



Milford-Orange Times

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Argentine Restaurant Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce on April 19 celebrated the grand opening of Chimichurri, Connecticut's only Argentine restaurant. The restaurant is located at 2 Schooner Rd. in downtown Milford and features a casual atmosphere. It is a counter service restaurant open for lunch and dinner. Photo by Steve Cooper.

Orange Rotary Donates To Amity STEAM Program



The Rotary Club of Orange in April donated a \$1,000 check toward the STEAM program at Amity Regional High School. From left: Amity Science Chair Alfonso DeMarco, Visual and Performing Art Department Chair Jessica Zamachaj, Rotary Club of Orange past president and current Youth Services Chair Richard Dumbrill and ARHS Principal Andre Hauser. Photo courtesy of the Rotary Club of Orange.

Milford Aldermen Hear Testimony On Ed Budget

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Board of Aldermen heard from education officials during a marathon hearing April 17 to discuss whether potential cuts will be made to the Board of Education's budget for the coming year.

For the second year in a row, the Board of Finance voted to significantly reduce the budget passed by the city's Board of

Education.

The Board of Education put forward a \$111.3 million budget, representing a 4.7 percent increase over the previous year's amount.

The finance board instead approved a 3.44 percent increase during their March 20 meeting, putting the education budget

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Orange Opts To 'Phase In' Revaluation Increases

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The effect of Orange's recent property revaluation on taxpayers will be somewhat muted, at least for now.

The Orange Board of Selectmen at their April 11 meeting approved a recommendation from the Board of Finance to enact a four-year phase-in of the revaluation.

Under the plan, the changes to property values – and therefore tax bills – that resulted from the revaluation will be implemented at 25 percent this year, with

an additional 25 percent added in each subsequent year.

The revaluation – which Connecticut municipalities are required to conduct every five years – showed that the town's grand list rose sharply – by 26 percent overall. Residential property went up the most by far – over 30 percent.

Having a larger grand list would allow the town to drop the mill rate from its current level of 32.31 significantly. But

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Orange Firefighters Dash Up 34 Floors For Fundraiser

By Doug Fenichel



Shannon

A team of Orange volunteer firefighters dashed up 34 floors recently and, although they were wearing full structural firefighting gear, there was no fire at the top of the stairs. Instead, there was hope for curing lung diseases.

The eight firefighters took part in the April 6 Fight for Air fundraiser for the American Lung Association. The event took place at Connecticut's fifth tallest building, Hartford21, a 36-floor residential tower on Trumbull Street in Hartford.

For Capt. Eric Demeraski, who led the team, the relationship between firefighters and lung disease is a natural one.

"As firefighters, lung disease is an occupational hazard we face because of the nasty smoke we deal with," he said. Firefighters must use cylinders of

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Orange Made \$48,000 In Pot Taxes

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Orange reaped a total of \$48,206.18 in tax revenue from recreational marijuana sales during the first three months of operation of the town's only dispensary.

The revenue totals are from December

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New Columnists Page 12 & Page 13



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NEW Awards Over \$17,000 In Scholarships To Area Women



The Network of Executive Women recently awarded over \$17,000 in scholarships to local women who are pursuing non-traditional higher education goals. From left: recipients Sharlim Gonzalez, Dianeysi Zapada, Melissa Zapata, Tatiana Jackson and Leidy Cubillos. Recipient Shirley Edwards is not pictured. Photo courtesy of NEW.

The Network of Executive Women, which is based in Milford, recently awarded over \$17,000 in scholarships to local women who are pursuing non-traditional higher education goals.

Recipients are working toward degrees in a variety of fields, including nursing, pediatric oncology, public health, physical therapy and social work. The awards are made to adult women, not high school students.

In the past two decades, NEW has awarded more than \$200,000 to adult women.

To be eligible, applicants needed to: reside in or attend a post-secondary education program in New Haven or Fairfield counties; demonstrate financial need; have had an interruption of their education; and be returning, continuing or commencing undergraduate schooling or other types of

training to further their educational goals and/or enhance job skills.

The recipients were Sharlim Gonzalez, Dianeysi Zapada, Melissa Zapata, Tatiana Jackson, Leidy Cubillos and Shirley Edwards.

Several of the scholarships awarded were named to honor former and notable members of NEW. This includes the Harriet Cohen Haggerty Memorial Scholarship, named in honor of Harriet Cohen Haggerty with funds donated by the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Donna Marino Memorial Scholarship, named in honor of Donna Marino with funds donated by the Marino family, and Phyllis Holt whose scholarship is funded by NEW to honor her as one of the trailblazers for the organization.

For more information about NEW, visit networkofexecutivewomen.org.

Stew Leonard's May Come To Orange After All

A rumor is circulating in Orange that grocery store chain Stew Leonard's may come to the plaza in town formerly occupied by the Christmas Tree Shops.

The Milford-Orange Times had not received a reply to a request for comment from a Stew Leonard's representative as of Friday.

"We are so excited to hear that Stew Leonard's is possibly coming to Orange. It will be great for us and other small businesses in the area and the entire community," said Renee Mizrahi, owner of Renee's Resale Clothing Outlet. The outlet is located in the plaza.

The storefront formerly filled by the Christmas Tree Shops is now the location of a Bargain House furniture outlet. There is another large vacant building in the plaza that used to be the home of arts and crafts store A.C. Moore.

It would not be first time Stew Leonard's, which was founded in Norwalk, has eyed Orange. The company bought a parcel of land on Marsh Hill Road – not far from the Christmas Tree Plaza – in 1996, but abandoned plans to build there in 2010 after a protracted battle against local opposition that resulted in the state Supreme Court overturning the grocer's wetlands approval.

Orange Lions To Host Dinner Dance

The Orange Lions Club is hosting a casual dinner dance on Sunday, May 19 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the West River Hall, located at 37 Orlando St. in West Haven. The event is titled "Groovy Tunes and Pasta," with all proceeds going to Lions' charities.

Doors open at 4 p.m. for a social hour. A dinner buffet including baked ziti, meatballs, salad, rolls, dessert and soft drinks will be served beginning at 5 p.m. Guests may choose to come dressed in attire from the eras of rock 'n roll, hippie or disco and may bring their own alcoholic beverages if desired. Around 6 p.m. DJ Jazzy Kat will start playing "groovy tunes" dating anywhere from the 1960s to the present, depending on what people want

to dance to, and she'll bring other activities like party dances and trivia. There will also be raffle prizes and gifts. The evening's event wraps up at 9 p.m.

Tickets are \$40 per person, which must be purchased in advance. They are available from any Orange Lions Club member or by calling Marianne or Ken at 203-795-3906.

Proceeds will benefit Lions charities for blindness aid, prevention and eye research. The Orange Lions Club also awards community mini-grants supporting more than a dozen local groups, including services to youths, the Case Memorial Library, the volunteer fire department, police programs and senior services.

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

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Milford Church Celebrates 200 Years, And Longer

By Marilyn May

The bell in the steeple of the First United Church of Christ, Congregational in Milford rang out recently, proclaiming to all gathered that the congregation was marking the 200th anniversary of the present church building that was dedicated in April 1824.

Today's church is the third structure built in almost the same location. The first meeting house was constructed in 1640-41 and the second in 1727-28. Notably, the first two structures had balconies for slaves and indentured servants.

Senior Pastor Rev. Adam Eckhart asked congregants to imagine and reflect on the earliest days of the church and the faith of its founders.

"The people who founded this congregation also founded Milford in 1639. They were Puritans from Hertfordshire County, England, under the leadership of Rev. Peter Prudden, who came to start a new life and Christian community," Eckhart said.

The Hertfordshire group was small. After landing in Boston, they soon sailed on to New Haven where they stayed for one year. During that year, it happened that a church in Wethersfield was temporarily without a pastor, so Rev. Prudden was called to preach there. He became known in that village, and many decided to travel with him when English followers were ready to move to Milford. It is estimated that as many as 200 people followed him in August 1639 along Indian trails until they came to the west bank of the Wepawaug River, just below the waterfall. (Some founders came by schooner with heavy farm equipment and cut lumber ready to construct the first shelters.)

"The plans for this third meetinghouse

were bought for \$25 from David Hoadley, known as 'Connecticut's foremost meetinghouse designer of the period,'" Eckhart said, adding that this classically New England church house was "built in the simple style that the church's Puritan ancestors would likely be proud of. When built, there were no religious symbols in the space."

Carol Brockett LaBrake, chair of the Trustees Ministry, said "Much has changed over 200 years. The church has had to balance the weight of history with current and future needs."

"Congregationalists of yesteryear were against fancy objects and statues in their worship spaces," she continued. In the early 1960s, however, after a renovation of the sanctuary, church leaders agreed to have a large cross placed in the chancel.

"A cross was made by the late Jim Merrill, a church member and builder, with the help of his two co-workers, one Catholic and the other Jewish," she said.

They built a model and installed it to check the size and appearance of what changes would be needed in their final work. It turned out no changes would be needed.

"When the cross was installed," LaBrake said, "there was widespread approval, and the cross has hung here ever since."

In the earliest days of the settlement, Milford was a theocracy. The church and government were one and the same. When disagreements arose on civil matters, issues were settled by leaders whose decisions were based on Bible scriptures. And in all village issues, only male church members could vote. Slowly, practices that were once exclusive became inclusive.

Still, conventional perceptions were deeply rooted. In 1949, H.L. Menchen

wrote "Puritanism - the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."

Today, United Church of Christ churches have the belief that "God is still speaking." It was Jan. 25, 1961, when the church joined the newly formed UCC denomination. However, the word "congregational" was retained as part of the church's name to reflect its founders.

All First Church pastors and associate pastors were men until 2016, when the congregation called Rev. M. Ashley Grant to become associate pastor, the first woman ever to hold that position. Some changes take longer than others. That one took 377 years.

Those who go under the expanding LGBTQIA acronym are part of the church family today. In 2019, a congregational vote affirmed that it was not enough to just say "Everyone is always welcome." Members made what the UCC likes to call an "intentional" vote to exactly spell out what a welcome really means.

Robin Lewis, of the Music Committee, gave a presentation on the role of music, noting that "For the first 175 years of our founding, there was controversy about whether music belonged in worship, what music could be sung, who was good enough to sing it." Later the question became, "Are the new hymns holy enough and so on. In the early 1800s, around the time this meeting house was built," she said, "music was an integral part of worship."

The bicentennial observance included a tour of the sanctuary by Faith Whitsett, a volunteer noted for what she does for the church, who said the sanctuary has what she called a "clear window" style that lets the light in. There is only one window with a stained-glass panel. It shows the 1640



First United Church of Christ, Congregational recently celebrated the bicentennial of its current church building. Photo courtesy of Marilyn May.

meetinghouse. It was donated in 1911 by the Sanford family, whose ancestors were among the founding families.

The rest of the sanctuary is relatively free of ornamentation except for the tiered, many-faceted Waterford glass chandelier that was donated by the late Rev. Dr. Roy Houghten, pastor emeritus, and his wife.

Commenting on the life of today's church members and friends, Eckhart said, "We are blessed to be a part of this history, present and future work of God."

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



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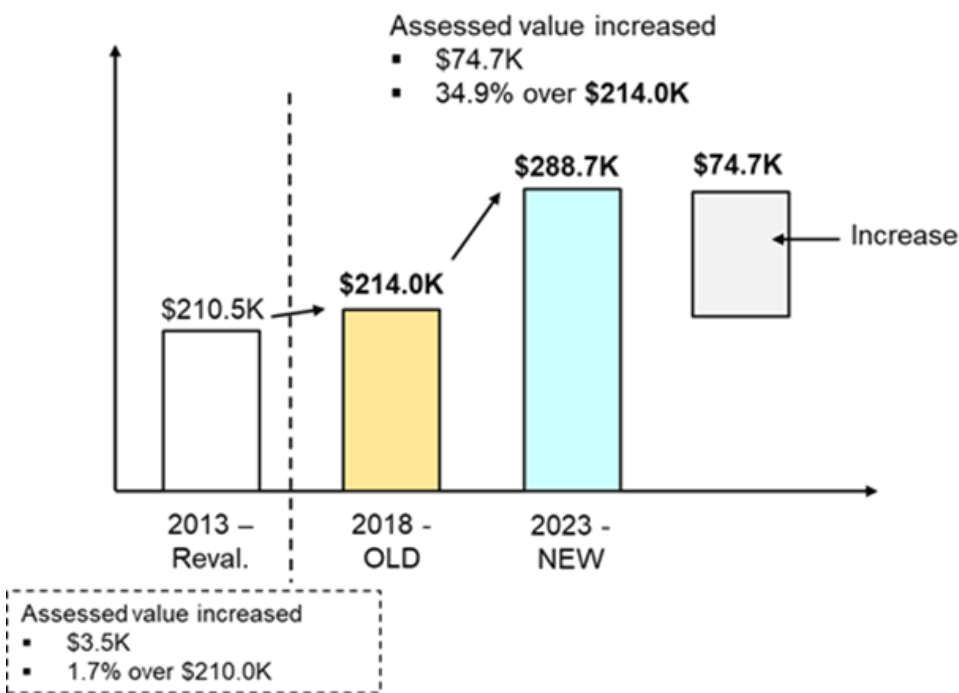
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Opinion & Editorial

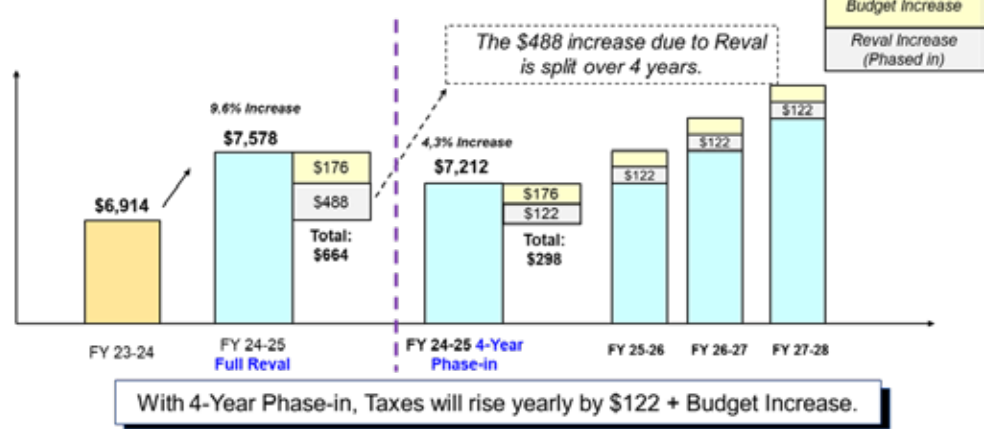
Four-Year Phase-In Of Orange Revaluation Best Path

By Jim Leahy

Example: 495 Lambert Road



Example: Taxes for 495 Lambert Road



	FY 24-25	
Option:	% Increase	FY 24-25
Full Reval	10.0%	\$857
4-Year Phase In	4.4%	\$381

Orange has undergone a revaluation of all town assets. Recently, residential real estate prices have increased significantly. The learnings from this Orange revaluation not only communicates facts to the taxpayers of Orange but demonstrates what other towns and municipalities will face when conducting their own revaluations in the upcoming years.

cent. The average increase for commercial properties was 16 percent. This difference has important implications.

Many people in Orange need to become more aware of this matter that impacts their taxes. So, this column is an attempt to get people up to speed.

Residential now must cover 68.8 percent of property taxes, while commercial is reduced to 31.2 percent. This “reval shift” means there would be an average increase of 5.91 percent on residential property taxes without including any budget increases. With a 0 percent budget increase, residential assets would have a 5.91 percent increase due to this “residential-to-commercial” shift.

budget reasonableness is expected to assist in keeping tax increases realistic.

The Orange Board of Selectman approved the unanimous recommendation of the BOF to implement a four-year phase-in. Both boards believe this approach is a smart alternative for fiscal year 2024-2025. Nevertheless, the next three years contain an annual built-in tax increase of \$122, presenting a fiscal challenge to budgetary leaders. Naturally, budget reasonableness – as debt service at Amity reduces dramatically – will be expected to assist greatly in that endeavor.

Impacts of Options on Sample Residences

At the time of this writing, the mill rate has yet to be calculated for all residences. To test the revaluation alternatives, the BOF assessed the properties all six board members to measure the impact of full revaluation versus the four-year phase-in. The accompanying chart shows a summary of that analysis.

For a more complete review of this topic, go to the Orange Government Access Television’s YouTube page for the April 28 town budget hearing that contains a 15-slide summary starting at the seven-minute mark.

Under full revaluation, the dollar increases range from \$664 to \$1,141 with an average of \$857 (10 percent). With the four-year phase-in, the dollar increase ranged from \$298 to \$470, with an average of \$381 (4.4 percent). This analysis represents a sample. Each town property is different. Yet it provides a reasonable bellwether of a range of likely outcomes.

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

The Path Forward

Facts About the Orange Revaluation

All towns and municipalities across Connecticut conduct a revaluation of all town assets every five years. Unsurprisingly, residential real estate has gone up significantly in the last few years. Clearly, an asset going up in value is a good thing for a homeowner’s net worth. The diagram of 495 Lambert Rd. shows an example of one Orange residence’s increase assessed value.

Requested Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budgets

Currently, the total budget requests sum up to an increase of \$3,566,115, a significant increase of 4.4 percent. Thus, the average increase to residential taxpayers for implementing the full revaluation – including budget requests – would be around 10 percent.

Options to Implement the Revaluation

Faced with this situation, the Orange Board of Finance recommended a four-year phase-in of this “reval shift.” As seen for the example property, a full revaluation would have increased taxes in fiscal year 2024-2025 by \$664 (or 9.6 percent) while a four-year phase-in results in a \$298 increase (or 4.31 percent). Taxes in the next three fiscal years would increase by \$122 per year, plus more for any budget increases. Naturally,

Implications Of The “Reval Shift”

From the revaluation, the average increase across all residential properties was 38 per-

Without any Budget Increase: Tax Shift SOLELY due to Increase in Residential Assets compared to Commercial Assets				
	OLD % of Taxes	* Asset Increase	NEW % of Taxes	% Increase for each Asset Class
Residential	65	38%	68.8	5.91%
Commercial	35	16%	31.2	-10.97%
	100		100	

* Preliminary Estimate of Overall Asset Increase; Town of Orange Finance Dept.

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Opinion & Editorial

Promises Kept: Our Budget Plan



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

Last month I outlined my concerns with state spending and why it is critical to maintain fiscal guardrails to balance a stable and sustainable budget for our residents. Sadly, neither the majority party on the Appropriations Committee nor the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee did their job in proposing budget adjustments and an updated revenue package. So House Republicans stepped up.

If we fail to adjust the budget as a legislature, not only will it go out of balance on July 1, but it would grant the governor the authority to make spending decisions to reflect his interests, without any balance or input from the General Assembly or voters like you.

When leadership on these committees decided against adjusting the budget, my colleagues and I rolled up our sleeves and got to work. Our plan focuses on affordability, including structural spending reforms, increased funding for local education and preventing more pressure on local property taxpayers.

One important theme in our proposal is supporting Connecticut youth and education. First, we are directing \$236 million for local education funding and another \$79 million to help relieve special education costs. Additionally, we have allotted \$12 million to increase reimbursement rates to birth-to-three child service providers, demanded federal funding for staffing shortage support and still matched the governor's proposed \$12 million increase to the Care4Kids program.

It's important to note that even with increased spending to education, our budget still rests at \$43 million under the spending cap while keeping remaining American Rescue Plan Act funding untouched for other acute spending needs. These include support for our nonprofits and social services, Connecticut's unemployment compensation fund or child care costs.

Other significant aspects of our plan include maintaining the \$42 million deposit to the Teachers' Retirement Fund, investing in youth mental health resources, eliminating the truck tax to lower retail and grocery prices and providing municipalities with the money they need to efficiently implement early voting this fall.

Unfortunately, Connecticut becomes more unaffordable every day, and our goal is to incentivize families, residents and small businesses to stay, grow and live in our state without constant financial pressure from their government. Creating this incentive began in 2017 when Democrats and Republicans worked collaboratively to develop fiscal guardrails promising to help our state earn revenue, spend wisely and pay down state debt simultaneously.

As always, if you have any questions, ideas, or concerns about this or any state issue, please contact me at Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov or at 860-240-8700. Don't forget to follow me on Facebook or subscribe to my brief email updates at RepKennedy.com.

The Two Sides To Memorial Day



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

We will observe Memorial Day on Monday, May 27 this year and commemorate it in Orange on Sunday, May 26 with the annual Memorial Day ceremony at 10:30 a.m. at High Plains Community Center, followed by the parade at 11:30 a.m.

Our town's tradition allows for both the celebratory and respectful aspects of this day, which is so important. In order to fully understand and appreciate the enormity of the sacrifice that the fallen men and women have made for our country, you must also have moments of great joy and celebration.

If you aren't able to attend the ceremony before the parade, perhaps during the parade you will find a moment to reflect on the history of Memorial Day, which in itself has a sense of bittersweet celebration. According to the National Cemetery Administration's website, "In the waning years of the Civil War (1861-1865) and immediately afterward, communities in the North and South, Black and White, decorated soldiers' graves with floral honors on springtime 'decoration days.' The practice of strewing flowers on graves has been documented from Classical Roman times to western Europe in the nineteenth century."

There are a number of different accounts on who may have held the first Decoration Day (and some arguments about who even had the idea first), but behind all of them was the desire to honor those who had died during the battles of the Civil War. Many communities held their own Decoration Days independently until 1868, when Gen. John Logan declared that May 30 would be known as Decoration Day to lay flowers on the graves of fallen soldiers to honor their passing (most states now commemorate it on the final Monday in May).

While the South didn't formally recognize the day until after World War I, on the first Decoration Day 5,000 people laid flowers on the graves of over 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington Cemetery.

On that day, General James Garfield said the following in an historic speech: "We do not know one promise these men made, one pledge they gave, one word they spoke; but we do know they summed up and perfected, by one supreme act, the highest virtues of men and citizens. For love of country they accepted death, and thus resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and their virtue."

These words still hold true for the servicemen and servicewomen who we have lost since that day. While we watch our talented school bands and cheer on our first responders and later perhaps share a barbecue with friends and family, I hope we all find time to remember the sacrifices so many have made for the success of our country. Imperfect as it is, I am so grateful for those who have been willing to give all to defend it.

Compromise As Progress



STATE SEN. (D-14)
JAMES MARONEY

There's no denying that political relations in our country are at a point rarely seen in modern times. While Democrats and Republicans often disagree, our systems are strengthened when people come together, collaborate and develop something that both sides can be happy with.

Unfortunately, we're moving away from bipartisan efforts to work together, and the impacts that could have on our country are dire. Disagreement is fine, but when that disagreement festers into more aggressive forms of opposition, the consequences are much worse.

Take our current Congress as one example. There are factions in our national government at odds, which is a tale as old as time. But their disagreements go beyond simple policy discussions – they're harming the progress of that government itself. According to Reuters, as of March our country had seen more than half a dozen threats of government shutdown in the last year. Each of those threats takes attention away from other bills that could bring aid to people nationwide. Important legislation on immigration, Medicare and Social Security has been delayed, stalled and even "killed" by this lack of direction. Congress passed just 27 bills in 2023.

Where does this leave us as a nation? A worse place. Our systems are not being updated to meet the needs of the modern day. Lack of togetherness leads to less work being done for the good of all constituents. In Connecticut, while lawmakers may disagree about the best way forward, we remain focused on a collective vision: the best ways we can move Connecticut forward.

Last year's legislative session is a prime example of the benefits of bipartisanship. Our state budget, which provided hundreds of millions of dollars in tax relief? That was worked on, adjusted and approved by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, with all but 13 legislators out of nearly 200 voting to approve it. Compromises are sometimes frustrating, but they can lead to better legislation and more constructive conversations as time passes.

The impacts don't end solely with legislators' efforts, either. Thanks to bipartisan efforts, that state budget delivered real tax relief to countless Connecticut families this year. Important efforts like gun safety, reproductive health and municipal funding all received improvements thanks to lawmakers working together in the name of supporting our state.

It's with this mindset that I will continue to work with my many colleagues in the name of representing our state for all of its voters – not just Democrats, not just Republicans, but all of us. Compromise should be a step toward progress, not something disregarded or abandoned.

Letters to the Editor:

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

Legal System Did Not Overreach on Trump

To the Editor:

A few points in response to Thomas Hurley's criticism of New York's legal system regarding the "\$494 million" judgment against Donald Trump in his civil fraud trial ("New York Legal System Overreached On Trump Bond," April 11, 2024).

Judge Arthur Engoron imposed a fine of \$363.9 million in penalties against Trump for lying about his wealth. The \$494 million Hurley cites includes interest owed (by state law) while Trump appeals his conviction.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "excessive fines," leaving the state to determine the exact amount. Hurley doesn't think the penalty imposed by the court matches the damage Trump's fraud caused the taxpayers, banks, etc. He wants "the adults in the New York system to put an end to this travesty." If he has exculpatory evidence New York doesn't know, he should notify the judge immediately. Instead, he complains about "prosecutorial injustice," and "the severely biased prosecutor and judge."

Hurley correctly states that New York "requires a large bond before allowing an appeal... in effect assuming that the party is guilty." However, New York has every right to assume that the party is guilty because Trump was found guilty. Innocent people do not appeal their vindication.

Hurley is very concerned about the "great harm to the former president" if his assets are seized. What about the great harm taxpayers have suffered because of his tax cheating? And if the seizure of illiquid assets "cannot easily be reversed," the self-declared billionaire should use cash. Or take out a legitimate loan if his credit rating will support it.

Hurley says, "Businesses are shying away from the state for fear of this novel prosecution." What businesses? The ones who fear they can't get away with breaking the law?

Finally, comparing our laws and judicial process to the Soviet Union's for "eliminating candidates" – while Trump fawns over dictators like Vladimir Putin and calls for "retribution" and the "termination" of the Constitution – is an ironic outrage. My grandfather, after whom I am named, perished in a gulag as a political prisoner. He was caught conducting a choir singing Russian liturgical music and convicted of celebrating mass. I wish he were here to teach Hurley some basic facts about democracy.

Gene Burshuliak
Orange

Trump Treatment Not Unprecedented

To the Editor:

Thomas Hurley, the Orange tax collector, routinely reveals his MAGA leanings in his columns, but his most recent comments in the Milford-Orange Times ("New York Legal System Overreached On Trump Bond," April 11, 2024) require pushback because many are false and come straight out of the divisive MAGA playbook. I really wish he'd stick to tax-advisory topics, since this is tax season.

Hurley states flat-out that the New York attorney general and Judge Arthur Engoron are "playing with fire" (a MAGA threat? It's a familiar MAGA word-pattern) by imposing a requirement that Donald Trump post bond before he is able to file an appeal, and also states that New York law requires a bond before filing an appeal. This is absolutely false. Trump filed

Continued on page 19

Insuring Your Future

Changes In Long Term Care Insurance Policies

There have been many changes in the long term care insurance market in the past 10 years which have not benefited the policyholders. Many insurance companies have dropped out of the long term care business, forcing consumers to choose between accepting the "reinsurer's terms" or dropping the coverage.

There are several factors to consider before making a decision regarding LTC policies. First, unlike whole life insurance plans, LTC plans do not build equity. If you cancel the policy, all the premium that has been paid is lost. Insurance companies have the right to increase premiums periodically, which in some cases can be quite dramatic. This puts policyholders in a difficult position; lose all the money that has been paid in or accept the increase.

However, there are generally other options to consider. When insurance companies increase premiums they also offer other

options, such as reducing the daily and/or length of benefit. While this may reduce the total value of the policy, it does preserve a portion of the coverage and keeps the premium affordable.

When considering these options, keep certain points in mind:

1. Know the current cost of long term care. In Connecticut, the average cost of being in a nursing facility is \$500 per day, and the average cost for in-home care is approximately \$225 per day. Adult day care centers cost approximately \$106 per day. Many policies will allow benefits to pay for some costs in an assisted living facility for which the average cost is \$5,000 per month.

2. Consider what personal resources are available to pay for long term care expenses such as Social Security, investment or re-



TRISH PEARSON

irement income. Also, will the surviving spouse remain in the home and what resources are needed to maintain it? This is a consideration if the benefit is being used for care in the home.

3. The final consideration is a crystal ball issue: length of benefit. There is no exact answer to this question. However, the average stay in a facility or home care is 3.5 years. There are many variables that impact how long the funds will be needed, so weigh the cost against the impact on current living expenses.

One insurance company has recently decided to reenter the LTC market. However, for it to be profitable they need to make some adjustments to their balance sheet. Many policyholders with total benefits above \$500,000 are receiving letters

informing them that their premiums are going to double, but offer options to avoid that increase by reducing some of the benefits. Weigh these options carefully, taking into consideration current financial and health status. Once the policy lapses, you cannot get it back.

For those considering long term care coverage, there are other options besides LTC insurance. An alternative is a hybrid life/long term care policy that enables the policyholder to use most of the death benefit for long term care either in a facility or at home. These policies build equity and the net death benefit will be paid to the designated beneficiary. Seek guidance from a financial or insurance professional if you need help.

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

Recovering

Adoption Complexities Can Lead To Addictive Behavior

There are numerous traumas that people encounter in life that without healthy emotional, mental or spiritual processing can lead one to search for a way to self sooth or numb the overstimulation of one's senses.

Enough research has been produced and consumed by the general public to begin to understand that people who have been the victim of verbal/physical/sexual abuse, divorce, untimely passing of parental figures and other events many times turn to and develop a substance use disorder to simply survive. It is devastating to not only the alcoholic/addict, but those around that person who care about them.

New research is also showing the effects that adoptive children carry with them and their proclivity to fall into substance abuse disorder. A deeper understanding is developing around adoptees' thinking patterns, behaviors and the psychological impact of deeply complex emotional and mental concepts. Greater resources are starting to be offered for adoptees, adoptee parents and biological parents who may carry guilt, remorse and sad-

ness for putting their child up for adoption. These members of the adoption triad, research is showing, carry a very complex, cumulative experience of emotional, mental and spiritual upheaval.

Adoption is one of the greatest demonstrations of love, care, selflessness, compassion and grace. Yet with that experience for each member of the triad, research is showing uniqueness to how people internalize the experience.

The National Council of Adoption defines adoption syndrome as "adoptees who experience pre-verbal trauma from the separation from the birth mother which may lead to mental health disorders in the adoptee." It adds that "individuals adopted are two times more likely to develop a substance use disorder than those not adopted."

Adoptees may manifest behaviors that limit or confound them in association with relational bonding, intimacy and attachment. The closed adoption, which continues to be used



ROB CRAFT

by many states, prevents adoptees from the opportunity to know their origin of birth and the family from which they came. To mitigate these issues requires a change in the way that adoption is handled within this country, removing the secrecy and promoting the rights of adoptees.

According to the Maryland Addiction Recovery Center, "While clearly adoption does not cause addiction, nor does every child that is adopted become addicted to drugs and alcohol, there is clearly a pattern for many adopted children to eventually develop a substance use disorder."

Adoptive parents, who want no more than to love a child, create a home and family, are learning how to safely, supportively and compassionately navigate these newly understood realities.

This column cannot do justice to fully developing the complexities associated with adoption. I only hope to crack a door of understanding, compassion and empathy to the

impact this experience has upon people.

For more education on this topic, there is a meaningful play called "The Good Adoptee" which will be showing on May 10 and 11 at the Cabaret on Main Theater in East Haven. It follows the true story of Suzanne Bachner's search for her birth family within New York's closed adoption system. It is brought by the R' Kids Family Center in New Haven that has supported, educated, and facilitated families around adoption in every facet. Tickets may be bought at rkidsthegoodadoptee.ludus.com/index.php.

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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Your Health

Keeping Drinking Water Safe Through PFAS Rules

In my previous columns I have written about drinking water regulation and updated the community about the health hazards related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, the set of chemicals known as PFAS. The Environmental Protection Agency announced on April 10 the Final National Primary Drinking Water Rule for these substances. This landmark regulation represents the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard designed to safeguard communities from the harmful effects of PFAS, often referred to as “forever chemicals.”

With the latest scientific findings as a guide, the EPA has taken decisive action to establish comprehensive drinking water standards aimed at protecting public health from the adverse impacts associated with certain PFAS exposures.

PFAS comprise a group of thousands of manufactured chemicals renowned for their diverse properties, including water repellency, stain prevention and enhanced heat re-

sistance. Widely used in industrial and consumer applications such as fabric, carpeting, electrical wiring, non-stick coatings, food packaging and firefighting foam for extinguishing petroleum fires, PFAS have become integral to numerous products and processes.

Despite their advantageous traits, toxicological studies on laboratory animals consistently reveal concerning effects on the liver, immune system, growth, reproduction, fetal development and blood lipid profiles like cholesterol. Additionally, PFAS can disrupt endocrine and hormonal systems, including the thyroid, further raising health concerns.

It’s worth noting that PFAS are not readily absorbed through the skin, diminishing the risk associated with activities like bathing, showering, swimming or washing dishes with water containing PFAS. However, prolonged consumption of PFAS-contaminated drinking water can lead to the accumulation



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

of these chemicals in the body, heightening the likelihood of adverse health effects over time. The recently enacted EPA rule for PFAS establishes maximum contaminant levels for six specific types of PFAS in public drinking water. In addition to setting these regulatory limits, the rule mandates that public water systems undertake monitoring for PFAS, notify customers of any detected levels and report findings to state public health departments. Moreover, water companies are obligated to mitigate customers’ exposure to PFAS in drinking water should levels surpass the established maximum levels.

Public water systems must adhere to the new regulations within five years of implementation. In the coming weeks, the Connecticut Department of Public Health will release an estimated timeline for the state’s adoption of this rule and offer recommen-

dations to public water systems to facilitate preparation for its implementation.

Additionally, DPH will update its web pages featuring PFAS frequently asked questions and PFAS information for public water systems, including a clarification on the distinction between the new federal maximum levels and the Connecticut drinking water action levels for these compounds.

I recommend that you review the annual water quality report published by the Regional Water Authority that supplies most of the areas in Orange.

To learn more about how DPH has proposed to use this funding to assist public water systems, including those serving small or disadvantaged communities, visit DPH’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Final Intended Use Plans for 2023 and 2024 at portal.ct.gov/dph/drinking-water/dws/call-for-projects-review-and-ranking-of-projects.

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

Book Reviews

The Little Village Of Book Lovers By Nina George

Love – everyone wants it, but finds it hard to describe or express. Authors write about it. Singers sing about it. Actors perform it. Artists paint it. But what is love exactly?

Love is the narrator in this delightful, charming novel. Love attempts to prove its presence in the lives of many of the villagers. Love’s focus is on people who would be perfect together but are either too shy or unaware of Love to do something about it.

Love targets Elsa, Francis and their daughter Maria Jeanne. Elsa’s heart had been hardened by her past. But Love, with her gentle touch, softens her and she learns to recognize the depth of her feelings for her husband Francis.

Francis, for his part, has always been in love with his wife and has now discovered a new love: reading. He develops a



CARMELA DEVITO

traveling lending library, going to isolated areas. He is supported and greatly appreciated by those who avail themselves of this service.

Maria Jeanne, however, is confused about Love in all its shapes and forms and strives to learn more.

I absolutely “loved” this. It’s warm, funny and a tribute to the power of love. This will

make you feel as if love has wrapped you in a comfy blanket and is holding you tight.

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

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Milford-Orange Probate Court

Addressing Conservatorship Abuse Or Overreach

A few high-profile cases have recently brought public attention to conservatorships and the potential for conservatorship abuse or overreach. Connecticut probate courts have a number of procedures and safeguards in place to prevent, identify and remedy such abuse or overreach. This column will highlight some of the procedures and safeguards in place for involuntary conservatorships.

In Connecticut, all conservatorship hearings are recorded and all witnesses are put under oath. The initial hearing cannot take place unless the subject of the involuntary conservatorship hearing (known as the “respondent”) has at least a 10-day notice. The notice of the hearing must be served on the respondent to confirm the notice requirement has been met. The hearing cannot take place unless the hearing notice was properly and timely served.

In general, the hearing cannot take place unless the respondent was examined by a physician no longer than 45 days prior to the hearing. The physician must submit a

report detailing his or her medical findings and answer a number of questions about the respondent to assist the court in determining if a conservatorship is appropriate.

Unlike in some states, the respondent is guaranteed the opportunity to have an attorney throughout the entire involuntary conservatorship process. If the respondent is indigent or otherwise cannot afford an attorney, the attorney will get paid through the Probate Court Administration Fund. The attorney will advocate on behalf of the respondent at the initial hearing and throughout the process if an involuntary conservatorship is ordered.

If a conservatorship is ordered, it will be subject to court review in a year and then every three years. The purpose of the review is to determine if the conservatorship is still appropriate. In addition, the conservator of the person must file a conservator’s report at



**BEN
GETTINGER**

least once a year. The conservator of the estate must file a financial report after the first year and then every three years and must keep all supporting documentation, such as bank statements, invoices and canceled checks.

If a conservator of the estate is ordered, the court will generally order a bond if the total assets are over \$20,000 or there is over \$10,000 in unrestricted assets. The conservatorship may also be subject to a random financial

audit.

There are also restrictions on the conservator’s powers. For example, a conservator must get court approval before placing the respondent in an institution for long term care, changing the respondent’s residence, terminating the respondent’s lease, disposing of the respondent’s furnishings or personal property, selling the respondent’s real estate and consenting to psychiatric medication.

Finally, the respondent has the right to try to terminate the conservatorship. The respondent may request termination at any time. A hearing must be held within 30 days of the request. The respondent does not need to submit medical evidence. The respondent also has a lower burden of proof than the initial burden of proof needed to grant the conservatorship. The burden of proof to terminate is a “preponderance of the evidence” that the respondent is capable. The burden of proof needed to grant an involuntary conservatorship, on the other hand, is “clear and convincing evidence” that the respondent is incapable.

Even with these procedures and safeguards in place, involuntary conservatorships in Connecticut are not infallible. Please call the Milford-Orange Probate Court at 203-783-3205 if you have any concerns, suggestions or general questions about conservatorships.

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

Travel Matters

Sailing To Exotic Destinations

If you ever wished you could travel to places far and wide but didn’t have the time or budget to book a world cruise, why not try one segment of a world cruise. That’s what we just did, escorting a small group of 11 people from Singapore to Dubai – a 20-day segment of Azamara Onward’s 2024 World Cruise.

We started our trip in Singapore for two days before the cruise, visiting the famous Marina Bay Sands Hotel, the Gardens by the Bay and enjoying a Michelin-star street food tour. We sailed to Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Oman, Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

We enjoyed many late-night stays and three overnight stays. Azamara is known for their destination immersion, including some of the longest hours in port, serving cuisine from all the countries visited and bringing on specialists to talk about the culture of each

destination. We took art classes using scenes from our travels.

Excursions curated by Azamara included three game drives in Sri Lanka and Sir Bani Yas (an island off of Abu Dhabi); a visit to Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur with henna tattoos followed by high tea at the Majestic Hotel and jewelry-making with a well-known jewelry designer.

The highlight of our trip was the overland journey to Taj Mahal and beyond. Land journeys are a new trend in luxury cruising and well worth the experience.

Ours consisted of three nights and four days, leaving the ship on the second day in Cochin, India and flying to New Delhi. Starting with a tour of New Delhi’s beautiful embassy buildings, we were welcomed



**KAREN
QUINN-
PANZER**

with marigold flower leis at the gorgeous Oberoi Hotel. We then visited Humayan’s Tomb, built in the 1500s and renowned as the inspiration for the Taj Mahal. It was restored by the Aga Kahn foundation in 2003.

Next day, we were off to Agra to experience the Taj Mahal at sunset and again at sunrise the following day. We visited the baby Taj to see more examples of the inlay technique used in the Taj Mahal, then returned to Mumbai to rejoin the ship. We stayed at all Oberoi Hotels with the best guide I think I’ve ever experienced, who taught as much about the culture as the history of the area. We also learned that locals pronounce Taj Mahal as Taj MaHEL. Micato is the new land partner with Azamara, and their level of service and

detail is impressive.

Words cannot express the monumental beauty of the Taj. Visiting at both sunset and sunrise was almost surreal.

One of the benefits of being on a segment of a world cruise is the special events onboard the ship, including a 1001 Arabian nights dinner at the pool and a cumulative master trivia competition where you could join one of the world cruiser teams.

Ending in Dubai for two nights, we enjoyed a taste of what this city has to offer, including dinner in the desert, a tour comparing the old city to the new city and ending in the VIP experience at the Burj Khalifa.

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

Orange Board of Finance

Governor On The Right Side Of Fiscal Guardrails Debate

There has been a growing debate between the state legislature and the governor over the fiscal guardrails, with many lawmakers within the House and Senate saying the guardrails are too restrictive. Having spent close to 20 years within corporate and public finance, where fiscal discipline and delivering bottom-line results is expected, it is refreshing to see a governor who fully understands the importance of the fiscal guardrails.

The guardrails have led to paying down nearly \$8 billion in unfunded pension liabilities and saving taxpayers \$700 million per year for the next 25 years. This – coupled with the recognition from Wall Street based on consistent credit rating increases over the course of the last six years – bodes well for Connecticut.

The legislature approved a bipartisan reform package back in 2017 that not only included new caps on spending and borrowing, but also included two programs that forced lawmakers to save more within the volatile income tax receipts tied to capital gains and other investment earnings. These reforms and a booming stock market helped Connecticut boost its rainy day fund over the past six years from about \$213 million to \$3.3 billion.

For the first time in several decades, Connecticut is finally on the path to fiscal sustainability. However, lawmakers are now looking to add \$400 million in excess state revenue that is projected for this fiscal year to be put toward nonprofits by using budget

gimmicks and financial maneuvers that could place that money outside the state spending cap.

Lawmakers are also close to a tentative deal that would use a mix of borrowing and reallocating non-recurring federal pandemic aid for operating expenses. That is a highly risky move because it creates potential gaps in the expenditure side budget in future years.

Gov. Ned Lamont has been willing to negotiate with lawmakers, but has good reason to be cautious on agreeing to any workarounds of the fiscal guardrails. Growth within both the US and Connecticut economies is starting to show signs of slowing, and sales tax revenues are projected to fall off in the coming months. The governor seems to be holding firm on his commitment on preserving the volatility cap passed in 2017 and unanimously renewed in 2023 by the state legislature through 2028.

The renewal of the guardrails by the legislature in 2023 is enforced by bond covenants, which require Connecticut to use spikes in volatile revenue sources for budget reserves or to pay down debt.

State revenues continue to exceed expectations today. However, most of the growth is coming from quarterly income and business tax receipts, which are covered by the volatility cap. If the state legislature adjusts the volatility cap, they should wait until 2028 when the bond covenants expire; the state’s credibility with the rating agencies and bond



**KEVIN
MCNABOLA**

investors would otherwise be in jeopardy.

I believe the governor’s position on preserving the guardrails is the right approach. Budget gimmicks would only create unsustainable growth in the budget. This would affect the ability of Connecticut residents to pay for state services and bring the state back to the old way of doing business, which led to decades of unbalanced budgets and deficits.

Critics of the fiscal guardrails within the legislature have been arguing for years that the guardrails are too restrictive. They are designed to keep budget growth in line with inflation. In recent years, many within the House and Senate have insisted on carrying forward a portion of the annual surplus into the next fiscal year’s budget.

For example, last fiscal year’s \$1.9 billion surplus would have been \$340 million larger had lawmakers not carried that smaller amount into the new budget cycle to bolster funding for public colleges and universities.

The guardrails consist of four major components.

The volatility cap requires that all revenue from the estimates and final portion of the personal income tax and pass-through entity tax are deposited into the Budget Reserve Fund. If the Budget Reserve Fund is maxed out, revenue is used to pay down pension debt.

The revenue cap limits general fund and

special transportation fund appropriations to a certain percentage of estimated revenues. It started at 99.5 percent in fiscal year 2020 and is down to 98.5 percent in fiscal year 2024. It will be 98 percent in fiscal year 2026 and each year after.

The spending cap limits general budget expenditures to the level of spending in the previous year plus a percent increase based on either average income growth in the last five years or the Consumer Price Index over the last year, whichever is greater.

Finally, the bond cap limits the issuance of general obligation or credit revenue bonds in excess of \$1.9 billion per fiscal year, which grows as indexed to the Consumer Price Index.

I believe the governor and the state legislature need to continue to work together in continuing to put Connecticut on a sustainable path to fiscal sustainability and continue the practice of paying down our pension debt and creating job growth. It is important to stay within the spending cap and adhere to the fiscal controls that were implemented. Going backwards with respect to fiscal discipline is not an option. The governor’s proposed tax plan sends a strong signal to both residents and the rating agencies that Connecticut is serious and committed to fiscal reform, which is long overdue.

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

The Garden Spot

Here Come The Hummers

I was so happy to see the first hummingbird at my feeder the last week in April. In reviewing my garden journal entries for the past eight years, I know that there is very little variation regarding when I see the first one. The earliest I've seen one was April 27 and the latest has been May 2 – so this one was right on time. I get the feeders ready and set out around mid-April in anticipation of late April visitors.

Here in Connecticut, we will be most likely to see the ruby throated hummingbird.

Hummingbirds winter in South or Central America and begin their migration to North America in early February. They travel during the day at a low altitude so that they can see the nectar sources that they require for the long journey. According to Hummingbird Central, an enthusiast website, the birds are expert at using tailwinds

to save energy and have been found to travel up to 23 miles in a single day. They are unique in that their hearts beat up to 1,260 times per minute and their wings flap between 15-80 times a second. They require a tremendous amount of energy to support this level of activity.

As well as consuming nectar, hummingbirds also eat small insects like aphids and spiders as a protein source. Their favorite color is red, which is why so many of the commercial feeders are colored red. I think that the feeders that are “flying saucer” shaped are easier to maintain than those that are bottle shaped, but either type will work well.

You can make your own hummer food or nectar by dissolving one part sugar into four



PAT DRAY

parts water. Either boil the water or heat it in the microwave until the sugar is completely dissolved and then allow it to cool before filling the feeder. You should not add red food coloring, since some colorings have harmful chemicals. You should change the solution at least once a week. I run my feeders through the dishwasher every few weeks to sterilize them.

Remember that hummers are very territorial – we often see them chasing away competition from one feeder to another. If you want to hang more than one feeder, try to have them out of sight of each other.

Hummers also need a water source. If your bird bath is too deep for these tiny birds, you can put some flat rocks in the center so that they have a place to land. As with

all bird baths, clean them frequently with a stiff brush to prevent bacterial growth.

You can also plant specific plants that will attract the hummers – generally bright colors with tubular shapes. Some good choices are butterfly bush, lantana, milkweed and salvia. Many of these hummer favorites are also butterfly favorites to double your viewing pleasure.

I hope that you'll be hearing the “hum” soon. You can get up to date information on their migration at hummingbirdcentral.com. You can also enter data on when you see your first hummer to keep the map updated throughout the season.

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

For Nature's Sake

Local Volunteers Tracking Turtles To Save The Species

Like detectives finding clues at suspected crime scenes, volunteers for the terrapin tracking project, organized by the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, are trained to scan coastal landscapes for signs of life. But they are also prepared to find evidence of harm. These local volunteers have agreed to do some “detecting” once a week from April through August at sites along nearly the entire coast of Connecticut for the purpose of helping the survival of a valued local turtle species.

The northern diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) is the only marine species of turtle that occurs in Connecticut. They play a key role in keeping our marsh ecosystems healthy, and there's a growing fanbase among residents who've encountered, for instance, the resident terrapin at Milford Point's Connecticut Audubon Center (see this column for Sept. 21, 2023, “There's



PATRICIA HOUSER

Some thing About Franklin”). Unhappily, by 2015 population losses of terrapins in the wild in Connecticut prompted the state to label them as a “species of special concern.”

In a hopeful turn of events for the turtle, by 2021 experts from four Connecticut organizations had begun a collaboration using volunteers from local towns to collect data to help better define and address one of the worst threats to terrapins. The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Western Connecticut State University, the Connecticut Department of Energy

and Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Department of Transportation are all partners in the community science tracking program.

One of the biggest hazards for diamondback terrapins in Connecticut comes in the warmer months when they are traveling to and from nesting sites, often crossing roads in the process. To help document the location and amount of loss from road strikes, volunteers from the terrapin tracking program are each assigned a particular half-mile stretch of roadway that has been identified as a so-called hotspot for diamondback terrapin mortality. Once per week each volunteer travels to their assigned site and walks up one side of the assigned stretch and down the other, looking for signs of terrapins while also taking note of other wildlife.

The brief entries that volunteer observers make on their rounds, recorded in an online app, sometimes offer clues of what a particularly happy day on patrol must be like. In an entry from July 2022, for instance, on a morning that was 83°F with 5 percent cloud cover (required notations), one terrapin tracker recorded the presence of a diamondback terrapin on the side of the road who was not just alive but in the process of laying eggs.

Based on records covering two years, volunteers' weekly entries are just as likely to contain grim details, like the notes for a 74-degree day in July 2023, when another terrapin tracker found the crushed body of a female terrapin at their assigned road. The comment section read, “Carcass clean and dried, death may have been 1-3 days after last tracking.” A photo was added showing the turtle's remains on the stretch of pavement.

Even when live turtles or their remains aren't sighted, volunteers frequently do come across terrapin nests. The problem is, any visible eggs associated with most of those nests are cracked, with signs that the nest has been depredated, or plundered, most likely by a racoon, skunk or fox. While that kind of destructive outcome might be thought part of the natural course of things, it can be argued that those mammals have had easier access to terrapin nesting areas because of alterations to landscapes by humans.

Then there are the assigned routes where there is rarely a sign of turtles, eggs or nests. “A non-sighting is still valuable data,” say the researchers at Western Connecticut State University, including the two leading graduate student researchers on the terrapin project, John Michael Arnett and Henry Schwendler. These dedicated and erudite young scholars have been tasked with sift-

ing through and interpreting data provided by citizen scientists under the oversight of Principal Investigator Dr. Theodora Pinou, who is also the biology department chair at WCSU.

Connecticut's terrapin tracking project can be seen as part of a larger trend across the world today of tapping into the potential for citizen scientists to help with environmental challenges. A citizen scientist is any resident (even the term citizen is misleading) with any background (they are mostly not scientists by profession) who is interested in volunteering to find out more about wildlife or air or water in their region and sharing that information with scientists as part of an organized program.

As with most citizen science, volunteers from the terrapin tracking project are required to attend training sessions that are conducted in early spring through the Maritime Aquarium, including lessons on identifying terrapins and their nests and eggs and how to use the online app for recording data in the field (volunteers may submit paper reports if they prefer). Volunteers are then equipped, says wildlife educator Bridget Cervero, with reflective vests, a neon green drawstring backpack, a bit of gear, display for the car dashboard and a map showing their recommended parking spot.

That fluorescent green vest is “super important,” says Marsha Borden of Guilford, who has been a volunteer in the tracking project since March of 2022. “It's shocking that cars do not slow down for you.”

Rather than dwelling on bad drivers or the forensic-style roadside task involved, though, Borden emphasizes benefits of the volunteer experience in terms of remarkable sights and sounds in our coastal landscapes, including, “The privilege to be able to spend that undisturbed time outside...walking, noticing nature...looking, listening. It feels very intentional.” She can justify taking this time once a week from an otherwise busy schedule, she says, because “I have this larger purpose...to track the terrapins.”

For information on other community science programs at the Maritime Aquarium, see the page on their website titled “Community Science Opportunities.” Volunteer opportunities focused on water quality around the state can also be found at the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's “Water Volunteer Monitoring Program Overview” as well as on Save the Sound's webpage on “Citizen Science.”

Patricia Houser, PhD, AICP is a freelance writer and researcher focused on environment and sustainability.



Terrapin nest with nearby depredated eggs. Photo courtesy of WCSU.

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Recycling Tip: The Good News About Paper Recycling

You put your recycling in the bin. You drop it at the curb or take it to your local drop-off. Then you wonder, is my paper actually getting recycled?

Yes. Recycled paper is used to make many new products such as paper bags, toilet paper, computer paper and all different kinds of boxes. Lots of paper products can be recycled. Examples include the box your cereal or toothpaste came in, bakery boxes for donuts, computer paper, white office paper, newspaper, colored office paper, chipboard, magazines, catalogs, phone books, and powdered laundry, dishwasher and detergent boxes. Corrugated cardboard and boxes can be recycled in your blue bin and also taken to the cardboard hopper at the Orange Transfer Station, where the cardboard is purchased by a local paper processing business.

As with all recycling, it's important to make sure that the items are clean and dry and don't have any contaminants mixed in, such as polystyrene, metal, wax, plastic coatings and other debris which should go in the

trash. Pizza boxes can be recycled, but take out the paper liner and any residual food. Flatten boxes before putting them in the recycling bin and remove cereal bag liners. Not allowed is anything smaller than four by four inches or shredded paper.

If you need to shred personal documents, Affordable Solutions based in Orange provides shredding services at many local town events such as the semi-annual Orange Shredding Day. The shredded paper then goes to a local paper broker who is equipped with facilities to sort, bale, and transport paper.

Brokers play an important role in connecting suppliers with mills, arranging transportation and facilitating transactions. This way, businesses can streamline their recycling processes and contribute to a more sustainable paper recycling ecosystem.

About 80 percent of US paper mills use some recycled paper to make new and innovative products. When paper goes to a paper mill, the process begins at any number of locations, including community curbside pro-

grams, drop-off centers, schools or offices. We fill the recycling bin with accepted materials, the paper is collected and goes to a materials recovery facility. It's loaded on a conveyor belt and contaminants are removed. Next, the recovered paper is separated, baled then transported to a paper mill where the paper bale is loaded into a pulper, which looks like a giant blender. The paper is mixed with water and other ingredients, then churned and broken down. Contaminants such as tape, labels and staples are screened out. From there, this slurry of fibers is screened for further cleaning. As it dries, it is formed into rolls of paper – newly recycled paper.

Connecticut is home to various wastepaper processors and brokers equipped with facilities to sort, bale and transport paper. These entities play a pivotal role in connecting suppliers with mills, arranging transportation and facilitating transactions. By working with reputable processors and brokers, businesses can streamline their recycling processes and contribute to a more sustainable paper

recycling ecosystem.

The importance of recycling paper can't be overstated. Paper constitutes the largest single component of the municipal solid waste stream – over one third by weight.

By recycling the paper into new paper, rather than disposing it, the amount of waste requiring disposal will be reduced, fewer trees will be cut down for paper production, less energy will be used to produce new paper, less pollution will be emitted into the air and water in the production of new paper and greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced. By purchasing more products in boxes, you can be assured that, once empty, that paper can be recycled. You'll also be supporting our local paper processors and mills that recycle and then sell the new paper produced in Connecticut. Promote environmental sustainability and local and state businesses at the same time.

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

Here's To Your Health

Liver Support

We hear a lot about heart health. However, the importance of good liver health gets far less attention.

The liver is your body's largest internal organ. Your skin is the only larger and heavier organ. Your liver is a metabolic detoxifier and supports your immune system. No one can live without their liver, so it's important to take care of it. The liver regulates chemicals in the blood and excretes bile, which helps carry away waste and breaks down fats in the small intestine. The liver regulates blood levels of amino acids and it stores iron. It also stores fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D, E, K and B12.

Believe it or not, your liver performs more than 500 vital functions in your body daily. It clears your body of drugs and other poison-

ous substances, builds proteins and helps with the production of chemicals that help your digestion, which is important to overall good gut health.

There are ways you can help support your liver to do its job. The first and most important way is to eat healthy, nutrient rich foods. Top of the list for liver support is coffee. Drinking a cup of coffee a day has been shown in some studies to lower the risk of cirrhosis. Grapefruit, blueberries and cranberries contain antioxidants and help reduce inflammation. Broccoli, cabbage, kale, brussels sprouts and cauliflower are cruciferous vegetables which help



MICHELE TENNEY

the liver with the detoxification process. Nuts have vitamin E and healthy fats which help break down non-healthy fats. A good ratio between omega 3 and omega 6 fats by eating fatty fishes is another way to help support your liver. Foods that are high in fiber will promote weight management, which in turn also helps the liver do its job.

It is important to pay close attention to your liver health because it does so much good for your body.

It's also important to sweat, which helps remove toxins from your body and helps support liver detoxification at the same time. There are a few good liver support supplements out there as well. However, taking

care of yourself by eating well, exercising, hydrating and getting good sleep is the best way to support your liver overall.

With spring here and summer on the horizon, I would suggest moderation in alcohol consumption too. I know all the barbecue cookouts, proms, weddings and vacations are even better reasons to support your liver health.

Here's to your health and here's to your liver health. I believe in you. You got this.

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.

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Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Thinking In The Long Run

The vast majority of homeowners are concerned about cost versus value in real estate. This translates to a question of what it has cost to maintain the home and how those funds can be retrieved when selling. There is no real answer to this, because living and enjoying one's home is the satisfaction you get as you keep up with repairs and upgrades over the years. Yes, it costs to live, but what's the alternative? The wholesome enjoyment of that new kitchen or the pool in the yard is so fundamental to ownership.

What happens when you no longer need the size and the location of your current home? Can you see it in yourself to realistically revamp your needs, collect fair compensation on the sale and start new?

The value of your home is only appropriate

Ponder This

ate to your stage in life. After that it can be a burden no matter how special and gracious the property is. It is a complicated decision to sell, to uproot and begin anew with unfamiliar living space, land and neighbors. I share with you an old saying I have: no one has ever come back to me after their sale, even years later, to say they had any regrets. It is true. The work and the upheaval moving created was so worth it in the end. It's easy to be comfortable in that long-term address you have had. But thinking practically, isn't it maybe the best time to move when it's a seller's market?

Whether staying in town for a bigger or



BARBARA LEHRER

small home, relocating to warm places or moving closer to the kids, real estate is always a great value. A fresh start and the decluttering that it automatically accomplished are exciting. Digest the costs to move, the profits you may gain; the results may surprise you. In the long run, you can sell high and also buy high, but getting what you need currently is the goal.

Many sellers right now are getting huge profits due to low inventory and anxious buyers, and then they are purchasing for cash. Maybe funds in the bank and a smaller property is for you. Renting for a few years is also an option as you research where you

want to land.

So don't be stagnant. If you need to move because you are living in a 10-room home and using only four rooms, take the plunge. Get help; the realtors can do it all. They won't clean your house for you, but they will do everything else, from setting up the finances and marketing your property to making a plan for new options to repairs, orchestrating the inspectors, movers, etc. A great agent can move mountains. Use your resources and think to the future.

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

Make Waves For Mental Health And A Better Future

Bridges Health Care is a community of caregivers in Milford committed to the provision of comprehensive mental health services and addiction recovery for adults, children and families. A major fundraising event, called Rock the Dock, will take place on May 30 at Lisman Landing in Milford to support the remarkable services that Bridges provides to 8,000 individuals annually.

Bridges is a nonprofit certified community behavioral health clinic agency, fully licensed by the state Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Family Services and accredited by the Behavioral Health Association. Bridges serves individuals, families and adults in Milford, Orange and West Haven.

The mission of this local agency is to promote individual and community wellness

and recovery through integrated behavioral health services. Life is most certainly stressful, and Bridges helps vulnerable people navigate by providing high quality professional services at the local level.

Bridges has an outstanding record of assisting with substance abuse problems and people with longstanding mental health issues. A summary of services includes a 24-hour crisis unit, addiction recovery services, mental health counseling and medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. Parallel goals for this local organization are to advocate for behavioral health treatment and removal of stigma attached to utilization of



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

mental health services.

The fundraiser will take place from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. There will be light fare, beverages, a silent auction, and a 50/50 raffle. The featured musical performance is by the rock-folk jam band the Alpaca Gnomes. Tickets can be purchased at <http://give.classy.org/rockthedock>.

Make the choice and purchase a ticket for wellness and recovery. The mission is to offer a beacon of hope for people dealing with mental health challenges. The evening promises to be positive, focusing on a joyful future for the community without any political commentary or negativity in the air. Be part of the folks creating and sustaining a

better future for Milford and the surrounding community. Join in the grassroots endeavor to help one another.

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

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Orange Republican Town Committee

A Fresh Perspective For Orange Republicans

I am grateful to the Milford-Orange Times for allowing me and my counterpart to share insights on the Orange political landscape. As the recently inducted Republican Town Committee chairman in Orange, I've been overwhelmed by the support and congratulations from friends, family and political leaders at the local, state and national levels. A sincere congratulations to Jody Dietch on her return to the chairmanship of the Democrat Party.

Contrary to popular belief, the two parties frequently communicate and cooperate. During my tenure as vice chairman of the Orange Republican Party, I worked closely with Democratic Party chairs Polly Demirjian and Joe Marulli. Despite differing views, our ability to collaborate improved our political process and Orange as a whole. I extend the same offer of mutual respect to Chairwoman Deitch.

For those unfamiliar with me, I'm a 21-year-

old native of Orange. I have been privileged to grow up in this community and witness how Orange truly is a great place to live, work and raise a family. I am currently a junior at Fairfield University majoring in finance. I've received academic honors for all three years of my educational journey thus far. I am deeply inspired by figures like Reagan, Washington, Lincoln, Churchill and Thatcher.

While leading our party at 21 is unprecedented for this committee, young leaders have a storied history of achievement in America. To my fellow young Americans, I offer this message: throughout our history, youth has catalyzed extraordinary achievements. Thomas Edison revolutionized the world in his early 20s. Amelia Ear-



DOMINICK LOMBARDI

hart broke records in her youth. The very architects of our nation like Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and Nathan Hale were all in their early 20s when they laid America's foundation. In their spirit, I bring a fresh perspective and boundless potential. Like them, we are prepared to tackle today's challenges with innovation, courage and accountability.

The Orange Republican Party will focus this summer on new initiatives to prepare for the 2025 municipal elections. Under the leadership of First Selectman Jim Zeoli and his administration, Orange has thrived. His administration has overseen steady economic growth, ensuring that Orange remains a vibrant community for businesses and residents alike. The town

showcases tier-one school systems, providing our children with top-notch education and a promising future. Thanks to conservative fiscal management, Orange has maintained its AAA bond rating, a testament to our financial stability and responsible governance. Additionally, Zeoli's commitment to preserving open space has helped maintain Orange's rural charm and honor its agricultural history, a hallmark of this community.

The Orange Republicans' initiatives have ensured that our town remains a picturesque and inviting place to live. These achievements, coupled with our team's dedication to serving the community, give us great confidence that voters will once again place their trust in the Zeoli administration come 2025.

Dominick Lombardi is the chair of the Orange Republican Town Committee.

Financial Planning

What Is A Stock, A Bond, And A Mutual Fund?

As a financial advisor, one of the things I do is review the financial statements for my prospective clients. As I am reviewing their holdings, I always ask why they hold the investments in their portfolio.

Then I take a step back and ask them if they know what the investments are. And more often than you can believe, the response is something like, "Well, I kinda know what a stock is but why don't you explain it for us again...."

Let's start with stock. Stock, simply put, is ownership in a company. If you own stock in XYZ company, then you own part of the company. You will share in the good fortunes and misfortunes of that company. You can buy stock in large, mid or small-sized com-

panies, both foreign and domestic. All the categories carry varying levels of risk.

A bond, by comparison, is debt. A company, municipality or government is looking for a loan. In return, they will pay interest to the grantor of that loan. The interest is usually paid on a semiannual basis for the life of the loan, after which the principal investment is paid back to the investor. Bond maturities can vary, but are typically between one and 30 years.

What's a mutual fund? This is an investment vehicle that allows for investors to pool their money to invest in a common



PJ SHANLEY

diversified, professionally managed portfolio. These portfolios can be made of stocks or bonds or a combination of stocks and bonds. Stock mutual funds can be growth-oriented, where the earnings of the companies are expected to outpace the market. Or they can be value-oriented, where the price is considered undervalued relative to investment fundamentals. They can also invest in large, medium and small-size companies both foreign and

domestic. A bond mutual fund is a portfolio that can be invested in any of the varying types of bonds. There are also blended port-

folios that invest in both stock and bonds that can help with diversity.

Which, if any, of these types of securities is right for you? That depends on your risk tolerance and time horizon. You should also consult your financial professional before making any decisions.

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.



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Orange Democratic Town Committee

Your Democratic Party Of Orange

The mission of the Orange Democratic Town Committee is to improve the quality of life for Orange residents by engaging, educating and advocating for our community. We promote the advancement of Democratic Party ideals and foster inclusive civic participation while developing and supporting Democratic Party candidates for local, state and federal office who represent the diverse voices of all Orange residents.

In each issue of the only print newspaper to serve Orange, the Orange Democratic Party, hopes to include information on what's happening in town and with the Orange Democratic Party.

Let's kick off our first column reminding you that the town budget referendum is Wednesday, May 15. Polls are open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. There is no early voting option for the referendum, but you can vote by absentee ballot if you are not available that day to vote.

The town of Orange has an \$83 million budget. This is your chance to vote on whether or not to pass this budget. The recent boom in residential real estate values and our mandated revaluation of properties will likely lead

to property tax increases for most, if not all, residents. Copies of the budget are available at Town Hall or view it online at <https://shorturl.at/mqJKU>.

At the recent monthly meeting of the ODTG, the elected members voted to endorse President Joe Biden for reelection. We recognize that much is at stake in November and applaud the many accomplishments of President Biden including, and certainly not limited to: the American Rescue Plan Act to get us out of the financial mess COVID and the previous administration left us in; the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that is rebuilding America coast to coast that we are seeing right here in Connecticut; the Chips & Science Act; the Respect for Marriage Act enshrining marriage equality for all; the Inflation Reduction Act; and protecting women's rights and the rights of the LGBTQ community.

The ODTG membership also endorsed the Amity budget. We recognize the value of education in our community. We know that the



JODY DIETCH

Amity Regional school system is exemplary and in order to maintain the high standards of education we have become accustomed to in the BOW community, we must support Amity. Our children deserve nothing less. Even if you don't have children in the school system, our property values are tied to our school system's success. The ODTG encourages you to support our schools and our kids.

We also engaged in a discussion on unleveling at the Amity middle schools. Many of us were unfamiliar with the term and what it means for our students. There is much misinformation out there on this as well. We wanted to take the time to learn the facts. Amity Board of Education members Carla Eichler and Paul Davis took the time to explain how this is working and to answer questions anyone had. We learned that math is not being unlevelled. We also learned that unleveling helps promote confidence in children and gives children struggling in a subject a better opportunity to improve their skills

and rise up in that particular subject. At the same time, it doesn't hinder higher achieving students from continuing their gains. Studies have found that when a child gets leveled in middle school, they accept that level and don't strive to get to the next level. Unleveling removes that stigma and allows children more opportunities to grow. Learning the facts was an eye opener for many.

As the weather warms, we look forward to seeing you at the Orange Memorial Day parade on Sunday, May 26. Look out for information on our Annual Meet the Candidates picnic happening Sunday, Sept. 8 and our booth at the Orange Country Fair the weekend of Sept. 21-22.

If you would like to learn more about the Orange Democratic Town Committee, you can reach out to me at JLDOrange@yahoo.com, visit our website at OrangeCTDems.org, or go to our Facebook and Instagram pages at [OrangeCTDems](https://www.facebook.com/OrangeCTDems).

Jody Dietch is the chair of the Orange Democratic Town Committee.

Artisan Market Returning To Milford

The Milford Artisan Market, a biannual community event, will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Milford Green at 168-176 Broad St. Admission is free.

"Bring Mom and the entire family to the Milford Artisan Market during Mother's Day weekend to browse all of the unique, handmade wares for sale," said event organizer Alison Kosakowski, owner of Artisan Events by Ally.

The event will feature over 100 local artisans and makers who will be offering items including jewelry, paintings, pottery, woodwork and natural products as well as

specialty foods. The event will also feature Mother's Day photo opportunities and kids' activities for family fun.

The market will include a full hour of free Kundalini yoga on Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m. plus entertainment from Carroll Farrell School of Dancing and live music from Soundview, Lord of the Cello, Inner Groove and Kayla Rae. Street food will be offered from vendors including International Food and Silver Sands Pizza, along with homemade baked treats from various artisan vendors.

Learn more at facebook.com/milfordartisanmarket.

Restoration Specialist Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting April 11 to celebrate the opening of an office in Milford for Precise LLC. Precise LLC is a restoration and mold remediation specialist, but they are adding on new services including remodeling, new construction and hardscapes. The company moved to Milford from California. From left: MRCC Director Simon McDonald, co-owner Leonardo Nicoara, Board of Directors Chair Kevin Wiersman, co-owner Marco Nicoara, co-owner Anatoly Nazarov and co-owner Alyas Haiderly. Photo by Greg Geiger.

Phase-In (Continued From 1)

since many homes would be recognized as being worth so much more money, they would be paying more even though the percentage being charged decreased.

Town Attorney Vincent Marino delivered a lengthy presentation arguing that the plan is legally sound and follows the schedule set forth under state law. He added that there has been some disagreement between the town and state officials over the phase-in and the schedule for Orange's next revaluation, though he reassured the selectmen that he felt comfortable standing by his assessment.

"If something were to happen where what I believe is my well-reasoned opinion is not going to stand because some judge on the Supreme Court disagrees with me, then we'll have to do 75 (percent of the phase-in) next year," he said.

"I've talked to a lot of people about this," said alderman PJ Shanley, who is also a Milford-Orange Times columnist. "These are some big numbers, and to not consider a phase-in...I think there's plenty members of our community who can afford it, and I think there's plenty members of the community that would be significantly affected by not phasing this in and absorbing a tax increase of this magnitude in one year."

Shanley said that even if Marino's

argument falls through with the state, that the effect of a 25 percent increase in the first year and a 75 increase in the second would still be better than doing nothing.

Selectman Mitch Goldblatt asked Marino how confident he was that the town's phase-in plan would fly. Marino said it was better to take the chance than to lose the opportunity to give residents a break.

Finance Director John Cifarelli also reminded Goldblatt that the town had gone through something similar in the early 2000s.

"It was the same type of thing. The housing market went way up. We voted to phase it in. We got to the second year, and then we had a big recession and the state passed a law to freeze it. You never know," he said.

Though the phase-in will likely benefit residential property owners, it will mean that commercial properties will continue to shoulder a proportionally larger portion of the tax burden in the near term. That's because the same total amount of taxes will have to be collected to cover budget expenditures, and commercial properties will show up as a greater percentage of the town's grand list than what the full revaluation would have given.

It also means that there is a built-in tax increase for many residents over the following three years, even if the town has no changes to its budget over that time.

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Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Heart Of Social Media Strategy For Business Growth

In today's digital age, the narrative a business weaves can often be as crucial as the products or services it offers. As the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, we have observed how storytelling and engagement are not merely aspects of a robust social media strategy, but fundamental drivers of business growth, especially for our member businesses in Milford, West Haven, Orange and Stratford.

The Power of Storytelling

Storytelling in business is about creating a narrative that resonates with your audience, connects on a personal level and builds trust. When customers understand not just what you sell but who you are and what you stand for, they are more likely to feel a bond with your brand. This connection is particularly potent on social media, where stories can be shared and spread far beyond traditional marketing boundaries.

For local businesses, storytelling provides an opportunity to highlight what makes them unique, whether it's their history, their involvement in the community or the personal journeys of their employees. By sharing these stories, businesses can differentiate themselves in a crowded market and cultivate a loyal customer base.

Engaging Your Audience

Engagement is the lifeblood of effective social media strategies. It's not enough to post content regularly; the content must invite interaction. Engagement can take many forms, from likes and comments to shares and direct messages. Each interaction is an opportunity to build a relationship and, importantly, to learn more about your customers' preferences and needs.

For small businesses in our region, engagement means listening to what the community values and responding in kind. It could be participating in local issues, responding to feedback, or creating content that speaks directly to the interests of the community. This two-way interaction not only boosts your social media presence but also strengthens community ties.

Leveraging Local Stories for Greater Impact

Local businesses have the unique advantage of community relevance, which can powerfully enhance storytelling and engagement. Sharing stories of local partnerships, community involvement or even featuring customer stories can significantly increase relevance and reso-



MICHAEL
MOSES

nance on social media platforms.

Here are a few actionable tips for our local businesses to enhance their storytelling and engagement on social media:

1. Showcase your origins: Share the history of your business, the challenges you've faced and the milestones you've achieved. Let your audience see the journey behind the business.
2. Highlight community involvement: Whether it's sponsoring a local sports team, participating in or organizing community events, or supporting local causes, let your followers know how you're involved in the community.
3. Engage with visuals: Use photos and videos to tell your story more vividly. Visuals are key on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, where they can attract more engagement than text-only posts.
4. Encourage user-generated content: Invite your customers to share their own stories related to your business. This not only engages your existing audience but also extends your reach to potential new customers.
5. Regular interaction: Make it a point to respond to comments and messages. Acknowledgment can go a long way in building customer loyalty and trust.

edgment can go a long way in building customer loyalty and trust.

The Milford Regional Chamber's Commitment

At the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, we are dedicated to helping our members thrive in the digital landscape. We provide workshops, resources and one-on-one consultations to help you craft compelling stories and effectively engage with your audience on social media.

By embracing storytelling and fostering genuine engagement, local businesses can enhance their digital presence, attract more customers and drive growth. We encourage all our members to harness the full potential of social media to tell their stories and engage with the vibrant Milford community.

To learn more about our digital marketing resources or to get personalized advice on enhancing your social media strategy, visit our website or contact our office. Let's grow together by telling our stories and engaging our community.

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

Orange Chamber of Commerce

Orange Chamber Hosting Spring Outdoor Events

The Orange Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce two upcoming events.

First, the chamber will be hosting our second annual Cornhole Tournament and Family Fun Day on Sunday, May 19 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event will take place at the Paugusset Club, located at 837 Dentree Dr. in Orange. The cornhole tournament will feature a \$500 cash prize for the winning team. Team entries are \$50 per team and a link to register can be found on our Facebook page.

In addition to the cornhole tournament, the chamber's Family Fun Day will run concurrently. Family Fun Day will include the Vistles Southern comfort food truck along with a bounce house and face painting. We will also feature a Chamber Member Showcase, where our members will be on site to discuss their businesses.

Next, the Orange Chamber of Commerce

will be hosting our annual Community Awards Dinner at Grassy Hill Country Club on June 13 starting at 6 p.m. Attendees will be able to network with an open bar networking social to begin the evening. Next, Grassy Hill will treat attendees to a buffet dinner along with a state of the town address given by First Selectman Jim Zeoli and a state of the state address from a special speaker. Tickets will be available on our chamber Facebook page.

Ribbon cuttings are a staple for the Orange Chamber of Commerce. Ribbon cuttings are run jointly in Orange with the Orange Economic Development Corporation.

We were honored to celebrate recently with Connection Heating and Plumbing and PickleSpot Indoor Courts as we cut the ribbon on



LIAM
OHLMANN

their new facilities. You are welcome to attend these ribbon cuttings and join us to celebrate our local businesses.

You are always invited to our monthly ONET series. ONET is a free networking and leads group which meets at 8:30 a.m. on the second Thursday of every month at The Homewood Suites by Hilton, located at 99 Marsh Hill Rd. Each month we have received a larger turnout for this event with energetic local professionals. Information regarding these meetings can be found by liking and following our Facebook page. Again, you are always welcome to attend and meet with local business professionals.

The Orange Chamber of Commerce would like to thank our corporate partners who are

so generous with our chamber and with our community. Thank you to Avangrid, Coldwell Banker Realty, The Eagle Leasing Company, The Milford Bank, the Milford-Orange Times and TrinityPoint Wealth for making many of our programs and initiatives possible.

To find out more about any of these events, or schedule a time to meet with the Orange Chamber of Commerce and discuss membership or sponsorship, please email Director@orangechamber.com. I am looking forward to meeting with you and discussing your business needs and how the chamber may help.

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

Wine Talk

Spring Wines Worth Checking Out

Spring is a difficult and confusing time to choose wines. Depending on the menu chosen, it is difficult to find a great spring wine. Are we having spring lamb or is it halibut season? Many wine people would recommend a white, like Austrian Gruner Veltliner, that goes with all of these foods. However, certain reds can pair with pesto and lentils and pasta primavera. These reds may want to break the "white with fish" advice.

The spring red wine is something with a light-bodied nature. However, some tannin structure is important. A red with fresh and juicy characteristics with some notes of fresh herbs and maybe some berries, flowers, but including some mineralogy and earthiness would work well. It's best to have not much oak.

Some great suggestions would include Grignolino from Piedmont, which is a pale and light red with a backbone. Another would include Blaufrankisch from Austria's Burgenland without too much barrel aging.

Another great choice would include a juicy native Catalan like Trepas. Some other great spring reds include some Alsace-an Pinot Noirs. These include Les Vins Pirouettes "Rouge Litron de Fabrice." This wine is produced by an association of Alsatian winemakers. It has seven days of skin maceration and is aged only in stainless steel. It has aromas and flavors of wild berry and rides between a red and a rose.

In the Tarragona province in Catalonia there are some spectacular wines made from the native Sumoll grape. They are referred to as the Celler 9+ wines and they are great spring wines. They have a great balance of juicy wines and earthiness and some cool mineralogy that is terrific. In Burgenland, a blend of Zweigelt and Cabernet Franc produces a wine called Christian Tschida Kapitel. At \$50 a bottle it is a bargain.



RAYMOND
SPAZIANI

There is a funk that makes this wine something special. It is an elegant wine that is still juicy and has intense pepper notes.

Another great wine from Burgenland is Rosi Schuster Sankt Laurent. It is primarily a Pinot Noir that has been crossed with another, unknown variety. It is a silky wine with a long, fresh finish that bursts with notes cherry and berry.

Blaufrankisch is Burgenland's top grape. Markus Altenburger "Eric" Blaufrankisch is a top spring wine with a great finish. At \$27 it is a bargain.

Catalonia has a Josep Foraster "Julietta" Trepas for about \$30. This wine is the definition of a spring red. "Vertebra de la Figuera" at \$50 is another Spanish home run. This is a Dominik Huber wine. It is a great spring wine. He makes reds that sell for \$350.

The Italians have some great spring wines

as well. "Natalin" at \$22 is a good choice. It is made from 100 percent Grignolino grape. This is an ancient Piedmont variety that is making a big comeback. Out of Emilia-Romagna is a wonderful spring red called Centesimino. It is a wine with lively tannins and lots of spring herbs.

Hunt for some of these spring reds. They will match with lamb and ham and all your favorite spring and holiday favorites. 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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The Rotary Club of Orange

Project Funding And Fundraising By Orange Rotary

The Rotary Club of Orange annually provides \$40,000 to \$50,000 to support youth services, community organizations and international projects. These fund amounts are club-generated, but also can be matched or multiplied when projects are undertaken jointly with other clubs.

Youth services receives the largest share of this funding, with the funding mainly generated by Orange club member fundraising. The funds provide first-year college scholarship awards for high school graduates who reside in Orange as well as leadership development programming. Other funds support academic projects at Amity High as well as prizes for public speaking contests. Orange Rotary also helps fund activities for satellite youth clubs (called Interact clubs) that engage students at Amity, Hamden Hall and Hopkins high schools, as well as middle school children at St. Martin de Porres Academy.

The club also supports literacy projects at Orange's elementary schools, and this year is sponsoring several mental health and wellness initiatives for children enrolled in these schools and their families. One of these is a Family Fun Wellness event to be held on Thursday, May 23 at Peck Place School. The wellness initiatives span both youth and community services goals for the club.

Annual club support of community projects includes providing a Thanksgiving dinner for

veterans at the American Legion Hall, as well as "Pancakes at the Pavilion." This brunch event is upcoming for seniors on Sunday, May 19 at High Plains Community Center in conjunction with the Senior Center.

This summer we are one of the sponsors of the town's summer concert series on Thursday evenings and will host our family-focused Summerfest on Sept. 7.

Community projects often are undertaken in conjunction with other area not-for-profit organizations and/or nearby Rotary clubs. For example, the club assisted Marrakech with its holiday party for the disabled clients they serve, and is providing partial funding to launch a boxing academy with them for physically or behaviorally challenged youth. During last fall's football season, our club joined with clubs from New Haven and North Haven to host a game-day event at Yale for Special Olympic athletes from south central Connecticut.

Another organization we collaborated with this year for a holiday stocking-stuffer project was Traveler on a Mission. TOAM helps provide personal hygiene products to residents who often are food insecure as well. This project complements a multi-year collaboration with Purple Pantry and Rotary clubs from



DAN MAY

Devon, Milford and West Haven to help provide a daily supply of shelf-stable food for nearby "pantries" among those maintained from East Haven to Bridgeport. Purple Pantry is truly a multi-organizational effort and includes churches, Elks clubs, YMCAs, Boys & Girls clubs and senior centers. Collaborating with other Rotary clubs brings an added benefit of receiving matching funds from the Rotary District for Southern Connecticut.

Rotary is an international organization, and the Orange club recently has partnered with clubs in rural Kenya and joined other Connecticut clubs on projects in Nepal and Guatemala. These included school and library projects, water supply improvements and health care service enhancements. Contributions from other clubs and districts are supplemented with funds from the Rotary International Foundation and can yield project-funding levels in the six-figure range.

Such projects thus reach a threshold to apply for matching funds from other global philanthropic organizations. Philanthropy at this scale relies on a pyramid of collaboration and cooperation.

However, it all starts with local fundraising and donor solicitations. The Orange club pro-

vided members' "sweat-equity" on the April 27 shredding day event at High Plains. And we are grateful that town citizens generously donated over \$2,400 that day. Our next fundraiser is part of our ongoing online Mother's Day Rose Sale, with roses available for pickup on May 10 at High Plains. Please consider purchasing roses for the mothers you cherish, and help support Rotary youth services and community initiatives, too. You can find out more about that event at rotarycluboforange.org.

Our September community Summerfest and Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot are also fundraising ventures.

Nearly all club member dues are routed to our regional district and Rotary International. The club actively tries to get most this back as matching funds by collaborating with other clubs on community or international projects. Past and current members, as well as long-time community "Friends of Rotary," have also been generous with individual donations and planned giving. As a result, the club has been able to establish a small endowment that supplements annual fundraising. Rotary is an all-volunteer organization, so nearly all funds received are returned back to local youth and community projects, with some linked into Rotary's network of global grants.

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

Bankruptcy

The Only Debt Consolidation Program That's Not A Scam

Most of my days are spent working on straight Chapter 7 bankruptcies in which my clients receive a discharge of their debts without ever having to pay them back. But not all folks qualify for Chapter 7. Some people are disqualified because they make too much money, or they have too many assets. People who cannot file Chapter 7 must turn to alternatives to protect themselves from their creditors.

Some people might decide to forego bankruptcy altogether and just let their debts go. If they do this, most of their creditors will likely sue them. Creditors have six years from the date of the last payment to commence legal action under Connecticut's statute of limitations. If folks decide to go this route, they can just deal with their creditors as they come after them.

Oftentimes, this results in settlements. Settlements connote some debt forgiveness, and you must keep in mind that every dollar of forgiven debt is a dollar of taxable income. (There are no tax consequences in bankruptcy.)

If a person can't stomach looking over their shoulder for six years, then they can

consider a different kind of bankruptcy called "Chapter 13."

I must insert here that some people in this situation may consider a debt consolidation program – perhaps one that they have seen on TV or heard about on the radio. Most, if not all, of these types of programs are scams.

The scam goes something like this: the company tells you to stop paying your creditors and start paying the consolidation company. They take monthly payments from you and save them for you after taking their cut off the top. They promise you that they will use this money to make settlements with your creditors. But by the time they actually save up enough money to make meaningful settlements, your creditors have done an end-around and sued you. Now you are out the money you sent to the program and you will need to spend more money on a lawyer, and likely pay the debt back anyway since there is no defense to the action.

Instead of enduring all of this, some folks consider an alternative like Chapter 13.



THERESA ROSE DEGRAY

Simply put, a Chapter 13 bankruptcy is a repayment plan. Much like a debt consolidation program, you stop paying your creditors and you make monthly payments. But unlike the scams, your debts actually do get paid back through a plan that the bankruptcy trustee administers. These plans run for a commitment period of three or five years, depending on your income.

The process and procedure of Chapter 13 is very similar to Chapter 7. Filers usually hire an attorney and pay a legal fee (sometimes upfront and sometimes through the plan, or both). They pay a filing fee to the court (as of today it is, ironically, \$313), they take credit counseling and debtor education courses, they have a 341 meeting of the creditors and ultimately receive a discharge.

The main difference is that in a Chapter 7 the debtor does not pay their creditors back and in a Chapter 13 they do.

Most often Chapter 13 bankruptcies are used to strategically stall foreclosure proceedings. If a client is at risk of losing their

home and they have exhausted all other options, Chapter 13 can save their home from foreclosure or buy them some time to gracefully exit their home. This is because as soon as a bankruptcy is filed an automatic stay goes into effect. The word "stay" is just a fancy legal term for the word "stop." The automatic stay immediately stops all collection activity, including foreclosure. In the Chapter 13 plan, the homeowner would pay back the arrearage on the mortgage. But what most folks don't realize is that during the pending Chapter 13, they must also go back to making monthly mortgage payments. Sometimes Chapter 13 gets too expensive for people to sustain.

Luckily, Chapter 13 is voluntary, and in most cases, if it doesn't work, the debtor can simply dismiss their case and move on.

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

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The Arts

May Is Blooming With The Arts

If you're looking for a last-minute experience for Mother's Day or need a unique gift idea for someone, the arts have you covered. May is the month when garden beds begin to flourish and drives along country roads and shoreline beaches offer beautiful views on your way to new adventures. Spend a day outdoors enjoying local vendors selling handmade items, take a trip to see a brilliantly unique and hilarious Hitchcock adaptation, see a Hamden-raised Broadway star, listen to a beautiful concert, see a wonderful collaborative effort of an all-abilities cast in a toe-tapping musical and more. Our arts community is blooming with local talent.

Spotlight Stage Company presents "Peter and the Suncatcher" on May 10-11, a Tony Award-winning play conceived for the stage by directors Roger Bees and Alex Timbers, written by Rick Elice with music by Wayne Barker. The play is based on the adaptation of Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's best-selling novels of the century-old story of how a miserable orphan boy becomes the legendary Peter Pan. A young orphan and his mates are shipped off from Victorian England to a distant island ruled by the evil King Zarboff. They know nothing of the mysterious trunk in the captain's cabin, which contains a precious, otherworldly cargo. At sea, the boys are discovered by a precocious young girl named Molly, a stargazer-in-training who realizes that the trunk's precious cargo is starstuff, a celestial substance so powerful that it must never fall into the wrong hands. When the ship is taken over by pirates - led by the fearsome Black Stache, a villain determined to claim the trunk and its treasure for his own - the journey quickly becomes a thrilling adventure. The play features a dozen actors portraying more than 100 unforgettable characters. Matinee and evening performances are available at the High Lane Club, located at 40 High Ln. in North Haven. Due to the historic nature of the building, patrons must ascend one flight of stairs to reach

the performance space. There is no handicap accessibility. The show is cabaret-style seating; bring your own food and beverage. Tickets are \$25 for main seating and \$40 for VIP seating, available at spotlightstagecompany.com or by calling 203-837-0261.

The Milford Spring Artisan Market will be held May 11-12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Milford Green, located at 168 Broad St. in Milford. Visit over 100 local artists and crafters selling handmade pottery, jewelry, paintings, sculptures, paintings wood-working and more. There will be live music, food and activities for the whole family. Special photo opportunities will also be available for Mother's Day. This event is free and open to the public and organized by Artisan Events by Ally.

New Haven Symphony Orchestra presents "Latina Leading Ladies of Broadway" on June 1 and 2, a dazzling afternoon of Broadway's iconic Latina roles featuring Hamden-raised Broadway leading lady Linedy Genao from Andrew Lloyd Webbers' "Bad Cinderella" and music from Gloria Estefan's "On Your Feet!," "West Side Story," "In the Heights," and more. The show will also feature the voices of the Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus and Hamden's Whitney Players, with guest conductor James Olmstead. The June 1 performance occurs at 3 p.m. at the John Lyman Center for the Performing Arts, located at 501 Crescent St. in New Haven. The June 2 performance is at 3 p.m. at Shelton High School, located at 120 Meadow St. in Shelton. Tickets are \$15-\$69 for adults and free for children under age 18 with the purchase of an adult ticket. College students pay \$10, and there is free admission for active military members with ID. Groups of 10 or more receive a 20 percent discount. Visit newhavensymphony.org or call 203-865-0831 for more information.



CYNDI CONSOLI

ation. New Haven Chorale presents "Music of Remembrance and Gratitude: Requiem for the Living" by Dan Forrest on June 9. In the composer's own words, "the five movements form a narrative just as much for the living, and their own struggle with pain and sorrow, as for the dead." This

40-minute contemporary masterpiece is a highly moving work that will inspire you with its lush sounds, comforting words and delicate sonorities. The chorale will be performing this work in the expanded chamber music version. The second half of the concert will feature thought-provoking works based around the topic of gratitude by composers J.S. Bach, Eriks Esenwalds, Craig Hella Johnson, Christopher Theophanidis and Gwyneth Walker. The performance will take place at 4 p.m. in Woolsey Hall, located at 500 College St. in New Haven. For tickets visit newhavenchorale.org or call 203-776-7664.

Castle Craig Players presents "The 39 Steps" by Patrick Barlow now through May 19. The play is based on the novel by John Buchan and the film by Alfred Hitchcock. Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have "The 39 Steps," a fast-paced whodunnit for anyone who loves the magic of theater. This two-time Tony and Drama Desk Award-winning treat is packed with nonstop laughs, over 150 zany characters (played by a ridiculously talented cast of four), an onstage plane crash, handcuffs, missing fingers and some good old-fashioned romance. There are matinee and evening performances at Almira Stephan Memorial Playhouse, located at 59 West Main St. in Meriden. Tickets are \$25 for general

admission and \$20 for seniors, available online at castlecraigplayers.org.

Vista Life Innovations' A Shared Stage Productions presents "Footloose the Musical" from May 17-19, a stage adaptation by Dean Pitchford and Walter Bobbie based on the original screenplay by Dean Pitchford with music by Tom Snow and lyrics by Dean Pitchford. Additional music is by Eric Carmen, Sammy Hagar, Kenny Loggins and Jim Steinman. This is Vista's ninth all-abilities musical production presented by a unified cast and crew made up of both Vista students and members along with actors and singers from the shoreline community. Produced by Vista Life Innovations and with a production team of experienced professionals in their field, this project aims to create a fully inclusive, shared, open communication through theater for participants of all abilities. "Footloose" tells the story of Ren McCormack, a teenager from Chicago who moves to a small town where dancing and rock music have been banned. Ren faces resistance from the conservative town leaders. Determined to bring joy back to the community, Ren rallies his peers to fight for their right to dance. Along the way, he falls in love with Ariel, the reverend's rebellious daughter. "Footloose" celebrated the exhilaration of youth, the wisdom of listening to one another and the power of forgiveness. Matinee and evening performances are at The Kate - Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center, located at 300 Main St. in Old Saybrook. For further information visit vistalifeinnovations.org or call 860-399-8080 x 269.

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

Orange Congregational Church Strawberry Festival SATURDAY June 8, 2024 RAIN DATE: JUNE 9 Come enjoy a day of strawberry treats and family fun at the Orange fairgrounds! • Food and Drinks • Strawberry Treats • Red Car Show • Family Games • Local Vendors • Live Music 9AM - 5PM HIGH PLAINS FAIRGROUNDS ORANGE, CONNECTICUT OrangeCongregationalChurch.com FREE ADMISSION

Network of Executive Women Celebrating 45 Years of Women Helping Women NEW 45th Anniversary Gala Please join us as we gather to recognize the 45th anniversary of the Network of Executive Women (NEW). Founded in 1979 by Phyllis Holt, NEW, an affiliate of the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, addresses the common business interests and issues of women in executive, professional, and entrepreneurial roles through the exchange of ideas, information, and experiences to help us grow and prosper. The celebration will be held on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at the beautiful, new, waterfront Tyde at Walnut Beach. Includes open bar for the first hour, appetizers, 3 course dinner, dancing, and many great prizes up for auction. Tickets: \$100 pp To purchase tickets, please scan the QR code or visit our website at networkofexecutivewomen.org We are grateful for the support of our amazing sponsors! Proud Affiliate of Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Questions? clemayaz@optonline.net or Barbara.Zink@coldwellbankermoves.com

Orange Lions Celebrate Community With Mini-Grants



The Orange Lions Club held a community grants night on April 8 at High Plains Community Center in Orange to present their annual mini-grants to various community causes. Front row, from left: Lion grant chairperson Nick Bencivengo, Cathy Anderson of the Orange Conservation Commission and Lawrence Messina of the Orange Land Trust. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Firefighters

(Continued From 1)

compressed air worn on their backs to work in the poisonous atmosphere of a fire. "Being able to take a deep breath and to conserve your air is incredibly important. Your air bottle is your lifeline in a fire. The better you can control your breathing and conserve your air, the better off you are."

Demeraski said he hoped the Fight for Air event would help firefighters already suffering from cancer and other lung diseases and help future firefighters avoid

the illnesses.

In addition to Demeraski, the team was made up of Capt. Dan Abrams and Firefighters Jesse Bartha, Jen Botsko, Noah Clark, Scott Horowitz, Walter Joseph and Cole Tennant. As active firefighters, the group was already in good physical condition. The team worked out together and individually. As the event approached, they donned their protective clothing and their air bottles and used a stair-climbing exercise machine in the firehouse bay.

Physical exertion was just one challenge team members had to overcome as they

ran up 688 steps in 75 pounds worth of firefighting gear.

"A lot of it was mental," said Demeraski. "You start to get tired. Your body says you don't want to do this anymore. You have to work through that. But that's just like being a firefighter. Your mind says you shouldn't run into that burning building, but you have to overcome that to perform the job."

All eight firefighters finished. As a team, they raised \$3,241.49 for the American Lung Association. Supporters can increase that amount by donating to the American

Lung Association through the Orange firefighters by clicking on <http://action.lung.org/goto/orangevfd>.

"I'm really proud of the team," said Demeraski. "We had seasoned firefighters and brand new firefighters. Everybody made it up the stairs at their own pace." That camaraderie and teamwork is a hallmark of the fire service, he said.

So is working for causes like the American Lung Association, he added. Demeraski, for whom this was the third Climb for Air, says he's looking forward to assembling a team again next year.

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Mental Health Fair Coming To Milford

There will be a mental health fair at Jonathan Law High School in Milford on May 25 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is a free event and is open to the public.

There will be numerous practitioners, therapists, nonprofits, vendors, and self-help groups in attendance. Visitors can see demonstrations of various practices for improving one's well-being as well as a

children's corner.

The fair is free to attend, but donations of clothing, toys, books (especially self-help books) and/or dry or canned goods will be accepted for local charities.

Vendors wishing to participate and anyone looking for more information can contact Cat Mortimer at milfordmentalhealth@gmail.com or visit milfordctmentalhealthfair.com.

Rock The Dock Mental Health Fundraiser Approaching

Bridges Healthcare, the local mental health authority for Milford, Orange and other surrounding communities, will hold its Rock the Dock for Mental Health event on Thursday, May 30 at 5:30 p.m. at Lisman Landing, located at 37 Helwig St. in downtown Milford.

In support of Mental Health Awareness Month, the event will feature an exclusive performance by local band The Alpaca Gnomes and include light fare and drinks. Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased at give.classy.org/RocktheDock. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Orange Library To Host 'Queen'

The Friends of the Case Memorial Library will host a visit of "Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II" on Saturday, May 18 at 2 p.m. as Sheryl Faye will portray the late English Queen.

Before the program the Friends will hold their annual meeting at 1 p.m., when there will be a brief business report, election of board members and the awarding of the Lucy Scillia Scholarship to a graduating Orange senior.

Faye graduated from Emerson College with a BFA in acting. She has received many awards for both stage and film and has performed across the US. She has performed other historical presentations for the Friends over the years. She becomes the character she is portraying in looks, words, actions

and costumes.

Queen Elizabeth II was the longest reigning monarch of the UK. She began her reign at age 25 and ruled through the many challenges to her kingdom before she died at age 96 in 2022. Like all mothers, she experienced the happiness, tragedies and disappointments of family members as well. Through it all, she was a loving wife, mother and grandmother, a lover of horses and corgis, a dedicated head of the commonwealth and a popular working queen.

The queen can be joined for tea after the performance and asks that you RSVP. Call 203-891-2170 or visit casememoriallibrary.org. Guests are asked to dress to meet the queen. A curtsy is optional.

Beekeeper Speaks At OLT Meeting



Dr. William Riecker, who produces honey through Bills Bees, spoke at the Orange Land Trust's annual meeting on May 1. The talk centered around the importance of bees for the environment and how 75 percent of the food supply depends on bees and other pollinators. Photo courtesy of the Orange Land Trust.

Juneteenth Fundraiser Coming In Milford

The fifth annual Milford Juneteenth celebration will kick off the Juneteenth holiday season with a May 16 fundraiser from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Milford Arts Council Firehouse Gallery, located at 81 Naugatuck Ave. in the Walnut Beach neighborhood.

Silver Sands Pizza and Walnut Beach Creamery food trucks will have food available for purchase. Fresh fruits, desserts and select wines are provided in the ticket price.

Musical entertainment will be provided by

soloist sensation Fernanda Franco, featuring smooth jazz, R&B and pop music.

Juneteenth materials and unique historical artifacts will be on display.

Tickets are \$50 and available from the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce at cca.milfordct.com/EvtListing.aspx?dbid2=CTMIL&evtid=10849836&class=E. For more information, contact Bryan Anderson at 203-306-7294 or Nija Phelps at 480-293-4240, or email juneteenthmilford@gmail.com.

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Dispensary (Continued From 1)

through February, the most recent months for which records were available. Southern Connecticut Wellness & Healing's RISE dispensary, which sells both medicinal and recreational marijuana, opened operations at 175 Boston Post Rd. in late 2023.

Under state law, municipalities that host a dispensary within their borders are allowed to take 3 percent of all recreational sales. RISE's recreational sales during that period came to \$1,606,873.01, according to the state Department of Revenue Services.

The total does not include medicinal sales, which are not taxed.

According to state law, the taxes Orange receives can only be used for certain purposes, including neighborhood improvements in the area where the dispensary is located; education or youth employment and training programs; services for those recently released from Department of Corrections custody, probation or parole; mental health and addiction services; youth service bureaus and municipal juvenile review boards; and civic engagement efforts within the community.

The dispensary's route to Orange did not come without fervent debate from some residents. Orange had placed a moratorium on pot dispensaries in 2021, shortly after the state legalized the sale of recreational marijuana. Southern Connecticut Wellness & Healing successfully convinced the Town Plan & Zoning Commission to craft a narrow regulation tailored to the Boston Post Road location. The regulation change passed without much fanfare, but when the company came back to get approval for its specific business, it met with vociferous opposition from many residents –

especially those in the neighborhood. Ultimately, members of the TPZC – even some who did not like the idea of a dispensary in town – voted for the approval, arguing that the application met the criteria the commission itself had just established.

Milford Education (Continued From 1)

at \$109.9 million.

The final decision goes to the Board of Aldermen, who have been deliberating over all aspects of the city's budget in recent weeks.

Susan Glennon, chair of the BOE, opened the meeting with a prepared statement arguing that the larger budget amount reflected the realities of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and other factors.

"Every dollar in this budget is an investment in our community, so that Milford will continue to be a place where kids love going to school and where young families will want to call home," she said.

Superintendent Anna Cutaia, during a lengthy presentation, explained that the public schools had already identified over \$460,000 in savings as part of their earlier budget-making process. Those savings included reductions in educational supplies, computers and contracted services.

"These are some of the line items that by our natural programming were reduced because of the current needs," she said.

Cutaia has released a list of potential cuts that the Board of Education would consider making to meet their budget shortfall if the aldermen approve the lower number. Some of the largest reductions could come in the form of

deferred facilities projects and specialized programming for behavioral and clinical support.

Cutaia noted, however, that many of those deferrals would have to be tackled later. In the case of deferred facilities improvements, a greater need for emergency repairs could also impose added costs.

The specific items that would be cut could change, as the Board of Education would have to make a final decision over how to handle the shortfall.

Alderman Ray Vitali noted that the trend in Milford has been a decrease in population over time – by about 2,000 people in the last five years. He compared that to a similar period in the 1970s, which resulted in layoffs and cuts in city schools at the time.

"Years ago, we had 13,000 or 14,000 kids in the system, with 21 elementary schools and three high schools" Vitali said. "We're down to 5,220 kids, with eight elementary and three high schools."

One of the perennial budget battles has been funding for instructional coaches. Republican members of the BOE unsuccessfully tried to reduce the number of coaches when that board was developing its budget. Several members of the Board of Aldermen also questioned the coaches, which Cutaia defended. Reducing the coaches was not on the list of recommended cuts that she created.

"If there is at the end of the day a move to cut 16 to 32 coaches, that's less help for kids and teachers," she pointed out. "The cutting of the coaches – I don't know what that gets. Now we're really not supporting the kids and teachers. The instructional core is even less supported."

Toward the end of the meeting, alderman Holly Mulrenan spoke in favor of Milford schools.

"I'm totally supportive of the Milford education system," she said. "My children have gone through it. Many of us here have gone through it, we loved it then. And we continue to embrace it because we know that we want to invest in the future."

Letters

(Continued From 5)


an appeal the day after the verdict as allowed by New York state law. The bond is required to prevent the state from beginning to seize assets after the 30-day grace period expires.

He goes on to state "with an unprecedented penalty, the defendant [Trump] cannot easily recover from a prosecutorial injustice." The penalty was not unprecedented in a civil trial if measured as a percentage of the defendant's wealth and was not arbitrarily determined; it represents a calculated summation of the ill-gotten gains Trump received as a result of known false valuation reporting. A quick Google search will find many examples of billion-dollar companies posting billion-dollar bonds. In Trump's case, a \$450 million judgment equates to 16 percent of his net worth (\$2.7 billion recent in Forbes reporting). In 2014 Marvel Semiconductor posted a \$1.5 billion bond against a \$5.6 billion revenue in civil court, a 27 percent figure.

The most disappointing parts of Hurley's comments, though, are the repeated MAGA chants of "severely biased prosecutor and judge and foregone conclusions of guilt" and "New York law... abused for one purpose – to prevent Trump from attaining the presidency." The prosecutors followed the paper trail, Trump's CFO was found guilty of perjury in the proceedings, and the fact that Trump just happens to be running for president again was correctly ignored by the court and by New York law.

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HyperFit MD's New Location In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce on April 25 celebrated the expansion of HyperFit MD Age Management into its new location at 2080 Bridgeport Ave. in Milford. The medical practice provides age management and precision medicine for women and men. Treatments include hormone replacement, IV therapy, regenerative medicine, aesthetics and advanced diagnostics, according to its website. From left: Milford Chamber of Commerce Director Simon McDonald, owner Dr. Charles Guglin, owner Francesca Guglin, RN Melanie Gombos, RN Erin Broderick and Mayor Anthony Giannattasio. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Ospreys Return To Milford



Ospreys vying for limited nesting spaces in Milford on April 17 as they returned from their annual winter migration. Photo by Tim Chaucer.

As the swallows return to Capistrano each Spring, so do the ospreys return to the salt marshes of Milford. Like clockwork, the ospreys or fish hawks, as they are sometimes called, returned during the third week of March, according to Tim Chaucer, director of the Milford Marine Institute.

The institute chose the osprey as its logo in 1983 because this bird best illustrates the link between the avian world and the marine world. In 1989 the ospreys first attempted to nest on platforms which the state erected at the urging of the Milford Marine Institute.

That year the booming of the cannon from the HMS Rose and USS Providence scared the birds off temporarily as Milford was celebrating its 350th anniversary. They nested the next year and every year since. Members of the Milford Marine Institute saw them recently as multiple individuals seemed to be competing for limited nesting platforms along the Gulf Pond State Wildlife Refuge as well as at the Anderson Avenue salt marsh near Chaucer Court.

The Milford Marine Institute has run a Bird Identification Art Camp for 41 years in which campers are introduced to the numerous avian groups which include raptors, or birds of prey, such as the osprey. Campers are also introduced to passerines

(perching birds), long legged waders, waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and others They choose more than one favorite bird which they draw on a pine board, have cut, learn to sand the edges, and paint. This camp meets from July 1-5 this year.

The institute also runs two Marine Biology Science/Art Camps where campers also choose favorite marine species such as whales, dolphins, fish, sea turtles, sharks, mollusks or crustaceans, draw their favorites on pine boards, have them cut out, learn to sand, and paint marine works of art. Campers learn the many marine habitats, make a Long Island Sound marine mollusk collection and to use a marine field guide. The institute has one of the largest collections of large marine mollusks in New England. All of the institute camps are co-sponsored with the Milford Recreation Department and can be found on the department's website.

The Marine Biology Science/Art A runs from June 17-21; the Marine Biology Science/Art B runs from June 24-28. Additionally, an Archaeology/Native Culture Camp A runs from July 8-12, and an Archaeology/Native Culture Camp B runs from July 15-19.

For more information call the institute at 203-874-4000 or 203-988-0918 or go to milfordmarineinstitute.org.

Plumbing/Heating Company Opens In Orange



The Orange Chamber of Commerce and Orange Economic Development Corporation held a ribbon cutting on April 19 for Connection Plumbing & Heating, a full-service and new construction plumbing/heating company that serves commercial and residential clients, located at 367 Boston Post Rd. From left: Orange Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Liam Ohlmann, owner Carl Tonucci III and his family, First Selectman Jim Zeoli and OEDC Executive Director Annemarie Sliby. Photo by Robert Creigh.

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Lombardi Inducted As Orange's Youngest GOP Chair

Dominick Lombardi, at the age of 21, was sworn in as the youngest Republican town chairman in Orange history during a meeting of the Republican Town Committee on April 10. The party also inducted Jude Toohey as vice chairwoman, Annie Gloria as recording secretary and Deb Esposito as treasurer and correspondence secretary.

The ceremony, held at the High Plains Community Center gymnasium, had an attendance of 300 people, according to the party, including national, state and local leaders within the Republican Party.

In his induction speech, Lombardi expressed his profound gratitude for the trust placed in him by the Republican Party of Orange.

"Being the youngest person ever to seek this position, I represent not just the vigor of youth but the beginning of a new era that will be innovative, invigorating, and unflinchingly forward-thinking," Lombardi said.

Acknowledging the significance of his appointment, Lombardi addressed fellow young Republicans, highlighting their potential to effect extraordinary achievements throughout history.

"Throughout our great nation's history, youth has not been a barrier to greatness, but rather a catalyst for extraordinary achievements," he said.

Lombardi also paid homage to the town, recognizing its rich history, vibrant spirit and resilient character.

"Orange is not just where we live; it is a part of who we are," he said.

Lombardi pledged to ensure the Republican Party remains a dominant force within the community. His agenda focuses on fundraising initiatives, recruiting the next generation of Republicans, maintaining election integrity and fostering collaboration with fellow Republican parties statewide and districtwide.

Garden Club Holding May Market In Orange

The Garden Club of Orange will be holding their annual May Market plant and bake sale on Saturday, May 11 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the High Plains Community Center pavilion, located at 525 Orange Center Rd. The club will be selling locally grown annuals, perennials and designs for

Mother's Day giving, as well as home baked goods and garden artifacts. The May Market has become the place for local gardeners to purchase plants that are proven to do well under local growing conditions.

To learn more about the Garden Club, visit gardenclubfororange.com.

Town of Orange Legal Notice Notice of Referendum

Pursuant to Section 2.6(c) of the Town Charter of the Town of Orange, notice is hereby given to the legal voters of the Town of Orange who are qualified to vote in Town Meetings, that a referendum will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 between the hours of

6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (E.S.T.) at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange CT for the purpose of voting on the following question:

SHALL THE OPERATING BUDGET OF THE TOWN OF ORANGE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AS PROPOSED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$83,815,766 BE ADOPTED? YES NO

Voters approving the question shall vote "YES." Those voters opposing the question shall vote "NO."

The polls will be open during the hours between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (E.S.T.) Voters will cast their votes at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT

Absentee ballots shall be available as provided by law at the Office of the Town Clerk. Copies of the Proposed Budget are available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk.

The voting will take place pursuant to the provisions of Section 2.6(c) of the Town of Orange Charter and the votes will be cast and canvassed and the results determined and certified as nearly as may be in accordance with the laws governing the election of Town officers.

Dated at Orange, CT this 9th day of May 2024.
Mary Shaw, Town Clerk

Notice of Democratic Caucus

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of:

Orange, Connecticut.

Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on:

Tuesday, May 28, at 7:00 pm, at
High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT

To endorse a candidate for Registrar of Voters.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut, on April 29, 2024.
Democratic Town Committee of Orange.

Jody Dietch
Chairperson



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Obituaries

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

Timothy Joseph Attolino, Sr., 62 of Milford, died on April 26 at St. Vincent's Medical Center surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



David Gabor Bagley, 76, of Milford, passed away at his home on April 21, 2024. Born on May 31, 1947, in Bridgeport, he was the son of the late Gabor and Mary Bagley. (Pistey Funeral Home)



Shirley Balascak, age 90, of Milford, CT, loving wife of the late Michael Balascak was called home to the Lord on April 20, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Catherine T. (Galpin) Baldwin, "Babe", age 83, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Richard G. Baldwin, passed away on April 29, 2024. (Adzima Funeral Home)



Paul V. Becker passed away unexpectedly Saturday April 13, 2024 at Montowese Health and Rehabilitation of North Haven where he resided for the last year. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Gloria (Aldo) Capecelatro, 99, of Orange, beloved wife of John L. Capecelatro, passed away peacefully on April 23, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Denise J. Carroll, 57, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Raymond T. Carroll, passed away at her home on April 18, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



John Cholakian, age 58, of Milford, peacefully passed surrounded by family at his home on April 13, 2024, after bravely battling cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Nancy A. Christensen, age 85, of Orange, beloved wife of the late Henry E. Christensen, Sr., entered peaceful rest on April 30, 2024, at her home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Gloria E. Danza, 101, peacefully departed on April 14, 2024, in Milford, CT, surrounded by the love of her family. She was born on February 10, 1923, to Rudolph and Christine DeFelice. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Stephen M Dunn, age 73 of Milford CT, passed away on April 26th, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer. (Pistey Funeral Home)



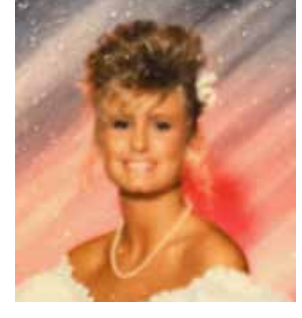
On April 8, 2024, **James "Jim" Federico**, loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away at home surrounded by his family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Entered into rest, April 10, 2024, **Mario A. Gambardella**, 98, of Orange; husband of the late Gloria DeSheen Gambardella. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Kimberly A. Haight, (Kimmy) age 52, of Milford, entered peaceful rest on April 16, 2024. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Maria Linda King of Milford, CT passed away peacefully on March 27, 2024 at Milford Hospital at the age of 72. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Nadine Klein of Orange, CT passed away on April 28. She was 80 years old. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



Helen Celeste McGarry, cherished wife, mother, and grandmother, peacefully departed this life on April 9, 2024, in Orange, CT, surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Margaret "Peggy" Rybczak, passed away peacefully on April 11, 2024, while in the presence of her loving husband. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



John Bernard Sporko, 81, passed away peacefully on April 21, 2024 at his home in Milford CT. John was the beloved husband of the late Gladys Sporko. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rosemary Andreucci Leone, 77, of Orange, beloved wife of the late of Don D. Leone passed away April 4, 2024 at her home surrounded by her loving family. (Porto Funeral Homes)



Margaret E. McHugh, age 85, of Milford, CT passed away peacefully in her home on Monday, April 8, 2024 surrounded by her loving family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Teresa (Golino) Salzillo, age 89, of Milford, beloved wife of Anthony Salzillo, passed away on April 14, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Stephen P. Urso, age 57, of Milford entered peaceful rest on April 10, 2024. He was born on February 19, 1967 in New Haven. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Mark A. McCarthy, age 71, beloved husband of 46 years to Terry J. (Peschell) McCarthy of Milford, entered peaceful rest on April 17, 2024 at home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



John Lincoln Peterson, born February 19, 1951 in Brooklyn, NY, passed away recently at the Orange Health and Rehab Center of Orange, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Robert W Schneider, Jr, 03, of Orange, passed peacefully on Sunday, April 28th, with his daughter by his side. He was born in Brooklyn, NY on May 19, 1930.



Jane M. VanValkenburgh, wife of the late James Morgan VanValkenburgh, born September 25, 1934 in Milford, died March 28, 2024 at home in Manchester, NH with her daughters at her side.



William "Billy" McFadden, 86, of Milford, passed away on April 13, 2024. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Nelson Antonio Rivera, 79, passed away peacefully on May 1, 2024 at Yale New Haven Hospital surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Maricela Argelis Shields, 47, of Milford, beloved wife of nearly 20 years to Daniel Shields, passed away on April 7, 2024, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Arthur E. Zollin, Jr., 91, of Orange passed away at his home on April 3, 2024. Art or Ted, as he was known to family and friends, was born in New Haven on July 14, 1932. (West Haven Funeral Home)



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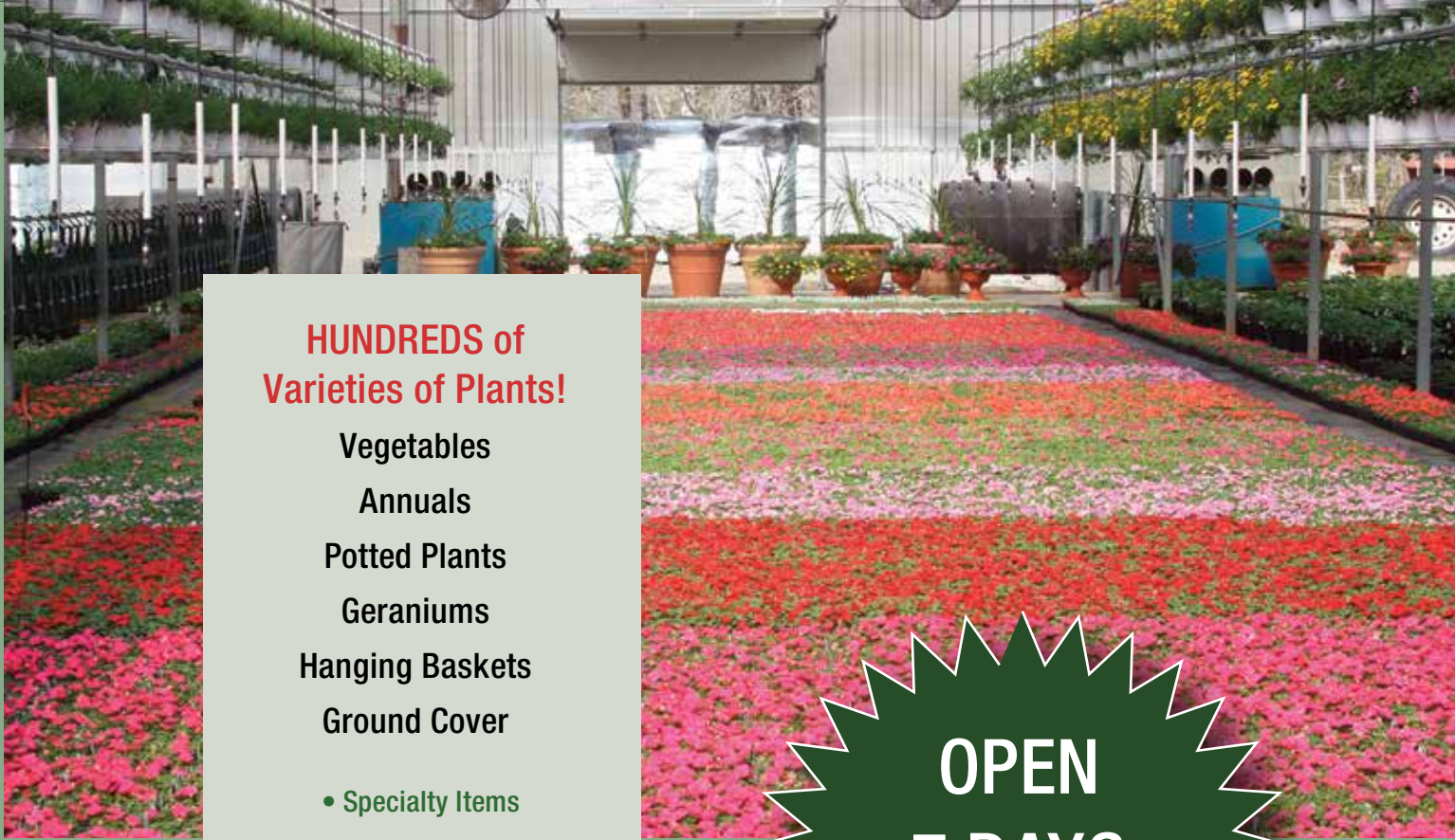
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