and concerns, not a predetermined agenda set by the advisor. As the client, you should come prepared with a list of financial goals and concerns and an inventory of all your financial-



**PJ SHANLEY**

ly-related statements and documents. Most financial advisors will also want to see a budget, so you may want to prepare one in advance if you don't already have one.

After the advisor has had adequate time to perform the analysis on the information provided, you should meet again for a comprehensive look at the results. The advisor should reiterate your goals and concerns and review the findings with you.

It's common for folks to have multiple goals and several different accounts that have been opened at various times in their life, so this meeting could take a while.

The meeting should identify areas where you are on track as well as areas in need of improvement. There should be a couple of different recommendations for solutions to all the areas of concern. If the advisor only offers one suggestion, ask to see an alternative. It's extremely important for you to

feel that you have time to review, and give thought to the recommendations, prior to implementation.

Last, customer service should be an ongoing relationship. You should set the expectations up front about how often you want to sit down for a formal review of your holdings. I like to see most clients on a semi-annual basis, but you should see your advisor once a year at a minimum. Also, keep your advisor abreast of any life changes, such as marriage or divorce, birth of a child, work changes, passing of a spouse or account beneficiary, or any other large event that could impact your finances.

*PJ Shanley is a financial advisor with Barnum Financial Group and is a former member of the Orange Board of Finance. He can be reached at 203-513-6282 or pshanley@barnumfg.com. Securities and investment advisory services are offered through qualified registered representatives of MML Investors Services, LLC.*

Join us at the Orange Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary's **St. Patrick's Day Meat-O!**

**Saturday March 2nd, 2:00 PM**

Post Road Fire House, 355 Boston Post Road, Orange CT

Each round is played with sets of 3 playing cards for a specific prize, hands bought at the start of each round. When all 3 of your cards are called, yell MEAT-O to win that prize!

\$5 a person to reserve your seat in advance, \$8 at the door based on availability  
Reservations in advance must be received by February 24th  
Prizes may include corned beef and kielbasa dinners, gift cards, and themed baskets  
Coffee and dessert will be served. You can bring your own snacks (please no alcohol)

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Or support my fundraiser March 23 at High Plains Community Center and hear a Credence Clearwater Revival tribute.



## The Garden Spot

# Time For Winter Pruning

The traditional thinking is to prune your spring blooming shrubs and trees in the fall after they have bloomed and before they set next year's buds, while pruning the summer bloomers in the spring. So, what's the trend to prune in winter about?

February and March are actually a good time to prune most woody trees and shrubs, especially on a clear and warmer day. You should check the weather forecast to be sure that there isn't a drastic temperature drop since recently pruned plants can be damaged by severe temperature drops. We've seen some weeks that started out in the 50s and then dropped to the teens in a day, so keep these trends in mind.

There are several key reasons to prune your plants: to improve shape and form

(aesthetics) and to promote plant health and new growth. The easiest way to determine if your tree or shrub is a good candidate for winter pruning is if it blooms on "old wood" versus "new wood." The plants that you should not prune are those that set their buds on last year's "old wood" and have early spring blooms such as azalea. Winter pruning for these plants would be pruning off the buds. These spring bloomers can be pruned later this year – about two weeks after flowering.

Now that the leaves have fallen from your deciduous trees and shrubs you have a clear view of their structure and any diseased,



PAT DRAY

dead, or crossed branches that should be removed. The plants and most pests are dormant, so there is a smaller risk of pests or pathogens entering through a cut. Pruning while the plant is dormant allows the plant to recover prior to the start of new growth and lets your plants put energy toward new, healthy growth once they leave the dormancy in the warmer weather.

The evergreens are another question. Most evergreens like spruce, pine and fir rarely require pruning for aesthetic purposes. However, any diseased or dead wood should be removed at this time. Hemlocks, yews, arborvitae, juniper and cypress shrubs

can be pruned in winter. The exception is pine, which should only be pruned for plant health reasons.

Take a break on one of the upcoming winter days, walk around your yard and give everyone the trim they need. Don't forget to note that you've done so in your ever-present garden journal.

Of course, all of this assumes that your pruning shears were cleaned and sterilized in the fall. If they weren't, please do that before you begin pruning.

Spring is coming; get out those plant and seed catalogs.

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

## Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

# New Apartments Are Good News In Orange

Have you heard about the two new apartment complexes in town?

With a variety of styles and restrictions, these units are elegant. We are excited to finally have more options available to live in. There are many homeowners who wish they had something new, something fresh, where they would be able to downsize their living quarters and still remain in this familiar and special community. Clients are constantly showing interest in selling their homes, but remain reluctant because the options for moving are limited.

Today the buyer pool is bigger than ever, and a property owner can rest assured that their home will fly off the market if it is priced right and maintained well. Let the

young families renovate, appreciate our school system and enjoy this area as we have done. Have your realtor give you a marketing price on your home and then preview some of these units.

Seeing the new modern units, with elevators, you can then picture what it would be like to live there. I bet a majority of the tenants will be from town. Your space will probably be smaller if you rent, but maybe you are living out of four rooms already. You may have really been waiting for this opportunity.

We have four condominium developments in Orange, but this is another investment.



BARBARA LEHRER

The prices are in a range to check out, as all are very different. You can go to a condo, or you can put your profit in the bank, let someone else do the work and rent.

Firelite Commons should have its certificate of occupancy by the time of this publication and is taking applications. Lascana on Smith Farm Road has wage restrictions, which can also be a great bet when all utilities are

included. These developments came at a perfect time when the prices of home sales are quite high. It is the retirement community that these are probably best addressed to.

I say this as I am also at the stage where taking care of property becomes more complicated. There is a lot of work to be done to keep a large home on an acre of land in shape. From raking leaves to changing roofs, the endless expense and energy of being a homeowner is over when you sign a lease.

Many a client has shared with me their excitement of travel or just not being a slave to their house anymore. Just think about it. We are entering the busy spring market, so do some investigating.

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

## Senior Life

# Show Your Heart Some Love

February is Heart Health Month. As a nation we have made great strides in reducing the number of people who die each year from cardiac-related issues, but heart disease remains at the top of the list of killers.

Heart health in seniors is especially important. Other conditions, such as diabetes or kidney disease, can all contribute to cardiovascular difficulties, leading to heart problems, strokes, etc. Medications can have side effects that affect your cardiac health. And, of course, there are a number of cardiac issues that just become more prevalent as we age – the general wear and tear of life adds up in our cardiovascular system.

Because the stakes of poor heart health are high, and also because many cardiac symptoms are not obvious, regular checkups on your cardiac health are important – at any age.

There are many types of heart issues, most of which are treatable in some way. Lifestyle compliance is important, but medications and even surgeries frequently round out the type of care seniors can expect, depending on their specific condition.

At a minimum, if you have not paid much



SUSAN ODERWALD

attention to your heart health, make a point this month to take action to ensure the basics are okay. Is your blood pressure normal? Have you had routine bloodwork done and are you in compliance with any heart medications you are taking? Are you seeing a cardiologist annually if you have any known heart condition? Do you and your family members know CPR? Are you eating well and exercising regularly?

If you are not sure where to start or are looking for specific information, ask your

doctor or visit the American Heart Association website.

February is a time to remember that everyone depends on that magical pump in our chest and keeping it healthy is essential to living well.

Take time this month to show your heart a little love.

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

## Recycling Tip: Recycling Old Clothes And Textiles

By Susan Wineland

Are you done with those jeans with the broken zipper? The stained shirts and pants? Those tattered towels and that coffee-stained shirt?

Don't throw them out in the trash. Over 20 million tons of clothes are sent to landfills every year. Once they start to decompose, natural and synthetic fabrics produce methane and other greenhouse gasses, and add lots of weight and volume to our landfills and incinerators. Recycling clothes, footwear, towels, bedding and other fabric-based products prolongs their life cycle and reduces waste, providing social, environmental and economic benefits.

Bay State Textile Recycling is now serving Orange, bringing a new opportunity to recycle textiles and producing added revenue for the town, which will be paid \$120 per ton for all of the items collected. You'll find their collection bins with the Orange

town seal and Orange recycling logo on them at High Plains Community Center near the pavilion and at the Orange Transfer Station to the left of Goodwill. There will soon be a third bin located at the Orange Public Works driveway at 308 Lambert Rd.

With over 40 years of experience in the post-consumer textile waste industry, Bay State Textiles serves over 180 municipalities throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. Acceptable items include all types of clothing from pants to blazers to pajamas to undergarments. All footwear, including boots, cleats, flip-flops and sneakers, are accepted. Accessories like hats, pocketbooks, gloves, duffle bags, ties, scarves, totes and bathrobes can also be dropped off. Linens such as sheets, draperies, pillows, towels, table linens, throw rugs, comforters, placemats, and stuffed animals as acceptable as well.

They do not accept mattresses and mattress pads, foam products, couch cushions,

lawn furniture, carpet remnants, rugs larger than two feet by four feet, or anything wet, smelly or dirty.

The many benefits of textile recycling include decreasing the amount of valuable materials going to landfills and incinerators and thereby reducing disposal costs for local governments, businesses and residents; reducing greenhouse emissions from textile production; saving natural resources, including water and petroleum; reducing toxins from pesticides, herbicides, dyes and other harsh chemicals used in textile production; and allowing valuable materials to remain in the supply chain to create sustainable products.

Bay State has a large customer base in the US. Their customers, called "graders," sort the clothing, shoes and household linens into 50-plus categories or grades. First grade gets packed for export as used clothing.

The second grade, the wiper grade, consists of material that is absorbent, such as

flannel, t-shirts, towels and denim. Items of this grade are all cut into wiping rags and resold to companies throughout the US that need wipers to keep their plants and equipment clean. The centuries-old "rag" business employs hundreds of workers, supports training programs to help struggling citizens develop work skills and adds value to materials that would otherwise be wasted.

Bay State materials that can't be used as rags are shredded and reprocessed into fibers for furniture stuffing, insulation, soundproofing and carpet padding, employing dozens of people to work in the manufacture of new materials. There is also a market for the zippers and buttons, which are collected separately and recycled.

So instead of throwing your unwanted textiles away, I encourage you to donate all used textiles for reuse.

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



The Arts

# Celebrate With The Arts

There is so much to celebrate and enjoy in the next few weeks. Be inspired by the offerings of the arts community during Black History Month, purchase tickets for you and your valentine to enjoy a candlelight concert, take the kids to see magical classic shows and enjoy the outstanding vocals of a true Irish tenor. Treat yourself to a concert with a full choir and audience participation sing-along, listen to the sounds of a full orchestra and venture out to see some of the most moving, comedic and musical shows from around the area.

**Orange Congregational Church** presents “Music on the Green: Emmet Cahill” on March 16, from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Considered to be Ireland’s leading young tenor, Emmet Cahill gained audience attention as the lead singer with PBS phenomenon “Celtic Thunder.” He enjoys singing in churches around the world, connecting with audiences on a more personal level as well as singing for thousands in venues such as Carnegie Hall. Orange Congregational Church is located at 205 Meeting House Ln. in Orange. Tickets are \$20 orangecongregationalchurch.org or by calling 203-795-9749.

**City Youth Theater/City Stage Company** will present “Black Broadway: A Celebration of Black Roles and Voices on Broadway” from Feb. 9 to 10. Celebrate the remarkable contributions of Black artists to the world of theater during this special Broadway musical review. This performance will showcase iconic Broadway hits and hidden gems that highlight the talent and legacy of Black voices throughout history. The show takes place at the Palace Theater (The Poli Club), located at 100 East Main St. in Waterbury. Tickets are \$29 and can be purchased at palacetheaterct.org or by calling 203-346-2000.

The **Bushnell Center of Performing Arts** presents “Disney’s Frozen” from Feb. 8 to 18. This show features Oscar winner Jennifer Lee (book), Tony and Olivier Award winner Michael Grandage (director), Tony winner Rob Ashford (choreographer) and the film’s original songwriters, Oscar winner Kristen Anderson-Lopez and EGOT winner Robert Lopez. This production features the songs you know and love from the original Oscar-winning film, plus an expanded score with a dozen new numbers from the original songwriters. A full theatrical experience

with stunning sets, costumes and special effects along with powerful performances will make this moving and spectacular Broadway musical an unforgettable experience for all. The Feb. 11 performance at 6:30 p.m. will be audio described. The Feb. 14 performance at 2 p.m. will be American Sign Language interpreted. The Bushnell Theatre’s Mortensen Hall is located at 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. This show is recommended for ages 6 and older. Tickets are \$40 and up at bushnell.org or 860-987-5900.

**Center Stage Theatre** presents “Oklahoma!” with book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, music by Richard Rodgers from Feb. 16 to 25. Rodgers and Hammerstein’s first collaboration remains, in many ways, their most innovative, setting the standards and rules of modern musical theater. In Western territory just after the turn of the 20th century, a high-spirited rivalry between local farmers and cowboys provides a colorful background for Curly, a charming cowboy, and Laurey, a feisty farm girl, to play out their love story. Their romantic journey, as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road, contrasts with the comic exploits of brazen Ado Annie and hapless Will Parker in a musical adventure embracing hope, determination and the promise of a new land. Center Stage Theatre is located at 54 Grove St. in Shelton. Tickets can be purchased at centerstageshelton.org or by calling 203-225-6079.

**New Haven Chorale** presents “Voices of Prayer and Power” on Feb. 17 at 4 p.m. Singing sensation Jeremiah Paul and friends will lead an inspiring program in honor of Black History Month featuring a cappella spirituals, rousing and moving gospel selections and an audience sing-along. Music will be by contemporary African American composers such as Moses Hogan, Undine Smith Moore, and Rosephanye Powell. The chorale performs at Battell Chapel, located at 400 College St. in New Haven. Tickets are \$25 at newhavenchorale.org or 203-776-7664.

The **New Haven Symphony Orchestra** presents “Candlelight Concert” on Feb. 23 and 24 at 7:30 p.m. Experience a candlelight performance led by concertmaster David



CYNDI CONSOLI

Southon and featuring NHSO strings while immersed in the beautiful surroundings of New Haven’s historic St. Mary’s Church. The program will include “The Four Seasons” as composed by three different composers – Astor Piazzolla, Max Richter and Antonio Vivaldi – as well as Mendelssohn’s “Sinfonia No. 2” and Bach’s “Concerto in C Minor” featuring NHSO principal oboist Olav van Hezewijk. St. Mary’s Catholic Church is located at 5 Hillhouse Ave. in New Haven. Tickets are \$15 to \$79, and \$10 for students. For more information, visit newhavensymphony.org or call 203-865-0831.

**Fuse Theatre of CT** presents “The Gospel According to Broadway: A Musical Exploration of the Influences of Gospel in the Broadway Canon” on Feb. 24 at 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Get ready to be swept away by an unforgettable night of soul-stirring melodies. Celebrating the powerful influence of gospel music on Broadway classics old and new, including selections from “The Wiz,” “The Color Purple,” “Waitress,” “Hamilton” and “Godspell.” This uplifting show spectacular will span over 60 years of Broadway shows performed by local soloists taking center stage alongside the Fuse Good News Gospel Choir and an electrifying five-piece band. The show takes place at the Music Back Then Performance Theatre at 221 Bull Hill Ln. in West Haven. Tickets are \$20 at FuseTheatreCT.org or by calling 203-314-3394.

**Downtown Cabaret Theatre** presents “Alice In Wonderland” based on the Lewis Carroll books from Feb. 24 through March 30. Come down the rabbit hole for this family-friendly adventure.

When Alice follows the elusive Mr. Rabbit, she has no idea the adventure that is in store. Join Alice’s journey through a magical Wonderland full of strange characters like the Cheshire Cat, Mr. Caterpillar, the Mad Hatter and the Queen of Hearts as she continues her quest to get back home. This show is recommended for ages 3 and up. Downtown Cabaret Theatre is located at 263 Golden Hill St. #3 in Bridgeport. Tickets are \$22.50 to \$40, with a \$10 online purchasing fee at dtcab.com or by calling 203-576-1636.

**Castle Craig Players** presents “Forever

Plaid,” written and originally directed and choreographed by Stuart Ross, from March 1 to 17. Once upon a time, four young men discover they share a love for music and start a singing group like their idols, “The Four Freshmen.” Rehearsing in one of their basements, they become “Forever Plaid.” On the way to their first big gig, they are broadsided by a school bus, and what seems like a tragic ending is transformed into the moment their dreams come alive. The story of “Forever Plaid” begins. You’ll love the close harmony, beloved songs of the 1950s and charming characters who will have you laughing and humming along. The show is at 59 West Main St. in Meriden. Tickets are \$25 and \$20 for seniors. For more, go to castlecraig-players.org.

**Square One Theatre Company** presents “Chester Bailey” by Joseph Daugherty from March 7 to 24. In a stateside hospital at the close of World War II, a young man recovers from catastrophic injuries – or so the doctors have told him. But Chester Bailey denies what’s happened to him has actually happened, which is how he comes under the care of Dr. Philip Cotton. Older, wounded in his own ways, Cotton is charged with leading Bailey back to reality. The journey is not what either man expected. The show takes place at Stratford Academy, located at 719 Birdseye St. in Stratford. Tickets are \$22 for general seating, \$20 for students and seniors and \$25 for reserved front row seating. For more, go to squareonetheatre.com or call 203-375-8778.

**Orchestra New England** will celebrate their 50th birthday on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. by revisiting their very first “Yale Theatre Orchestra” concert from 1974, an all-Ives extravaganza so successful that within the first two weeks they recorded the whole affair for CBS Records (now Sony). They will be performing at their first home, Sprague Hall at Yale. James Sinclair is the music director. Sprague Hall is at 470 College St. in New Haven. Tickets are \$25 for general admission and \$50 for premium seating. For tickets, go to orchestranewengland.org or call 203-777-4690.

*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.*

Recovering

## Recovery Takes Willingness And Action

Most individuals cannot conceptualize the chronic unhealthy behaviors that people with substance use disorders anchor upon as a coping mechanism. Rationally, why would a person reinforce chaos in their life by altering their mind, body and spirituality with substances that accelerate or depress one’s ability to function?

The reason is both simple and complex. Most people with SUD have no concept, limited experience or soothing tools to live a life without being in an altered state. It has become their reality to live in an anesthetized state. They strive to dull, kill or vacate any ability to process traumas, neurotic thinking or extreme emotions we cannot digest. They are reminded of their inadequacy to be normal, and respond to things normally. It is a perpetual state of fear, shame, remorse, guilt

and envy that only grows more powerful as they progress into this disease.

What is not understood by many is that when embarking upon a life of recovery we must create a whole new concept of acceptance to these internal shortcomings. We must recognize how our fears, envy, pride, greed, lust, control and other character traits have sabotaged our ability to act in a healthy manner within a community. Upon our understanding of these defects of character, we then, in a conscious daily measure, can begin to create a pattern of behavior through self-enlightenment to be willing to change.

Here lies the hard work, important to a



ROB CRAFT

life of recovery, that each must be rigorously honest about in our effort to change thought, action and behavior.

We must understand that when our basic survival instincts (which have led us to poison our bodies) are activated, we cannot not fall on familiar habits (drugs and alcohol). For once, in many of our lives, we need to consider why we are alarmed, fearful, envious, hurt or angry. And we must muster new-found life skills to process, understand and move forward with healthy action.

So when I write, “recovery takes willingness and action,” I mean the person in recovery is truly reconstituting their coping

mechanisms. It is incredibly hard and often misunderstood. We need patience and loving support as we grow into our new selves.

Believe me, no one who has had their life upended by SUD wishes for themselves that the answer to ease their pain lies in a substance that is only trying to kill them.

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

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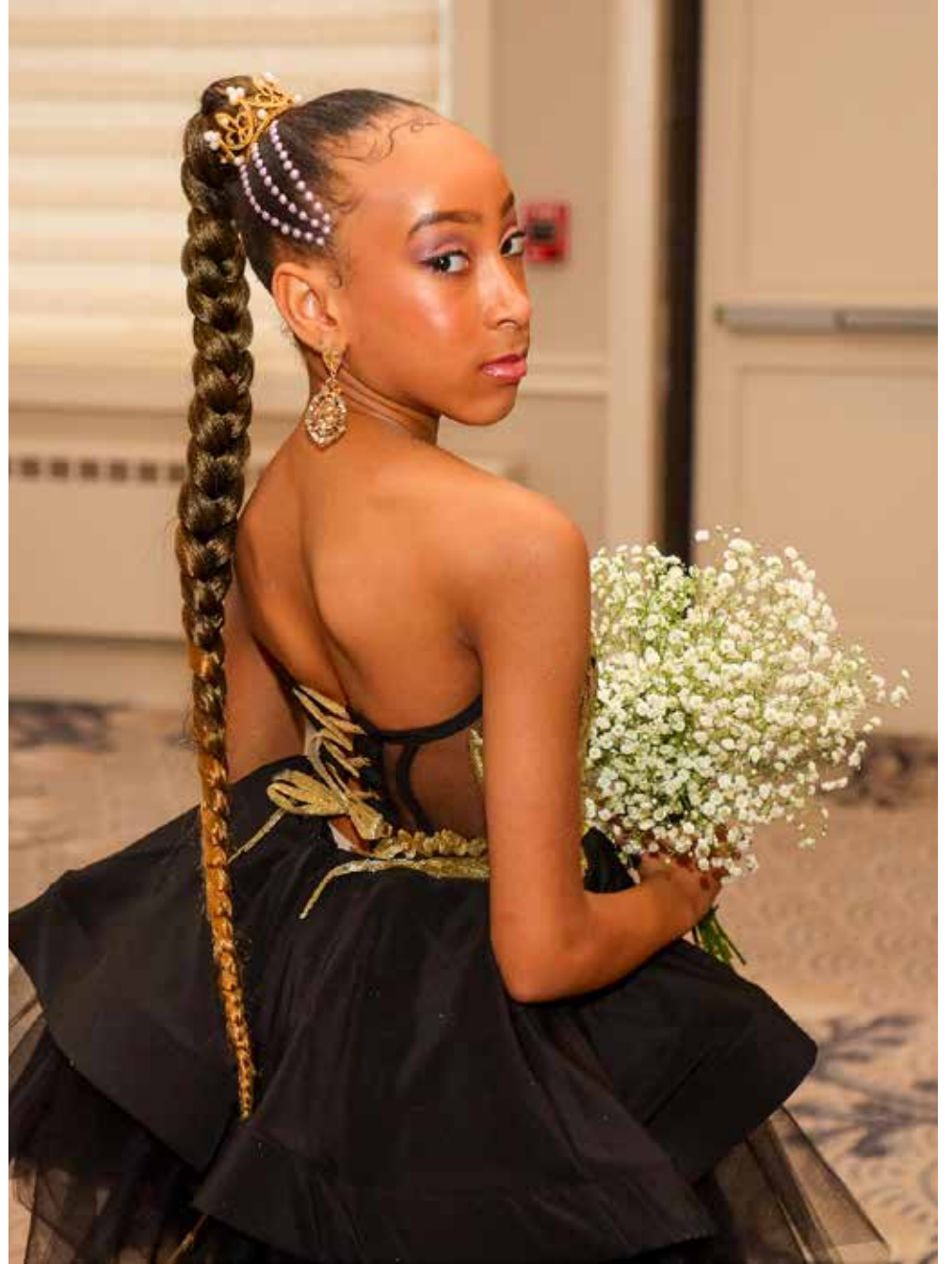
## Here Comes The Bridal Expo To Orange



Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange was the site of the second annual Bridal Expo on Jan. 28, hosted in conjunction with the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce and Milford Med Spa. Photos by Greg Geiger.



## Here Comes The Bridal Expo To Orange



Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange was the site of the second annual Bridal Expo on Jan. 28, hosted in conjunction with the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce and Milford Med Spa. Photos by Greg Geiger.



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# Milford Chamber Hosts Annual Awards



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual awards dinner on Jan. 25 at Riverview Bistro in Stratford. Photos by Greg Geiger.



## Snowy Days From Milford's Past

By Marilyn May



This handsome horse looks like he's ready to take off for a wonderful winter sleigh ride after a heavy snowfall in the 1930s. Notice the beautiful houses in the background. They were all destroyed. The only structure still standing is the Diane S. Toulson Building that in 1986-1987 narrowly escaped destruction. Today that building is the River Park Apartments for seniors on West River Street.



Some hearty men look like they are on their way to shovel the snow that covered Milford in the 1930s. At the right is the Town Hall, the Diane S. Toulson Building (more commonly known as the "Yellow Building") and the Central Grammar School (built in 1923 and demolished in 1986). The house in the center was built in the 1890s, and the last to live there were two generations of the J. Tyler Patterson family. It was sold to the town in 1936 and was turned into the Milford Children's Library. The house was demolished in the mid-1960s. The house to the left on West River Street was also destroyed to make room for the expansion of the town's municipal offices. Photos made available by the late Irene Nolan.

## Take-Out Restaurant Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting on the brisk winter afternoon of Feb. 1 to celebrate the opening of Small American Kitchen, a take-out establishment run by Milford resident and Platt Tech graduate Alberto Baez. The restaurant features wings, burgers, chicken sandwiches and more. Small American Kitchen can also host parties. The restaurant is located at 11 Berwyn St. in Milford. From left: owner Alvaro Giron, owner and chef Baez and Mayor Anthony Giannattasio. Photo by Greg Geiger.

## Home Care Company Moves To Orange

Senior Helpers Home Care has recently moved its main office from Fairfield to Orange. This relocation allows for a substantial expansion, making the in-home senior assistance company exponentially larger than before.

The new Orange location at 109 Boston Post Rd., Suite 204, boasts a state-of-the-art training center, where caregivers receive instruction from the owner, Tim Francis, who is a board certified physician assistant.

It is co-owned by Dr. Jack Yeung, an entrepreneur with a doctorate in pharmacy. Yeung is also the co-founder of Main Street Pharmacy in Danbury and the owner of several other pharmacies and businesses across the state.

Training at Senior Helpers Home Care is overseen by a team of health care professionals, including Registered Nurse Nancy Sivri and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Melissa Francis.

## Free Show By Yale Concert Band Coming

The Yale Concert Band will perform a free concert on Friday, Feb. 16 featuring "The Firebird" by Igor Stravinsky, theater piece "Cave of the Winds" by Russell Peck, "A Mother of a Revolution" by

Omar Thomas and a Leonard Bernstein triptych. Thomas C. Duffy is the music director. The event begins at 7:30 p.m. at Woolsey Hall, located at 500 College St. in New Haven.

## ADULT EDUCATION AT OR SHALOM PRESENTS: PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO READ

SUNDAY MARCH 17TH, 2024 3-5PM

The freedom to read is under attack in the United States, restricting students' freedom to explore words and ideas, and creating a hostile learning environment for young people whose identity is the subject of targeted titles. Yet a 2023 NPR/Ipsos poll found that a majority of Americans oppose such measures.

Join Pen America, CT authors Chad Sell and Alan Katz, & "The Book Lady" Pia Ledina for a timely discussion of the legal issues and learn how we can help protect the freedom to read, moderated by Adult Ed chair and author Sarah Darer Littman



Chad Sell



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- February 8th: applications for Grades 1-8 open to new families!

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## Homelessness

# A Healthy Workforce Is A Housed Workforce

I had the most wonderful experience last week. In partnership with consultants of the South Central Regional Council of Governments, we organized a tour of homeless response services in the greater New Haven area for community developers, elected officials, city planners and business professionals.

My initial interest in this effort was genuine curiosity. What happens when long-established silos are lifted for three hours, as 30 decision-makers of urban, suburban and rural communities ride a bus, eat lunch and talk about what it means to solve homelessness locally?

Many connections were made. Folks in communities without local homeless services shared admiration and gratitude for their municipal neighbors, understanding the reliance one community has on another. A consensus was built on the following:

- People become homeless for many reasons, not just because they have substance use issues or mental illness.

- People become homeless in every municipality in our region but are served in just a few

of the towns.

- The people staffing these agencies are often overworked, underpaid and underappreciated.

I have no qualms about the conclusions noted above. However, I would add one more finding to this list: as homelessness is a housing problem, community developers, city planners and municipal leaders are the most effective people to support long-term, sustainable solutions. Further, how each municipality addresses homelessness also speaks to the wellness and resiliency of that community.

The greatest example I can think of in this intersection between housing and community resiliency is workforce development. Connecticut was one of only two states in the Northeast that experienced a decrease in the civilian labor force in the past year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Connecticut experienced the greatest absolute decrease



JENNIFER  
PARADIS

in the civilian labor force, second only to New Hampshire in terms of percentage. In navigating through and out of the COVID-19 pandemic, employers have reconciled wages, benefits and worksite flexibility only to meet the same conclusions as the homeless response system. We are all dependent on the accessibility of our housing market, and the availability of affordable housing is essential to a growing workforce.

Of the households served by Beth-El Center, 80 percent have income; 40 percent of these households fall into the category of "earned income," while others receive income through Social Security and/or Social Security disability benefits. The 40 percent of households who are currently employed reflect our general population; they are our emergency first responders, our teachers, our child care workers, and our nonprofit employees.

Most recently, an emergency room nurse reached out to Beth-El Center for housing

assistance as she is struggling to maintain housing in Milford while working her "dream job." According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition 2023 Out of Reach Study, earners must make at least \$35.19 per hour for a one-bedroom and \$41.15 per hour to afford a two-bedroom rental in Milford. The average ER nurse salary in Connecticut, according to Salary.com, is \$83,247, or \$40 per hour.

Workforce development and affordable housing are inextricably linked, and I find it totally amazing that on our SCRCOG tour last week, representatives of these key systems sat next to each other, learned from one another and focused their attentions on the most vulnerable in our communities. For those three hours, we dreamed of the same future – one where every community is equipped to solve homelessness.

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

## Orange Board of Finance

# The Economy Weathered 2023. But What About 2024?

To the surprise of many economists and leading financial firms on Wall Street, it is fair to say that the 2023 performance of the US economy exceeded expectations. Gross domestic product finished strong with a 3.3 percent growth rate in the fourth quarter, despite experiencing the highest level of monetary tightening in over 40 years. Monetary tightening ultimately contributed to bringing inflation down from a high of 9.1 percent in June 2022 to 3.5 percent in December 2023.

The economy finished strong despite geopolitical factors, including the wars in Ukraine and Israel and three out of four of the largest commercial bank failures in US history. Consumer spending within the fourth quarter was surprisingly strong despite all the economic headwinds. According to MasterCard, from Nov. 1 to Dec. 23, US retail sales were up 3.1 percent and online sales were up 6.3 percent.

So what's in store for 2024? Will a recession materialize? So far Fed policymakers have penciled in three rate cuts for 2024 to get inflation down to 2 percent. The markets will ultimately dictate whether future rate cuts will be needed to close the gap between nominal and real rates, with the latter factoring in the level of inflation.

How will the fiscal reality of the national debt, which now stands at \$34 trillion, impact investors, banks and global investors? Will it drive the economy into a recession? It's hard to believe, but the national debt has increased by \$14 trillion dollars in just the last three years. The US Treasury has taken extraordinary measures to keep paying the government's bills, but the well could run dry sooner than later. Debt growth continues to outpace economic growth (as measured by GDP), and has already reached 100 percent of GDP. It will reach 118 percent by the end of this decade.

Each American citizen now shoulders the burden of \$100,000 per taxpayer attributed to the national debt. Unfortunately, there has not been much progress or agreement within Congress to address the need for balanced budgets. The federal budget is largely made up of mandatory entitlements, with close to 46 percent of the budget consisting just of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Social Security is expected to grow to 24 percent of the budget by 2028 as an aging population pushes up the costs of both programs.



KEVIN  
MCNABOLA

Only about one third of federal spending is labeled as discretionary, which includes defense spending. Discretionary spending requires congressional approval through annual appropriations bills. The Congressional Budget Office also expects that net interest on debt payments will account for 13 percent of spending by 2028, up from 10 percent in 2023.

When federal government spending exceeds revenue, creating a budget deficit, the US is forced to cover the gap by selling securities, such as Treasury bonds. The national debt is the accumulation of all past deficits and the interest owed on the resulting debt. Measuring the debt as a share of GDP allows for comparing the level of debt over time relative to the size of the US economy and for comparisons with other countries' debt-to-GDP ratios.

How will the Connecticut economy fare in 2024? It is hard to believe that the state's economy only grew 1 percent from 2017 to 2022 when you factor in real adjusted growth inflation; however, there is optimism with a 4.7 percent growth in GDP for the third

quarter of 2023 that we should see continued growth for 2024, since the nation's and Connecticut's economies are highly integrated – particularly within financial markets.

Connecticut under Gov. Ned Lamont has also created a business-friendly environment, which has attracted businesses from other states such as New York and Massachusetts. The state is now finally on a solid fiscal trajectory, and has begun to take steps to reduce the tax burden on residents and businesses. Based on Connecticut's solid financial results over the past six years, the governor and the legislature need to work together this year and continue implementing additional permanent reductions to the income tax and corporate and business taxes, which will ultimately attract new business investment within our state.

Connecticut is finally on the path to fiscal sustainability, so now is the perfect time to implement tax cuts and hold the line on additional spending.

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

## The Rotary Club of Orange

# Rotary's Four-Way Test

A group of students from Amity Regional High School will compete on Saturday, Feb. 24 in the first round of Rotary's Four-Way Speech Contest. This is a public speaking competition in which students get a chance to describe and promote a cause or viewpoint that is important to them as framed in the context of Rotary's Four-Way Test.

Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor created the "test" in 1932 when he assumed charge of the Chicago-based Club Aluminum company, which was facing bankruptcy. From its founding in that city, Rotary included the promotion of high ethical standards in the business lives of members. But Taylor's four simple questions guided that company's directors and employees into a new culture for advertising, production, sales and service to both customers and suppliers. The practices and resultant culture change are credited with saving the company.

Taylor was a business executive and a laureate member of the American National Business Hall of Fame. He also was a civic and Rotary leader. Rotary International in 1943 adopted the four questions Taylor used to guide the corporate turnaround as its international standard for business ethics. Taylor awarded RI the copyright in 1954 when he served as its

worldwide president.

Since then, this guide has been translated into more than 100 languages and shared in thousands of ways. In English, it boils down to 24 words: (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 Four-Way Test and motto of "service above self" are two pillars of Rotary membership that help frame club decision-making and hopefully guide the professional activities of club members. The Four-Way test is relatively easily applied in many business transactions, but in the Four-Way Speech Contest, many high school students take the next demanding step of trying to see how it might be invoked in social, political, economic and even personal scenarios. This is much more challenging, as a win-win approach in business transactions can also devolve into winner-take-all in business or other human interactions.

Taylor was a devout Methodist and co-founder of the Christian Worker's Foundation.



DAN  
MAY

He also served on the boards of a number of organizations serving youth, including Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and Youth for Christ. In addition to "The Four Way Test," he authored "The Ten Marks of a Good Citizen" and "The Twelve Marks of a True Christian" as attempts to reach beyond business transactions solely. These other guides have not received the renown as the Four-Way Test – maybe because there are too many qualifying marks in each or because they are too challenging for most to meet. However, Taylor's ethical values are intrinsic to the Four-Way test and members of all faith traditions have adopted the test itself globally.

If you want to see how the next generation approaches a broad range of ethical dilemmas in the context of the Four-Way Test questions, consider joining the Rotary Club of Orange from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at Case Memorial Library. Club members will judge the presentations by Amity High students as each student delivers a prepared speech from memory that is about seven

minutes long. Their choice of topics is compelling and the presentations first-rate. Taylor would be proud, and you will leave the competition feeling uplifted as well.

Winners from this opening round move on to semi-final and final competitions at the district level, where they will be competing in April with students vetted by Rotary clubs from across coastal Connecticut. Similar competitions are occurring around the world at this time.

Rotary's intent is transparent – to plant the seeds of structured, ethical decision-making in young adults as they decide on career and other choices. Taylor's successful revitalization of that bankrupt company took about a decade, as it required a complete corporate culture change. About a decade from now, these young women and men will be well into accelerating professional and personal lives. Hopefully, they will retain some of Taylor's 24 words of wisdom to both use and share with others.

*Dan May can be contacted at [dmay@newhaven.edu](mailto:dmay@newhaven.edu).*



### Fred Wolfe Park (Continued From 1)

the road between the two largest parking lots so that the route to each would be totally separate.

The final, most drastic concept shown – dubbed Concept 3a – appeared to get the most favorable response from those in attendance.

Celtruda stressed that each of the concepts was really the equivalent of a rough sketch and should not be taken as finalized in any sense.

“I caution everybody, because they look finished,” he said, noting that pencil sketches have largely been replaced by computer renditions. “These are programming concepts. Nothing is set in stone.”

To that end, the other aim of the meeting was to garner input from the residents before creating a final recommendation. And residents had plenty of thoughts, both on the designs and on other aspects of the park.

Several speakers noted that Fred Wolfe Park has no restrictions on entry at night, and that cars enter at all times, sometimes sitting in the dark in view of people’s homes.

“I was just curious if there were any plans for fencing or gating off those entrances

at certain times,” asked John Bakis, who lives near the park and echoed a suggestion several other speakers mentioned. “Once people know that it’s a spot that’s dark, and there’s no lighting – not that we want lighting there, because we don’t. But we just want to know that the park is closed.”

Some of the suggestions and questions went to aspects of the park that were outside of the scope of the BL project. James O’Connor, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, responded to numerous questions by pointing to the park’s master plan, which was completed in 2013 and has not been updated despite all the changes that have taken place on the land in the last decade.

“We need that master study plan redone,” O’Connor told the audience at one point. “That’s something that we need to ask for funding for. That would be the next step, as well as going ahead with these additions.”

Resident Nick Calcaterra, along with several others, noted that the master plan needs to be revisited so that another entrance to the park – long planned but never built – can finally come to fruition.

“Whatever plan we come up with,” he said, “we need to take into account that there needs to be another entrance at some point, and whatever design we select shouldn’t preclude another entrance from coming in.”

### Orange Garden Club Holds Silver Tea



One of the designs presented by BL Companies on Jan. 24 that would reroute the road around the playscape and separate the two largest parking lots in Fred Wolfe Park. Photo by Brandon T. Bisceglia.

### Orange Lions Club Offering Mini Grants

The Orange Lions Club will provide a limited number of mini grants to eligible community organizations and/or individuals in 2024. The program is intended to provide funds to worthy causes and activities in Orange that might not otherwise be funded.

The blank applications for the community mini grants program are now available at High Plains Community Center, in the Community Services Department and at the Case Memorial Library, as well as from any

Orange Lion.

Completed applications are due to be submitted to the Orange Lions Club no later than Feb. 29. All Orange nonprofit clubs and related nonprofit organizations, individual Orange residents and Orange government entities are eligible to apply. The recipients of Orange Lions mini grants will be announced in March after the selection committee completes its review of all timely applications.

The Garden Club of Orange’s held its annual holiday luncheon, The Silver Tea, on Dec. 12. As part of the civic nature of the event, donations from members were collected and then the amount matched through the club’s general fund with a total of \$400 donated to the Orange Community Assistance Program. The tea also included floral designs by club members with the theme of “Walking in a Winter Wonderland.” Designs were evaluated by National Garden Club accredited flower show judges, and blue ribbons were awarded to members Diana Defillippo (top) and Diane Geary (bottom). To learn more about the club, visit [gardenclubfororangect.com](http://gardenclubfororangect.com). Photos courtesy of the Garden Club of Orange.

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## Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

# Chamber Had Record-Breaking Achievements In 2023

Across Milford and West Haven, the regional business community is experiencing a transformative journey led by the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. With an impressive milestone of surpassing 600 members, the chamber has not only demonstrated its resilience but has also become a powerhouse driving digital engagement and community building.

### Record Digital Engagement

In an era where the digital realm shapes business landscapes, the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce has embraced innovation wholeheartedly. Throughout 2023, the chamber witnessed record-breaking digital engagement, leveraging online platforms to connect businesses, entrepreneurs and the local community. From virtual networking events to insightful webinars, the chamber has proven that it understands the importance of a robust online presence in fostering collaboration and growth.

The chamber's commitment to digital excellence has not only facilitated communication among its members but has also positioned Milford and West Haven as dynamic and forward-thinking communities. Social media

campaigns, interactive forums and engaging content have become the pillars of the chamber's strategy, driving unprecedented levels of participation and creating a vibrant digital hub for local businesses.

### Surpassing 600 Members: A Testament to Trust

Exceeding the 600-member mark is a testament to the trust and confidence that businesses place in the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. This milestone signifies a united front, where businesses, irrespective of size or sector, come together under the chamber's umbrella to strengthen their collective voice and enhance their growth prospects.

Small and medium-sized enterprises have found a powerful ally in the chamber, which has tailored its initiatives to address their unique needs. By fostering an environment where businesses can network, share resources and collaborate, the chamber has become a driving force behind the success of local enterprises.

### Looking Forward to 2024: Building Community, Supporting Local Business, and



MICHAEL  
MOSES

### Driving Tourism

As we step into 2024, the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce is poised for even greater achievements. The chamber's vision extends beyond numerical milestones, focusing on the holistic development of the communities we represent.

Building community: The chamber recognizes the importance of a strong and connected community. Initiatives centered around community engagement, cultural events and collaborative projects will take center stage, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents and businesses alike.

Supporting local business: With an unwavering commitment to small and medium-sized enterprises, the chamber will continue to provide resources, advocacy and networking opportunities that empower local businesses. Workshops, training sessions and cost-saving collaborations will be at the forefront of initiatives designed to boost the resilience and success of businesses in the region.

Driving tourism: Understanding the econom-

ic impact of tourism, the chamber will actively promote Milford and West Haven as must-visit destinations. By showcasing local attractions, supporting tourism-related businesses and advocating for tourism-friendly policies, the chamber aims to attract visitors, contributing to the overall prosperity of the region.

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce's journey through 2023 reflects a commitment to growth, innovation and community building. As we look forward to 2024, the chamber stands as a beacon of support for local businesses, a driving force for community development and a catalyst for tourism that showcases the unique charm and opportunities that Milford has to offer. Together, the chamber and its members are shaping a future where collaboration, digital excellence and community strength converge for the prosperity of all.

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

## Foodie Foursome

# High-Quality Sushi Comes To Orange

I'm sure if you live anywhere near Milford or Orange you will remember the old Jacob Marley's, and more recently, Prime 16 on the Post Road near Orange Center Road. The transformation into the new restaurant, Sayori, is incredible and a welcome addition to the culinary landscape of the area. Asian restaurants have become increasingly popular, and this Japanese establishment will soon become a favorite.

While it is billed as a sushi restaurant, it is so much more, with awesome choices for those not looking for sushi. It features upscale ambience with a sushi bar where you can watch the top-quality, fresh ingredients transformed into your "sushi experience." The seating in the main dining room is comfortable, spacious and features a three-projector panoramic wall of continuously changing images. The affordable menu blends Japanese tradition and new techniques in a way that is truly appealing to all – a delectable, delicious dining experience.

Sayori is an extraordinary group of creative itamae (highly skilled sushi chefs) with decades of training and varied experience.

On this evening, Cindy and I were joined by Hannah and Eric, my daughter and son-in-law. Hannah was the first person to introduce me to the world of sushi, so they were the perfect dining partners for this excursion.

We started with both cold and hot appetizers of beef and seafood choices. The first two were the beef negimaki and rock shrimp tempura. The negamaki was thin-sliced beef wrapped around fresh scallion, broiled

and seasoned with a tasty teriyaki sauce. The tenderness of the beef juxtaposed against the crunch of the scallion was a treat. The crispy tempura batter on the tender shrimp, lightly fried and dipped in their spicy yet subtle mayo, was like what is said about potato chips: you can't eat just one.

The last two apps were the Angus short rib and lobster bites. The short rib was slowly braised with Japanese barbecue sauce. It was fall-apart tender with a slow-braised taste and served atop a thick and creamy korokke (the Japanese name for potato croquettes). The outside of the korokke was a perfect golden-brown that gave a wonderful "crunch," all drizzled with more sauce. The lobster bites were presented on small, bite-size pieces of toast. These creative stacks were visually appealing and constructed to balance the flavors. A nice mound of guacamole served as the base with chunks of fresh Maine lobster placed on top of that and garnished with tobiko and fresh herbs.

Before our entrees we had a green salad. While it was a simple salad, the ginger dressing was refreshing. We started off with a selection of yellowtail and masago-tuna sashimi with shredded daikon radish (a tender winter Japanese radish). The simple presentation and sizable thick-cut pieces were expertly sliced, presenting the tenderness, freshness and delicate flesh of the fish



STEVE  
COOPER

by showing off the connective tissues and layers of muscle fiber that make for its delicate texture and incredible taste.

Our next dish was the combination dinner under the hibachi entrees. This was the juiciest Angus steak and succulent sea scallops we have had in some time. The scallops were huge, tender and cooked so well that they melted in your mouth. The hibachi preparation of the proteins combined with large shrimp, mushrooms, zucchini, carrot, broccoli and onion, black pepper, soy and teriyaki sauce was perfect. It was served with yum yum sauce and ginger sauce and made for one of our favorite dishes.

Our final choices were easy. We kicked off with classic rolls, one with spicy crunchy salmon and the other with spicy crunchy yellowtail. These raw hand rolls were expertly done with a nice sticky rice and the freshest of fish. The salmon was minced and rolled with avocado, encased in the wall of rice, cut into pieces and presented on its sides with nice-sized pieces of salmon draped over each piece. The yellowtail was presented as pieces in a more classic manner, showing off the pinkish color. It had a clean, refreshing taste. These were both served with wasabi and pickled ginger.

The last roll was one from their creative signature rolls. We went with the TNT roll. The spicy toro was rolled inside with avocado and minced toro and wasabi dressing.

While toro is tuna, and comes from the fatty part of the belly, it has perfect flavor, melt-in-your-mouth texture and is full of nutritional value. It is more rare and expensive, as it is such a small portion of every tuna.

Sayori has many creative desserts from which to choose. We went with the fried ice cream. We had the vanilla, which was surrounded with a butter poundcake and tempura flash fried. It was plated with fresh fruits and whipped cream. We also had the ultimate chocolate cake – a velvety chocolate mousse between layers of chocolate decadence and moist chocolate butter cake and cookie crust.

The passion of Sayori's Japanese culinary creations carries through to their dining areas which are casual, hip, cool and fun. Having had sushi in various parts of the country, I believe that California has some of the best anywhere. Sayori would hold up to that standard. Unlike many seafood restaurants you cannot tell how the seafood is being prepared due to the freshness of their seafood and sourcing purveyors.

Sayori is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner. It is located at 464 Boston Post Rd. in Orange. Call 203-298-9100 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.*

## Milford BOE

### (Continued From 1)

multiple accounts to find savings to defray the costs."

Board member Mike Smith pointed out that the school system's infrastructure is aging, with the most recently-built school, Joseph A. Foran High School, having been erected in the 1970s.

"While there are \$723,500 of requested facility upgrades in this budget, there's a list of \$8.7 million" that the schools' want for facilities, Smith said. "And so we're doing a pretty good job of making do with what we have."

Prete at one point put forward a motion to save \$712,800 by cutting the number of instructional coaches at each elementary school from four to two, reducing the total number of coaches to 16.

"This will provide confidence and show a good-faith effort that the Board of Education has looked for efficiencies in these difficult inflationary times, as everyone is doing more with less in their own personal and family budgets," Prete said of her proposal. It was ultimately rejected by the Democratic majority.

Several coaches spoke in defense of their positions during the public comment period.

Sara Kaminski, who works as a coach and is also one of the cofounders of the Room 17 math tutoring service in Milford, said she felt coaches were perpetually undervalued.

"I've had to defend my role as a coach every single year," she said. She described how, when she entered the Milford education system 21 years prior, each classroom was doing its own, different thing, with "all wheels spinning, but in isolation." She laid out a long list of ways in which coaches

help at all levels of the system, from administration to students.

"Ultimately, coaches are the cogs that keep all wheels moving in the same direction toward student growth," she said.

Superintendent Anna Cutaia said one of the main roles of the coaches was to help the teachers become even better at what they do.

"We look at our adults as learners as well," she said, "so part of this includes helping teachers along their own professional growth journey."

When asked how she would justify the coaches to those who might think they're unnecessary, Cutaia described them as essential.

"If this board, this administration, this school community believes in the vision of a learner, high-quality instruction, the equity framework and the relationships

framework – if that is at the core of what we believe, then we would not be talking about the value of coaches anymore," Cutaia said. "They're critical to getting that into every classroom."

The school budget has to go before the Board of Finance and the Board of Aldermen before being finalized in the spring.

It is likely to face significant hurdles as it goes through the next rounds. Last year's budget ask of \$106.48 million was initially reduced by \$1.8 million by the Board of Finance. Cutaia predicted dire impacts from such a cut, including the possibility of closing a school or gutting popular programs to make ends meet. The Board of Aldermen ultimately restored most of the funding. It was also the first year that the total city budget resulted in a mill rate increase for taxpayers, after years of falling tax rates.



Travel Matters

# Regent Seven Seas Grandeur Review

One of the best perks of my job is getting invited to sail on inaugural sailings of new ships. I have just returned from the Grandeur. What a beautiful ship. It carries only 592 guests, with all Veranda suites starting at 307 square feet, on up to the Regent Suite – the largest suite at sea – at 4,443 square feet.

Regent is a true all-inclusive product, from air to beverages to specialty dining to excursions. It also includes WiFi and gratuities, of course. Business class air is included from most major gateways for international sailings. And they just introduced two game changers: multi-night city stays on some itineraries, and complimentary three-night stays pre or post cruise on many sailings.

I stayed in a Superior Veranda, which had a living area, king-size bed (one of the most comfortable ever), large bath with separate shower and bathtub and two sinks. I enjoyed having breakfast on the veranda with white

linen tablecloth and silver service. The

Concierge Veranda is identical but offers a bit more in perks, including priority excursion and dining reservations. Walk-in closets are included in all verandas and more storage for your items than in any five-star hotel. That is what Regent Grandeur is – a floating luxury five-star hotel.

One of the standout spaces onboard is the Constellation Lounge in the front of the ship with sweeping views and comfortable seating. A sizeable library is located nearby with puzzles available each day for guests.

The standout specialty restaurant is Pacific Rim – both in terms of design (cherry-blossom tree upon arrival to the restaurant) and menu. It was outstanding and required



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

no additional charge. The main restaurant, Compass Rose, is an art deco design statement, simply beautiful and elegant, with Versace place settings and lobster on the menu at no additional charge.

Every day they offer teatime in the Grandeur Lounge. While I was onboard, I enjoyed their chocoholic teatime during which they served a tempting array of treats with a solid chocolate guitar and wraparound keyboard as part of the display. There is a culinary arts kitchen with cooking classes onboard as well.

Entertainment ranged from a musical top hits dance revue in the state-of-the-art theater to a four-piece jazz band in the smaller lounge after the main show. The second night they had a tribute show to female mu-

sic icons followed by a late-night dance party. The casino is fairly large for such a small ship and has everything from slots to poker to blackjack to roulette.

There is a serious art collection onboard this ship, starting with the commissioned fabergé egg, “Journey in Jewels” – the first and only fabergé egg to reside

permanently at sea. There is a digital art tour available through the Regent mobile app, which is very well done. For relaxation and rejuvenation, this is a perfect choice for travelers.

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

Book Reviews

# The Frozen River By Ariel Lawhon

How could I not love a book that starts off, “The body was floating downstream”? This had me engrossed from the first sentence and didn’t let go until I finished.

Midwife Martha Ballard’s medical skills are called upon when a body is discovered in a frozen river. It is quickly discovered that the deceased was an unscrupulous member of her small 1700s New England community. This discovery leads to a lot of questions and various complications for Martha and her family.

Told in alternating time frames, the story delineates the development of hostilities

between Martha, her husband Ephraim and the town’s judge, Joseph North. When North and other town figures are accused of rape, Martha does whatever is necessary to ensure that justice is served and the victim’s voice is heard.

Based on the diary of the real Martha Ballard, this book is remarkable in many ways. The writing is captivating and presents a clear picture of the challenges facing a group of colonies striving to become a new



CARMELA DEVITO

nation.

Martha is a formidable, remarkable woman and a tireless advocate for her patients. Her skills and attention to detail as well as her knowledge of plants and their medicinal properties and uses is amazing. She is strong willed, feisty and not afraid to speak her mind. In today’s terminology she would definitely be described as a feminist.

Martha’s marriage to Ephraim was outstanding given the time and circumstances.

Rather than treat his wife as property (which was the standard as women had limited, if any, rights), Ephraim respected her profession and supported her emotionally as well as physically if it was warranted.

I absolutely loved this. It is an early candidate for my favorite book of 2024.

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

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Your Health

# Understanding The Function Of The Thyroid

During the past week, I was instructing medical students on how to examine the thyroid gland. It dawned on me that January is recognized as Thyroid Awareness Month, aimed at increasing awareness about thyroid-related illnesses and their implications for individuals.

Two of the most common thyroid disorders are hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism. They often present with subtle symptoms that may not be detected. Therefore, Thyroid Awareness Month encourages individuals to be proactive about their health, promoting early detection and timely treatment.

The thyroid hormones, primarily thyroxine and triiodothyronine, play crucial roles in regulating various physiological processes in the body. The thyroid gland, which is located in the neck, produces these hor-

mones, and their effects are widespread throughout the body.

Thyroid hormones are essential for proper growth and development, especially during fetal development and childhood. They influence the development of the nervous system, bone formation and overall physical growth.

Thyroid hormones contribute to the regulation of body temperature by influencing heat production and dissipation. They help maintain a stable internal body temperature within a normal range.

They also have a significant impact on the cardiovascular system. They influence heart rate, cardiac contractility and blood vessel function. An imbalance in thyroid hormone



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

levels can lead to changes in blood pressure and heart function.

Thyroid hormones regulate lipid metabolism, including cholesterol levels and influence glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity. Abnormal thyroid function may contribute to alterations in blood sugar levels.

Thyroid hormones are crucial for normal brain function. They play a role in cognitive function, mood regulation and overall mental well-being. Insufficient thyroid hormone levels can lead to cognitive impairment and mood disturbances. Furthermore, thyroid hormones play a role in reproductive health, influencing menstrual regularity in women. Thyroid disorders, par-

ticularly hypothyroidism, can affect fertility and pregnancy outcomes.

Hormonal imbalances – either excessive or insufficient thyroid hormone production – can lead to a range of health issues and require medical attention for diagnosis and management. This can prevent the progression of thyroid disorders and mitigate the risk of complications, such as cardiovascular issues, fertility problems and metabolic imbalances.

By increasing awareness, individuals are empowered to recognize potential signs of thyroid dysfunction early on and seek medical attention.

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

Wine Talk

# Ice Wines And Other Canadian Winners

Canada is known for making wonderful ice wines in the European tradition. This is where they allow the grapes to freeze on the vines, which concentrates the sweetness.

Times are changing. Although ice wines are still being produced and are internationally known, several other European varietals are being produced and some terrific wine regions have been recognized.

Canada's primary wine growing areas include the Niagara Peninsula in southern Ontario and Okanagan Valley in southern British Columbia. In the past 10 years other regions in Quebec and Nova Scotia have produced award winners. Wineries seem to be opening up all over Canada.

Not as well-known stateside are wines

from Similkameen Valley, which is located next to Okanagan Valley in British Columbia. Also, Lake Erie North Shore and Prince Edward County in Ontario have started to produce some big winners.

Canada boasts over 600 wineries and over 3,000 acres dedicated to wine production.

Ice wine is still Canada's big winner. The freezing of the grapes concentrates the sugar, acid and berry flavors in the grape. This results in intense, highly concentrated flavors. This is what Canadian ice wines are known for. They are generally made from Vidal,



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

Riesling and Cabernet Franc.

Over 200 wineries in Canada are making sparkling wines. Many of them are making them in the traditional method, which is how wines are made in the Champagne region of France. The sparklers are gaining international notoriety and the quality and wine making techniques are excellent.

Canada is still a relatively new producer of drier wines. There are several wineries in Canada making Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah and Cabernet. Most of these are grown in Ontario and British Columbia. They are

getting better and better.

On one of our cold winter nights, try some Canadian wines. You will be glad you did.

*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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Running

# Break Up Those Groundhog Days With Exercise

Famous groundhog Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his burrow and did not see his shadow, predicting an early spring this year.

People have been referencing Groundhog Day as living the same the same day over and over, as depicted in the movie by that name. Groundhog Day is just one day, just a point in time. Spring is on the horizon.

Even if there were six more weeks of winter, that is no excuse to crawl back into our burrow and hibernate.

Our schedules are busy and it's hard to find time and motivation to get out and exercise, even though we know it is vital to both physical and mental health.

Maybe it would help to know what time is best to exercise. It's personal, whether you are a morning person or better late in the day.

There is a case for working out in the morning. First, you get your workout done and over before you even start your day. This means you will begin your day with your en-

dorphins and a good feeling you have accomplished something before 9 a.m. That's more than some people accomplish all day long.

Studies show that walking briskly for 45 minutes increases metabolism, which means you burn calories throughout the day.

While morning is a great time to get up and out, there are also benefits to exercising in the afternoon. Your body temperature increases throughout the day, and between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. your body is the most ready and efficient to take a brisk walk.

Some prefer working out at night. While it may disrupt sleep for some, others have said they have a better sleep quality and sleep longer.

What time is best? While studies reflect different benefits to different times, one thing is clear: getting up and moving is im-



CATHY BRADLEY

portant, any time you do it. What really matters is finding the time of day that works for you, fits your schedule and that you can stick to.

By keeping your regimen consistent, at the same time every day, you will make better gains. Make it a positive. If you plan a reward after you exercise you start to develop a habit. It becomes a ritual, a part of your day. Entice yourself by setting up a reward after you exercise. You will

look forward to the exercise because you know that the reward is waiting. It does not have to be anything large. It can be simple, like a bubble bath or a cup of tea with a favorite treat. It just needs to be a routine that gives you something to look forward to that gets you out the door.

Let's break up the monotony of "groundhog days."

Like Groundhog Day, I am back running the Boston Marathon and raising money for charity. My reward is the goal of completing 26.2 miles and raising money for cancer and early and better detection. Some cancers are still difficult to diagnose. The better and earlier the detection, the higher percentage of people will be cured. I will have a fundraiser March 23 at High Plains Community Center with the John Fogerty Tribute Project, a Credence Clearwater Revival cover band. It will be great fun. I am also a great baker, so there may be my famous apple pie for sale or homemade chocolate chip cookies. Stay tuned.

You can also provide a small donation to DETECTOGETHER LLC by mail to Cathy Bradley, 554 Carriage Dr, Orange CT 06477.

Cathy Bradley can be reached at [cathy@ccenterprises.com](mailto:cathy@ccenterprises.com).

## Registration Open For Energize Connecticut eesmarts Student Contest

Registration is open for the 19th annual eesmarts student contest, run by Energize Connecticut, which is sponsored by energy companies Eversource and Orange-based Avangrid subsidiaries United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas.

The contest invites Connecticut students in grades K-12 to answer grade level-specific prompts on how they would promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable solutions.

This year, students in grades K-8 are asked to submit their entries in the form of a poster (grades K-2), limerick (grade 3),

outdoor billboard (grade 4), fictional story with an energy-saving character (grade 5), persuasive letter (grade 6), comic strip (grade 7) or social media post (grade 8).

Students in grades 9-12 will produce a persuasive image in words or pictures, such as a short poem (125 words or less) or cartoon strip (12 cells or less) that advocates for an energy topic. Entries will be evaluated based on scientific validity and concise and convincing imagery.

"To see the creativity and critical thinking displayed by Connecticut students who participate in this annual contest is always inspiring to me," said Frank Reynolds,

president and CEO of United Illuminating, Southern Connecticut Gas and Connecticut Natural Gas. "I look forward to reviewing this year's submissions and seeing these students' commitment to helping us reduce our emissions and further the clean energy transition. Our students are our future, and the products of contests like this one make me confident we're in good hands."

"The eesmarts student contest has asked students throughout Connecticut to use their imagination to address critical energy issues by developing their own solutions that will help bring us closer to a clean energy future," said Tilak Subrahmanian,

vice president of energy efficiency and electric mobility for Eversource. "I look forward to seeing what our young minds bring to the table this year."

Contest registration is open until March 22. Project submissions are due on March 29. All work must be completed by the individual submitting the entry. No group projects are being accepted this year.

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

For more information about the contest, visit [EnergizeCT.com/student-contest](http://EnergizeCT.com/student-contest).

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### Kennedy Announces Run For Fourth Term



Kennedy.

State Rep. Kathy Kennedy, who is serving her third term in the Connecticut General Assembly representing the 119th House District covering portions of Milford and Orange, has announced she plans to run for another term this November.

Kennedy has built a reputation for her bipartisanship, working with both sides of the political aisle to promote important policies like improved mental health for children, additional protections for domestic violence victims and working for better health care outcomes for women.

Kennedy currently serves on the legislative Public Health, Appropriations and Education committees. While serving

on the budget-writing Appropriations Committee, Kennedy helped guide through a state budget that included the largest tax cut for state residents in Connecticut history.

She is currently the head House Republican on the Transportation Committee and negotiated a new law which calls for the installation of wrong-way driving detection systems on at least 120 high-risk exit ramps. The law also calls for a public awareness campaign about the growing problem while requiring the Department of Transportation to provide a grant to the University of Connecticut to analyze the effectiveness of directional rumble strips.

Kennedy also serves as a member of the bipartisan Women's Caucus, the Coastal Caucus, the I/DD caucus for the those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the EMS/Fire Caucus. Additionally, Kennedy serves on the Social Emotional Learning & School Climate Workgroup to help educators and schools meet the mental health needs of Connecticut students. She is a member of the Endometriosis Working Group and the Breast Cancer Awareness Working Group, as well as the Animal Advocacy Caucus.

Kennedy has been elected this year by her female peers across the country to be the Connecticut state director of Women in Government.

"I love what I do and I want to continue representing the people of Milford and Orange," Kennedy said. "When I look at a piece of legislation and before I vote, I inquire on whether the policy change positively or negatively affects my constituents, and vote accordingly. I always try to put my district first."

### Orange Scholarship Fund Accepting Applications

The Orange Scholarship Fund Association is now accepting applications for several scholarships that it is offering to graduating seniors from Orange.

Among the awards is the Ashlie Krakowski Memorial Scholarship of \$5,000. This scholarship is given to a student who intends to pursue a career in health care or a related health care field.

Applicants must meet criteria for

receiving scholarships, which include financial need, academic achievement, community service and leadership roles in organizations and activities.

Application information is available through high school guidance departments, through the Orange Scholarship Fund Association Facebook page or by emailing info@orangescholarshipfund.com. The deadline for applications is April 22.

### AMSO Students Fill Stockings For Veterans



Students at the Amity Middle School Orange held its annual Stockings for Soldiers community outreach program in December, with students, staff and families of AMSO sending in various toiletry and snack items that were put into stockings and delivered on Dec. 22 to the VA Hospital in West Haven. Seventh grade teacher Janine Arents has helped run this drive every year since its beginning. Over 776 items were donated that went into over 25 stockings, and student wrote over 125 letters and cards to veterans, which were enough to include a letter or card of gratitude in every stocking. From left: AMSO students Eniola Taiwo, Azka Amir and Nava Ismail-Beigi. Photo by Janine Arents.

### St. Mary School Applications Open

Applications to St. Mary School in Milford for prekindergarten and kindergarten for the 2024-2025 school year have opened to the public. Visit

saintmaryschoolmilford.org for more information. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, and classes fill quickly.



## Beth-El Gets New Chief Development Officer



Popilowski.

Beth-El Center homeless shelter and community kitchen in Milford announced today the hiring of new Chief Development Officer Richard Popilowski.

With a career of over 35 years working in the nonprofit industry, Popilowski has spent the last eight years with the Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts as its director of principal and major gifts, chief development

officer and director of the capital campaign to build the new Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut. He has generated millions of dollars for the organizations he has worked for, including Fairfield University, Bridgeport Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital, Nantucket Hospital, Milford Hospital, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and the Connecticut Burns Care Foundation through major gifts, annual and planned giving, events, grants and capital campaigns.

As Beth-El Center's chief development officer, Popilowski will be responsible for creating a comprehensive development program that expands the center's fundraising activities. He is taking over for previous Director of Development Troy Gonda, who recently departed to pursue a new endeavor in the Waterbury area. Gonda spent the past 18 months initiating the center's development and gifts operations, organizing and growing its donor database and coordinating fundraising projects.

"Troy's impact on the whole Beth-El Center community will be long-lasting and we are so grateful for the time and expertise he committed to us," Beth-El Executive Director Jenn Paradis said. "We're excited to welcome Dick to serve as a key member of the center's leadership team to support our growth and development as we plan for our expansion and new building."

## Charter Senior Living Now Managing The Vero At Orange

Senior living management company Charter Senior Living is now the management company of The Vero at Orange. The independent living, assisted living and memory care community will be rebranded as Charter Senior Living of Orange. Charter said it plans to bring its life-enrichment programming, elevated dining program and mission of enhancing the human spirit to the community.

"We are thrilled to add Charter Senior Living of Orange to the Charter family," said Keven Bennema, co-founder and CEO at Charter Senior Living. "It means lifting up the exceptional staff who will be in place at our newest community, and

supporting them with access to Charter's well-established team of respected and experienced leadership who are all committed to their continued success. It means bringing in a supportive culture built upon reliability, loyalty, pride, experience and mutual respect. It means providing seniors with exceptional services and the lifestyle they so richly deserve."

The community, located at 197 Indian River Rd. will become one six under Charter Senior Living's management, including Brookfield and Woodbridge in Connecticut and Danvers, Dartmouth and Dedham in Massachusetts.

**OVFD Auxiliary**  
**EGG MY YARD!**

The Easter Bunny is making their annual trip to Orange!  
New format this year!

- \$15 each, Easter Goody Bags
- \$8 each, Mini Goody Bags
- \$12 each, Easter Baskets with candy filled eggs
- \$15 to Egg your Yard with Easter figures on stakes
- \$15 each, Doggy Bag with bowl, treats, and toys

For detailed information and to sign up visit <https://eggmyyard2024.cheddarup.com>  
Deliveries will be made between March 17th and 23rd, within Orange, CT only  
To contact please email [OVFDAuxiliary@hotmail.com](mailto:OVFDAuxiliary@hotmail.com)  
Deadline: Payment must be received no later than March 7th, 2024  
All proceeds benefit the Orange Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary

### Town of Orange Legal Notice

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec 7-394, there is on file for public inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk, the Auditors report for the Amity Regional School District #5 Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut, this the 19th day of January 2024.

Mary Shaw  
Orange Town Clerk

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FEBRUARY 10th  
At The High Plains Community Center  
Tickets: [MILFORDPERFORMANCECENTER.org](http://MILFORDPERFORMANCECENTER.org)

**February 17th 3 Comedians**  
**MPC COMEDY HOUSE**  
At High Plains Community Center

Howie Mason | Angel Rentas | Donny Salvo

February 10th- Sons of Skynyrd  
February 24th- The Legendary Crystal Ship ~ Doors Tribute ~  
April 6th- Gold6 Rush ~ Neil Young Tribute ~  
April 27th- The Neil Diamond Experience  
[MilfordPerformanceCenter.org](http://MilfordPerformanceCenter.org)



# Obituaries

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

**James Carson Edwards** died on January 3, 2024 at his home in Milford, Connecticut. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**John William Hartigan** passed away peacefully on January 14, 2024, with his loving wife Karin by his side. (Lawrence Funeral Home)



**Gerald Kleinman**, a former resident of Orange, CT, passed away peacefully in his home on January 22, 2024. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



**Janet Bludnicki**, age 72, beloved wife of Dennis Bludnicki, entered into eternal rest on January 23, 2024. (Pistey Funeral Home)



**Susan Ellen (Swift) Farrell**, of Milford, CT, passed away at home on January 15, 2024 surrounded by family, friends and flowers. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Fady Y. Jalaf**, 58, of Milford, beloved husband of Maria (Burns) Jalaf, unexpectedly passed away on January 7, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Carol A. McHugh**, of Milford and West Haven, CT, 69, passed away peacefully on January 25, 2024, with loved ones by her side. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Dennis Buczek**, age 79, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on January 5, 2024 at CT Hospice in Branford, CT. (Pistey Funeral Home)



**Lisa Girard-Cloutier** died unexpectedly on Jan. 12, 2024. She was born June 10, 1963 to Robert and Jean Girard and married her best friend, Robert Cloutier on July 29, 1995.



**Roger F. Hinckley Jr.**, 80, of Milford, beloved husband of Katharine (Roorbach) Hinckley, passed away on February 1, 2024, surrounded by his loving family and beloved music. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Mikita, Craig W.** of Milford, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family, January 8, 2024.



**Margaret Carey Coley**, 75, of Orange, beloved wife of William Booth Coley completed her earthly journey on Friday, January 5, 2024 surrounded by her loving family. (Porto Funeral Home)



**Charles "Grimmy" William Grimshaw**, age 90, of Milford, beloved husband of Kendall Carroll Grimshaw, entered peaceful rest on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Joan C. Johnson**, age 82, beloved wife of Robert Johnson, Sr. of Orange and formerly of Milford, entered peaceful rest on January 30, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Evelyn Mary Miller**, age 94, of Milford, beloved wife of the late David Harold Miller, entered peaceful rest on Jan. 26, 2024 surrounded by her loving family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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# Obituaries

**Dolores Konetchy Harrower Mironchik**, 96, of North Branford died peacefully on Friday January 19, 2024, surrounded by her family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Marolyn Elizabeth Paulis** was born on September 16, 1944 and passed away on February 2, 2024 at age 79. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Janet Marie Rivera**, 63, of Milford, beloved mother of Rachel and Benjamin Kurlander, passed away at home on January 15, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Martha Gallucci Tripodi**, age 60, passed away peacefully on Monday, January 29, 2024 at her home. (Shaughnessey Banks Funeral Home)



**Nicholas P. Mucherino**, age 84, of Milford, beloved husband of Dorothy Stella Mucherino, passed away peacefully on January 12, 2024. (Galello-Luchansky Funeral Home)



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



**Olga Iris Soto-Termini**, age 69, of Milford, entered peaceful rest on December 30, 2023 in Milford Health and Rehabilitation. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Ian Peter Voytek**, 65, of Milford, beloved husband of 21 years to Mari-beth (Clifford) Voytek, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Ronald Arthur Murray**, 68, of Orange, formerly Milford, beloved husband of Diane (Orfino) Murray, passed away peacefully on January 8, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Ronald James Ritchie, Jr.** of Orange, CT, passed away suddenly at his home on January 30th at the age of 80. (Wakelee Memorial Funeral Home)



**Zane A. Spiller**, age 84, beloved husband to Beverly (Berendt) Spiller of Milford entered peaceful rest on January 26, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



**Stanley Harold Weiner**, known to his loved ones as Stan, passed away peacefully on February 1, 2024, in Orange, Connecticut after a long illness. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



**Jorge Alejandro Ospina Restrepo**, 49, formally of West Haven, passed away on January 22, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Dennis Rivera** was born on May 11, 1959 and passed away on January 30, 2024 at age 64. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Trudy Trichter**, 90, beloved wife of the late Irwin Trichter, passed away on January 14, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



**Amelia Walton Williams** of Meriden, CT, beloved wife of Gary P. Gamble III, passed away on January 13, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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