

Milford-Orange Times

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February 13, 2025

Milford Chamber Holds Bridal Expo



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held its third annual Bridal Expo at Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange on Jan. 25. The bridal show was presented by Karlene Lyndsay Designs, and the expo featured local businesses that serve a variety of wedding-related needs. Additional photos on page 15. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*

Orange Residents Herd To Goat Hike



The Orange Land Trust and Camp Cedarcrest hosted their first winter "Hike with the Goats, Living in The Blue Zone" on January 18 to mark the 100th anniversary of Camp Cedarcrest and the importance of walking and hiking to maintain good health. The blue zone refers to areas of the world where on average people seem to have lived longer, healthier lives. *Photo by Allen Grealish.*

Orange Passes Moratorium On Smoke Shops

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

Tobacco purveyors will be unable to open new storefronts in Orange for at least the next six months.

The Town Plan & Zoning Commission voted during its Jan. 21 meeting to enact a temporary moratorium on smoke and vape shops.

The move comes on the heels of a unanimous vote held by the Orange Board of Selectmen in November that recommended the TPZC limit the opening of additional

smoke shops in town. The vote by the selectmen was not binding on the zoning commissioners, but sent a public signal about the direction they wanted the town to go.

Director of Community Services Stacey Johnson and Youth Services and Prevention Coordinator Chantelle Bunnell led the effort to limit the stores. They have argued that there has been an explosion of vaping among

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Bridgeport Flyer Diner To Become Apartments

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

The Bridgeport Flyer Diner, a Milford mainstay for generations, will close to make way for an apartment complex.

The Milford Planning & Zoning Board unanimously approved a plan by developer Metro Star to erect 80 apartment units divided between two buildings with an affordable housing component.

The diner has been open since 1973 and was once a 24-hour establishment. Owner Dennis Kokenos has been keeping it open

but has indicated that he would like to retire and has been working with the developer on this plan.

The application for the buildings was filed under Connecticut's 8-30g law, which limits the reasons that municipalities can give for denying an affordable housing project to health and safety.

The plans call for 24 units, or 30 percent,

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Smith To Run For Milford Mayor

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**



Smith

Milford's "accidental" former mayor is hoping to head the city again, this time intentionally.

Democrat Richard Smith will run against incumbent Republican Tony Giannattasio for the mayor's seat in November's municipal elections. Giannattasio is currently serving his first term.

Details of the announcement were not available as of press time; confirmation of Smith's run for office were made by media aide Alex Armstrong.

"I am committed to fostering growth, enhancing our schools, supporting small businesses, and preserving the unique

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Milford BOE Approves \$115 Million Budget

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

The Milford Board of Education at its Jan. 22 meeting approved a 4.87 percent increase to the school budget for 2025-2026 proposed by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Anna Cutaia.

Cutaia has said that the additions to the \$115,304,923 budget will allow the district to continue functioning, without bringing in

major new programs or projects. It covers increasing costs for salaries and benefits, higher special education costs and new, more expensive contracts for things like bus transportation.

"If it was a different fiscal climate, I would be suggesting that we add money to

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Send Us Your Poem

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



THE MUSIC OF
MÖTLEY CRÜE
 February 21st
 High Plains Auditorium
 525 Orange Center Rd, Orange, CT
 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR & ONLINE
MilfordPerformanceCenter.org

LIVE IN CONCERT



THE ULTIMATE
 NEIL DIAMOND
 TRIBUTE

At Parson's/Veteran's Memorial Auditorium
MARCH 8th



Adopt A Pet: Ghost



Ghost is looking for a new home. He is an adult, medium-sized Siberian husky. He has been neutered and has had all of his shots. He's athletic, playful, affectionate and friendly. He can be adopted from Milford Animal Control, located at 664 East Broadway in Milford. For more information, call 203-783-3279. Photo courtesy of Milford Animal Control.

Flags Donated To Milford Scouts



The Milford Rotary Club, along with local philanthropists Danforth "Dan" Smith and Frosty Smith, have donated funds to Boy Scouts Troop 1 of Milford, enabling the troop to purchase 40 American flags, which will soon be available for sale to the public for \$50 each. Proceeds from sales will help Troop 1 scouts who might not otherwise be able to afford summer camp and other scouting activities. Contact Scoutmaster Mark Krom at msnowtree6590@gmail.com to purchase a flag. From left: Krom, Allen Flyte, Colin Donegan and Milford Rotary President Philip Ucci. Photo courtesy of Philip Ucci.

Amity Student Wins Congressional App Challenge

Amity Region 5 School District announced that Sage Wong, an eleventh grader at Amity Regional High School, was named the winner of the 2024 Congressional App Challenge in Connecticut's Third District and was presented with the award by US Rep. Rosa DeLauro at the school on Jan. 28.

Factualize AI, the app that won the competition, was created by Wong and aims to combat misinformation by automatically fact-checking claims and providing contextual explanations.

Wong said that the creation of Factualize

AI was inspired by his own experience being misled by things he found on the internet. The app not only automatically fact-checks claims, but also provides an explanation with further context.

The Congressional App Challenge is an initiative of the US House of Representatives, encouraging middle and high school students to learn to code and inspiring them to pursue careers in computer science. The winning team from each Congressional district is invited to showcase their app to Congress during the annual #HouseOfCode festival.

Milford-Orange Times

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In The House: Rep. Mary Welander (D-114) Kathy Kennedy (R-119)

Senator's Seat: Sen. James Maroney

Columnists:

Wendy Barry, Orange Rotary
Ellen Russell Beatty, Ponder This
Cathy Bradley, Running
Barry Cohen, Orange Chamber
Cyndi Consoli, Arts
Steve Cooper, Food
Rob Craft, Recovery
Theresa Rose DeGray, Bankruptcy
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews
Jody Dietch, ODTG
Pat Dray, Gardening

Jennifer Fiorillo, Mental Health
Ben Gettinger, Probate
Patricia Houser, Environment
Jennifer Ju, Facing Ourselves
Barbara Lehrer, Real Estate
Dominick Lombardi, ORTC
Dan May, Local Geology
Marilyn May, Milford History
Dennis Marsh, Orange Seniors
Kevin McNabola, Orange Finances

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Trish Pearson, Insurance
Karen Quinn Panzer, Travel
Leonora Rodriguez, Milford Seniors
PJ Shanley, Financial Planning
Raymond Spaziani, Wine
Michele Tenney, Wellness
Don Wetmore, Time Management

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Woodbridge Office 270 Amity Road, Woodbridge, CT 06477 203.389.0015

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Lucy Scillia Scholarship Available To Graduating Orange Seniors

The Friends of the Case Memorial Library is accepting applications for its annual Lucy Scillia \$2,000 scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to a local public or private high school senior who is a resident of Orange and has plans to enroll at an accredited institution of higher learning.

Applications may be downloaded at casememorallibrary.org/lucyscillia. Applicants must submit an application, references and high school transcript.

Completed applications may be mailed or dropped off at the Case Memorial Library, c/o President of the Friends of the Library, 176 Tyler City Road, Orange, CT 06477. The deadline for submission is April 1.

The scholarship is a tribute to the late Lucy Scillia, an Orange resident and member of the Friends of the Case Memorial Library, who had a career as a school librarian. She also served on the Orange Town Library Commission and was active in library fundraising efforts.

Orange Living Treasure Selection Open

Nominations are now being accepted for the Orange Living Treasures, which are awarded each year by the Orange Senior Center to three senior residents who have given of themselves to the community. The nomination form on the town website

at orange-ct.gov/783/Orange-Senior-Center. Nominations are due by March 21. The recipients will be honored during the center's annual Pasta Festa dinner. For more information, call Dennis Marsh at 203-891-4789.

NEW Gets Community Award



The Network of Executive Women received the Business Community Impact of the Year Award from the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce at their annual meeting and awards of distinction event in January. "On behalf of the incredible women who empower and support one another – beginning with our visionary founder, Phyllis Holt – I am honored and grateful to accept this award on behalf of the Network of Executive Women," NEW President Danielle Rowlin said. NEW was founded in 1979 to address the common interests of businesswomen in the community and help them grow and prosper. From left: MRCC Director Simon McDonald, Milford Mayor Tony Giannattasio, Rowlin, state Rep. MJ Shannon and state Sen. James Maroney. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Hadlock Gets O'Sullivan Award



Hadlock

community for their contributions to the community in the spirit of the O'Sullivan family.

Hadlock grew up in West Haven. After graduation from Lauralton Hall, she attended college in Boston where she met her future husband, Kevin, on her first weekend away from home. They married in 1971 and started married life in California, where Kevin was stationed as a naval officer. They spent time living in California, Texas, New Zealand and England, during which time they had four children.

The family returned to Connecticut in 1981, settling in Orange. Hadlock soon began a 28-year teaching career in Region 13 (Durham-Middlefield). She was an active member of the Turkey Hill School PTA. She was a softball coach for a number

of years and an inaugural member of the Orange Hurricanes, an over-30 women's soccer team. She played on the team for 17 years – both spring and fall seasons – as the team goalie.

After her retirement in 2013, she joined the Orange Historical Society, and soon became a member of the OHS Board of Directors, a position she continues to hold. Hadlock joined the Garden Club of Orange in her second year of retirement. She has served as the recording secretary and is currently the club's vice president.

Hadlock is also a long-time member of the Orange Lions Club. For several years she co-chaired the Lions' biggest fundraiser of the year, the annual spring wine tasting. She has also developed and chaired the vision screening program for all preschoolers and

elementary school children in Orange.

Hadlock is a longtime member of the Orange Democratic Town Committee and has served as an elected member of the Orange Board of Education since 2015. Now in her third four-year term on the board, she serves as chair of the Policy, Personnel, & Transportation Committee, and as vice chair of the Curriculum Committee.

Hadlock is a grandmother to seven, all who live out of state.

She will be honored at an event on Thursday, March 27 at 5:30 p.m. at Birchwoods at Oak Lane. For information on attending or taking out a congratulatory ad in the commemorative program, contact Jody Dietch at JLDOrange@yahoo.com or at 203-314-9975.

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<p>ORANGE 321 MICHAEL COURT SOLD! ON DEPOSIT IN JUST 2 DAYS! IN THIS COMPETITIVE MARKET, HAVING AN AGENT WITH PROVEN MARKETING STRATEGIES AND LOCAL EXPERTISE MATTERS! WAYNE HUGENDUBEL ~ 203.605.2946</p>		<p>ORANGE 40 RED CEDAR CIRCLE COMING SOON! \$599,000 Silverbrook 62 & Older Community Spacious 1,865 sq ft, 2 BRs, 2.5 bathrooms. 1st floor primary BR suite, new hardwood floors. Newer furnace & central air systems. NICK MASTRANGELO ~ 203.641.2100</p>	
<p>WEST HAVEN 421-433 CAMPBELL AVE COMMERCIAL FOR SALE! \$649,000 Prime investment opportunity in the heart of West Haven's vibrant downtown business district! This retail strip is just a block from the Green and City Hall, surrounded by a dynamic mix of offices, retail shops, and restaurants. TOM CAVALIERE ~ 203.907.7800</p>		<p>MILFORD 36 CLARK HILL ROAD UNDER CONTRACT! IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET, STAND OUT WITH THE EXPERTISE YOU DESERVE. YOUR JOURNEY TO A NEW HOME BEGINS WITH ME! ERIK SMITH ~ 203.215.9846</p>	
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<p>JUMP START THE SPRING SEASON WITH YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT! CURIOS TO KNOW THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME IN TODAY'S MARKET? CALL ME! LAURA GIAMMATTEI ~ 203.415.9959</p>		<p>MILFORD 402 SWANSON CRESCENT NEW LISTING @ FOXWOODS! \$288,500 Well maintained, 2nd flr end unit w/over 1000 sf of lvg space. Updated EIK, spacious lvg/dnr area, BR w/ dbl closets + den/office. In unit laundry. Heat incl in HOA. Pool, tennis, bocce. Close to town, train and hways. SHEILA CIMMINO ~ 203.314.3172</p>	

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Opinion & Editorial

State Rep. District 119

My Bill Proposals And How They Affect You

During this extended legislative session where we are tasked with developing a new state budget agreement, I have the unique opportunity to propose my own legislation reflecting the needs and concerns of our communities. This year, I have submitted and cosigned bills that address social media use, female health care and rights, financial support for first responders and those with disabilities and a comprehensive plan to lower your electric bill.

In my first bill (HB 5474), I am proud to be collaborating with two local students from Amity High School who are committed to keeping our youth safe online. Michael Audie and Daniel Mowerman have identified both a mental health and parenting crisis due to excess social media use, prompting them to suggest cracking down on addictive algorithms and propose parental consent requirements for teens under 16.

I have submitted three bills that concern female health care, specifically fertility fraud,

preventing female genital mutilation (HB 6596) and newborn screening for Duchenne's muscular dystrophy (HB 5710). Last year, I was proud to speak alongside a constituent who was a victim of fertility fraud, which can be caused by physician misconduct during the artificial insemination process. That's why I have proposed HB 5475, which protects patients from being misled or mistreated by physicians during fertility treatments.

Other constituent concerns I am addressing this session involve our first responders concerning the development of materials to promote awareness and acceptance of persons with cognitive impairments or disabilities. In the bill, the commissioner of motor vehicles will develop and make available color-specific



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

materials and establish a certified training program for first responders on best practices when interacting with a person with cognitive impairments or disabilities. Through this legislation, we can inform our first responders of residents who may require special attention and care.

Finally, although our electric bills have been weighing us down, I am proud to have joined House and Senate Republicans in unveiling our trustworthy plan to lower the cost of energy in Connecticut. This multifaceted plan will move the public benefits charge from your bill into the state budget, putting it up to legislative review every year. Next, we plan to cap the amount we spend on energy to reflect the wholesale price and also explore ways to increase the supply

of natural gas and nuclear power in our state. Our plan will split the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection from the Public Utilities Regulatory Agency so that residents are no longer bound by unnecessary energy incentives, like the electric vehicle mandate, that increase the cost of our bill.

Like all proposed bills, however, their success relies on your participation in the legislative process. Whether it's submitting testimony in a public hearing or contacting my colleagues in the General Assembly, your voice can be the deciding factor in the future of better solutions for our state.

As we continue in the 2025 legislative session, please remember to share your voice by submitting my legislative survey at RepKennedy.com/survey2025 and never hesitate to reach out to me at Kathy.Kennedy@housegop.ct.gov or at 860-240-8700 with your questions, ideas and concerns.

State Rep. District 114

We The People...

Gov. Ned Lamont last week presented his budget proposal to a joint session of the legislature. The key word to remember is "proposal"; these are suggestions about how to allocate funds, but it is the job of the legislature to make the final decisions.

There were many points in the governor's address that I wholeheartedly support: increased funding for child care and for special education, free school breakfasts, the elimination of certain occupational licensure fees. There were also some proposals that I am concerned about, such as a jump in fees for bus and train fares. As we continue to craft the budget, I will share more details about the pros and cons that arise.

In my two previous terms, the final budget has had bipartisan support and contained massive amounts of federal funding as well as

large tax cuts for most residents. This year, however, will be different. Our state has an annual budget of roughly \$22 billion; of that, \$16 billion typically comes from the federal government. As we have seen since President Donald Trump was inaugurated just a few weeks ago, we can no longer count on anything being "typical" when it comes to the federal government, and that includes funding. Time will tell how this will go.

If you have been reading my columns or my weekly newsletter, you know that I try to approach everything with common sense and an open mind, focused on facts and information, not reactionary political grandstanding. I've developed a reputation for that in Hartford



STATE REP. (R-114)
MARY WELANDER

as well; it's something I am proud of.

With that in mind, you will probably have noticed a shift in my communications. I may be a Democrat, but above all I am an American. I love this country. I watched my younger brothers go into combat over and over and over to defend the principals of this amazing and sometimes frustrating country. It is with that love that I say that what is currently happening in Washington is not normal, it is not about "efficiency," and it is not American.

If your first reaction is to dismiss or defend what is happening, consider this: what if I as your state representative went to the board of

education offices and locked out our superintendent and all staff, and then proceeded to collect HIPAA and FERPA privacy-protected student documents, and issued statements firing all the teachers? What if I went to the tax collector's office and barred Tax Collector Tom Hurley and all staff from entering and started erasing data from records? It wouldn't be okay here, and it's not okay in Washington, either.

By the time this goes to print, perhaps things will have changed. I would like nothing more than to be wrong about where I fear this may be going, but I feel a responsibility to call attention to what is happening to our nation's institutions. We are all responsible for the success of our democracy.

"Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." – Harry Emerson Fosdick

Ponder This

Once Again Poetry Can Help Us

In whatever craft we are engaged – parenting, professional employment, politics, community activity, friendship, sisterhood – our successes and failures fade. But so do the opportunities before us. There is within our grasp an opportunity to join in hope and healing; we must not squander it.

I am referring to the current state of the world. We, collectively, are in distress. The world has seemingly gone mad with climate change, political instability, warfare in many geographic areas, health crises, poverty and threats to our own American democracy from within.

Like many others, I have a temptation to bolt from the troubles. I cannot in good conscience remove myself from public participation, but am haunted by "does it make a difference?"

My public contribution as an elected official is small, local and fleeting, yet connected to national and international concerns. My obligation is to donate time, funds, resources and presence to help in troubled times.

During this tumultuous season of doubt and peril for our nation and our globe, I have turned again to my own previous pieces written about my early exposure to poetry. I

have previously mused that there is always hope, and our obligation is to point us in the right direction, to keep hope alive no matter how brittle it seems from the forces against it.

History and the arts can merge to help us explain the human condition and what is happening in the world.

The diminution in decency so apparent recently among some elected officials is very offensive. My public role conflicts with an ever-present seductive urge to give up. The joys of a comfortable retirement based on an accumulation of privileges of education, resources, family and environment make it difficult not to bolt from public life.

But the writings of Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and countless other poets, leaders and positive influencers demand that we speak out against tyranny, suppression of thought and speech. Decency and concern for others may be absent from current policies but must remain a part of public discourse.

Channel the Swedish poet Stephen Berg,



ELLEN RUSSELL
BEATTY

who wrote of earth, planet and human desires. In defiance and hope we must stand ground like the seeds of nature in Berg's imagery. Our individual, small contribution must persist against the hard forces that stop us. Berg's words inspire us to endure like hopeful seeds against the hard, red, clay of the earth.

In their infinite march against seemingly unstoppable forces of extreme cold, heat and dryness the seeds endure. No matter how small our contribution may seem, it reinforces that human hope and endurance can triumph over the very real problems that confront our world, particularly our struggling American democracy.

I am not certain that my contribution will matter in the larger scheme of the world, but together with all the others who came before and after me we will persevere. Together, everyday people can make a remarkable difference together.

Taking action to dream that together we can build a better world requires us to help others. I remain profoundly disappointed to

witness various religious leaders and communities align with policies of the current administration. I want to be on the right side of history and to do that I must stay the course.

All creatures of earth are looking to us for their destiny. Let's call upon the beauty and energy of the words of Berg. I take up the call with enthusiasm and hope to maintain our democracy despite very hardened forces working against it.

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.

Send Us Your Letters

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.

The Garden Spot

Nature's Thermometer

Every morning when I take my dogs outside, I look at my rhododendrons. They look nice and healthy and are budding nicely, but that's only one reason I look at them. They are natural thermometers and will help you gauge the temperature.

Scientists call this process plant thermosensing. Although there are many things that plants do based on temperature changes, I think the thermosensing of rhododendrons is one of the most fascinating since they can quickly change their appearance based on the air temperature.

Plants possess specific genes and proteins which are released based on temperature fluctuations and change the fluidity of the plant cell membranes (and therefore the leaves), making them harder or softer. At higher temperatures, membranes become

more fluid, while at lower temperatures, they become more rigid. The end result is nature's thermometer.

There are a couple of different changes to the leaves that occur at different temperature points to create nature's thermometer. Start by looking at your rhododendrons and observe the following changes:

The first is leaf curling. One of the most obvious signs that rhododendrons exhibit in response to cold temperatures is leaf curling. As the temperature drops below freezing, the leaves of the rhododendron will begin to curl inward, forming tight rolls. This is a protective mechanism that reduces the surface area exposed to the cold, helping



PAT DRAY

to minimize water loss and frost damage.

Think about it like a person putting their arms around themselves to stay warm. The more pronounced the curling, the colder it is. If the leaves are flat and horizontal, it's above 40 degrees. Right above freezing, the leaves will curl upward. If the leaves are only slightly curled inward, it tells you that the temperature is just below freezing. Tightly curled leaves tell you that it's between 20-30 degrees.

The second thing to observe is leaf drooping in cold temperatures. When combined with tight leaf curling, drooping tells you that it's really cold out – below 20 degrees. You'll notice that the leaves hang limply, al-

most as if the plant is wilting. The degree of drooping can vary, with more severe drooping suggesting colder temperatures. With the recent single digit temperatures this was very pronounced.

By observing the physical changes in your rhododendron, you can get a good sense of the temperature in your garden. This natural thermometer can help you decide when to take additional measures to protect your plants from cold damage, such as covering them or moving them to a more sheltered location. I also think it's a fun game to play with your family and friends and helps you notice the wonder that nature is.

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

On Our Land

Walking In A Winter Wonderland

I enjoy hiking during the winter in the open spaces in Orange. There are no ticks or mosquitos, and few people are around. Plus, it is easier to dress to stay warm in winter than to stay cool on muggy summer days.

With the leaves and underbrush gone, one can see several times further into the woods than during the growing season. Birds and forest animals are more visible as well, and less skittish with fewer people and dogs. If there is snow lingering on the ground, it's easy to take a census of wildlife from their proliferating tracks. Red foxes are particularly fun to see.

I would like to claim that I contemplate Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" while visiting my two favorite open spaces – Turkey Hill Preserve or the Housatonic Overlook. I do enjoy the solitude of these places in winter, but it is the extended view across the terrain that really attracts my attention. It is also fun to wonder what a walk across Connecticut would have been like before human habitation and worries.

Both of these open spaces are good examples of what is known as the western Connecticut highlands. This is a physical geographic province characterized by mostly north-south trending hills composed of crystalline met-

amorphic bedrock that has been eroded and smoothed by repeatedly advancing and retreating continent-scale ice sheets over the past 2 million years.

Soils are thin at Turkey Hill and the Housatonic Overlook, and bedrock is often visible in these elevated settings. Exposed bedrock surfaces are occasionally striated, grooved or polished by moving ice. The undulating, low elongated hills here often have gentler slopes on the north and steeper slopes on the south. That asymmetry is characteristic of ice advance and erosive 'plucking' southward. And both the striations and hill shapes record the movement direction of ice.

Intervening valleys between the hills have thicker accumulations of eroded glacial debris, carried like a carpet mat beneath moving ice, called till. Till is a poorly sorted mix of sand, angular gravel and boulders. River and stream development is immature, and higher elevations illustrate the early stages of stream development with numerous wetlands and seasonal ponds.

In general, glacial landscapes are identified



DAN MAY

as erosional or depositional. Most of Connecticut displays erosional features, although there are local depositional settings. For example, some of the flatter areas around Orange are former post-glacial lake bottoms, with modern floodplains now forming adjacent to the small rivers in town.

However, to best see a widespread ice-age depositional landscape, a ferry trip across Long Island Sound is required. The landscape of Long Island itself is wholly different from Connecticut and is dominated by east-west trending depositional features. And all the nearly flat terrain south of Interstate 495 is composed of sand and gravel deposited from the melting ice sheet, formally called outwash.

I-495 lies along the southern margin of a long east-west trending narrow hill that bisects the island, called the Ronkonkoma terminal moraine and named for that small town there. This terminal moraine marks the southernmost advance of the last continental ice sheet about 22,000 years ago. At its greatest extent this ice sheet covered over 5 million square miles

across the Midwest and Northeast US as well as central and eastern Canada. This is about the size of the Antarctic ice sheet and almost 10 times the area still covering Greenland.

If one could go back in time to then and stand near where the Islip airport is today and look north, the view would be that of a sloping nearly featureless sheet of snow-covered ice rising to over 12,000 feet above Connecticut and Massachusetts. Major braided streams of meltwater then covered the landscape to the south as they drained to the edge of the continental shelf tens of miles further south. At that time as well, sea level was nearly 400 feet lower than at present.

It would be 10,000 years later before Native Americans begin to explore and settle this new landscape. By then the ice sheet had melted back to Quebec and the local climate had become more habitable. And it would be the middle of the 19th century before a Swiss geologist named Louis Agassiz arrived at Harvard to begin establishing the history of glaciations in North America.

Dan May is a local geologist. He can be contacted at capemay2013@gmail.com.

Recycling Tip: The Unseen Environmental Impact Of Pharmaceuticals

By Susan Wineland

Pharmaceuticals are indispensable in modern medicine, from painkillers and cold medicine to antibiotics. These drugs provide critical relief to millions of people worldwide. But what happens when these life-saving compounds are disposed of improperly? Pharmaceuticals then find their way into our ecosystems, leaving a lasting imprint on wildlife, water systems and potentially human health.

The issue of pharmaceutical pollution has gained significant attention in recent years, as studies reveal that drugs ranging from common over-the-counter cold remedies to powerful cancer medications are being released into our environment. This pollution primarily occurs in two ways: through human excretion and improper disposal of unused medications.

For years, doctors and pharmacists recommended flushing expired or unwanted drugs down the toilet as a safe disposal method. However, we now understand that this practice can have serious environmental consequences.

Pharmaceuticals are biologically active chemicals. Even in small concentrations, these substances can have unintended effects on both wildlife and humans.

Discarded pills enter wastewater systems

and can evade conventional treatment processes at wastewater facilities, making their way into rivers, lakes and even our drinking water supplies.

The US Geological Survey conducted a large-scale wastewater study between 2004 and 2009 to examine the presence of pharmaceuticals in water systems. The results were alarming. Samples collected from 23 wastewater treatment plants revealed the presence of a wide range of pharmaceuticals, including methadone, oxycodone and butalbital. Many of these compounds were found in concentrations sufficient to potentially harm wildlife and humans. While wastewater treatment plants are designed to clean sewage and remove contaminants, they are not equipped to eliminate all pharmaceutical substances.

Traditional treatment methods such as aeration, settlement, chlorination and digestion are effective at removing many pollutants, but drugs remain a persistent issue. Consequently, traces of these chemicals are discharged into rivers and lakes, often ending up in ecologically sensitive areas where they can disrupt the natural balance.

One of the most concerning aspects of pharmaceutical pollution is its potential presence in drinking water. Studies have confirmed that some pharmaceutical compounds survive the wastewater treatment

process and end up in rivers and reservoirs used for public water supplies. The US Environmental Protection Agency is actively monitoring the levels of pharmaceuticals in water systems and working to assess the associated health risks.

While there is still a lot more to learn about the long-term effects of consuming water contaminated with pharmaceuticals, the risks are clear. These compounds, even in trace amounts, have the potential to accumulate in the body over time, and their biological activity could have harmful consequences for human health. The presence of drugs in drinking water also raises questions about the broader ecological impact on wildlife, as fish and other aquatic organisms are particularly vulnerable to changes in their environment.

Addressing pharmaceutical pollution requires a multi-pronged approach. On the individual level, one of the simplest steps people can take is to properly dispose of medications. Many communities offer drug take-back programs that allow people to drop off unused medications for safe disposal, keeping them out of the waste system. Never flush drugs down the toilet or throw them in the trash because of their potential environmental impact.

Orange has partnered with local health departments and police forces statewide to sup-

port an event for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at High Plains Community Center, located at 525 Orange Center Rd. in Orange.

There is also a prescription drug drop-off box in the main lobby of the Orange Police Department headquarters, located at 314 Lambert Rd. The box has been provided by the Bethany-Orange-Woodbridge Drug/Alcohol Action Committee and is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Any over-the-counter or prescription drugs can be brought to the department and dropped into the box. Additionally, most Walmart pharmacies have medication disposal boxes in front of the pharmacy.

Pharmaceuticals are a cornerstone of modern health care, but their unintended consequences on the environment cannot be ignored. Pharmaceutical pollution is a growing issue with serious implications for both wildlife and human health. As we continue to advance our understanding of this problem, it's up to each of us to take proactive steps – both on an individual and societal level – to reduce the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals and ensure that our ecosystems remain healthy for future generations. Don't put prescription medicines or over-the-counter products down the sink or flush them in the toilet. Participate in a drug take-back program.

Orange Democratic Town Committee

Learning What It Means To Run For Elected Office

Running for elected office is a noble endeavor that requires dedication, perseverance and a deep commitment to public service. It is a journey that involves understanding the responsibilities, challenges and rewards of being a public servant.

The Orange Democratic Town Committee is seeking to provide insights into what it means to run for elected office, the process involved and the essential qualities needed to succeed with a special event on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at High Plains Community Center.

Our elected state officials, state Sen. James Maroney, state Rep. Mary Welander and state Rep. MJ Shannon will headline the program, sharing their experiences of running for office and what is involved to be successful.

Every individual who decides to run for elected office has a unique motivation driving them. For some, it is a desire to bring about positive change in their community. For others, it is a sense of duty to represent the interests of their constituents. Under-

standing one's motivation is crucial, as it serves as the foundation for a successful campaign and a fulfilling tenure in office.

A strong connection to the community is the primary motivation for many candidates. They seek to address local issues, improve public services and enhance the quality of life for their neighbors. This deep-rooted commitment to the community is what often sets successful candidates apart.

For some, the motivation comes from a passion for specific policy issues. Whether it is education, financial management or economic development, these individuals are driven by a desire to influence policy and create a lasting impact on society.

The process of running for elected office is multifaceted and requires careful planning and execution. It involves several key steps, each of which plays a critical role in the



JODY DIETCH

overall success of the campaign.

The journey to elected office involves dedication. While running for elected office can be immensely rewarding, it is not without its challenges. Candidates must be prepared to navigate a complex and demanding landscape. Running for office requires a significant investment of time, energy and resources. Candidates must balance their campaign responsibilities with their personal and professional

lives, which can be demanding.

Despite the challenges, running for elected office offers numerous rewards. Successful candidates have the opportunity to make a tangible difference in their communities, advocate for important issues and represent the interests of their constituents.

Elected officials have the power to shape policy and influence the direction of their

communities. The impact of their work can be far-reaching, leaving a legacy for future generations.

The experience of running for office and serving as an elected official can be personally fulfilling and transformative. Candidates develop valuable skills, form lasting relationships and gain a deeper understanding of the democratic process.

By understanding the process, developing essential qualities and addressing the challenges head-on, candidates can successfully navigate the path to public service and make a meaningful impact on their communities.

If you are interested in attending the program at 7 p.m. to learn more about running for office, email Melissa Johnston at msmelissajohnston@gmail.com.

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

Mental Health

Leveling The Playing Field For Behavioral Health

I have been encouraged by the outcome of recent past legislative sessions that have helped to support and build upon the critical safety net of community mental health and substance use services for some of our most vulnerable residents in Connecticut. Providers have seen some cost of living increases in state service contracts that have enabled them to adjust salaries for staff who provide trauma-informed, evidenced-based treatment that is necessary to promote positive outcomes and successful recovery.

The unfortunate reality is that the non-profit sector still functions 30 percent behind inflation dating back to 2007. This statistic, published by the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance, places safety net services at risk for shutting down vital programs and services because of high staff turnover, burnout and the inability to pay a competitive salary that meets market standards. Compounded by this statistic of agencies operating behind inflation, those that are supported through

the Medicaid/Husky program for behavioral health services have been struggling to meet program needs and demands because the reimbursement rates for services are lagging behind significantly.

The results of phase I of a Medicaid rate study that was initiated by the state Department of Social Services in 2023 showed concerning disparities between expenditures in specific behavioral health services in comparison with five benchmark states including New York, New Jersey, Maine, Oregon and Massachusetts. The total behavioral health Medicaid/Husky expenditures for Connecticut for the study period were \$39.1 million compared to an average of \$81.5 million for each of these benchmark states. Nearly 92 percent of the rates for the services analyzed in Connecticut fell below the reimbursement for these comparisons.



JENNIFER FIORILLO

Agencies providing outpatient mental health services in Connecticut are not nearly able to cover the cost of services through Medicaid/Husky reimbursement alone. Individuals who seek care at community-based mental health organizations are typically on Medicaid/Husky. The reimbursement for an individual therapy session does not even cover 50 percent of the cost in an outpatient clinic. Those organizations that receive support from state contracts to supplement reimbursement struggle to meet the demand for service, retain clinicians and provide consistent treatment because of staff turnover and ever-increasing costs to provide quality care.

Community-based outpatient clinics are also required to meet rigorous licensing and accreditation standards, service thresholds,

quality monitoring and data reporting that need to be supported by adequate infrastructure and technology. These requirements not only cost money, but they add to the complexity of providing treatment and recovery services to people who so heavily rely on this support.

I had a sense of hope at the start of this year's legislative session that we would continue to see progress toward making non-profits more whole. There is nothing more meaningful to community non-profit providers than to do their best work and meet the needs of those who put their lives in our hands. In order to do our best work, we need to continue to advocate and push for the funding we need and deserve to bring about hope and healing.

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

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Orange Republican Town Committee

Growing The Local Party

As we embrace the new year, the Orange Republican Town Committee is charging ahead with energy and purpose. Traditionally, odd-numbered years receive less political attention due to the absence of national and state elections. However, for municipal organizations like ours, these years demand the most focus. The foundation we lay now is critical to ensuring a thriving future for our town and party.

I am thrilled to share the transformative strides the ORTC has made so far in 2025, setting a strong and inspiring tone for what promises to be a remarkable year as we head toward November.

One of our key achievements this past year was amending our bylaws to increase membership capacity from 75 to 150 members. In 2024, we expanded our membership from 75 to 103, and at our January meeting, we proudly inducted 16 new members, bringing our total to an unprecedented 119 members.

This growth reflects not just the enthusiasm surrounding our organization but also the broadening appeal of the ORTC to residents

of all ages, backgrounds and experiences. These new voices are vital to the longevity and diversity of our Republican values.

Special thanks to our Membership Committee Chair, Jude Toohey, whose dedication was instrumental in achieving this milestone. Let us also extend a warm welcome to our newest members: Meghan Rabuse, Sharon Venezia, Christy Wooldridge, Ed Wooldridge, Amanda Zapatka, Marianne Bauer, Jack Fearnley, John Querker Jr., Angela McNabola, Caroline McNabola, Johnny McNabola, Pat McCorkle, Rob McCorkle, Georgia Sansone, Mary Anders and Peter Berube.

Our subcommittees, which were restructured last year, are thriving. The fundraising, membership, election integrity and Orange Young Republican Coalition subcommittees have already exceeded expectations, and we are delighted to announce the formation of a new subcommittee for 2025: the ORTC Candidate & Election Committee. This new body



DOMINICK LOMBARDI

will play a pivotal role in managing candidate nominations and election operations as we approach November.

I am particularly encouraged by the growth of our Orange Young Republican Coalition, which began with just five founding members and has since blossomed into a vibrant group of nearly 50 young leaders, ranging from high school students to college graduates. This enthusiastic and energetic coalition represents the future of our party, and their involvement ensures our vision endures for generations to come.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting lineup of events to bring our community together and support our mission. We will host our hallmark corned beef and cabbage dinner on March 10 at Biagetti's Restaurant in West Haven. This cherished tradition has been a highlight for over 20 years, offering a festive atmosphere to celebrate Irish heritage and camaraderie.

We are thrilled to invite you to the ORTC

wine tasting on April 10th at Stappa Vineyard in Orange. This special evening promises to display the best of local wine and provide an unforgettable experience for all attendees. Tickets can be purchased via cash or check as well as through online purchases through our website and social media channels.

As we gear up for the 2025 election season, the ORTC is stronger than ever. With record membership, a strong treasury and a talented pool of candidates, we are well-prepared to ensure Orange remains a community of excellence and opportunity under the Zeoli administration.

I encourage you to join us on this journey. Our strength lies in the collective efforts of our members, and we welcome everyone who shares our commitment to a brighter future.

For more information or to get involved, please don't hesitate to email ortc.chairman@gmail.com. Together, we will achieve remarkable things for Orange.

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

Milestones Appoints New CEO



Gregory

Milestones Behavioral Services, originally known as the Connecticut Center for Child Development, was founded in 1995 by Roger and Suzanne Letso with a mission to apply the power of behavior analysis to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities or other educational needs. After over 25 years, the company's cofounders have retired, naming Lisa Gregory, former executive vice president, as the new CEO. The organization also appointed a new COO, senior vice president of finance, and vice president of school services, as well as a new board chair and vice chair.

Gregory has been with the company since 2003. She has a certification and master's degree in special education, as well as a sixth year diploma in educational leadership and 092 certification in administration.

"I am excited to embrace this new opportunity and continue working alongside our incredible team," Gregory said.


Theresa Bollmann, former vice president of operations, stepped into the role of COO after being with Milestones for over six years. Nicole Playford, who joined the organization in 2021 and was most recently the vice president of accounting and finance, has transitioned to the role of

senior vice president of finance, and Tracy Sanford, the former principal of Milestones' school program was recently promoted to vice president of school services, after being with the organization for over 20 years. Judy Palazzo will continue as vice president of behavioral services. Current board members also transitioned into new roles. Anna Friedberg, the president and founder of Tillid Group, was named board chair after serving on Milestones' board for five years. Paul Piasecki, partner at The Innovative CPA Group, was named board vice chair, after serving on Milestones' board for over 25 years.

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Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Relax, Stretch Out The Selling Process

If you are one of those homeowners who is finally ready to sell, then these next six weeks are your window of opportunity. This is prime real estate season to sell.

In my experience is that in each year top sales are closing in May and June. Ideally, as a seller, if you get a commitment 120 days out from your buyer, think of all the time you have to firm up where you are going. You will know your funds situation exactly, as the deal is already consummated. All the new inventory starts mid-March and you already will have a solid deal in the works. Now you just shop.

Buyers are happy to wait until the end of the school year. If you are downsizing, you have months to get rid of your unwanted but loved old items. It's not as stressful, as you have more time to figure out what to gift or donate.

Every time I employ this strategy with my clients, they have the best results financially and emotionally. They are not surprised when I recommend marketing in February

after I explain that the buyers are always out there. Plus with a seller's market such as it is, the terms are set by the seller and it becomes a win-win to start now.

A long-term closing has huge benefits. Those sellers who have contracted to build have been doing this for years. Buyers get an extended loan, with added fees to them, and the seller can move forward with all these great perks of time, financial structure and freedom to relax because the purchase with their buyer has already secured their loan, if they needed one.

But let's get back to the nitty gritty of ownership. We love our homes and it is a project to move, so do you want to do it while living the everyday routine of your life – or rush and stress about the market because the selling process can take over all your weekends at minimum?

Let's say that during your home inspection the buyer discovers a necessary repair. If



BARBARA LEHRER

you have a late closing now, you have time to research the issue and get multiple estimates.

Always share this information with your buyer; trust and communication are the foundation of a good deal. Sellers educate their buyers all the time, and many become good friends for years to come. We all love to help our neighbors and the more we work together the better the satisfaction is for everyone. Whether it is buyer agent to seller agent, attorney to attorney or seller to buyer, what a great world we live in where we help each other toward our goals.

With extra time comes a clearer head. With extra time comes better decisions, and the real estate transaction is solid, with both sides grateful.

As you decide what is right for you, this process of home selling comes with a full package of property decisions, from the location that is right for you to what the costs are

for the loan, the move and the upgrades or repairs needed as you leave. All these parts take time and orchestration.

Choose your realtor carefully. Pick someone with patience. Do not rush, but timing is everything and this season holds value in time and money every year. Commit to being out within six months. You can rent back if need be, but this is only possible with a cash offer. Besides, lenders are finding that they are not needed a huge percentage of the time these days. Buyers with cash have more flexibility as they await their perfect property for occupancy.

Sellers are in the driver's seat when inventory is low. Now is the time because this coming spring inventory is going to pick up. Homeowners move for so many different reasons, and don't you want to have the home potential buyers are competing for?

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

Book Reviews

Out Of My Mind By Sharon Draper

This book is amazing, not just in its format but in its content as well.

Melody is a bright 11-year-old with cerebral palsy. She has limited verbal skills and is confined to a wheelchair. The dialogue of the novel consists of the un verbalized thoughts in Melody's head. Her parents and her next-door neighbor, Mrs. V, are her staunchest supporters. Mrs. V designs a communications board with words or letters that Melody can spell with or point to in order to make her needs known.

Everyday life for Melody is challenging. She needs assistance with daily living skills such as toileting, dressing and eating. She is completely dependent on her parents and Mrs. V to accomplish what many of us take for granted.

Slowly – very slowly – life improves for Melody. She receives a motorized wheelchair, making it easier for her to move around. Her school adopts the inclusion concept, placing children with special needs into mainstream classrooms. Melody also receives a device which uses a computerized voice, allowing her to actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.

An unexpected development occurs when Melody's mother announces she is pregnant with another girl. Melody's parents are concerned that this child will also have cerebral palsy. But as with Melody, they have vowed to do all they can to ensure that their new



CARMELA DEVITO

addition is loved, cared for and given everything she needs to succeed. The baby, Penny, arrives in perfect form. As she grows she also becomes a supporter and defender of her older sister.

While Melody is targeted by the school's bullies (which many of us were victims of in grade school), her academic life couldn't be better. She is assigned an aide, and with the computerized voice and her native intelligence wins a spot on the Whiz Kids trivia team. The team wins the regional trivia championship and is soon on their way to Washington, DC to compete for the national title.

What happens to Melody on the way to Washington is truly heartbreaking, with surprising aftereffects. Despite her personal heartbreak, Melody shows how strong and resilient she is.

This book is amazing on so many levels. It's full of humor, love and a feisty heroine who succeeds despite her perceived limitations. This is the first of a trilogy chronicling Melody's adventures. I loved this so much that I moved the other two novels to the top of my to be read pile to be devoured as quickly as possible.

Carmela DeVito, a voracious reader with a journalism degree from Marquette University, is a retired social worker and a member of the Friends of the Milford Library.

Rotary Club of Orange

Join Rotary For Exciting Events In Orange

I'm excited to share some fun upcoming events hosted by the Rotary Club of Orange that are sure to bring everyone together for a great time.

Mark your calendars for our Family Bingo Night on Thursday, March 6 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. p.m. at High Plains Community Center at 525 Orange Center Rd. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., so come early to grab a good seat. This is a fantastic opportunity for families to enjoy an evening filled with bingo, dancing, games and lots of prizes and giveaways. We'll have delicious snacks, pizza and drinks to keep everyone fueled and happy. It's going to be a night of laughter and fun for all ages.

I'm thrilled to announce that Summerfest will be happening on Sept. 6. This year,

we're planning an amazing lineup of food trucks, refreshing beer and wine, kids' games, a bounce house and live music throughout the day. One of the highlights will be our third annual Don Lewis Corn Hole Tournament, which will be professionally run. Last year was such a blast with so many teams participating, and we can't wait to see even more this time around.

May will be a busy month as we will host our annual Mother's Day rose sale, and we'll be working with the Orange Recycling Committee for a shred day as well. We're also excited about our new Peace Project. This special community service event is all about making a positive



WENDY BARRY

impact, and we'll share more details as our plans come together.

We invite everyone in the community to reach out if you're interested in joining our Rotary family, becoming a corporate sponsor or simply attending one of our meetings. We have wonderful guest speakers who cover a wide range of topics, making our gatherings both informative and enjoyable. Check our website for meeting days and times.

For those who may not know, the Rotary Club is a global network of community leaders dedicated to making a positive impact

through service and fellowship. Founded in 1905, Rotary has grown to include over 1.2 million members in more than 200 countries. Our mission is to promote peace, fight disease, provide clean water, support education and grow local economies. The Rotary Club of Orange has been a proud part of this legacy, working tirelessly to improve our community and support those in need.

We can't wait to see you at our upcoming events. Thank you for your support in making our community a better place. Let's come together and have some fun.

Wendy Barry is the president of the Rotary Club of Orange Contact her at Wendy@wbbarryrealtor.com.

Orange Holding Preschool Lottery

The Orange elementary school system is now accepting names for the blind lottery to enter its 2025-2026 preschool program.

The special education/general education integrated program is looking for both 3 and 4-year-olds to enroll as community peers.

The total cost of tuition for the community peers is \$3,250. The preschool program is held five days a week for three hours each day. No transportation is provided for general education community peers.

The program follows the district's school year calendar: the morning class

is held from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and the afternoon class is held from noon to 3 p.m. Each classroom is a blend of 3 and 4-year-old children. Class sizes are limited to a total of 12 students, which includes special education students. By law, students with special needs identified with an individualized education program are placed in the program by the Department of Special Services through the Planning and Placement Team process.

In order to participate in the lottery, a child must be 3 years old but not older than

4 by Sept. 1. All children must be toilet trained and Orange residents.

The blind lottery is conducted in two stages. First, all names are randomly selected by age group for the limited number of available spaces, with the remaining names drawn and placed on a waiting list. Then a second drawing determines which children will be admitted to the morning or afternoon classes to balance each classroom by age.

To enter a child in the blind lottery, call the Special Services Department for the

Orange Board of Education at 203-891-8023 between 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Names will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 29. Parents will be mailed a letter of the lottery results by Feb. 7.

A non-refundable tuition deposit of \$170 is due by Monday, Feb. 24 to reserve the child's space. The deposit will be deducted from the total cost of tuition; the remaining tuition due will be paid in eight equal payments of \$385 from October through May. Registration paperwork needs to be completed by March 24.

Homelessness

Just Cause Eviction Protection Is Homeless Prevention

Over the past several years, Connecticut has seen a rise in legislation that highlights and strives to correct the underlying imbalance in our rental housing market. Efforts and successes include increased fair rent commissions and access to legal counsel for households facing eviction across the state. We have a renewed opportunity to further these efforts by passing just cause eviction legislation.

Connecticut has had a law for over 40 years providing just cause eviction protections to tenants who are 62 and older or who have a disability and live in a building with five or more units. Should this year's proposed bill reflect previous drafts, landlords still have grounds for filing an eviction or refusing to renew a lease if there is justification, and that can and does include nonpayment of rent, lease violations, refusal to agree to reasonable rent increases, the landlord's permanent removal of a unit from

the housing market or intention of the landlord to use the property as their principal residence.

Further, the expansion of just cause protections would not apply to owner-occupied buildings or buildings with four or fewer units. It does not impact small landlords.

These protections are vital to solving homelessness. At the Beth-El Center, we understand how critically important the relationship between landlords and tenants is and how necessary it is to meet the needs of both parties to ensure stable and secure housing for all. For us, just cause eviction legislation does not pit tenants against landlords or shortchange landlords from their rights as property owners. What it does is prevent no-cause or no-fault



JENNIFER PARADIS

evictions.

No-fault evictions are filed arbitrarily, with no correlation to the actions or behaviors of the tenant. Most of these evictions occur because the landlord is interested in a "slash and burn" approach to raising rents. More often today, we see private equity firms driving no-cause evictions after purchasing property from local landlords. We saw the highest eviction rates in five years in 2022, and in 2023 and 2024 no-cause evictions comprised 11 percent of all evictions. Those evictions inevitably lead to homelessness.

In reviewing the past six months of emergency shelter data at the Beth-El Center, we saw rising rents and stagnant income as the key factors contributing to homelessness. Economic instability remains the leading cause, with 80

percent of emergency shelter guests reporting that their expenses exceeded their income, rent being their most considerable expense.

Extending rental protections to include just cause legislation will retain our community's more naturally affordable housing today. It will ensure a stable rental market, foster community through long-term tenancy, and prevent communities from losing more of the reasonably priced rental market on which we have come to rely.

The most cost-effective intervention to solving homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Just cause eviction protections are a clear way to achieve that end.

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

Milford Senior Center

Practicing Mental Health First Aid

I am a mental health first aider and trainer. If you have never heard of mental health first aid, you can liken it to medical first aid. In medical first aid, you may be tasked with providing a bandage on a small wound before medical professionals can arrive to render assistance. Just as first aid does not qualify you as a medical physician or other trained medical staff, mental health first aiders are not mental health professionals. Instead, they support people experiencing a mental health situation by connecting the person to qualified mental health professionals.

While adults 65 and older comprise ap-

proximately 17 percent of the US population, they make up approximately 22 percent of suicides. The National Council on Aging lists several reasons leading to suicide in older adults such as loneliness, social isolation, death of a spouse and being homebound due to disease or disability. Other reasons can include financial issues, depression and cognitive impairment. This is a stark reminder of how age-related changes can greatly impact our mental well-being.

MHFA helps someone who is experienc-



LEONORA RODRIGUEZ

ing a mental health concern by listening to and assessing to get the person to appropriate mental health services. This is a crucial step in moving a person from potential crisis to care.

If you feel you or someone you know is struggling with mental health concerns or suicide call or text 988 to be connected with a live person. You can also go online to 988lifeline.org to learn more. For an immediate crisis, call 911.

There are also local agencies that can as-

sist individuals needing professional mental health support. You can find them by contacting 211 or by visiting 211CT.org online.

There are other ways to help a friend in need. "You are not alone" and "I'm here for you" are two powerful statements that can help a friend in need. By being a friend, staying connected and offering compassionate support, you can help them navigate through difficult times.

Leonora C. Rodriguez is executive director of the Milford Senior Center. The center can be reached at milfordctseniorcenter.com or 203-877-5131.

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Travel Matters

Cunard's Queen Anne Is A Wow

Spending time on Queen Mary 2 was a royal treat; both times I crossed the Atlantic from Brooklyn to Southampton. I enjoyed the history, the glamour and the authenticity of the ocean liner, which was explicitly designed for the transatlantic crossing. The other two queens – Victoria and Elizabeth – have equally elegant and imposing profiles.

When I received the invite to attend the brand-new Queen Anne's debut in Miami as part of its first world journey on Jan. 21, I was intrigued. After all, Queen Anne is the first new-build since 2010 for Cunard. How was Cunard going to recreate these icons of yesteryear using today's technology?

I am delighted to say they have delivered a beautiful queen with equal parts tradition – chart room and royal court theater – and some snazzy updates such as adding a big video screen at the pavilion pool but with your own personal headphones for your

movie experience.

They have also introduced new dining experiences, including Tramonto – Mediterranean fare “inspired by the likes of Sicily, Sardinia and Seville” – and Aji Wa, meaning “harmony of flavors,” offering an authentic Japanese dining experience with menus reflecting the seasonality of ingredients and Queen Anne's location on your sailing. Where you sit and the time of day will also impact your experience when you dine there – from a sit-up sushi bar to a full omakase set menu in the evening.

Aranya (meaning “forest” or “wilderness” in Sanskrit) will provide a “sensory tour of the Indian subcontinent” and got great reviews from guests we met on our ship tour. Sir Samuels, named after Cunard's founder,



KAREN
QUINN-
PANZER

specializes in seafood and steak and will offer Dover sole served tableside and prime cuts of meat from around the world.

Even the Golden Lion Pub is reimagined as the British pub extraordinaire with a menu designed by Michel Roux, the two-star Michelin chef, and an ever-changing menu of ales. Three are Cunard exclusives. It also has wines from around the world. Even on formal nights, the dress code is casual at Golden Lion Pub, and live music adds to the fun.

Also impressive is Queen Anne's wellness offerings. On the top deck, there is a new wellness studio for regular fitness sessions, including yoga, with expansive sea views that are perfectly suited to mindful meditation. A new wellness café features many healthful

choices beyond the typical smoothie.

Queen Anne also presents the first archery experience at sea and the ever-popular pickleball court, plus a putting green and a golf driving cage at sea.

Bright Lights Society is the ship's new performance space. In a first for Cunard, Bright Lights Society is a hosted experience, bringing breathtaking acts into the spotlight – with no two nights the same. The name and design pays homage to Cunard's history of being the first to bring electric lights to the launch of an ocean liner.

Queen Anne will be based in Southampton offering European sailings after its world cruise.

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

Running

The Best Time To Run

Punxsutawney Phil, the famous ground hog, emerged from his burrow and saw his shadow this year, declaring there will be six more weeks of winter.

Spring is on the horizon. Even if there are six more weeks of winter, that is no excuse to crawl back into our burrow and hibernate like Phil.

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

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

There is a case for working out in the morning. You get your workout done and over before you even start your day. This means you will begin your day with your endorphins and a good feeling you have accomplished something before 9 a.m. That's more than some

people accomplish all day.

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

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

Some prefer working out at night. Though some say it disrupts sleep, others have said they have better quality sleep and sleep longer.

While studies reflect different benefits, one thing is clear: getting up and moving is important. What really matters is finding the time of day that works for you, fits your schedule and that you can stick to.



CATHY
BRADLEY

By keeping your regimen consistent, at the same time every day, you will make better gains. If you plan a reward after you exercise, you start to develop a habit, and it becomes part of your day. You will look forward to the that exercise because you know the reward is waiting. It does not have to be anything large. It can be simple, like a bubble bath or a cup of tea with a favorite treat. It just must give you something to look forward to that gets you out

the door.

Like Groundhog Day, I am back running the Boston Marathon and raising money for charity. My reward is the goal of completing 26.2 miles and raising money for the Last Call Foundation. They support the physical and mental health of firefighters. We think about the devastation caused by fires and

sometimes forget the physical and mental toll it takes on first responders and their families.

It certainly is brought to light with California fires, and the tragedy of the plane crashes in Washington, DC and Philadelphia.

Last Call does extensive research on the exposure and health challenges presented by carcinogens in both equipment and protective gear. We have a board member on the ground in California providing support and resources to the firefighters and the communities there.

You can help me support these heroes by making a donation of any amount by writing a check made out to the Last Call Foundation and mailing it to Cathy Bradley, 554 Carriage Dr., Orange CT 06477. Donations are tax deductible.

Cathy Bradley can be reached at cathy@ccenterprises.com.

Time Management

Crucial Vs. Not Crucial

We all have “too much to do.”

That we have “too much to do” suggests that much has been entrusted to us.

But this creates a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it's great to enjoy the confidence of others and accomplish meaningful and productive tasks. Yet having “too much to do” often creates stresses and anxieties that may reduce our personal productivity.

Accomplishing crucial items is the most productive use of our time. They are the important actions that help us reach our personal goals. They have a sense of urgency and focus.

The “not crucial” items are lower in productive value but can engender a small level of accomplishment. It is worth accomplishing some during the day.

When we accomplish the crucial things

in our life we are doing “business, as opposed to “busyness.” We are making progress versus wheel-spinning. We have all experienced those days when we were busy the whole day long, but when we got home that night we felt like we did not accomplish much at all. Perhaps it is because we got caught up doing not crucial items.

Doing the crucial things builds our self-esteem and our motivation level. When we have had a productive day doing crucial things that positive momentum carries forward into our evening hours. We are more inclined to do more personally-crucial items, spend time with the family, work on hobbies or read that book we bought a year ago but never started.



DON
WETMORE

However, when we have had one of those not crucial days, our motivation and momentum levels are reduced. When we come home at night, many of us just want to block out the day with that all important not crucial exercise, the “click, click, click” of the TV remote or the keys on the computer, scrolling through a multitude of channels or surfing the internet.

When given a choice between crucial and not crucial items, we will almost always do the not crucial items first and the crucial items later or not at all, in spite of the fact that we all want to be productive in our day.

Why? Because we are driven more by

emotion than logic.

The crucial items are typically longer and harder to accomplish. The not crucial items are typically quicker and emotionally satisfying.

To accomplish more of the crucial items, create a plan for your day, including a list of all the crucial items you want to accomplish. Prioritize those items. Label the most important item as #1. The next most important item is #2, and so on.

This will be your roadmap to a productive day as you complete and check off those crucial items.

Don Wetmore is a certified business coach and the author of “The Productivity Handbook” and “Organizing Your Life.” Contact him at 203-394-8216 or ctsem@msn.com.

Orange Association Offering Scholarships

Applications for scholarships offered by the Orange Scholarship Foundation Association are now available. Senior students who reside in Orange and attend either public or private high schools are eligible.

Among several scholarships is the Ashlie Krakowski Memorial Scholarship of \$5,000 that will be awarded to a student who intends to pursue a career in a health care field.

Applicants must meet criteria for receiving scholarships which include financial need, academic achievement, community service and leadership roles in organizations and activities. Application information is available through high school guidance departments, through the association's Facebook page and by emailing info@orangescholarshipfund.com. The deadline for applications is April 22.

Smith (Continued From 1)

charm that makes Milford a special place to live and work,” Smith's campaign website says.

Smith's former stint as mayor came as a result of long-time Mayor Ben Blake's departure in 2023, after Gov. Ned Lamont nominated Blake to fill the post of administrative law judge for Connecticut's Workers' Compensation Commission. City rules required the appointment of an interim from the same party as Blake, who

is a Democrat.

Smith has served on the city's Police Commission and was the longest-serving chair of the Milford Democratic Town Committee, where he was credited with shepherding his party to solid majorities on boards and commissions throughout city government.

Smith was raised in Milford and attended middle school and high school in the city. He graduated from Trinity College in Hartford and Yale in New Haven, where he studied political science, public policy and American government.

For Nature's Sake

Volunteering In Nature: Five Opportunities In 2025

Wildlife and scientific organizations in Connecticut will be looking for volunteers in the year ahead to keep an eye (and ear) on local species and ecosystems. Depending on the program, participants might set out once a week, binoculars in hand, to keep tabs on the progress of fledglings in a particular osprey nest, or listen at dusk to a chorus of frogs at a local pond to detect, by sound, which species have shown up that night, or patrol, in reflective vest, a coastal byway where marsh turtles cross during nesting season. Other programs include tagging species in the field, like horseshoe crabs or monarch butterflies.

The synopses below include the times of year when each program starts and organizations and websites to consult for further information.

FrogWatch USA

FrogWatchUSA is a national group, coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums that sets protocols and collects information from thousands of volunteers across the US to better inform environmental protection and amphibian conservation. Our local chapter, a collaboration between the Beardsley Zoo, the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium and Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History, sends volunteers out to identify frog species in our landscapes, based on sounds.

Jim Knox, curator of education at Beardsley Zoo says, "The program is called FrogWatch, but we always joke it could be called FrogListen. We're not capturing frogs. We're capturing data."

FrogWatch lead educator Andrew Connolly notes that the local group has distinguished itself nationally for its significant number of observations, and out of 128 chapters across the nation, this chapter trained the most volunteers in 2024.

Interested residents can register now for the regional chapter of FrogWatch with three choices of training session. Only one session is needed: virtual training on Feb. 25 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; virtual training on March 5 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; or hybrid training in person at the zoo on March 13 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The Beardsley Zoo FrogWatch page,

beardsleyzoo.org/frog-watch.html, offers more details on the roles of volunteers, content of training and a place to register online for free, with an optional \$10 donation.

Terrapin Tracking

The Connecticut Terrapin Tracking program was formed in 2021 out of concern for the population losses of a keystone salt marsh species, the northern diamondback terrapin, which prompted a collaboration between the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium, Western Connecticut State University, the state Department of Transportation and state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

I have written before about the details on the role of volunteers as they, sometimes literally, track the fate of this appealing turtle species ("Local Volunteers Tracking Turtles, to Save the Species," May 2024 and "There's Something About Franklin," September 2023)

In recent years the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium's training options for the Terrapin Tracking program have been offered in late March or early April. Volunteers can check for updates on when to register for a free training session at the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium's community science webpage at maritimeaquarium.org/community-science.

Osprey Nation

One of the more encouraging tales in environmental protection is the way that, after the pesticide DDT was banned in 1972, osprey and other raptor populations have increased in places like Connecticut. From a population of eight pairs in 1970, nesting osprey pairs grew to 726 with 1,077 fledglings in 2024, according to the Connecticut Audubon Society's Osprey Nation site.

Today, ospreys' reliance on healthy fish populations and sensitivity to contaminants are part of what continue to make them a "sentinel" of ecosystem health. Osprey Nation, the community science program run by Audubon in partnership with DEEP, is looking for additional volunteers in the season



PATRICIA HOUSER



ahead to expand their survey of nests.

The new nest assignments and orientation session for Osprey Nation will take place in the second half of March, with exact dates to be posted on the Connecticut Audubon website. Director of Communications Tom Anderson, suggests that interested residents can also reach out to get on the mailing list to be notified of starting dates by e-mailing osprey@ctaudubon.org.

In the meantime, the Osprey Nation website at ctaudubon.org/osprey-nation-home/ offers a thorough look at the project, including a training manual and the report on last season findings.

Horseshoe Crabs: Project Limulus

Project Limulus was founded in 1997 to study Long Island horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*). The project is part community science (data gathering), part research and part educational outreach, all contributing to the work of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Horseshoe Crab Species Specialist Group.

A relic of the prehistoric era, horseshoe crabs have 12 legs, 10 eyes and are more closely related to arachnids (spiders and scorpions) than true crabs. The species plays a key role in supporting other species and plays an essential part in supporting human health. For decades, medical technicians have relied upon an element in horseshoe crab blood to detect bacterial toxins in medical equipment. Anyone today who has ever had a vaccine or relied upon an injectable drug or implanted medical device owes some thanks for their safety to the blood of horseshoe crabs.

Meanwhile, Project Limulus brings locals out to the beach in various roles, whether as learners, observers or for more hands-on identification and tagging in late May and early June.

Jo-Marie Krasinak, biology professor at Sacred Heart University and director of education and outreach at Project Limulus, is scheduled to give a talk at the Beardsley Zoo on May 21 at 7 p.m. Krasinak will also be

giving informal talks at the Milford Point Beach in early June for those who sign up ahead of time. Interested residents can consult the Connecticut Audubon website starting in May to register for a beach talk and/or contact the Project Limulus program at Sacred Heart University for more information.

Monarch Watch

The local chapter of Monarch Watch, coordinated by the Beardsley Zoo, is linked to a national program for studying these iconic butterflies through tagging; the idea is to better understand migration patterns, especially at a time of habitat loss. The addition to a nationwide dataset and mapping are one contribution that locals make, but there's also the value of simply better understanding what's happening in our own backyards, says lead educator in Beardsley Zoo's Monarch Watch, Jenn Farrell.

The actual tagging typically begins in the fall, but interested residents should start looking for notices about training on the Beardsley Zoo website in late summer.

Farrell notes that once they are trained, individuals can carry out the tagging on their own, including sending away for a \$15 tagging kit to the national organization at monarchwatch.org. However, Beardsley Zoo is also happy to let participants do their tagging with the zoo's equipment and/or with a bit of supervision.

"If they wish to come to the zoo, we have the necessary equipment already. They're usually with a staff member and we will book appointments for them to come meet up with us," Farrell says.

Recommended viewing on the current Beardsley Zoo Monarch Watch webpage at beardsleyzoo.org/monarchwatch.html is a taped livestream talk from the zoo with details about monarch butterflies and an explanation for a program called Project Monarch Health with an impressive demonstration of how to handle the butterfly to sample for parasites.

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

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The Arts

Something For Everyone With The Arts

The winter weather is still upon us, and what better way to spend the season than with the arts? From toddlers to adults, there is something for everyone. Cultivate the interest of children with a special orchestral instrument “petting zoo” and concert or meet the characters from Sesame Street after watching them perform live. Take some time to nurture your own interests by seeing a classic or contemporary show, watch the beauty of a ballet, relax at a candlelight concert, create or enter your photographs in a juried show. Take a friend and enjoy something new; it will be time well spent.

Orange Congregational Church presents **Music on the Green Concert: Gospel Choir** on Feb. 16 at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary at Orange Congregational Church, 205 Meetinghouse Ln. in Orange. The show will feature the Messiah Baptist Church Mass Choir with conductor Dr. Jonathan Berryman. Join in a soul-filled afternoon of gospel music followed by a reception in the dining hall. Tickets are \$10 at the door for adults; children attend free. For more information call 203-795-9749.

The Milford Art Council is seeking artists for the **Milford Photo Expo**. This yearly collaboration with Milford Photo welcomes photographers of all experience levels. There is no specific theme or subject for this show. Original photographs or photographically derived work are accepted. Works may be created with a digital or a traditional film process. AI works are not eligible. For a prospectus and submission form visit milfordarts.org. The submission deadline is March 7. Judge(s) select the award winners based upon their interpretation of creativity, photographic excellence and ability to evoke reaction. Awards will be certificates to Milford Photo, good toward equipment, products, printing and more. The opening reception will take place on April 3 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Firehouse Gallery, 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. For more information, visit milfordarts.org or call 203-878-6647.

Westport River Gallery presents **“3D Pop Art”** by internationally renowned American artist Charles Fazzino, now on display at the Westport River Gallery, 1 Riverside Ave. in Westport. Fazzino is best known for his use of bright colors and intense detail in his images, which are then brought to life through a unique hand-assembled 3D layering technique. A pop culture historian with hundreds of galleries and museums exhibiting his pieces worldwide, he has gained a loyal following. His art is in the private collections of presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, as well as celebrities throughout North America, Asia and Europe. Gallery hours are Wednesdays to Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. For more gallery offerings and further information, visit westportrivergallery.com or call 203-226-6934.

Center Stage Theatre presents **“Guys and Dolls”** with music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, book by Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows with matinee and evening performances from Feb. 15 to March 2 at Center Stage Theatre, located at 54 Grove St. in Shelton. Set in Damon Runyon’s mythical New York City, *Guys and Dolls* is an oddball romantic comedy. Gambler Nathan Detroit tries to find the cash to set up the biggest craps game in town while the authorities breathe down his neck; meanwhile, his girlfriend and nightclub performer Adelaide laments that they’ve been engaged for 14 years. Nathan turns up fellow gambler Sky Masterson for

the dough, and Sky ends up chasing the straight-laced missionary, Sarah Brown, as a result. From the heart of Times Square to the cafes of Havana, Cuba, to the sewers of New York City, eventually everyone ends up right where they belong. For tickets visit centerstageshelton.org or call 203-225-6079.

David Southorn, concertmaster and principal violinist for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, presents a candlelight concert on Feb. 28 and March 1 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary’s Church, located at 5 Hillhouse Ave. in New Haven. Experience a candlelit performance led by Southorn and featuring NHSO strings while immersed in the beautiful surroundings of New Haven’s historic St. Mary’s Church. This soaring program will take you on a flight of imagination with music inspired by birdsong, including “The Lark Ascending” and “The Goldfinch Concerto” featuring the NHSO’s principal flutist, Mira Magrill. Serving as artistic director for this program, Southorn will play the solo violin lines and conduct the ensemble from his position in the violin section. His recent solo highlights include performances of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with the Fremont Symphony, Aaron Jay Kernis’ AIR with the New Haven Symphony and Vivaldi’s Four Seasons with the Delaware Symphony. As a chamber musician he has performed with his award-winning Amphion String Quartet at Alice Tully Hall as members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s CMS II. Tickets to this concert start at \$15 for adults. Children under 18 years of age are admitted free with the purchase of an adult ticket. Tickets can be purchased online by visiting newhavensymphony.org or calling 203-865-0831.

Castle Craig Players presents **“Almost Heaven: Songs of John Denver”** from Feb. 28 to March 16 at Almira F. Stephan Memorial Playhouse, located at 59 West Main St. in Meriden. The original concept is by Harold Thau, with orchestration and vocal arrangements by Jeff Waxman. There are matinee and evening performances run. “Almost Heaven” weaves together the songs of Denver to create a theatrical narrative that reflects upon the country during the years in which he wrote them. Twenty-nine of Denver’s songs are rediscovered and reinvented, performed against a backdrop of stunning visual images of America in the late 60s and early 70s, a time of social unrest and political protest. Tickets are \$25 for general admission, \$20 for seniors and are sold exclusively online at castlecraigplayers.org. This production is cabaret-style seating and patrons are invited to bring their own food and beverages.

Grand Kyiv Ballet presents **“Swan Lake”** by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky on March 1 at 7 p.m. at Shubert Theatre, 247 College St. in New Haven. “Swan Lake” is a ballet masterpiece that tells the story of a prince who falls in love with a beautiful swan princess under a spell. The ballet is renowned for its stunning choreography, intricate set design and Tchaikovsky’s captivating music. Its themes of love, sacrifice and redemption continue to resonate with audiences of all ages and backgrounds, making it a timeless classic that has endured for more than a century. This timeless tale of love and magic will be brought to life by the finest dancers of the Grand Kyiv Ballet. The graceful movements of the world’s best dancers from Ukraine, Italy, Spain, the US and Japan will give you unforgettable emotions. Colorful costumes and decorations will transport audiences



CYNDI
CONSOLI

to a world of enchantment and wonder. Tickets are \$59.50 to \$129.70 and can be purchased by visiting shubert.com or calling 203-562-5666.

The Milford Arts Council presents **The Story of Women Music Festival** on March 1 at 6:30 p.m. at 40 Railroad Ave. in Milford. Celebrating women in music and storytelling, The Midnight Anthem, a fast-rising country trio headlines the event. Featured performers include Milford’s own Kayte Devlin (singer-songwriter), Elaine Nadal (Milford poet laureate), Cinamon (instrumentalist, songwriter, poet, music therapist), Ariel Horowitz (violinist and composer), and carrying on the legend of her grandfather, left-handed banjo and guitar jazz musician Lee Blair and her indigenous lineage. The afternoon will be impactful, community driven and a beautiful illustration of the power of the female creative to be celebrated by all. Tickets are \$25 to \$49 and can be purchased by visiting milfordarts.org. This performance will have cabaret-style seating.

Phoenix Stage Company presents **“The Smell of the Kill”** by Michele Lowe with matinee and evening performances from March 8–23 Phoenix Stage Company, 133 Main St. in Oakville. Take three delicious, malicious wives, add three miserable, unloving husbands – and chill. That’s the recipe of Lowe’s tantalizing new comedy that had Broadway audiences cheering. The play revolves around Nicky, Debra and Molly, who have tolerated one another during once-a-month dinners for years. While their unseen spouses play golf in the dining room, the women exchange confidences for the first time revealing that all three marriages are on the brink of disaster and all three women are facing the challenges of their lives. Nicky’s husband has been indicted for embezzlement, Molly’s husband is stalking her and Debra’s husband is leaving her for another woman. When the men mistakenly lock themselves in a basement meat locker, the women are faced with a life-or-death decision – should they leave the men out in the cold permanently – or let them thaw? One by one the women make their choices with more than a little help from one another. Tickets are \$25 general admission and \$22 for seniors, teachers and students. Purchase tickets online by visiting phoenixstagecompany.org or calling 860-417-2505.

The Bushnell presents **“The Wiz,”** with music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls and book by William F. Brown, from March 11-16 at William H. Mortensen Hall, 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. “The Wiz” returns “home” to stages across America in an all-new Broadway tour, the first one in 40 years. This groundbreaking twist on “The Wizard of Oz” changed the face of Broadway, from its iconic score packed with soul, gospel, rock and 70s funk to its stirring tale of Dorothy’s journey to find her place in a contemporary world. With direction by Schele Williams (“The Notebook,” revival of Disney’s “Aida”), choreography by JaQuel Knight (Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies” and “Black Is King”) and additional material by Tony-nominated and Emmy-nominated writer and TV host Amber Ruffin (The Amber Ruffin Show, Late Night with Seth Meyers), this dynamite infusion of ballet, jazz and modern pop brings a whole new groove to easing on down the road. Tickets are \$34 to \$130 at bushnell.org or by calling 860-987-5900.

Shubert New Haven presents **“Sesame Street Live! Say Hello”** on March 14 at 6

p.m. at the Shubert Theatre, 247 College St. in New Haven. Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Cookie Monster and their friends from Sesame Street are coming to the neighborhood to say hello. At “Sesame Street Live! Say Hello,” sing, dance and play alongside these favorite furry friends, all while following Elmo’s puppy, Tango, in a fun game of hide and seek. Put on your dancing shoes and make your way to where the air is sweet for this all-new celebration on Sesame Street. In an exclusive post-show experience, families will have the opportunity to make a lasting memory of the visit by taking a photo alongside characters from the show. Admission to the performance is not included in the photo experience ticket – this separate upgrade must be purchased in advance. A limited number of tickets are available for a post-show VIP meet and greet photo experience with characters from the show. Every person is required to have a performance ticket to attend the VIP meet and greet. Booster seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Performance tickets are \$44.70 to \$116.10, with a 25 percent discount when you buy tickets in multiples of four. Purchase tickets at shubert.com or call 203-562-5666.

Shubert New Haven presents **“Clue: Live On Stage”** by Sandy Rustin, from March 20–23 at Shubert Theatre, 247 College St. in New Haven. Murder and blackmail are on the menu when six mysterious guests assemble at Boddy Manor for a night they’ll never forget. Was it Mrs. Peacock in the study with the knife? Or was it Colonel Mustard in the library with the wrench? “Clue” is a hilarious new play based on the fan-favorite 1985 Paramount Pictures movie and inspired by the classic Hasbro board game. This ultimate whodunit is a fast-paced slapstick comedy that will leave you dying of laughter and keep you guessing until the final twist. Tickets are \$53.60 to \$113.10 at shubert.com or by calling 203-562-5666.

The New Haven Symphony Orchestra presents Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s **“Scheherazade”** with Perry So, conductor and music director on March 23 at 3 p.m. at Woolsey Hall, 500 College St. in New Haven. This performance will feature Wu Man playing the pipa, a traditional Chinese lute-like instrument. This adventurous program will feature Rimsky-Korsakov’s enchanting Scheherazade, which uses music to tell the story of 1001 Arabian Nights. NHSO proudly welcomes triple-Grammy nominee Wu Man – the world’s foremost pipa soloist – to serve as a “wordless narrator” on Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Du Yun’s extraordinary and unusual Ears of the Book. Scheherazade is one of the greatest orchestral showpieces. Tickets start at \$15 by visiting newhavensymphony.org or by calling 203-865-0831. Children under 18 are free with the purchase of an adult ticket.

New Haven Symphony Orchestra presents **“Young People’s Concert”** on March 30 at 1 p.m. at Lyman Center for the Performing Arts, 501 Crescent St. in New Haven. Meet the orchestra at this free, interactive program designed for kids. The NHSO will show off all the cool sounds that an orchestra can make. After the 50-minute concert, kids can meet NHSO musicians in the lobby and try real orchestra instruments at the instrument “petting zoo.” Join Perry So, music director and conductor, for this unique and fun experience. For more information about this free event, visit newhavensymphony.org or call 203-865-0831.

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

Bankruptcy

Prenups Aren't Just For The Rich And Famous

My parents were married right before Valentine's Day in 1960. Their bridesmaids carried heart-shaped bouquets and wore red lace dresses over taffeta. My parents remained married until my father passed away, and had they both still been alive today, they would have been celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary this month. I will still mark the occasion by going to the cemetery and bringing flowers, because true love never dies.

In this day and age, marriages don't tend to last like my parents' did. Data from the US Census Bureau shows that just under half of all marriages end in divorce. With that statistic alone in mind, it would behoove folks thinking of getting married to consider a prenuptial agreement.

No one likes to talk about such things when they are picking out rings and saying "yes" to the dress. But I am the self-proclaimed queen of talking about things no one wants to talk about. So let's examine the proposition and unpack the process. Maybe if we look closely at it, we can shake the stigma.

Last year, I wrote in this space that there is a huge misconception that you need to be rich or own a business or lots of real estate or be a celebrity to necessitate a prenuptial agreement. That still holds true and is likely the single biggest reason why people don't get them.

But prenups are just insurance policies. They are meant to protect you in case of

divorce no matter what your financial status is going into the marriage.

Another reason people balk at them may be the cost involved. The process does usually include the use of legal counsel, and it always includes an exchange of financial information and a lengthy written agreement. But the return on investment may be priceless in the long run.

Prenups are also known as prenuptial agreements, premarital agreements and antenuptial agreements. Prenups made in this state after 1995 are governed by the Connecticut Premarital Agreement Act, which can be found in Connecticut General Statutes 46b-36a to 36j. (Prenups made prior to Oct. 1, 1995 are not subject to the act, but instead are subject to case law, specifically *McHugh v. McHugh*.)

According to the current statute, the definition of a prenup is "an agreement between prospective spouses made in contemplation of marriage." It further states that it "shall be in writing and signed by both parties" and it "becomes effective upon marriage unless otherwise provided in the agreement."

The statute goes on to enumerate what the contents of a prenup can be. Examples of what they may contain are the right to buy, sell, manage and control property; the disposition of property upon divorce; modification or elimination of alimony; estate and retire-



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ROSE DEGRAY

ment planning; choice of governing law; any other matter; and nothing illegal.

You may ask, "What about children, custody and child support?" The statute specifically states "the right of a child to support may not be adversely affected by a premarital agreement. Any provision relating to the care, custody and visitation or other provisions affecting a child shall be subject to judicial review and modification."

A plain meaning of this is that you could include provisions about children, custody and child support in your prenup, but they are likely going to be changed based on the best interest of the children at the time of the divorce. In practice, I almost always leave language about children born after the marriage out of my prenups.

During the course of my practice, I have taken on clients in divorce matters who had prenups but didn't want to follow them. The statute contemplates this and states "a premarital agreement may be amended or revoked only by a written agreement signed by the parties. The amended agreement or the revocation shall be enforceable without consideration."

In this situation, we add a clause to the separation agreement that references the statute and states clearly that the parties wish to revoke the prenup by agreement.

If, on the other hand, one party wants to

enforce the prenup and the other doesn't, the prenup can be attacked. The statute provides for that as well.

Prenups must be entered into voluntarily, they cannot be unconscionable, and each party must fully disclose their finances to the other, including income, expenses, assets and liabilities. I have my clients do this in writing under oath through the mutual exchange of financial affidavits.

Two attorneys are often involved in the making of a prenup: one attorney drafts the agreement for one spouse, and the second attorney acts as what I like to call "review counsel." This second attorney is not required – however, it is encouraged.

Connecticut case law holds in *Friezo v. Friezo*, that the party against whom enforcement is sought should have a "reasonable opportunity" to consult with independent counsel. I have acted in both capacities over the years; and my most frequently given advice overall is: don't sign anything without consulting a lawyer first.

Prenups are nothing to be scared of. More people should consider them.

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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 such as divorce and mediation. She can be reached at TRD@ConsumerLegalServicesLLC.com or 203-713-8877.

Orange Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Charmers: True Partnerships And Love

Let's have a chamber cheer for Planet Fitness in Orange. On Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 4:30 p.m., the "judgement free zone" will mark over two decades of being an awesome Orange business with a milestone ribbon-cutting at 440 Boston Post Rd. A celebration showcasing the best-in-class renovations and state-of-the-art new equipment the fitness facility recently installed throughout their pristine workout floor will follow from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The continued investment and community engagement made by Planet Fitness and its parent IGNITE Fitness Holdings is a testament to their commitment to the town and surrounding municipalities.

You may recall that Planet Fitness jumped right in and was the first of six corporations to sign on as an event sponsor for the Orange Chamber Health and Fitness Expo on Jan. 11.

Why take the leap? Ryan Berk, CEO of IGNITE said, "We always want to support

the chamber and our communities." IGNITE is one of the largest Planet Fitness franchisees, currently operating over 130 locations, which includes Planet Fitness in Orange.

Congratulations to Orange Chamber of Commerce member Mai Thai Restaurant on being named "Best Thai Restaurant" both statewide and in the county for 2025 as determined by the Hearst newspapers Readers' Choice survey.

Pamela Mahler of the "Best of" product team said, "Known for its fresh ingredients and flavorful recipes, Mai Thai ensures a memorable dining experience. Whether you're dining in or ordering takeout, the restaurant promises quality and taste with every dish, making it a must-visit spot for fans of Thai cuisine in Connecticut."

Owner Pete Kolakul also donated gift certificates as part of our Feb. 3, "Feel the Love" Business After-Hours, hosted by the al-



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ways-generous Charter Senior Living of Orange. A bountiful "beauty basket" was also donated by Melissa Murphy and Alyson Anderson, the dynamic duo owners of Kashmere Salon. The event featured mouth-watering hors d'oeuvres, light refreshments and beverages. And we were celebrating Valentine's Day, so you know there were also sweets involved.

Yale University West Campus joined the Orange Chamber of Commerce last October. During this brief time, Yale has proven to be an essential part of the chamber, as the university is to our region's economy via jobs, business growth, charitable contributions and overall quality of life.

As part of the university's continued engagement with businesses throughout the region and the local community, Yale West

Campus kicked off 2025 by becoming our newest corporate partner. This is the highest level of membership, shared with seven other organizations.

Corporate partners and event sponsors allow the chamber to maintain financial stability and access critical operational resources while also creating and optimizing benefits for every chamber member and the communities we serve.

Since the last column, the chamber welcomed three new members, including the Regional Water Authority, TLC Mindful Consulting and the soon-to-open House of Brides, which will have a ribbon-cutting on March 1 at 1:30 p.m. at 236 Boston Post Rd.

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

Here's To Your Health

Boosting Immunity Against Colds And Flu

As I type this article, I know of at least six people who are battling the dreaded winter flu. Children, teens, adults and the elderly alike.

While the flu has been around for hundreds of years and vaccinations exist, people are still getting sick. I am a believer in prevention versus cure. Prevention doesn't mean you won't get sick; it just means you won't be as sick or sick as often.

The way we prevent illness is to be intentional about building our immunity. We do this by eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, by drinking lots of water, getting an adequate amount of sleep, exercising and having good hygiene practices. In addition to these things, taking vitamins D, C, E and zinc are also ways to boost immunity.

Studies published in the British Medical

Journal and elsewhere show that vitamin D helps prevent flu, colds, bronchitis and pneumonia. Washing your hands frequently and keeping your hands away from your nose and mouth is the best way to stay healthy. But you should also stay home when you're not feeling well. We wouldn't have to avoid people with respiratory illness if they didn't come to work or the gym or climb on an airplane. Airborne droplets from coughs and sneezes are what transmit the illness. So if you're not feeling well, give yourself permission to stay home and do your best to get better.

There are also natural ways to fight colds and flu like drinking plenty of fluids, sleep-



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ing and having a nice bowl of chicken soup. Other things like a honey, garlic and salt-water gargle will help relieve symptoms as well.

My all-time favorite is wet sock therapy. When I first learned about wet sock therapy, being a person who despises the cold, I thought to myself, "Oh heck no." Then I came down with bronchitis and gave it a try out of desperation. Much to my surprise, I wasn't freezing and when I woke up the next morning, I was feeling much better.

I have used this therapy on my son several times, and the one time that stands out the most is when he had a 104-degree fever and tested positive for COVID. I put him in a lukewarm bath and gave him wet sock therapy treatment. By morning he was down to

a 99-degree temperature. You can find directions how to do this therapy on the Brannick Clinic of Natural Medicine's website.

Most of us run to the drug store first before we even give the more natural approach a chance. Let's think about what was used as medicine before pharmaceuticals: food, herbs and oils. The body is amazing, and it naturally wants to heal itself. Give it a boost for prevention, and in the event you do get sick, try a more natural approach to getting better first. It can't hurt and it very well may surprise you. Here's to your health.

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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 Hmgbtd3@gmail.com.

Baldwin A Milford PD Pioneer

By Marilyn May

“You’re going to be what?!”

That was the response from Donna Lee Baldwin’s mother when she told her she was going to apply for a policewoman’s job that was being advertised in the newspaper. Mom thought her daughter already had a good job as a licensed practical nurse at Milford Hospital.

Still, Baldwin was considering applying for a part-time job, never thinking she would work with the police department for the next 21 years. Or that she would be patrolling Devon on a foot at midnight, or working undercover on a state regional task force, or that she would eventually be made Milford’s first woman patrol sergeant.

She had some wonderful role models. The way was pioneered by Sgt. Annette Fosdick, whose career spanned from 1946 to 1966; Mildred Moe, 1947 to 1971; and Denise McGrath in the early 1970s, who worked in the youth bureau of the detective division. They worked in plain clothes and had powers of arrest. These women worked mostly on investigations involving women and children.

Another bright star was Tracey Mooney, 1994-2014, who retired from Milford PD as deputy chief and went on to become chief of police at the University of New Haven.

In 1974, Baldwin started out as a “special” patrol officer. She had passed all the written and oral exams, physical agility tests and had gone through the Milford Police Department’s training. This meant she was able to work part time.

One day she got a call that there was a job open that night for a walking beat in Devon from midnight to 8 a.m. She would do it. There was only one drawback, she told the officer on the phone: she didn’t have a uniform. No problem, she was told. She could find a pile of uniforms at headquarters under a staircase where at the time retired officers threw their old uniforms.

She went through the pile and found herself an outfit.

“I felt proud because I knew what it took to get where I was,” she said.

Most of the first-year men and women walked solo beats in all weather. Baldwin had a 15-minute break to warm up or dry off when a patrol car was sent to meet her. It was always at the corner of Bridgeport and Naugatuck avenues. The dome light had to be on when she was in the car. Headquarters had to be told when she got in the car and when she left. And the police car was always parked facing downtown Milford in case a code 3 alerted the driver to turn on his siren and emergency lights and get to a certain location as soon as possible. Later in the morning, Baldwin had a half-hour meal break and ended up visiting just about every diner in Milford.

One night Baldwin was walking a beat in downtown Milford making sure all the doors were locked, including the back doors. She heard glass break behind a building. She walked toward the sound but could see that no windows or doors had been smashed. Then there was the sound of breaking glass again.

Walking past a nearby dumpster, she said,

“Up pops Bandit, a very large raccoon.” She still laughs about the incident. Bandit is her favorite name for raccoons, but this Bandit did not end up with a police record.

“Fifty years ago, thought patterns were very different,” Baldwin said. When she applied to be a full-time officer, she was told, “You can’t do that because you’re a girl.”

No lady, back in the day, walked the streets alone at night or was called to break up bar-room fights.

“But I have all the requirements,” Baldwin had countered. “It’s not fair. Let me try.” She was not – and is not – one to be easily discouraged.

“Okay,” the officer had demurred. “You can try.”

You can guess the rest. She passed all the tests that were the same for men and women, and their paychecks were the same, as well. By 1977, she was able to work full time.

“Every time I looked in a mirror to make sure my collar and pins and badges were straight, I always thought of all the women officers who came before me,” she said.

How did the public react?

“The public generally saw the uniform first and then saw I was a female. Their first reaction was surprise,” she said, and then their next reactions were “mixed.” Some favorable, some not so much.

In time, Baldwin and fellow trainee Pat Gustafson became friends, confidantes and “partners in crime,” applying for higher positions at the same time. And their timing was good. The city received a federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act grant in 1976. This enabled the hiring of more officers. Gustafson was hired to work in communications/dispatch, and under the same grant Baldwin was hired as a full-time police officer. Both had to go through accredited training at the state police academy in Meriden. They were then sworn in by Chief William Bull.

Baldwin has a quick laugh and a take-charge attitude that served her well. She said that in questioning things she never cited “discrimination,” but always questioned issues of “fairness.”

Sometimes she figured out subtle ways to police the streets once she got a patrol car. She drove past the former Office Bar on Daniel Street and saw 15 motorcycles parked on the sidewalk. That was not permitted, but it wasn’t worth causing a ruckus with all those bikers. All she did was drive by very slowly and shine a spotlight on each bike. Then off she went for a coffee break. Later, she drove past the bar again and said she found no bikes on the sidewalk. Mission accomplished.

After being a police officer for a few years, one night she happened to tell her mother that the state police had asked to “borrow” her to do undercover work. The dinner plate her mother was drying shattered all over the kitchen floor.

“Oh! And are you going to do it?” her mom asked.

As you can guess, Baldwin did undercover work for the state for a year and a half

When she got married to retired detective Robert Hall, her colleagues continued to call



Police Officer Donna Lee Baldwin is sworn in by Chief of Police Timothy Flaherty. In 1994 she was the first woman officer to gain the rank of patrol sergeant. Photo courtesy of Baldwin.

her Officer Baldwin because that’s the way they had known her for years.

She was born and raised in Milford. “My family’s name is on that bridge down there,” she said, motioning to the Memorial Bridge where the names of Milford’s founders are carved in granite.

Having a woman on the force was helpful more than once. One day she and some paramedics were called to a house where a woman was having a heart attack.

“She was an old Italian lady, and she was adamant that she would not let a man touch her,” Baldwin recalled.

The paramedics backed out while she took off her police hat, sat down and calmly had a chat with the woman. Then she asked if she could open the woman’s blouse and put a stethoscope on her chest. The lady timidly agreed, and Baldwin placed the scope and listened. That’s when she told the lady that one of the male paramedics just outdoors was a “personal friend” of hers, and he was “the very best at checking heart rates.” The woman relented, so Baldwin held the stethoscope, and the paramedic was allowed to listen. The woman was immediately taken to the hospital. She recovered somewhat and lived a few months longer.

Many years later Baldwin was working at

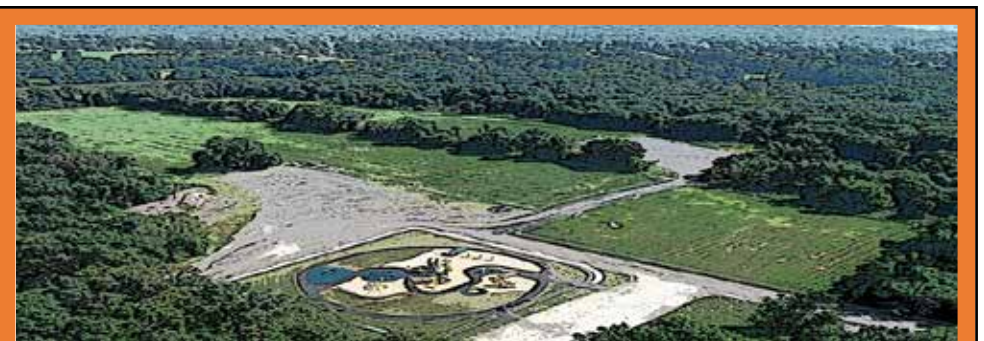
the headquarters front desk when a woman came in to ask a question about something. Instead she just stood there, not moving, not saying anything, just staring at Baldwin for a long time. Finally, the woman said, “You came on a call for my grandmother who was having a heart attack. She did not want the guys to come in. You talked with her and ‘played a game’ to get a paramedic in and check on her. You saved my grandmother’s life. You gave her more life. I was a little girl at the time. It was the first time I ever saw a woman officer.” And then she told Baldwin, “I just want to thank you.”

Baldwin was promoted to patrol sergeant in 1994 by then-Chief Thomas Flaherty and put in charge of supervising officers who went on calls. She retired in 1998.

Looking back on her career, she said, “I loved being a cop, and I loved being a patrol sergeant.”

There are currently 28 female officers of various ranks serving in all divisions of the police department.

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



Community Workshop 2 For the Fred Wolfe Park Master Plan

When: February 27th, 2025

Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm

Where: High Plains Community Center

Room 4 and 6

525 Orange Center Road

Please come listen and share your ideas regarding the future of Fred Wolfe Park.



Planning, Preservation, Progression

Bridges Healthcare Accepting Scholarship Applications

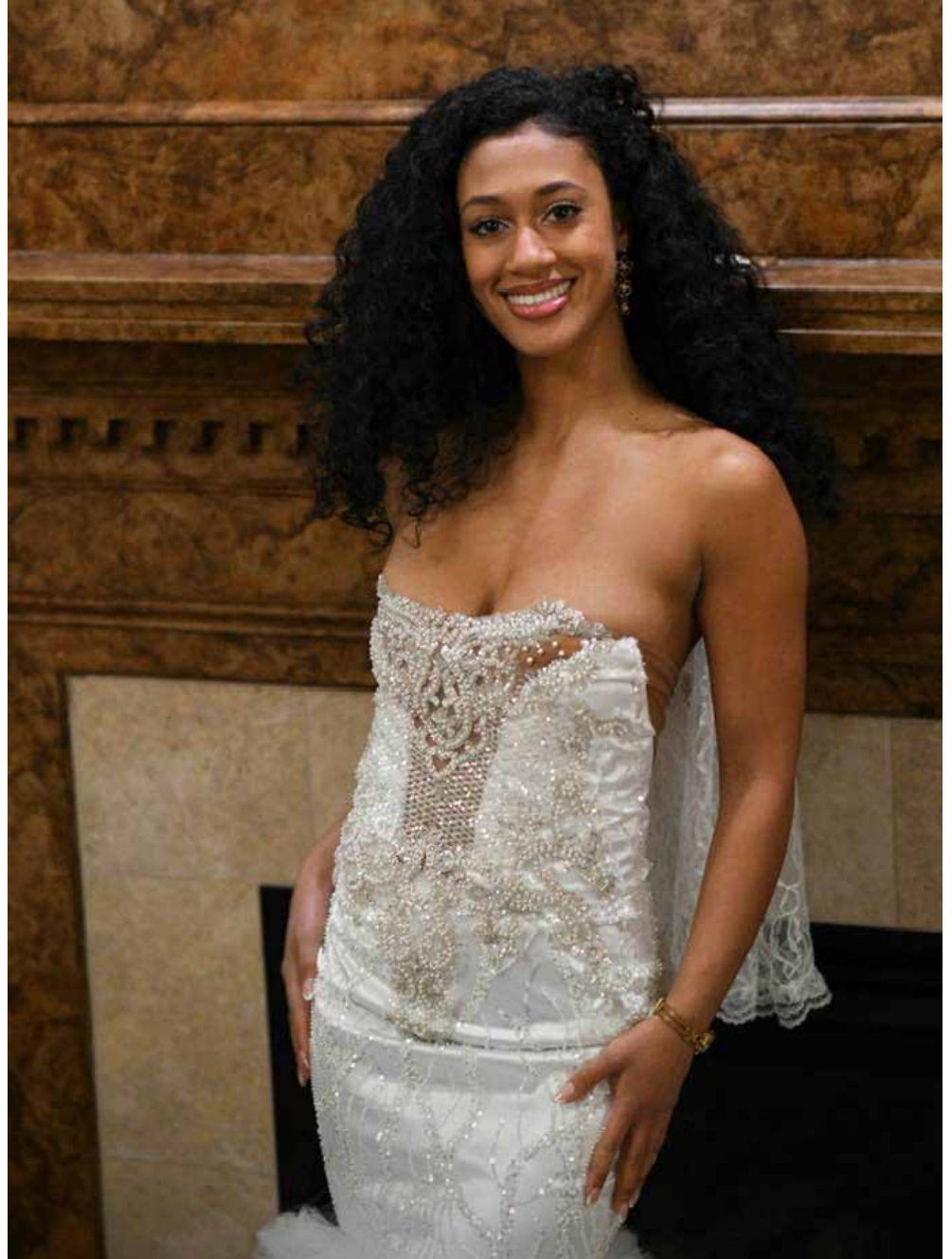
Bridges Healthcare in Milford is accepting applications for the Barry Kasdan Scholarship for the pursuit of a graduate or undergraduate degree in human services and the Stella Cretella Scholarship for those in pursuit of higher education through graduate or undergraduate degrees focusing on advocacy and policy reform in mental health services.

Three \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded. The successful candidates must be a Bridges employee, or spouse, child or grandchild of a Bridges employee, or a resident of Ansonia, Bethany, Derby, Milford, Orange, Seymour, Shelton, Stratford, West Haven or

Woodbridge and must be pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree in human services, or must be pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree in mental health advocacy/public policy. High school applicants must be completing high school or have GED equivalent in the year the scholarship is awarded.

Completed applications are due no later than March 31. Applications can be submitted online using the Bridges Healthcare Board Scholarship Application at bridgesct.org. Contact scholarship@bridgesmilford.org with any questions.

Here Comes The Bridal Expo To Orange



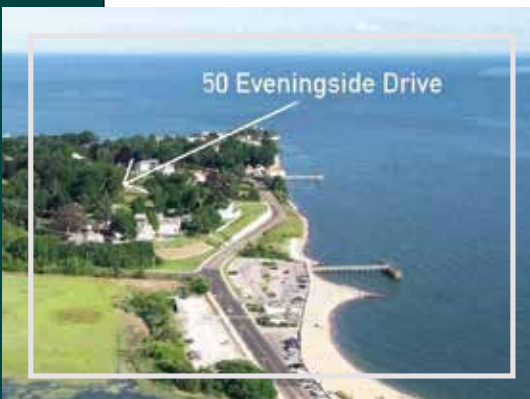
The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held its third annual Bridal Expo at Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange on Jan. 25. The bridal show was presented by Karlene Lyndsay Designs, and the expo featured local businesses that serve a variety of wedding-related needs. *Photos by Robert Creigh.*

Two Milford Waterfront Homes



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**50 Eveningside Drive
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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., \$70/person.**

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Contact: Dennis Belanger, 203-494-5219 or email
milfordflot073inc@gmail.com to register.

Students will be instructed on how to interpret and use information printed on charts as well as chart a course using that information, GPS and navigation tools.



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Walk-ins welcome!

Boating Safety Course 2025

for power boats,
sailboats & personal
watercraft.



Click QR code to register with us for this class.

Saturdays, Feb 22, Mar 15, Apr 12, May 10, June 7, July 12, Aug 9, Sept 6, 2025, from 7:30 a.m. (registration) to approximately 4:30 p.m. \$70/person.

Go to <https://a0142403.uscgaux.info/boatingclasses.html>. In the schedule in the center of the page, find the class date. Click on "Click here to Register Online for this Class." This will bring you to the online payment screen, Boat America, which will guide you through the process. You also may pay by check or cash at the door starting at 7:30 a.m. on class day. If you have questions, please call Dennis Belanger, public education staff officer, at 203-494-5219.

The Boat America course is required by the state of Connecticut to obtain your State Certificate of Boating/Personal Watercraft Operation with Recreational Towing Endorsement.



REGISTRATION
Go here to find or get your CT State conservation ID: <https://ct.aspirafocus.com/internetsales>
Walk-ins welcome!

Smoke Shops (Continued From 1)

youth and of smoke shops that sell vaping products.

“We do have a national health crisis among our teens regarding vaping,” Bunnell had told the selectmen in November. “Prevention agencies like ours are trying to gage how to cope with this really fast-moving crisis.”

In a memo to the TPZC, First Selectman Jim Zeoli used similarly dire language to describe the situation.

“Vaping has become a national health crisis, and the addiction it creates is much worse than cigarette nicotine,” Zeoli wrote.

According to Bunnell, Orange currently has five smoke/vape shops, excluding old-fashioned cigar shops.

Milford changed its regulations in September to permanently prevent any further smoke shops from opening. The city already has 15 such stores.

Under Milford’s new rules, those stores can stay open where they are but would not be able to relocate elsewhere in the city. Orange would similarly not force existing stores to close.

Bunnell has said that Milford’s decision would likely drive potential retailers to open more in surrounding towns, including Orange.

Although the TPZC agreed to adopt the moratorium, Chair Oscar Parente expressed frustration that no one from the town had come to address the commission directly on the matter.

“I had hoped that there would be people here tonight to inform us,” Parente said, “but it doesn’t look like that’s going to happen.”

There was some confusion among the commissioners about what exactly they were aiming to accomplish.

“So basically we’re taking a legal, regulated activity, because people are using it illegally, because they’re youths...” commissioner

Kevin Cornell wondered.

“I’m not even sure if that’s the issue,” Parente responded. “It may be something that’s not just bad for youth in the community, but bad for the community in general.”

Parente said he was looking forward to receiving some feedback from other town departments and the general public during the moratorium period.

Although standalone smoke shops will not be allowed to open, plenty of other establishments sell combustible, chewable and electronic tobacco products, including gas station marts and some pharmacies. Those stores would not be affected.

Milford Education (Continued From 1)

this budget. But it’s not that kind of fiscal climate,” said BOE member Cindy Wolfe-Boynton, a Democrat. “This is a budget that is so bare-bones that I think that the word ‘lean’ is generous in some ways. To me it is skeletal in some ways. And frankly I’m worried about what might happen down the road, because there are so many things that we can’t predict.”

Democrat Tom Koda said that after taking out cost increases that the superintendent could not control, such as salaries, transportation and the state-mandated Right to Read updates, the budget was only going up by 0.7 percent.

“In the days of 4 percent inflation, that’s an incredibly good job,” he said. “I think this is a barely get by budget for now.”

Republican member Christina Prete, however, felt that some of the projected numbers were unclear, particularly around enrollment at The Academy. She abstained from the budget vote rather than opposing it.

“I don’t feel with have all the information to make an educated decision,” she said.

Notably, the budget does not account for large unmet needs to improve or replace the

district’s school facilities, all of which are over 50 years old. Education officials are working on a separate track to create a strategy for these long-range needs.

Though some of the plans could reduce spending over time, all of the options require multiple millions of dollars in renovations or construction. Cutaia has estimated that it could cost about \$90 million for an elementary school and \$200 million for a high school.

To that end, Democrat Meghan Doyle said the facilities planning should be the focus of the board’s continued efforts.

“I think we need to continue with our facilities study, and that’s where we can focus on the next level of efficiencies,” she said.

All eight of the board’s Democrats voted to approve the budget. Like Prete, the board’s other Republican member, Scott Firmender, abstained.

The budget will still need to go through the Board of Finance and the Board of Aldermen before being adopted sometime in late spring.

The Board of Finance has cut millions of dollars from the BOE budget proposal in each of the previous two years. In 2023, the Board of Aldermen restored the funding; in 2024 they left the cuts in place.

Apartments (Continued From 1)

of the apartments to meet affordability criteria, according to Kevin Curseaden, the attorney representing the developer. Twelve units will be set at 80 percent or less of the area median income, while another 12 will be set at 60 percent or less.

All of the units will be one bedroom and 540 square feet. There will be assigned parking under the building for tenants, as well as unassigned exterior parking for visitors. The buildings will be five stories tall.

The planning board had in 2024 denied a mixed-use project proposed for the diner

site that would have had 50 apartments and first-floor office space but did not have the affordability component.

The property is in the Corridor Design District 2, which prohibits a development of the type Metro Star wants to build. The developer had earlier asked the board to change the zoning regulations, but that too was denied.

Several members of the board expressed frustration over the way the project has evolved.

“We denied something that could have went a lot nicer with less units for something that has to pass because of the state law,” said board member Mark Macchio.

City Planner David Sulkis pointed out that as long as Milford remains under the threshold of 10 percent total affordable housing, developers can ignore many local zoning restrictions on things like height limits, parking minimums and setback requirements.

“The burden must be proven that outweighs the need for housing, and it’s a very, very high bar,” Sulkis said. “Traffic is not an issue. Parking, noise, mental anguish on neighbors – none of those mean anything.”

“They’re going to build these all over Milford...and then we’re going to look like Norwalk and Stamford,” Macchio warned. “This one’s fine because at least it’s on a main road, but they’re going to put these in people’s backyards soon.”

Board member Bryan Anderson, however, argued that the developers had made changes to the design to address some of the board’s earlier criticisms, calling the new plan “very responsive.” He added that he was in favor of this type of project in the kind of commercial-adjacent area on the Boston Post Road where it’s being built.

“This is something that you would not put on a purely residential street with single-family houses. But it’s more than appropriate for this particular location,” he said.

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Orange Democrats Call for Candidates

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- Board of Selectmen
- Town Clerk
- Tax Collector
- Board of Finance
- Orange & Amity Boards of Education

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Session
February 26
7:00–8:00pm
at HPCC**


Details and RSVP
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Paid for by Orange Democratic Town Committee, Patricia Sanders Romano, Treasurer

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Indian Restaurant Opens In Orange



Royal Spice Indian restaurant and the Orange Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on Jan. 30 to celebrate the restaurant's grand opening. The event included a free dinner buffet. Located at 85 Boston Post Rd. in Orange, Royal Spice is operated by co-owners and veteran restaurateurs Jijin Jimmichan and Vigil Padinhare. During the celebration, state Rep. MJ Shannon presented the owners with a citation on behalf of the General Assembly offering congratulations and best wishes for continued success. Included in the photo are Jimmichan holding scissors, Padinhare, Orange Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Barry Lee Cohen, Shannon and workers at Royal Spice. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Crowder And Prud'homme Join Orange Chamber Board Of Directors



Crowder



Prud'homme

Edward Crowder of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority and business executive Scott Prud'homme were recently elected to the Orange Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Crowder is a corporate communications professional with extensive experience in utility communications, media relations, executive communications, multimedia storytelling and crisis communications. He currently serves as the RWA's senior communications specialist, where he identifies and implements creative ways to connect with employees, customers and communities.

A resident of Woodbridge, Prud'homme is a veteran business executive with over 20

years of experience building brands and driving growth across a breadth of consumer businesses. He is also the former chairman of the Woodbridge Economic Development Commission. Prud'homme is currently the franchisee and owner of twelve Supercuts throughout Connecticut, including three Supercuts chamber member locations in Orange and Derby.

"Scott and Ed's professional backgrounds, unique skillsets, and commitment to business growth and community engagement are already having an immediate, positive impact on creating value for our membership and partners," said Barry Lee Cohen, the chamber's executive director.

NEW Scholarship Applications Open

The Network of Executive Women is accepting applications for their 2025 scholarship program.

The annual scholarship program provides monetary support to women who would not ordinarily be able to afford educational programs. The objective of the NEW scholarship awards is to offer scholarships to women in need of financial assistance for educational undergraduate degrees, retraining or certification purposes.

To be considered, applicants must be at an undergraduate level, but not transitioning from high school to college; be enrolled at an accredited school in New Haven or Fairfield counties; demonstrate financial need; and be enrolled, continuing or returning to school to further their educational goals or training to enhance their job skills. Members of the

NEW and their families are not eligible for this scholarship.

This scholarship is not open to high school graduates or students who have continuously schooled since high school. The program is designed for women who have had their education interrupted or delayed, never had the opportunity to pursue high education, or otherwise need additional credentialing to advance in their career.

The deadline for submitting applications is Friday, Feb. 21 at 5 p.m. No application submitted after that deadline will be considered by the committee. To learn more about NEW and the scholarship program visit, networkofexecutivewomen.org/scholarships. For questions and to request an application, email Debbie Siena at Deb.Siena@snmc.com.

Amity Library Renovation May Get State Funding

Amity's \$3.15 million high school library renovation project is one step closer to reality. The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services has included the proposal in its school building project priority list submitted to Gov. Ned Lamont.

The plan aims to modernize the library and surrounding classrooms with an anticipated \$1.35 million grant. The funds will need approval by the legislature's education committee and the full General Assembly.



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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.

Theodore O. Boynton Jr., 95, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on January 23, 2025, surrounded by his family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Catherine Ann Clifford, 83 of Milford, passed away peacefully on January 28, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Gabriel Angel Hernandez, age 66 beloved husband of Barbara (Farinas) Hernandez, entered peaceful rest on January 27, 2025 surrounded by family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Joseph A. Arpino, 84 of Milford, passed away peacefully on January 26, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Thomas Raymond Brooks, 82, of Milford, husband of the late Mary (Penders) Brooks, passed away at his home on Thursday, January 23, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Doreen Quigley D'Auria, 94, of Orange, CT and formerly of West Haven, CT, passed away early Sunday, January 26, 2025, at her home with her family by her side.



Delena J. Hulse, beloved wife of the late Brian R. Hulse, went home to be with the Lord on January 18, 2025, after a brief illness. (Cody-White Doyle Funeral Home)



Teresa Victoria Assunto, 73 of Seymour and formerly Milford, passed away peacefully on February 4, 2025. Teresa was the beloved wife of Anthony Assunto for 54 years. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Edna M. (Fusco) Casolino, 98, of Orange, the beloved wife of the late Philip Casolino passed away peacefully at her home on January 20, 2025 surrounded by her beloved family.



George Danas, age 58, a man of few words but immense love, passed away peacefully with his beloved wife, Jennifer, by his side. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Sharleen Ann Kazmeryk, 64 of Milford, CT, passed away on January 25, 2025. Sharleen was born on June 4, 1960, in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Helen Brown Barnett, age 100, of Milford, formerly Bridgeport, passed away peacefully on January 25, 2025. (Baker-Isaac Funeral Services)



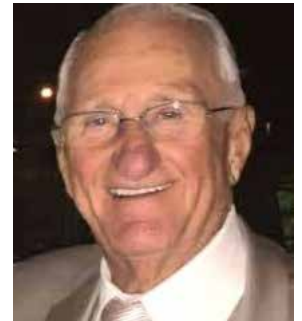
Pasqualina Castiello, 95, of Milford, adored wife of the late Mario Castiello, passed away peacefully on January 16, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Elinor Brainerd Silva Gregory, 82, of Milford, beloved wife of Robert "Bob" Gregory, passed away peacefully on January 27, 2025 surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Richard M. Lanese, 85, of Milford, beloved husband of Bonnie Carlson Lanese, passed away peacefully at his home on January 26, 2025 surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

We are sad to announce that **Reinhold Luther**, 98, of Milford passed away on January 29, 2025 at his home surrounded by his loving family and friends. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Anna May Geipel Pieger, 63, of Orange, beloved wife of Robert G. Pieger II, passed away on December 21, 2024 at her home surrounded by her loving family. (Porto Funeral Home)



Luke Christopher Lynch, 67, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Desiree Tango, passed away on January 26, 2025 surrounded by loved ones. (Cody-White Doyle Funeral Home)



Aileen May Provenzano, 95, of Milford, passed away on January 31, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Jeannette E. May, 101, of Orange, CT passed away peacefully on January 25th surrounded by her family. (Sisk Brothers Funeral Home)



Naomi Simkhovitch Rottman, 88, passed peacefully in her sleep on Saturday, February 1, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Michael John McCarthy, age 69, lifelong resident of Milford and beloved husband of Carol Ann (Sala) McCarthy, passed away on Jan. 26, 2025. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



It is with heartfelt sadness that we announce the passing of **Diana Gerardi Wilpink**, who left this world on January 31, 2025 surrounded by the love of her family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Feeling Lucky!

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

Saturday March 8th, 2:00 PM

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

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

\$5 a person to reserve your seat in advance, \$8 at the door based on availability
Reservations in advance must be received by March 3rd
Prizes may include corned beef and kielbasa dinners, gift cards, and themed baskets
Coffee and dessert will be served. You can bring your own snacks (please no alcohol)

Reserve your seat online at meato2025.cheddarup.com or mail cash/check to:
OVFD Auxiliary C/O Victoria Arms, 400 Old Tavern Rd, Orange CT 06477
Any questions please email OVFDAuxiliary@hotmail.com
All Proceeds Benefit the Orange Volunteer Fire Department

Town of Orange Legal Notice

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec 7-394, there is on file for public inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk, the Auditors report covering the Town of Orange for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut, this the 30th day of January 2025.

Mary Shaw
Orange Town Clerk

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\$4 MILLION SETTLEMENT

LTKE Law's medical malpractice team obtained a settlement against medical providers that failed to appropriately diagnose and treat a patient, leading to his death.

\$2.75 MILLION SETTLEMENT

Attorneys Steven Errante and Marisa Bellair secured a settlement against health care providers who failed to diagnose a growth on a client's gland.

\$2.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT

LTKE Law's medical malpractice team obtained a settlement of \$2.5 million dollars against a health care facility.

\$2 MILLION SETTLEMENT

Attorneys Steven Errante and Marisa Bellair secured a settlement against a gynecologist for failing to identify a mother's serious condition during pregnancy.

\$1 MILLION SETTLEMENT

Attorney Garrett Denniston secured a \$1 million settlement for an elderly pedestrian who was hit by a vehicle.

\$975,000 SETTLEMENT

Attorneys Marisa Bellair and Rosalie Louis represented an elderly client who suffered loss of vision in one of her eyes because of medical malpractice.

