



Milford-Orange Times

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March 12, 2026

Charter Revision Vote Fails In Milford

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

The Milford Board of Aldermen failed to advance a proposal to open the city's charter for potential revisions, including extending the mayor's term from two years to four, at their March 2 meeting.

Nine of the members voted in favor of revising the charter, with five against. But the motion required a two-thirds majority to move forward. The split fell along party lines, with the Republicans present opposed.

Milford's current charter was drafted in 1959. The last time it was amended was in 1983, and the only update then was to make members of the Planning and Zoning Board elected officials.

Mayor Rich Smith has recommended the charter be updated to account for the multitude of changes that have happened in the law and the city since the 1980s.

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RWA Donates To Orange Fire Department



Vaughan Dumas, chief of the Orange Volunteer Fire Department, right, recently accepted a \$1,000 check from the Regional Water Authority. "This is our way of giving back what we can," said Nicoletta Blevins, left, government and community relations manager for the Regional Water Authority. "Your department protects us and this is one way we say thanks." Dumas said the money would be used to purchase two firefighter helmets, which cost about \$500 each. He added that a full set of gear for each firefighter costs about \$6,000. The RWA provided the funding through its Emergency Responder Grant Program. Photo by Doug Fenichel.

Education Budgets Take Shape In Orange

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

Orange Public Schools Superintendent Vincent Scarpetti pitched a 2 percent increase for the school system at a budget workshop meeting of the Board of Finance on Feb. 25.

The total education budget for the town's

elementary schools would rise by \$523,903 over the 2025-2026 fiscal year for a total of \$25,738,057.

The percentage increase is the lowest

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Milford Garden Club Pounds Paper



Milford Garden Club members Janet Kuryla and Bunny Elmore presented a program on paper pounding at the club's Feb. 11 meeting at the DAR building in Milford. Paper pounding is an art technique where flowers and leaves are pounded onto paper using a mallet or hammer to transfer their colors and patterns. The group created unique botanical prints for tags and note cards. Photo courtesy of the Milford Garden Club.

Milford Finance Board Scrutinizes Education Budget

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

The Milford Board of Finance grilled education officials on Feb. 19 about the \$118,952,091 budget passed by the Board of Education for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, which would represent a 4.3 percent increase from the prior year.

The budget, which was adopted by the education board as presented by the superintendent, would go up by

\$4,934,674.

Education officials have described the budget as bare-bones, eliminating some programs and deferring some maintenance to keep costs down.

The Board of Finance has regularly cut the Board of Education's proposed budgets

Continued on page 2

Orange Selectmen Mull Email Policy

By **Brandon T. Bisceglia**

Can Orange selectpersons speak for themselves via email?

That was the question at hand during the Feb. 11 Board of Selectmen meeting, with members trying to parse the differences

between their personal roles, their roles as individual town representatives and their collective role as one board.

First Selectman Jim Zeoli provided as a

Continued on page 5

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 9 issue. Submit your poem no later than Monday, March 30 to editor@theorangetimes.com. Include your full name and address (only the name and town will be printed).

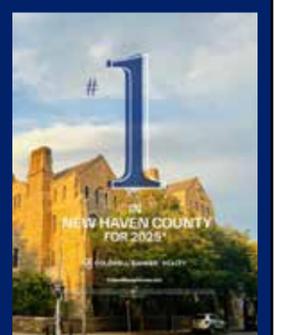


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Orange Farmland Added To State Preservation Program

By *Brandon T. Bisceglia*

Twenty-one acres in Orange were added to a state program in 2025 meant to preserve farmland for agricultural uses.

The state Department of Agriculture announced in February that 13 parcels totaling 953 acres of land across the state were added to its Farmland Preservation Program in 2025. Among those was the Eloise Phelps Nominee Trust Farm in Orange, which features “prime farmland soils used for silage corn and hay.”

Under the program, the state purchases development rights, allowing it to make sure that the land remains dedicated to agriculture, though the farmlands often remain under private ownership.

According to the agriculture department, the Farmland Preservation Program has

safeguarded 455 farm parcels and 51,203 acres around Connecticut since the program’s inception in 1978.

The property in Orange is among 10 of the 13 parcels that were preserved in collaboration with and received funding from the US Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Services Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements program.

“Our Farmland Preservation Unit has done an outstanding job working with farmers, landowners, and partners to protect the heritage of Connecticut farmland for future generations,” said state Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt.

Milford Education (Continued From 1)

in recent years. On some occasions the Board of Aldermen, who have the final say on city spending, have restored those cuts – but not always.

Board of Finance member Jeffrey Matchett questioned why the budget calls for new teacher hires when enrollment has been on downward trajectory – a long, slow process that has continued for years.

“Usually that is elementary enrollment-based, so we follow class size guidelines,” Superintendent Anna Cutaia explained. “We also are moving kindergarten class size guidelines from 2018, so that created a couple of teacher bumps.”

Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations Sean Brennan said that the enrollment ebbs and flows, and the system regularly responds to those changes.

Board of Finance Chair Scott Moulton reprised a question from the previous year about the cost of running The Academy, the district’s alternative high school.

Cutaia said that closing The Academy would still require spending for all the teaching, administrative and other costs, with only minor savings in layouts for things like utilities.

“So some type of savings, but not a one-to-one,” Moulton said.

Cutaia said it could hypothetically increase costs through the need to outpace those students in other programs.

Board of Finance members also had

Tyrone Shoelaces To Perform At MAC

The Milford Arts Council will host a concert featuring Tyrone Shoelaces on Friday, March 13 at the MAC’s event space at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

Tyrone Shoelaces is wild, genre-blending ensemble led by songwriter Chuck Chesler, known for a “wild and sexy eclectic mix of reggae, funk, and groovin’ rhythms that surge one’s soul.” Since the band’s inception, their sound has continued to evolve, moving fluidly from

deep, danceable grooves into explosive, experimental moments filled with edge and improvisation.

The show starts at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$20 at the door.

For tickets, visit milfordarts.org/event/tyroneshoelaces-concert/. For more information, contact the Milford Arts Council at 203-878-6647 or go to milfordarts.org.

Cookie Concert Coming To Orange

The Suzuki Music School of Orange will host a Cookie Concert on Saturday, March 14 at 3 p.m. in the St. Barbara Library at 480 Racebrook Rd. in Orange featuring violinist Andrew Smith with pianist Christopher Ungerer. They will perform works by Schubert, de Falla and Greig.

The Cookie Concert Series features professional artists performing in an

intimate, informal setting designed for the whole family. Concerts are about 45 minutes long and suitable for children ages 4 and up.

The event is free and open to the public. Tickets can be reserved at <https://suzukischools.org/events/childrens-cookie-concert-series-andrew-smith-chris-ungerer-sp26/>.

questions about a section of the budget that calls for adding armed security officers to the eight elementary schools and The Academy, plus a lead officer, at a cost to the district of about \$576,000.

The city’s middle and high schools already have their own officers. The Academy has a security guard who would be replaced by the officers.

The other schools currently have school resource officers, who are active-duty police officers employed by the city who spend part of their time in the schools. Those costs are split between the city and school sides of the budget.

School security officers, on the other hand, would be employed directly by the school district from former and retired law enforcement and devoted entirely to

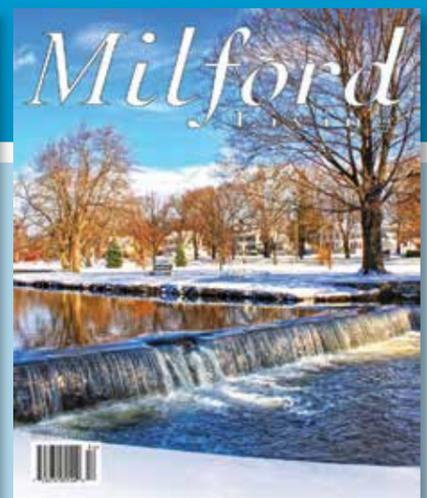
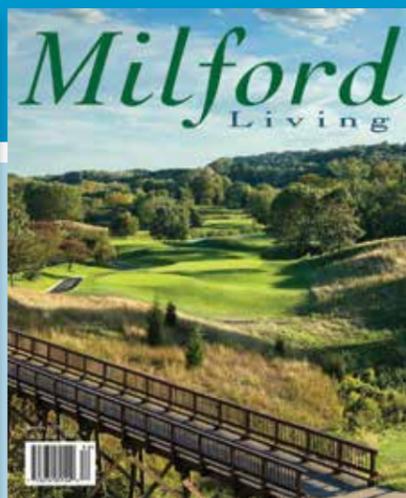
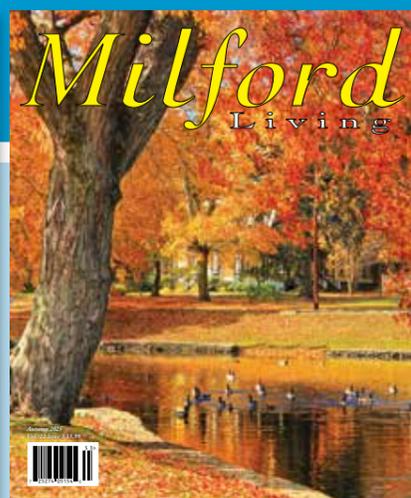
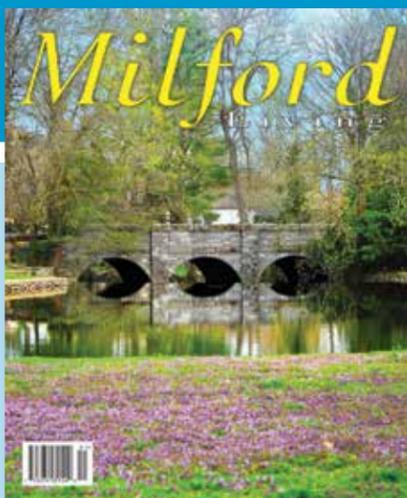
their assigned school. Under the proposal, the vetting and training criteria would be developed with assistance from the Milford police and exceed state standards.

“We all know why security is important,” Moulton said. “What do people who say, ‘We don’t want this in our elementary schools’ – what’s their argument against it?”

Cutaia responded that she had heard some fear around the idea of having an officer with a gun on the campus with their children.

“They’re babies, and they’re going to have someone with a gun wandering around all day long. That in some ways normalizes and probably endangers childhood,” Cutaia said of the arguments she had heard against it.

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Orange Lions To Make Community Grants

The Orange Lions Club will again provide a limited number of mini grants to eligible community organizations and/or individuals in 2026.

The mini-grants program is intended to provide funds to worthy causes and activities in Orange that might not otherwise be funded, said Orange Lions Club President Dee Chamberlain.

“While we continue to provide funds to Lions blindness prevention programs, aid for the blind and eye research, which are long-time Lions Club priorities, we feel strongly that it is important to allocate funds to local projects as well,” she said.

Chamberlain emphasized that this funding is in addition to one college scholarship which the Orange Lions Club has awarded to Amity High School graduates from Orange for more than 50 years in conjunction with the Orange Scholarship Fund.

Chamberlain has appointed Mark Moyher of Orange to chair the community mini grants program this year. Blank applications

to apply for mini grants are now available at the High Plains Community Center in the Community Services Department and at the Case Memorial Library.

“In addition to our ongoing commitment to fund anti-blindness programs and provide aid to those with sight problems, the Orange Lions feel that it is crucial to continue to use some of our fund-raising resources for local community-based projects and activities,” Moyher said. “While the amount we can give away in 2026 will be less than in recent years due to fewer fundraisers than last year, we Lions feel it is important to give back to our community in this meaningful way.”

Mini grants may be for as little as \$100, or as much as \$1,500. Completed applications are due no later than Tuesday, March 31. All Orange nonprofit clubs and related nonprofit organizations, individual Orange residents and Orange government entities are eligible to apply. The recipients of the mini grants will be announced by the Orange Lions Club in April and awarded in early May at a reception.

Speaker To Discuss History Of Milford Hospital



The original, temporary Milford Hospital opened in 1920. Speaker Karen Kipfer will discuss the hospital's history on March 16 at Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church in Milford.

The Milford Historical Society will host a free community program about the history of Milford Hospital on Monday, March 16 at 7 p.m. at the Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church on South Broad Street in Milford.

The guest speaker is Karen Kipfer, who has more than 20 years' experience in hospital administration, communications and community relations. She currently serves as the site administrator for the Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus.

Milford Hospital opened in 1920 in a temporary location on Bridgeport Avenue in a building known as the “Stockade House” – the first house built outside the stockade or palisades which surrounded the settlement. The house had been built

by Deacon George Clark about 1659.

In the 1970s, the hospital needed to expand and offered the house to the Milford Historical Society. It was dismantled board by board, each piece numbered and stored on the society's 34 High St. property. After many fundraisers, the house was reassembled in 1974. The first Milford Hospital was saved and its removal made way for a new era for Milford Hospital.

Milford Historical Society hosts five community programs each year at the church free and open to the public. Refreshments are served; donations are accepted. For information, check milfordhistoricalsociety.org or email info@milfordhistoricalsociety.org.

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Italian Restaurant Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on March 6 to celebrate the grand opening of Italian restaurant Kaos at 354 Woodmont Rd. in Milford. The restaurant serves classic Italian cuisine, including pizzas, house-made pastas, salads other dishes. Included in the photo are Milford Mayor Rich Smith, owner Randi England, state Rep. Kathy Kennedy and MRCC Director Simon McDonald. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Jazz Quartet Playing At MAC

The Milford Arts Council will host a jazz concert featuring the Noah Preminger Quartet on Friday, March 20 as part of this season's jazz series.

Born in 1986, Preminger grew up in Canton, Connecticut, before going to Hall High School in West Hartford, an institution that produced several well-known jazz musicians. From the first day he picked up the saxophone, Preminger "knew I'd become a musician," he recalls. "I would practice eight hours a day as a young teenager. I was possessed."

Preminger released his debut album, Dry Bridge Road, just after his 21st birthday and

was named Debut of the Year in the Village Voice Critics Poll. Since then, he has been a two-time winner of Downbeat Magazine's Rising Star Best Tenor Saxophonist and has recorded over 20 critically acclaimed albums as a band leader. He has performed jazz concerts on key stages around the globe.

The show will take place at the MAC's event space at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$45 at the door. For tickets and more information, visit milfordarts.org/event/noah-preminger-quartet-jazz-concert/.

Color Of Joy Call For Artists Open

The Milford Arts Council has released a call for authors and artists to submit to its upcoming exhibit, "The Color of Joy."

The call asks artists to "leverage the power of color to evoke emotions or tell stories, exploring the use of bold hues to express feelings of joy, optimism and passion. Authors may celebrate a meaningful color in their prose or verse striving to immerse the reader or set a scene that invokes feelings of joy, optimism or passion."

The submission deadline is Sunday, March 29.

An opening reception for the show will be held at the MAC's Firehouse Gallery on Thursday, April 16 at 6 p.m. The gallery is located at 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. The works will be taken and picked up from the gallery.

The show will be judged by Eileen Carey, a Connecticut-based artist and art educator who has taught art at Joel Barlow High School, Redding and Woodhouse Academy in Milford.

The subject is open to the artist's choice.

Artwork may be two- or three-dimensional. The work must be original with the artist's own concept and design. It must have been created in the past three years and not previously exhibited at the MAC's galleries. Any painting or drawing style may be employed for 2D works, including digital painting. Any traditional 3D medium such as stone, wood, metal, or clay. Artwork cannot exceed 30 inches wide and 30 inches high, including the frame. No work can weigh more than 20 pounds.

Classwork, reproductions, audio or video-art, AI-generated works, giclee prints and 3D printed works are not accepted.

Artists may submit a maximum of three artworks for consideration, priced for sale or not for sale. The entry fee is \$20 for the first work and \$10 for each additional work. The entry fee for written works is \$10 for each piece, limited to one work per submitter.

Works must be submitted via the MAC's online form at <https://milfordarts.org/event/color-of-joy-artist-call/>.

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Charter

(Continued From 1)

Smith, a Democrat, had recommended three Republicans and two Democrats to serve on a charter revision commission, including former Mayor James Richetelli. The commission would have been tasked with holding public hearings and drafting the revised language for the charter, which would then go before the Board of Aldermen for possible approval.

In addition to lengthening the mayor's term, other changes the commission would have been asked to consider included extending the city clerk's term to four years; aligning the number of appointees on the Pension and Retirement Board with the number called for by city ordinances; updating the language around city departments, as some departments have been added, abolished or renamed; and reviewing the budget-setting schedule to make sure it aligns with current timing requirements.

"Our charter has not been revised in 43 years – more years than some members on this board have been alive," Smith wrote in a message to the board that was read by Chief of Staff Holly Mulrenan while Smith was out of town.

"Our charter is out of date and in conflict with standing ordinances and state statutes. Along with the need to align our charter to existing laws and ordinances, it is also recommended to extend the term of mayor and city clerk from two to four years. Many towns around us are making the same change, if they haven't already. It is very hard for a mayor to do the work required of him and her in that job if every other year they need to take time to campaign and raise money," Smith wrote.

Prior to the vote, a handful of residents also spoke in favor of opening Milford's

charter.

Domingos Fernandes noted that the charter was revised 11 times from the 1950s to 1983, but not in the last generation.

"Milford has evolved over the last 40 years; so should that document. Expectations around transparency, technology and civic participation have changed dramatically," he said.

"The role of government, as you all know – you take part in it every day – is to live in a symbiotic relationship with the people governed," said resident John Grosso. "And that can't happen without a living document, not one that's collecting the dust of previous eras and administrations. Mayor Smith's agenda for the charter revisions, in my opinion, is very level-headed."

Although the most recent push for charter revision was defeated, nothing prevents the Board of Aldermen from taking up a charter revision in the future.

Email Policy

(Continued From 1)

template the policy that the Orange Board of Education uses, which generally forbids any one member of that board from responding to queries.

Selectman John Carangelo said adopting a communications policy was long overdue.

"There's been some concern...of having conversations with residents when there's a pending agenda item, when there's a public hearing," he said. "We've probably all individually responded to somebody at one point in time thinking that we were doing the right thing by responding to a constituent, when in fact we could be doing something inappropriate."

Town Attorney Owen Weaver noted that technically no individual can speak for the board as a whole – not even the

first selectman. However, he said the first selectman could address emails that pertain to various town departments under his supervision. He recommended that residents instead be encouraged to attend the board's public meetings to be heard.

"If I had my way, none of you would have emails," he joked.

Several of the board members expressed confusion about how they could respectfully respond to constituent questions as individuals.

"Sometimes we can help not have people show up here for something that can swirl on social media if we can either correct or direct someone as to what our responsibilities are," Selectman Mitch Goldblatt said. He added that he rarely expressed his own preference on an issue ahead of time, and would never assume in advance how the board would vote.

Carangelo strongly disagreed with Goldblatt, saying that individual members shouldn't speak privately with constituents at all.

"It gives a view of impropriety," Carangelo said.

"As an elected official, I respond to my constituents. I work for them – not for you,

not even for Jim (Zeoli)," Goldblatt said. "I'm not going to put my head in the sand and say, 'I can't talk to you about that. Come to the meeting.'"

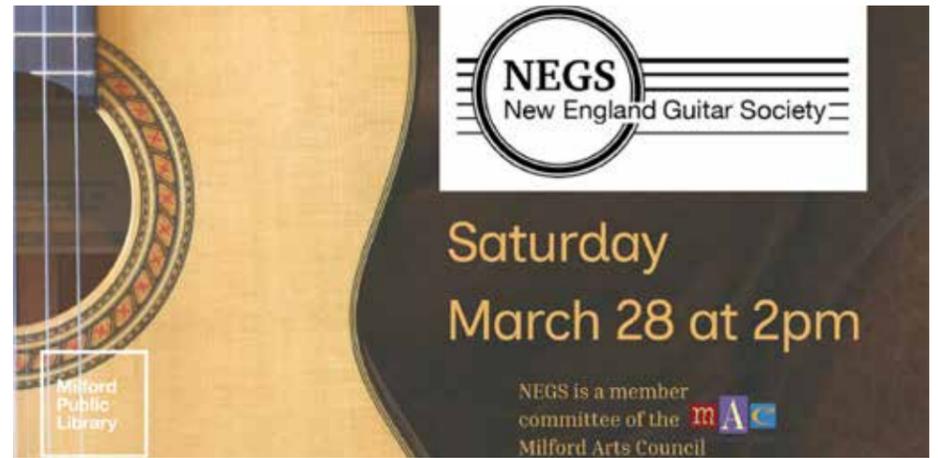
"I can't tell you how many times the Board of Education fell back on this with any given situation, and we were damn happy to have it there," said Selectmen Bill Kraut, who previously served on the education board. "It gives everyone their roles and responsibilities to each other and to the public."

Zeoli said times had changed with the advent of new technologies.

"It's a guideline that, in this day and age, I think should at least be considered," Zeoli said. He recommended the board create an ad hoc committee to come up with a draft policy that they could deliberate further.

At the end of the discussion, town resident Aaron Smith warned officials from becoming too cocooned in an attempt to protect themselves.

"What I've experienced to this point is a shrinking of the communication to the constituencies, which is going to cause even more confusion," he said. "There are guidelines – I get it. But let's not shut off the people in the community."



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Opinion & Editorial

State Rep., District 119

Exempting Tips & Overtime Pay From CT Income Tax

In towns like Milford and Orange, hard work isn't just a slogan – it's a way of life. From the early-morning diner shifts at Pop's or Chip's to late-night Milford Hospital rounds, from construction sites to busy restaurant floors, our neighbors put in the hours to provide for their families.

That's why a proposal before the Connecticut General Assembly to exempt declared tips and overtime pay from the state income tax simply makes sense.

Talk to any server working the lunch rush in Milford or any electrician picking up extra overtime to finish a job on time, and you'll hear the same thing: every dollar counts and matters.

Tips aren't "extra." They're grocery mon-

ey. They're the gas bill. They're what helps cover school clothes or an unexpected car repair. Overtime isn't a luxury; sometimes it's necessary. It's time away from family dinners, Little League games or just extra sleep.

Right now, when someone in Milford stays late to plow roads during a snowstorm or a nurse in Orange works an extra shift to cover for a colleague, the state takes a share of that additional pay. That just doesn't sit right with a lot of folks. If you're willing to put in the extra effort, take on the extra hours



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

and serve your community, you ought to be able to keep more of what you earn.

Exempting declared tips and overtime from the income tax is a straightforward way to help the working men and women who keep our local economy running. It doesn't create a new government program. It doesn't require pages of paperwork. It simply lets people hold onto more of their own hard-earned money.

Let's be honest: that money won't sit in a savings account somewhere. It will be spent right here in our local communities. It will be used at the local hardware store, the fam-

ily-owned restaurant or the small businesses that line our main streets. When workers have a little more breathing room in their budgets, our whole community benefits.

Giving tax relief to people who are clocking in overtime or earning tips through good service isn't reckless – it's responsible. It shows that we respect work and the people who do it.

In Milford and Orange, we believe in earning your way. We believe that if you're willing to work harder, you should be rewarded for it, not taxed more heavily because of it. This proposal is about fairness, common sense and standing up for the people who punch the clock every day. That's something worth fighting for.

Letters to the Editor:

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

Board of Selectmen Gag Order Concerning

To the Editor:

I'm deeply concerned about the proposed policy that would control how members of the Board of Selectmen respond to their constituents.

Unlike members of a board solely created to counsel and supervise an executive, such as a board of education, the Orange Board of Selectmen is a legislative body representing residents of the town. Members are obligated to receive communications from those they represent, although they are not obligated to respond.

The right of a citizen to talk to his or her representative is spelled out in the First Amendment of the US Constitution and in Article I, Section 14 of the Connecticut Constitution.

There is, of course, nothing in either document that obliges that representative to reply. Those who fail to reply, however, often find themselves out of a job. Historians often point to the Declaration of Independence, which complains that "our repeated petitions (to King George) have been an-

swered only by repeated injury."

Barring members of the Orange Board of Selectmen from responding to their constituents will not spark a revolution. But in a representative form of government, citizens not only have a right to communicate with their representatives, they are encouraged to do so. Is it unreasonable to expect a legitimate response? If a representative chooses to reply, don't they have the same First Amendment rights and protections the rest of us have?

The suggestion by some members of the board that only a single voice can respond is an overreach of authority, an attempt to muzzle those who might disagree with the majority party and an effort to control messaging to constituents. It sets a terrible precedent for an arena where the free exchange of ideas ideally leads to the best solution. Unfortunately, we've seen a lot of this type of intimidation and control at the national level. It is a shame that in a small town, where we elect our neighbors to govern, rules could be made that would bar our representatives – our neighbors – from speaking freely with us.

I expect my legislators – federal, state or local – to respond to me when I correspond with them. It's a reasonable demand that every voter should have. If a legislator or a party is attempting to interfere with that expectation with a gag order, they should be voted out of office.

Doug Fenichel
Orange

When the First Selectman Doesn't Reply

To the Editor:

At its February meeting, the Orange Board of Selectmen discussed whether to create a formal policy governing how its members respond to emails from residents. Following that discussion, I emailed the board to share my hope that any policy adopted would expand, not restrict, communication between Town Hall and residents.

I appreciate that three of the six selectmen responded and shared their perspectives. That kind of engagement is healthy. Residents should be able to email their locally elected officials and expect a thoughtful reply.

However, I did not receive a response from our first selectman, who serves full-time as the town's chief administrator.

In my view, that silence highlights the core issue.

During last month's discussion, he acknowledged that he does not always respond to emails. This confirms what many residents have experienced: delayed responses, vague replies or no reply at all. When that happens, people understandably feel ignored or frustrated.

I agree that the Board of Selectmen should develop a clear communication policy. But much of this concern could be addressed in a far simpler way: timely, professional responses from the town's chief executive.

In a small town like Orange, communication matters. When residents take the time to write to their elected leaders, they deserve acknowledgment and a meaningful response.

Dan Fitzmaurice
Orange

Are Democrats Really Protecting the Community?

To the Editor:

I read with interest the column by the Orange Democratic Town Committee regarding their efforts "to ensure the election of Democrats...our representatives from [to] Congress...to the state offices. They are the

front line in protecting our rights. We need these people to continue to protect the interests of all Connecticut residents."

What rights are they protecting? Legislation recently passed in special sessions and under emergency certification – often to bypass public hearings and meaningful comments have done anything but protect our rights. These measures, pushed through by Democratic majorities, frequently erode local municipal control in favor of centralized Hartford decision-making.

For example, HB 8002 (now Public Act 25-1, An Act Concerning Housing Growth), approved by Democrats in the November 2025 special session, creates top-down bureaucracy, reduces local zoning authority, and establishes confusing, potentially conflicting new development programs. It imposes increased administrative burdens on municipalities, risks conflicts with existing land-use laws and diminishes towns' ability to shape their own character – effectively overriding home rule on housing planning, parking minimums for smaller developments and streamlined approvals for conversions from commercial to residential use.

Recent examples continue this troubling pattern. In early 2026, the legislature advanced sweeping "emergency-certified" omnibus bills (such as Senate Bill 298) that bundled numerous measures without standard public input, reviving prior proposals and adding layers of state mandates on issues from municipal pensions to warehouse regulations and election procedures – further centralizing power away from local governments.

These rushed, partisan processes sideline taxpayers and local leaders, prioritizing state-level agendas over community needs. True protection of rights includes preserving municipal autonomy, not stripping it away under the guise of progress. Connecticut residents deserve transparency, accountability and respect for local control, not more Hartford overreach.

Thanks to local Democratic Senator James Maroney (D), House members MJ Shannon (D-117th) and Mary Welander (D-114th) who all supported this power grab, prioritizing Hartford's agenda over the voices of their constituents in Orange, Milford, West Haven and Woodbridge.

Craig Stahl
Orange

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Steve Cooper, Restaurant Reviews
Theresa Rose DeGray, Bankruptcy
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews
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We Regret the Error

An article on page 19 of the Feb. 12, 2026 issue ("Milford Student In Running For 'America's Most Artistic Kid'") presented an incorrect last name for the artist. Her correct name is Mila Natalia Aziz.

Orange Students Get Art Awards



Six students from Orange Public Schools were honored by the Connecticut Association of Schools of Feb. 2 at an awards ceremony recognizing excellence in the visual and performing arts. The music teachers, art teachers and principals joined the honorees at the reception. The CAS Art Award program celebrates elementary students who demonstrate outstanding citizenship, strong cooperative skills and exceptional artistic talent. Each elementary school is invited to select two sixth-grade students to receive this honor. Left: Turkey Hill School students Elijah Liu (performing arts) and Madeleine Zamachaj (visual arts); top right: Peck Place School students Edward Zhang (visual arts) and Skylar Lynn (performing arts); bottom right: Racebrook School students Hannah Anderson (performing arts) and Aadya Gowrishetty (visual arts); and Photos courtesy of Orange Public Schools.

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Orange Democratic Town Committee

Time To Turn The Page

After many years on the Executive Committee of the Orange Democratic Town Committee and a total of eight years as chair, it is time to turn the page and hand the leadership over to the next generation of Democrats.

There are many accomplishments I am proud of over the years. Bringing diversity to the ODTC is one. Helping to start this newspaper is another. I feel the circle is complete as I close out my time on the ODTC with my last column.

I am also humbled to be the honoree of the 2026 O'Sullivan Award. Trish Pearson started this award in 2016 with Paul Davis as the first honoree. Since then, we have honored many worthy Orange residents. It is an honor to share this award with them.

As I have written in past columns since the November 2025 election, we have a strong foundation on the ODTC. We added 15 new members in January and have more interest

in joining. That enthusiasm comes from what residents are seeing from the ODTC and our candidates. They are seeing the actions we are taking on their behalf, bringing issues to light and keeping them informed via social media, our website (OrangeCtDems.org) and our monthly newsletter.

I grew up in Orange and moved back here in 2001 with my husband Jeff and sons Howie and Mike. I immediately got involved at Racebrook School, joining the Playground Committee chaired by Rachel Ettinger and Jill Ferriolo. From there I joined the PTA and through my friends, Trish Pearson and Mitch Goldblatt, became involved with the ODTC.

The friends I have made and people I have had the opportunity to meet and get to know



JODY
DIETCH

personally are very special to me. These are opportunities I would not have had if not for the ODTC.

Have I made enemies along the way? I'd like to say not everyone has agreed with me, as opposed to making enemies. We are a small community, and we will not always agree on how best to move our town forward. We should be able to have an open conversation without being called "thorns" or being told to be quiet or "you lost." I'd hope

we would be better than that.

That is my hope for the future of Orange. I hope we see leadership that genuinely wants to hear from their constituents and will embrace their opinions and not dismiss them. I hope to see leadership in Orange that will represent all residents regardless of party af-

filiation.

I am confident that the next leadership of the ODTC will be working very diligently, openly and passionately to bring those hopes to fruition. I plan to still be a part of the ODTC and look forward to helping make this happen.

Thank you to all who have supported me over the years. Thank you to my family for their support. Most of my sons' time at RBS and Amity included their mom being on PTA, the Orange Board of Education and the ODTC. I couldn't have served without their support – especially that of my husband. I can't tell you how much it means to me.

Signing off...Jody Dietch, soon to be immediate past chair of the Orange Democratic Town Committee.

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

Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Housing Decisions For Elder Family Members

Making decisions about aging loved ones is one of the most emotional and complex responsibilities a family can face. Today, there are more elder care options than ever before – so many, in fact, that professional guidance is available to help families determine the most appropriate living solution.

I recently experienced this firsthand with my own elderly mother. With family input and thoughtful budget discussions, we were able to arrange the appropriate support for her. The process was new, intense and emotional. After all, this is the woman who cared for us our entire lives. We naturally want the very best for her.

But not every situation unfolds smoothly. When a loved one is healthy, independent and financially secure, the process can feel more manageable. Yet circumstances often change. A professional advisor can help evaluate available resources, assess how funds may be impacted over time and guide families through financial considerations that are often overlooked.

These decisions may unfold gradually, or suddenly. Last-minute transitions, often trig-

gered by a health event, are typically the most stressful.

The research required to create a comfortable and personalized living arrangement is significant. The options are numerous and nuanced: assisted living communities, memory care facilities, independent living, in-home support services.

Health diagnoses may introduce additional layers of complexity. Will the level of care need to increase? Could there be another move in the future? What is financially sustainable? These are difficult questions to navigate alone.

Having an unbiased professional willing to do the necessary homework can make all the difference. Their role allows family members to focus on what matters most: supporting and nurturing their loved one during a time that can feel uncertain and frightening.

Families may be unclear about timelines or overwhelmed by the number of choices. As we all know, rushed decisions – especial-



BARBARA
LEHRER

ly in emotional circumstances – are rarely ideal.

Planning ahead, whenever possible, alleviates unnecessary pressure. Elder care advisors are familiar with a wide range of price points and care models. They have already researched facilities, services and standards of care. Sitting down with a transition coordinator can provide clarity during what might otherwise feel chaotic.

One component that is frequently part of this conversation, though sometimes postponed, is housing. For many, the family home represents decades of memories. But it may also represent equity that can help fund future care. In some cases, aging in place with modifications is the right solution. In others, downsizing or selling the home becomes part of the broader care plan.

When housing is involved, thoughtful planning is essential. Understanding market timing, property preparation and financial implications can significantly impact

the overall transition strategy. Real estate is rarely just a transaction in these moments; it is part of a larger life decision.

I have seen families take weeks away from work to help parents navigate these transitions. Health concerns often drive urgency. But with professional guidance from elder care specialists, financial advisors and trusted real estate professionals, families can move forward with confidence rather than fear.

The question of "where do we begin?" is what initially drew my attention to these services. After meeting with a local elder care counselor, I was relieved and impressed to learn that this level of support exists for families in our community.

No one wants to face these decisions. But having the right guidance can transform an overwhelming experience into a thoughtful, well-planned transition – one that honors the dignity and comfort of those who once cared for us.

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

The Influence Factor

Why First Impressions Decide More Than You Think

I once assumed that if my intentions were clear, my message would be too. Experience proved otherwise.

Many of us assume our reputation reflects our intentions. Often, it reflects something else: clarity.

Decades of behavioral science research show that people form judgments in seconds, not after a detailed explanation or reviewing credentials. Those first impressions shape what follows.

Whether someone returns your call, attends an event, chooses to support an organization, decides to do business with you or trusts what you are saying in a casual conversation, the pattern is the same. The same dynamic plays out in everyday life. First impressions shape how neighbors are welcomed, how community initiatives are received and how quickly misunderstandings take root.

When someone encounters your work, your organization or even you in conversation for the first time, they make rapid assessments. Does this make sense? Does it feel credible? Do I understand what is being offered? These questions form quickly, often before we have a chance to explain ourselves fully.

If the answer is unclear, hesitation follows. And hesitation costs more than most

realize. Sometimes it shows up as silence. A message goes unanswered. An invitation receives no response. We assume people are not interested. Often, they were simply unsure. Uncertainty rarely looks dramatic. More often, it looks like delay. People wait. They defer. They keep their distance.

In communities like ours, where relationships overlap and reputation travels quickly, early impressions compound. We notice tone. We notice consistency. We notice when communication feels thoughtful and when it feels rushed. Over time, those small signals shape who gets trusted, who gets invited and who gets the benefit of the doubt.

Over the years, I have seen capable organizations struggle not because their work lacked quality, but because their explanation lacked clarity. They assumed people understood what they meant. Many did not. That gap between intention and perception is where momentum gets lost.

You see this in practical places. Websites describe services but never explain outcomes. Community announcements assume context. Volunteer invitations lack clarity about what is needed and why it matters.



EZIO
SABATINO

We assume in conversations that our intent is understood without stating it.

None of this signals incompetence. It signals friction. And friction slows decisions.

A simple exercise can reveal more than most strategy sessions. Ask someone outside your circle to review your website, read your announcement or listen to your explanation. Then ask them to describe what you do and why it matters. If they hesitate, others

likely will too. This is not about criticism. It is about clarity. Most of us are too close to our own work to hear how it lands.

Make three adjustments. Lead with outcomes instead of process. Shorten your explanation by 20 percent. Replace words that describe effort with words that clarify value. Assume nothing is obvious. If context matters, state it. If expectations matter, clarify them. People cannot support what they do not understand.

Then test it in a real setting. Introduce your work in one sentence. If the other person asks a clear follow-up question, you are on the right track. If they look confused or change the subject, you have more work to do. Confusion is useful feedback when we

are willing to see it that way.

Before changing anything else, ask yourself one question: If someone encountered this for the first time, what would they believe about me, my organization or my intent? That belief may not be fair. It may not reflect your effort. But it will influence what they do next.

Influence does not begin with persuasion. It begins with perception.

The uncomfortable truth is that most organizations, and many individuals, never revisit those first seconds. They invest in better marketing, programming and service. But they rarely examine whether they are clearly understood in the first place. When clarity is missing, improvement elsewhere does not compound. It stalls.

Those who pause to evaluate that moment often discover something surprising. They were not lacking effort; they were lacking alignment. When clarity improves, engagement improves. Decisions move faster. Growth follows.

Ezio Sabatino is chief influence officer at Sabatino Marketing, where he helps businesses and nonprofit leaders apply behavioral science to improve performance, credibility and growth. He serves on the board of directors for the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Orange Republican Town Committee

Housing Law Bad For Towns Like Orange

I would like to kick off this column by celebrating the outstanding performance of the US Olympic teams. Every athlete competed with heart and demonstrated tremendous national pride. A heartfelt congratulations to all of them – they have made us all proud.

As I reflect on the past month, it has been a wild ride weather-wise: heavy snowstorms, biting cold snaps, brief thaws and now March is kicking off with rain and possible snow showers. It reminds me of my childhood, when endless snowfalls meant neighborhood kids bundling up to build forts and igloos, playing outside for hours on end. Those were simpler times, brimming with joyful memories.

But simplicity feels like a distant memory in today's world, where worries pile up relentlessly. Here in Orange, our Republican leadership treats the town's budgets like their own hard-earned cash – because it is, just as much as it is ours. They work tirelessly to keep Orange safe, affordable and a wonderful place to live and raise families.

Unfortunately, we cannot say the same for the leadership in Hartford, where one-party Democratic rule reigns supreme with a supermajority that steamrolls legislation without meaningful input from the taxpayers footing the bill.

Take House Bill 8002, for example. This bill, passed under emergency certification during a special session in November, bypassed public hearings and robust debate, effectively shutting out citizens and local officials. While it builds on a previous housing bill vetoed by Gov. Ned Lamont earlier in the year, this "compromise" version still

centralizes power in Hartford at the expense of towns like ours.

On the surface, HB 8002 sounds appealing – promising to boost housing growth and help low-income families afford homes, much like the existing 8-30g law. But dig deeper, and it is clear this is just another tool for developers to sidestep local zoning rules while creating a new state agency to oversee it all.

This is not about genuine affordability; it is about stripping away local freedoms. The bill mandates towns create "housing growth plans" and allows developers to appeal directly to the state if they do not get their way, overriding community decisions on what gets built and where.

It could strain our police and fire departments, overload schools and permit high-rise developments that clash with our suburban character. Worse, it is not optional – towns must comply or face penalties.

With each new state mandate like this, we lose more control over our own backyards. When politicians claim, "this will help you," it is time to be skeptical.

What's particularly galling is how Democratic representatives pushed this through despite the obvious flaws. In the House, the bill passed 90-56, with the vast majority of yes votes coming from Democrats, who hold the supermajority. In the Senate, it was even more partisan: a 24-10 vote where every single Democrat (including our local Sen. James Maroney) voted in favor, while all



JUDE TOOHEY

Republicans opposed it. Local Democratic House members like MJ Shannon (117th District) and Mary Welander (114th District) also supported this power grab, prioritizing Hartford's agenda over the voices of their constituents in Orange.

These Democrats tout HB 8002 as a win for affordability. But look at the evidence: cities already overwhelmed by unchecked development experience skyrocketing costs, infrastructure strain and diminished quality of life, without delivering truly affordable units. Critics, including the Connecticut House Republicans and analyses from outlets like the CT Mirror, highlight how the bill adds layers of bureaucracy without guaranteeing a single new home while conflicting with existing laws and creating confusion. It is a top-down approach that ignores the real drivers of high housing costs in Connecticut, like excessive regulations and taxes, which these same Democrats have failed to address.

We all support affordable housing in principle, but forcing it through heavy-handed legislation is not the solution. It is a burden on taxpayers and a threat to local autonomy. At a time when Connecticut residents are already overtaxed, this bill exemplifies Democratic overreach.

I urge you to check your elected officials' voting records on sites like the Connecticut General Assembly's website or LegiScan. We deserve representatives who fight for us, not against our freedoms. While Democrats

may spin these laws as benevolent, read the fine print and see the real-world fallout in overdeveloped areas. It is time to hold them accountable and demand better.

I want to make one thing crystal clear: neither I nor anyone else opposes truly affordable housing. We all want families in Orange and across Connecticut to have access to decent, attainable homes. However, the new housing law mirrors past affordable housing regulations that sound promising but often fail in practice. The state bureaucracy expands and well-connected developers and contractors profit, while those who need help most get lost in red tape and mismatched outcomes.

Any mandate that overrides local plans of conservation and development must include real taxpayer input. After all, it is your tax dollars and your community services that bear the burden. Orange has a strong track record of pursuing thoughtful, truly affordable projects that fit our suburban character, and we should be allowed to build on that success without Hartford's heavy-handed overreach. True affordability comes from cutting excessive regulations and taxes to encourage market-driven solutions, not from more top-down mandates that enrich a few while burdening many.

We welcome all who wish to join the Orange Republican Town Committee. There is always something special happening.

Jude Toohey is the vice chair of the Orange Republican Town Committee.

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

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Orange Board of Finance

US, CT Economies Take Center Stage

This past week I had the opportunity to conduct and moderate the first of a series of town hall-style meetings at the University of New Haven to discuss the state of the US and Connecticut economies.

My panel included Connecticut State Treasurer Erick Russell, North Haven Mayor Mike Freda and Chief Fixed Income Strategist Guy LeBas from Janney Montgomery. The purpose of the town hall was to bring state officials, local leaders and financial experts to talk openly about the economy and provide expert analysis, insight and economic transparency to the university's graduate students within the MBA and MPA programs.

The meeting was well attended by graduate students, outside financial portfolio managers and the general public. The goal was to make national and state financial issues understandable, listen to the concerns of students and the general public and build a constructive dialogue between the financial sector and the community.

The conversation only works when every voice is heard. Our panel heard from graduate students at UNH who stole the show. The level of student engagement was excellent, with many insightful and thoughtful questions leading to a great dialogue with our panel.

Topics included Connecticut's improving

financial health and how national economic forces shape state outcomes. Russell spoke about how Connecticut ignored funding its pension plans for seven decades and finally implemented fiscal policies to ensure future contributions were required. The state's "fiscal guardrails" contributed to paying down over \$10.1 billion in unfunded pension liabilities, lowering the total from \$48 billion to \$38 billion. The treasurer also highlighted how his office manages day-to-day operations. The office oversees cash management, managing short-term investments; debt management, how the state handles bonded debt; and pension fund management, running the six state pension funds.

Russell also outlined what led to Moody's and S&P upgrading Connecticut's credit rating, which included building budgetary reserves to \$4.8 billion, making additional pension contributions over and above the annual required contribution, providing strong fiscal governance that resulted in six straight years of balanced budgets, and implementing appropriation caps to navigate volatility.

LeBas delivered an in-depth analysis of the current national economic environment, including inflation trends, interest rate ex-



KEVIN
MCNABOLA

pectations and bond market conditions. He also spoke at length about Connecticut's economic trajectory, including employment, growth sectors and fiscal stability. He described what these trends mean for future financial markets and investors heading into 2026.

LeBas said that Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and interest payments on debt now account for 75 percent of overall government spending. He said successive US administrations and Congress have failed to agree on measures to reverse the trend of large annual fiscal deficits, growing interest costs and a \$36.9 trillion national debt.

The panel gave recommendations for how the US can enhance its credit rating, including fiscal reform with sound fiscal and macroeconomic policy that will reverse debt; developing plans to increase revenues by optimizing tax policy; developing a plan for significant multi-year reductions in mandatory spending and deficits; and continuing to strengthen the dollar and build liquidity into the market.

LeBas also touched on the issue of affordability in Connecticut, particularly as it related to graduate students who are renting and

looking to eventually buy a home – something many aren't doing until the age of 40 these days. Parents of college graduates and college graduates themselves are finding it hard to afford renting or buying a house within Connecticut. Many graduate students are forced to live at home in order to save money until they are financially stable enough to make an investment in a house.

The panel concluded that the state faces significant affordability challenges in the areas of energy, housing and health care. All the panelists agreed that new fiscal policy is needed to address these challenges and in order to be economically competitive.

Today, Connecticut is ranked 44th in the nation for the cost of doing business in CNBC's 2025 America's Top States for Business rankings based on its high cost and tax structure.

Future town hall meetings will be scheduled in the fall at other Connecticut universities. If you're a student majoring in business, finance or government, or if you are an interested resident and want to attend, I would highly recommend it. You will receive expert analysis and greater insight into the fiscal realities of the US and state economies.

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

Orange Recycling Committee

Spring Cleaning Made Easier With Community Events

Items like confidential documents, electronics, hazardous household liquids and mattresses can pose safety and environmental risks if discarded improperly. Thankfully, Orange has multiple options for residents to safely dispose of many materials.

By participating in the twice-yearly "Paper Shredding and More" events and using the multiple waste disposal stations at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center year-round, Orange residents can conveniently and safely dispose of items while building sustainable habits.

The Case Memorial Library will host a special program titled "Clear the Clutter: Simple Strategies for Decluttering, Recycling, and Preparing for Collection Days" on March 19 at 6:30 p.m. You can register at casememorial.librarycalendar.com/cleartheclutter.

The program will be co-hosted by the Orange Recycling Committee and Case Memorial Library, and will be led by Orange resident Lauren Hass, a certified professional organizer and founder of Clutter Kicker. She'll share practical, realistic strategies to help participants decide what to keep, donate, recycle, shred or safely dispose of – without guilt or overwhelm.

This event will help residents prepare for the April 11 "Paper Shredding and More" recycling event.

Held twice a year, the community event provides convenient, responsible disposal options for a wide range of household items. The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon at High Plains Community Center, located at 525 Orange Center Rd. It will include document

shredding, hazardous waste disposal, mattress and box spring recycling, electronics recycling and clothing and household item drop-off.

Secure shredding of paper prevents identity theft, while recycling electronics and mattresses keeps harmful materials out of landfills. Hazardous liquids and chemicals, if poured down drains or tossed in trash, can contaminate soil, water and air.

Secure onsite shredding of confidential documents – including tax returns, bank statements and medical records – will again be handled by Affordable Solutions of Orange. This is not intended for non-confidential papers such as junk mail, which goes in regular recycling bins. The shredding service is funded by the Rotary Club of Orange, making it free to residents. Rotarians will be on hand to accept contributions to the club's scholarship fund.

The Regional Water Authority's HazWaste Central mobile unit will collect household hazardous liquids such as paints, stains, solvents, pesticides, old gasoline, cleaners, pool chemicals, aerosols and vehicle fluids. Residents are encouraged to see the full list of what's accepted and preregister at rwater.com/hazwaste to reduce waiting times.

Mattresses and box springs will be accepted through the Mattress Recycling Council's "Bye Bye Mattress" program. Residents may bring these items to the truck in the front parking lot at HPCC or may arrange for vol-



ILENE
MOYHER

unteers to collect mattresses and box springs from their home. This pickup service is provided by the Orange Lions Club for a donation of \$15 per item; contact Ken Lenz at 203-795-3906 to arrange pickup. Futon mattresses, sofa bed mattresses, waterbeds and items that are wet, damaged or heavily soiled will not be accepted.

Electronics – including computers, laptops, tablets, monitors, TVs and phones – will be collected free of charge by Take 2 Recycling. New to Orange, Take 2 also provides electronics pickup at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center.

The Orange Community Women will col-

lect gently used clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, small appliances, toys and more, with proceeds supporting charitable efforts.

The Buy Nothing Orange group will host a free swap meet under the pavilion from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Remaining items will be donated.

Residents should follow signs and volunteer directions to ensure safe and efficient drop-offs. For more information on allowable items, visit bit.ly/Orange-Recycling-Event or facebook.com/ORCinCT, or email orangerecycles@gmail.com.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Orange Scholarship Foundation Accepting Applications

The Orange Scholarship Foundation Association is offering several scholarships to graduating seniors from Orange who attend public or private schools.

The Ashlie Krakowski Memorial Scholarship is \$5,000 and is awarded to a student who intends to pursue a career in health care or a related health care field.

Applicants must meet criteria for receiving scholarships which include financial need, academic achievement,

community service and leadership roles in organizations and activities.

Application information is available through high school guidance departments, through the Orange Scholarship Foundation Association Facebook page, the OSFA website at orangescholarshipfund.com/ or by emailing info@orangescholarshipfund.com. The submission deadline is May 1, 2026.

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Clock Ticking On Insurance Options

Medicare enrollees may change plans until March 31. There are certain requirements that must be met to make a switch. The Medicare open enrollment period allows people who are on a Medicare Advantage plan to switch to a different plan of the same type or to regular Medicare with a separate supplement and prescription drug plan.

Why change? You might switch if something unexpected occurs that will require significant medical care during 2026 or if you need to seek care out of state. In this instance, the premiums for a supplement and prescription drug plan may be less than the estimated copays.

You might also change if a medication is not covered by your current plan. All plans do not cover the same name brand-name medications, and it is preferable to be in a plan that includes the drug in their formulary. In this case it would be advisable to

change to a different insurance carrier that offers similar medical benefits but includes the prescription.

If either of these situations applies to you, contact a broker who can assist with choosing the right plan.

The special enrollment period for individual plans through the health exchange will likely end in April. The enrollment period applies to individuals who had a plan in 2025 but did not renew because they lost the tax credits or did not apply because they were not eligible but are now eligible to receive some assistance.

People who now qualify for increased premium assistance may also choose a different plan. For example, if someone enrolled in a bronze-level plan with a high deductible,



TRISH PEARSON

they may now switch to a silver plan that allows for copays for most medical care without being subject to a deductible. To see if you qualify for the special enrollment period, contact Access Health CT or a certified broker who can assist with the enrollment process.

The latest proposals to change the Obamacare plans for next year would shift more health care costs to enrollees with much higher deductibles: \$15,000 for an individual and up to \$31,000 for families. This is eight times the average for someone who is on employer-sponsored insurance.

This could result in larger medical bills and make care unaffordable. It's supposed to be the "Affordable Care Act," but there is nothing affordable about a \$15,000 deduct-

ible that has to be met before there is any cost sharing by the insurance company.

A record number of people in Connecticut enrolled in plans on the health exchange in 2026. It is working, providing affordable health insurance to many of our residents. Nationally, millions of people who depended on the tax credits that lowered their premiums were hit with monthly premiums that were double what they paid in 2025.

The premise behind this proposal is to encourage patients to "shop around for the best deal." We should choose providers based on their reputation and expertise, not the fees they charge. With so much at stake, it brings new meaning to the term "buyer beware."

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

Your Health

March A Month To Focus On Health

It feels like it has been an unusually prolonged winter. We may have grown accustomed to relatively mild temperatures in recent years, but this season has been especially cold and persistent.

Encouragingly, recent data from the Connecticut Department of Public Health dashboard indicate that cases of contagious viral respiratory illnesses are trending downward, signaling a positive shift as we move closer to spring.

I am observing the month of Ramadan, which falls in March this year, offering an opportunity to focus on both spiritual reflection and physical well-being. In addition, several public health campaigns this month emphasize prevention, screening and healthy living, making March an ideal time to recommit to overall wellness.

National Nutrition Month: Healthy nutri-

tion plays a foundational role in preventing chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. This March, we're promoting practical strategies to eat healthy by increasing the portion of fruits and vegetables, selecting whole grains over refined grains, limiting added sugars and sodium and staying hydrated.

Fall and Injury Prevention: It is essential to monitor weather alerts closely, particularly during winter storms. Icy conditions at home and in workplace settings significantly increase the risk of falls, especially among older adults. Falls continue to be a leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations in Connecticut, underscoring the importance of taking preventive measures



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

during periods of snow and ice.

Prevention tips include wearing slip-resistant footwear, ensuring adequate lighting in homes, removing tripping hazards, reviewing medications with your health care provider and engaging in balance and strength training programs that can also help reduce fall risks among all age groups.

National Kidney Month: Chronic kidney disease often develops without symptoms. Individuals with diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney disease should discuss routine kidney function testing with their provider.

Preventive steps include controlling blood pressure, managing blood glucose levels, staying physically active and avoiding tobacco use

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month: Colorectal cancer remains one of the most preventable yet commonly diagnosed cancers in Connecticut. The Connecticut Department of Public Health continues to emphasize the importance of screening beginning at age 45 for individuals at average risk.

Screening tests, including colonoscopies and stool-based options, can detect precancerous polyps before they develop into cancer. Early detection significantly improves outcomes.

We encourage residents to speak with their health care provider about the screening option that's best for them.

Taking control of your health is never too late.

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



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The Garden Spot

Preparing For Hummingbirds

I know that after the recent crazy winter weather, it's hard to believe that the hummingbirds have already started their winter migration from South and Central America. Maybe they knew something we didn't?

I've been keeping a garden journal for the past 10 years, so I do know that there is very little variation in their arrival time. In my yard, it's always between April 27 and May 11.

Although the opinions of ornithologists vary as to what triggers the start of migration, it is generally thought that hummingbirds sense changes in daylight duration and in the abundance of flowers, nectar and insects. Instinct also plays a role in making the decision to migrate.

Whatever the cause, my journal tells me that it's time to get the feeders ready to be set out in mid-April in anticipation of late April visitors. It's a lot of fun to get up-to-

date information on their migration at hummingbirdcentral.com/hummingbird-migration.htm. You can even enter data on when you see your first hummer to help keep the map updated throughout the season.

We are most likely to see the ruby throated hummingbird. According to Hummingbird Central, they use tailwinds to save energy and can travel up to 23 miles in a day. Their hearts beat up to 1,260 times per minute and their wings flap between 15-80 times a second.

They obviously require a tremendous amount of energy to support this level of activity. They need food, water and shelter during and after their journey.

Besides consuming nectar, hummingbirds also eat small insects like aphids and



PAT DRAY

spiders as a protein source. Their favorite color is red, which is why so many commercial feeders are colored red. I think the horizontal feeders are easier to maintain than the vertical ones, though both types are effective. You can even get one that has a built-in camera that syncs to your cell phone if you want some great video.

It's simple to make your own hummingbird nectar by dissolving one part of sugar into four parts water. Either boil the water or heat it in the microwave until the sugar is completely dissolved. Then allow it to cool before filling the feeder. Do not add red food coloring, since some colorings have harmful chemicals.

Change the solution and clean the feeder at least once a week. Hummingbirds are very territorial, so if you want to hang more

than one feeder, try to have them out of sight of each other.

Your birds will also need a water source. If your bird bath is too deep for them, put some flat rocks in the center so that they have a place to land. As with all bird baths, clean them often with a stiff brush to prevent bacterial growth.

Have some attractive plants nearby for shelter and nesting. You can also plant specific plants that will attract the hummers – generally flowers with bright colors and tubular shapes. They happen to love my early spring blooming viburnum. Other good choices are butterfly bush, lantana, milkweed and salvia. Many of these hummingbird favorites are also butterfly favorites to double your viewing and listening pleasure.

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

Book Reviews

Bug Hollow By Michelle Huneven

Sally and her brother Ellis have always been close. When Ellis dies in a tragic accident, Sally loses her primary support system. Although her father is attentive, his work takes him away from home frequently. Her mother Sybil has no patience with her. Sybil finds solace in her teaching job and her daily alcohol-infused Hawaiian punch drinks.

Life in the Samuelson household becomes complicated when Ellis's pregnant girlfriend Julia arrives. Knowing she would be unable to care for her unborn daughter,

Eva, Julia asks the Samuelsons if they will care for the baby. Their decision is heartbreaking.

Sybil has a gifted class and has a student she believes practices selective mutism. She enlists the aid of another student in her desire to befriend the mute student and not give up on him. She is delighted when she learns her formerly mute student has turned into a chatterbox and proved to be brilliant, thanks in part to the friendship shown by the



CARMELA DEVITO

second student and Sybil's own dedication and stubbornness.

The story flashes forward by 18 years. Eva is now a high school senior ready to go to college. That decision leads to great conflict between Julia and Sybil, who each want Eva to be close to them. Eva is caught in the middle, not wanting to hurt either of them. She ultimately makes up her own mind.

Eighteen years after his death, the time

has come to dispose of Ellis's ashes. His final resting place is in an area he and Julia came to love. All involved think it is the most perfect place for Ellis.

Surprises abound as relationships are identified and secrets revealed, all of which lead to a gentle, loving ending.

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.



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Wine Talk

Trying Some White Winter Wines

Winter has roared through and it is time to try some great winter white wines.

One of my favorite wines is both styles of Chardonnay. Tyler Winery in Santa Barbara makes some great Chardonnay. The 2023 vintage is currently available at \$31.99, a very good buy. Robert Parker gave it a 94.

The Central Coast is a great area for Chardonnay. The 2024 Liquid Farm Golden Slope Chardonnay is exceptional. At \$63.99 per bottle, it is a little pricey, but this one is worth it. Notes of toasted Marcona almonds, lemon sorbet and river rocks leap out of the glass, followed by hints of burnt marshmallow, brioche and vanilla.

Seven Hills Sauvignon Blanc out of the Columbia Valley in Washington is a great wine. This wine stands out with a pineapple flavor that has a hint of honey with some va-

nilla. It is a great buy at \$16.83. The 2023 vintage is available.

The Wente family has been a big part of the California wine picture for some time. Carl Wente's great grandfather was the first winemaker to bring Chardonnay into California back in the 1880s. The winery is still family-run and their Chardonnay is considered to be one of the best. They make a basic Chardonnay for around \$13 or \$14. That is a big, buttery and oaky wine that I highly recommend.

France's Alsace region is known for making great Riesling. This is one of the most long-lived white grapes. The French style is slightly drier than the German, making



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

this a great wine to accompany a main course. These wines can be purchased from \$15 to many hundreds of dollars. However, between \$15 to \$25 is a great range to start. I

If you like a sweeter wine, Bordeaux's Sauternes region is the place to go. This has been a favorite wine for many years. It was George Washington's favorite. They start around \$25 and they are all quite good.

Sancerre is a spectacular wine made from Sauvignon Blanc. It is a food-friendly wine. Try it with some goat cheese. The Graves sub-region is an area for great blends. They take some Sauvignon Blanc and add a little Semillon to increase

body and texture.

The Italians make some great whites too. One of my favorites is Terre di Talamo Vento Vermentino Maremma Toscana 2023 vintage. At under \$15, this Toscana Vermentino will match well with both chicken and fish.

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

Rotary Club of Orange

Belong Before You Believe

The sign in front of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on Route 1 in Milford reads, "You can belong before you believe." If you happen to be looking for a church to join, this is a thought-provoking invitation to stop in to participate in what's going on with the congregation there before you decide about adopting their faith statements.

I view it each week driving to a small store-room in the back of D&M Carquest Auto Parts that generously stores the food which members of the Rotary Club of Orange deliver to a neighborhood Purple Pantry Box. Making food available at a local level to the food insecure is one of many activities that Rotary clubs work on together.

I like St. Andrew's marketing message because I believe it is the best way to recruit people to any voluntary organization, be it a church or synagogue, a service group like Lions or Rotary, or any of many volunteer-run organizations that help support a community. Learn what they do, not merely what they say they believe.

As a Rotary leader, I try to recruit new members who would enjoy and might benefit from helping with the club's community activities. And the best way to introduce a prospective member to Rotary is to have

them come to one or more of these activities.

In the last few weeks, club members joined other volunteers to package meal packets for food pantries and shelters, distribute storybooks to kindergartners and support high school juniors competing in an uplifting public-speaking contest about ethical decision-making.

This spring, the Orange club will sponsor a family bingo night on March 17 at High Plains Community Center, host leadership development conclaves for high school students on March 28 in New Haven and April 11 in Newtown, provide the labor to shred once-important household documents dropped off at the town's Recycling Day on April 11, sell roses before Mother's Day to raise funds for college scholarships, and serve pancakes to seniors as part of a regional day of service on May 16.

These are fun activities and all are welcome to participate. Any can also serve as a good introduction to Rotary and its members. The Rotary International motto is the lofty-sounding "Service above Self," but



DAN MAY

our club also wraps other words around its logo - "Fellowship, Fun, Giving Back." It's enjoyable to connect with others outside of family, old friends and work colleagues in meaningful actions.

Rotary started in Chicago in 1905 and has since spread to every state and nearly 200 nations and territories. As a global organization, it has achieved success with polio eradication, literacy efforts and public health initiatives. But perhaps the best product exported from the US is the idea of

local community service, which is practiced by clubs everywhere.

Civic engagement was noted as a distinct American virtue by French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville in his mid-19th century analysis, Democracy in America. Rotary has spread that virtue globally. Today about 300,000 Rotarians are US members, while over one million are international members. We would like to increase the US share and reclaim the title for civic engagement. Such engagement is also in significant need of renewal here at home.

I attended college in California in the

1970s, in the era of "finding yourself" and trendy institutes touting "internal exploration and emergent transformation." My father would shake his head when visiting and remind me that "you are what you do, not what you say or currently believe." I eventually took a course on ethics and realized he was paraphrasing Aristotle, who argued that living a good/happy/flourishing life ("eudaimonia" in Greek) is best achieved through daily habits and practice of virtuous activity. It's not finding yourself, but making yourself.

One of the first steps to eudaimonia might be joining in activities with an action-oriented group that will help "make" you, often by helping others. It might be with St. Andrew's or another church or synagogue, or a non-sectarian organization like Lions or Rotary, or a mission-specific group like Purple Pantry Boxes. But join. Action will follow and affect belief, and not incidentally, help others.

Dan May is a local geologist and president of the Rotary Club of Orange. He can be contacted at capemay2013@gmail.com.

Ponder This

Learning To Listen To Riverdance

I recently had the pleasure of attending a performance of the 30th anniversary of Riverdance at Foxwoods Premiere Theatre.

I previously enjoyed the privilege of a Michael Flatley performance in Lord of the Dance. This was quite a few years ago, yet I still remember how this renowned choreographer and dancer simply glided like a feather across the stage. Familiar with the Riverdance story, the troupe and the music, I eagerly anticipated another occasion to enjoy a sensational event with amazingly talented dancers.

Step dancing has a long history in Ireland dating back to the 17th century. Folklore informs us of the cultural influences for keeping the upper torso rigid during Irish step dancing.

Ireland is an island in the northern Atlantic with a cold, wet climate - certainly not a warm environment for merriment and dance. The influence of the Catholic Church's punitive view of handholding and touching contributed to the severe posture of keeping arms at the side. Long under British control, with no autonomy over their own education, religion or culture, prohibitions against singing, language and boisterous expression helped step dancing to emerge as a unique means of expression for the Irish people.

The feet create distinct rhythmic sounds with little upper body movement and quick, specific footwork techniques. Interestingly, as step dancing evolved the immovable upper torso helped add focus to the intricate footwork and difficulty of the dance.

I was not quite prepared to be so profoundly moved by the meaning of the musical score and choreography of this performance. My goal was to simply enjoy the talent and event at face value. Riverdance is truly a remarkable production.

For this occasion, I focused more on the music and the artistry, the skillful craft of the performance. My nephew, a very accomplished drummer, taught me to think of drums as an instrument that one needs to learn to listen to. Drumming skillfully adds rhythm, physicality and percussion to music. Likewise, the feet in stepping add to the rhythm and beat of the score. Each tap adds something to the total story being told. One needs to learn to listen to the precise footwork of the step dancer just as one learns to listen to drumming.

Bill Whelan, the composer of the now-famous original Riverdance musical score,



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

"Reels Around the Sun," provides the important backdrop to this immigration story of how the light of the sun brings on the new day.

For the first time, I heard fully the pipes, fiddle and percussion so hauntingly beautiful. I was touched by the songs and lyrics in a way I didn't experience in my previous exposure. I was mesmerized by the powerful story weaving immigration, Irish history and historical myths. The

incredible music, breathtaking choreography and background of the sound of stepping provided a moving experience. Their feet expressed their enduring merriment and joy, coupled with deep resolve and a look to the future. An irrepressible spirit was embodied in the feet, filled with purpose and renewal.

The yearning in the chant from the song, "The Heart Cry," says, "We will not be beaten down; we will not be beaten down." Their determined feet brought them across the world seeking liberty and respite from control by others.

I found that I was too proud to weep, especially during the music and choreography of "The Heart Cry," a song about leaving and

the deep love that stirred the Irish exodus. These are the mournful, yet defiant lyrics of a people determined to triumph over adversity. I was privy through this stellar artistic performance to the emotional, difficult journey of the Irish people, and to all refugees seeking a better world and freedom from tyranny.

I exited the theater channeling the poets, philosophers, rebels, farmers, writers, women and children who fought so hard against oppression and gave up so much in doing so. I am proud that my ancestors joined the great diaspora and helped to bring the history, dance, music and folklore abroad.

Dr. Ellen Russell Beatty served five terms 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.

Travel Matters

Getting Pampered At Sea

Want to get pampered for four days and four nights? Try the MSC Yacht Club – the ship within a ship luxury experience where the staff ratio is nearly one-to-one.

We sailed on MSC Seaside, which offers four-night getaways from Miami, and the pampering started the minute we arrived at the cruise terminal. Met by a butler, we were whisked through security, offered a glass of champagne or mimosa and found ourselves onboard the ship before we could finish it.

Every cabin in the Yacht Club has a butler, exclusive top sail restaurant and lounge, separate sundeck and pool and exclusive bar and grill at the pool. There's a complimentary minibar, 24/7 room service and complimentary bottle of wine or liquor.

I need to mention the butler again, because who thinks you actually need a butler?

We ventured out to go to the theater. The butler escorted us to our reserved seats. And to the spa – the butler made our reservations. The butler found me in the dining room while I was at breakfast to confirm said spa reservation. He offered to press the clothes and to do our laundry. It was only four days, so we turned him down.

In the Yacht Club, you get complimentary use of the thermal suite at the spa, including sauna, steam room, snow room and the lasso therapy pool (therapy pool with water jets that do amazing things for sore joints and muscles).

The average age of MSC adult guests is well under the average for just about any



**KAREN
QUINN-
PANZER**

other cruise line, and I have sailed on 22 lines. The energy level on MSC is very high; many families and multigenerational families were onboard.

The neat thing about the Yacht Club for families is that they have inside cabins as well as beautiful large balconies. I saw a few families with older kids. But "kids sail free" promotions generally exclude Yacht Club cabins.

We did leave the Yacht Club (which is comprised of three floors) to go to the theater to see a Queen (Bohemian Rhapsody) cover show; to daily trivia; to jazz club performances; and to the casino.

The difference in atmosphere and guest

density is huge, and the peacefulness you feel when you step back into the hallowed halls of the Yacht Club is amazing.

On the last day, we visited MSC's private island: Ocean Cay Marine Reserve. Near Bimini, MSC redeveloped a deserted island. We walked off the ship to experience two miles of pristine beaches, a wellness spa and Ocean Cay house complete with lobster rolls (a Yacht Club exclusive).

It was tough to leave, and we are looking forward to coming back very soon.

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

Orange Education (Continued From 1)

since the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Scarpetti said that the main drivers of increases in the system's budget are insurance, salaries, benefits, technology and utilities.

The budget includes an increase of \$208,084 for insurance compensation, up by 4 percent; a \$29,369 increase for technology-related expenses, up by 8.3 percent; and an increase of \$147,945 for noncertified support staff, up by 5.5 percent.

The largest line-item drop in the budget would be in the category "instructional – other," falling by \$62,565, or 14.4 percent. The majority of the savings comes from reductions for interns and substitute teachers.

Scarpetti said Orange remains a draw for families thanks to its high-quality public education.

"I could bet nine times out of 10 when you ask why someone has moved to Orange, they say because of the school system," he said.

Scarpetti warned, as he had the previous year, that Orange could in the future be required to buy a program aligned with the state's 2023 Right to Read Act, which would necessitate more funding. Orange has so far not been forced by the state to make the shift.

"It's an interesting piece – dancing with the Connecticut state Department of Education sometimes," he said. "Sometimes we may step on each other's feet on the dance floor."

The Orange Board of Education's budget is separate from the Amity district budget,

which is split between Orange, Bethany and Woodbridge and covers the middle and high schools.

That budget is not expected to be voted on by the Amity Board of Education until March 15. The proposal under consideration is for \$58,997,700, an increase of \$888,701 from the previous year, or 1.53 percent.

Since each town's portion of the budget is weighted by the number of students from that town, Orange could see its allocation lowered this year by over \$80,000.

Education is by far the largest portion of Orange's budget. During the meeting, Board of Finance Vice Chair Jim Leahy noted that the Amity and Orange Board of Education budgets together accounted for 61.3 percent of the overall budget in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, with all other town services and capital and debt services

making up the remainder.

"We have maintained what I call quality educational experiences for our children," Leahy said after the Scarpetti's presentation. "I like what I see here from that administration. I like what I see from that board."

The Board of Finance continues to deliberate over the budget, with additional meetings scheduled for after press time on March 11 and March 26. Finance Director John Cifarelli projected that the mill rate would drop, but that some residents would end up paying more because of the multi-year phase-in of the town's last property revaluation.

Once the board approves a budget, it will go before the voters in a townwide referendum. The Amity budget will also go for a separate referendum between the three member towns in the spring.

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Here's To Your Health

The Importance Of Sleep

Spring is on the horizon; it can't come quickly enough for me. While I am excited to watch the snow melt and see new growth in my perennial garden, I'm not so excited about the time change that comes with spring.

Twice a year, many of us experience the disruption of changing our clocks for daylight saving time. While the one-hour shift may seem small, it can have a meaningful impact on our bodies.

When I was younger, it never seemed to bother me. The older I got, however, the more I felt it. Sleep is one of the most important foundations of good health, yet it is often the first thing we sacrifice when life gets busy. The time change is a powerful reminder of just how much our bodies depend on consistent rest and healthy routines.

Sleep is essential for physical health, emotional balance and mental clarity. During sleep, the body repairs tissues, strengthens the immune system and restores energy. Quality sleep also helps regulate hormones that control appetite, stress and mood. People who consistently get enough rest tend to have better focus, improved memory and

stronger decision-making skills. Chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to weight gain, heart disease, high blood pressure and increased stress levels. That is pretty serious.

The shift to daylight saving time in spring can be especially challenging because we lose an hour of sleep. One hour may not sound like a lot, but our internal body clock – often called our circadian rhythm – relies on consistent patterns of light and darkness. When the clock suddenly changes, the body may struggle to adjust. Many people notice they feel more tired, less focused and perhaps even slightly more irritable during the days following the time change. Young children are really susceptible to this.

The temporary disruption has an affect on productivity and overall well-being. Our bodies simply need time to recalibrate.

The good news is that there are practical steps we can take to ease the transition and protect our sleep.

One of the best ways to prepare for the



MICHELE TENNEY

time change is to begin adjusting your schedule a few days in advance. Going to bed just 10-15 minutes earlier each night can help your body adapt more gradually rather than being thrust into the change all at once. This small adjustment makes the one-hour shift feel less abrupt and can help reduce the feelings of fatigue.

Maintaining a consistent bedtime routine is just as important. Turning off bring screens at least 30-60 minutes before bed helps signal the brain that it's time to wind down. Soft lighting, reading a book, prayer or quiet reflection can also help the body prepare for rest. Creating a peaceful sleep environment that is cool, dark and quiet also helps improve sleep quality.

Morning sunlight is another powerful tool for resetting your internal clock. I realize some of us get up while it's still dark in the morning. However, if you're able to get outside early in the day, even a short walk in natural light can boost energy and improve mood.

Good nutrition and exercise also contribute to healthy sleep. Avoiding caffeine late in the day and limiting heavy meals before bedtime can prevent sleep disturbances. Regular physical activity helps the body fall asleep more easily and sleep more deeply, although vigorous exercise is better done earlier in the day.

Sleep should never be viewed as a luxury – it's an absolute necessity. Just like our need for food and water, we need adequate rest to live healthy and happy lives. The time change serves as a reminder for that.

By protecting our sleep and preparing thoughtfully for the time change, we can support both our physical health and emotional health. Here's to your health and peace of mind.

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

Art Quilt Exhibit Opening In Milford

A new exhibition of 36 original art quilts opens this month at the Milford Arts Council's main event space at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

The 21 textile artists represented in the show designed and created these fiber art pieces around a central theme, called "Circular Thinking."

"Collectively, this work explores the variety of meanings, images and experiences evoked by the circle as a shape, symbol, concept or metaphor. This exhibition offers diverse explorations of this ancient symbol,

which has permeated cultures around the world and throughout time," the MAC said in a release.

All 21 artists are members of the state chapter of Studio Art Quilt Associates. Fourteen are from Connecticut, with one Milford artist among them: Lin Elmo with "Watch Your Face...In the Face of the Watch" and "Stitches in Contrast." The rest hail from New York, Massachusetts and Colorado.

The show's opening reception will be on Thursday, March 12 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The show will remain through Friday, April

17. Each work was chosen for inclusion in the show by juror Betty Busby, an internationally known fiber artist from Albuquerque, New Mexico. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Busby earned a degree in ceramics, then founded a ceramic tile manufacturing studio in Los Angeles, which she ran for 18 years. She has been working full-time making fiber art and teaching since 2003.

"It was a privilege to select an exhibition from works that represented such a great

variety of interpretations of the theme, inspiration and approach to creating the images," Busby said. "It was also quite difficult, and I would have included many more pieces if space permitted."

A catalog of the "Circular Thinking" exhibition may be purchased at the opening reception and at Amazon.com.

After Milford, the show will be on display at the Windham Textile Museum from May 2 to June 28; the Brookfield Craft Center from July 25 through Aug. 22; and the Wilton Library from Aug. 31 through Sept. 18.



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The Arts

Have Some Fun With The Arts

It is almost spring, and the arts community has a lot in store. From new works and budding artists to tried and true musicals, plays, dance and orchestrations, there is a lot to do in these last few weeks of the season. Attend an adventure featuring one of the most beloved series of films with musical accompaniment by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Spend an afternoon or evening with your local community theater as you guess whodunnit at a murder-mystery comedy. Enjoy breathtaking art exhibits, participate and support new works and get publishing advice. Take the kids to see a favorite musical. The arts community has so much to offer.

The Community Theatre at Woodbury presents **The Gin Game** by D.L. Coburn with matinee and evening performances from March 13-22 held at Woodbury Historic Old Town Hall, 5 Mountain Rd. in Woodbury. This two-person play follows the story of Weller Martin and Fonsia Dorsey, two elderly residents at a nursing home who begin to enjoy each other's company. Weller offers to teach Fonsia how to play gin rummy, and they begin playing a series of games that Fonsia always wins. Weller's inability to win a single hand becomes increasingly frustrating to him, while Fonsia becomes increasingly confident. Conversations about their families and their lives in the outside world start to take priority as each player tries to expose the other's weaknesses. Tickets are \$20 for students and seniors, \$24 for general admission and can be purchased by visiting ctaw-ct.org or calling the box office at 203-695-7107.

Broadway Series at The Bushnell presents **Kinky Boots**, with book by Harvey Fierstein, music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper and choreography by Jerry Mitchell, showing matinee and evening performances March 17-22 in William H. Mortensen Hall at The Bushnell Performing Arts Center, 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. This hilarious and uplifting musical play is based on true events and follows the journey of two people with nothing in common – or so they think. Charlie Price reluctantly inherits his father's shoe factory, which is on the verge of bankruptcy. Trying to live up to his father's legacy and save his family business, Charlie finds inspiration in the form of Lola, a fabulous entertainer in need of some sturdy stilettos. As Charlie and Lola work together to turn the factory around, this unlikely pair finds that they have more in common than they realized...and discover that you change the world when you change your mind. Tickets start at \$36 and can be purchased by visiting bushnell.org or calling 860-987-5900.

Grand Kyiv Ballet presents **Swan Lake** by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky on March 21 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 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.

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art presents **The Scenic Daguerreotype in Amer-**

ica: 1840–1860, as invented in France by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre in the 1830s. This installation is open for viewing now through March 22 at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main St. in Hartford. The daguerreotype rapidly became the first widely practiced photographic process worldwide in the 1800s. Eighty-three surviving examples of these jewel-like scenic daguerreotypes are displayed in this exhibition, most selected from an important private collection. Included are two of the earliest American landscape photographs: one never before exhibited in public made in 1840-41 by Samuel Bemis (1789–1881), and a street scene in Cincinnati made around 1851 by James Presley Ball (1825–1904). Transport yourself into mid-19th-century American life and the beginnings of American landscape photography that emerged concurrently with the Hudson River School of painters. These forgotten but pioneering daguerreotypes laid the foundation for the scenic and urban landscape tradition that would dominate American photography in the 20th century. For exhibit hours and further information, visit thewadsworth.org or call 860-278-2670.

Orange Players presents **The Alibis**, a hilarious murder mystery-comedy written by Jonathan Dorf, Tyler Dwiggin, Kathryn Funkhouser, Patrick Greene, Mora V. Harris, Carrie McCrossen, Ian McWethy and Jason Pizzarello. Matinee and evening performances run March 27 and 28 at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Rd. in Orange. Eight playwrights were challenged to find the comedy in crime in this rogues' gallery of 10-minute plays wrapped in a classic whodunnit. When eccentric billionaire J. Leslie Arlington is murdered, a clueless detective finds the suspects are all reluctant to admit their alibis...because they were all committing other ridiculous crimes at the time. You never know what's coming next when your suspects include disgruntled chefs, teen detectives and vengeful divas. But one thing's for certain: every alibi is absolutely absurd. With 36 cast members and numerous sketchy circumstances, this play is sure to keep you laughing while you guess who is guilty. The show has cabaret-style seating; bring your own adult beverage and food. Tickets can be purchased by visiting orangeplayers.ludus.com, orangeplayers.org, or calling the box office at 475-227-7547.

Southington Community Theatre presents **The Game's Afoot** by Ken Ludwig, March 26, 27 and 28 at 7 p.m. Performances will be held at Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School, 385 Pleasant St. in Southington. It is Christmas Eve, 1936. William Gillette, an actor famous for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes, has invited his fellow cast members to his Connecticut castle for a weekend of revelry. But when one of the guests is stabbed to death, the festivities in this isolated house of tricks and mirrors quickly turn dangerous. Then it's up to Gillette himself, as he assumes the persona of his beloved Holmes, to track down the killer before the next victim appears. This glittering whodunit has murder, infidelity, wit and surprises – something for everyone. Tickets are \$20 at the door or \$15 in advance by purchasing online at southingtoncommunitytheatre.org.

Shubert Theatre presents **The Sound Of Music** with music by Richard Rogers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, with matinee and evening performances from March 26-29 at 247 College St. in New Haven. This classic musical is set in Austria and tells the sto-



CYNDI
CONSOLI

ry of Maria von Trapp, a woman who takes a job as a governess to a family of seven children and their widowed father while she is deciding whether to become a nun. She falls in love with the children and their father, who is commissioned in the German Navy. He opposes the Nazis, and he and Maria devise a plan to flee Austria with the children. This timeless story and musical score is a favorite of many theater-goers. Tickets start at \$29 and can be purchased by visiting shubert.com or by calling the box office at 203-562-5666.

The **2026 Connecticut Writing Workshop: How to Get Published** will be held on March 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Courtyard Shelton, 780 Bridgeport Ave. in Shelton. This in-person writing event is a wonderful opportunity to get intense instruction over the course of one day, pitch a literary agent or editor (optional), get your questions answered and more. This one-day event is full of classes and advice designed to give you the best instruction concerning how to get your writing and books published, discuss your publishing opportunities, how to write queries and pitches, how to market yourself and your books, what makes an agent/editor stop reading your manuscript and more. No matter what the content of writing, the day's classes will help point you in the right direction. Writers of all genres are welcome. Literary agents will be onsite to give feedback and take pitches from writers, including Lee Melillo (Dunham Literary), Alyssa Maltese (Root Literary), Nadia Lynch (Talcott Notch), Lindsey Aduskevich (Martin Literary), Kelsey Evans (Rosecliff Literary), Gina Panettieri (Talcott Notch) as well as editor Deb Werksman (Sourcebooks). Space is limited to 125 participants. Registration is required by visiting connecticutwritingworkshop.com or emailing WritingDayWorkshops@gmail.com.

Hartford Symphony Orchestra POPS presents **Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows Part 2 Film in Concert** on March 28 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. at William H. Mortensen Hall (the Bushnell Performing Arts Center), 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. The final battle begins as you experience this film with the accompaniment of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra performing Alexandre Desplat's iconic score as the film is projected onto a high-definition screen that puts you in the middle of the action. Don't miss this unique opportunity to witness Harry and his friends face off for the last time against their foes. Tickets start at \$57 and can be purchased exclusively at hartfordsymphony.org or by calling their box office at 860-987-5900.

Hartford Stage presents **Death of a Salesman**, a classic American theater drama by Arthur Miller. Matinee and evening performances run through March 29 at 50 Church St. in Hartford. In this poignant story of the high cost of achieving the American dream, Willy Loman desperately craves success for himself and his sons, but stark reality cannot live up to his dreams. The wall of delusions he has constructed quietly crumbles around him while a devastated and demoralized man searches in vain for a hidden path to greatness. Meanwhile, his devoted wife holds out hope, and his sons wrestle with their own failings. Beautifully written and relevant through the decades, this classic play reveals new truths to every generation of audiences. Tickets start at \$20 and can be purchased by visiting hartfordstage.org or calling 860-527-5151.

The Bushnell Performing Arts Center presents Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** with matinee and evening performances from April

7-12 at the William H. Mortensen Hall, 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. The show's original composer is Alan Menken, lyricist Tim Rice and book writer Linda Woolverton with direction and choreography by Matt West, scenic design by Stanley A. Meyer, costume design by Ann Hould-Ward and lighting design by Natasha Katz. The show is approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including one intermission. This enchanting and timeless tale is filled with the music, romance and grandeur audiences know and love, featuring spectacular new sets and dazzling costumes. Tickets start at \$50.50 and can be purchased by visiting bushnell.org or by calling their box office at 860-987-5900.

Hartford Symphony Orchestra presents **Masterworks Series: Brahms' Third** with matinee and evening performances from April 10-12 at the Bushnell Performing Center's Maxwell M and Ruth R. Belding Theater, 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. This dynamic program, featuring works by Berlioz, Brahms and Clarice Assad, blends intensity and expression. It features Berlioz's King Lear Overture debut, capturing the play's power struggles with dramatic orchestration. Assad takes the stage as soloist in her own concerto for piano, offering a unique composer-performer perspective. Brahms' Symphony No. 3 will be performed followed by Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5 for a rhythmic finale. All tickets are sold exclusively at hartfordsymphony.org or by calling their box office at 860-987-5900.

Center Stage Theatre presents **Jerry's Girls**, a musical revue featuring the music of Jerry Herman (Hello Dolly, Mame, La Cage Aux Folles and Mack & Mabel). Matinee and evening performances run April 10-19 at Center Stage Theatre, 54 Grove St. in Shelton. This performance features three women highlighting the broad spectrum of thrilling material written specifically for female performers. A greatest hits mix of some iconic shows are tied together to present a beautifully staged show. From solos, duos and trios, the show is a light, fun and charming romp through the magical world of Herman's music. Tickets can be purchased at centerstageshelton.org or by calling 203-225-6079.

The Milford Arts Council Written Word Writer's Group will host a **Literary Open Mic** session on Sunday, April 19 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the MAC, 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. Participants are invited to share their work of poetry, prose, essay, memoir or other literary form from the stage with an appreciative and supportive audience. There are no themes or special requirements. Performers are free, and audience members pay \$5 at the door. Online registration is available at milfordarts.org or by calling 203-878-6647.

Long Wharf Theatre presents **Last Call: With Lampert & Barsha** April 17 to 26 at 7 p.m. at Space Ballroom, 295 Treadwell St. in Hamden. This diverse and unique performance is packed with songs and stories that blend original music, comedy and memoir in a vibrant exploration of queer resilience, community, chosen family and the spaces that shape us. Created and performed by Lampert and Barsha – queer, Jewish, intergenerational bosom buddies – the evening spans decades of queer culture, all unfolding over one unforgettable night in a beloved dyke bar. Tickets start at \$36 and can be purchased by visiting longwharf.org or by calling their box office at 203-693-1486.

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

Detecting The Treasures Under Milford

By Marilyn May

The unusual, torrential five to eight inches of rain on June 5-6, 1982 inundated not just Milford center; along the shoreline, powerful waves were rolling in higher and stronger than ever. Residents were evacuating, but for one teenage boy it was time to run to Bayview Beach.

"I went to see the waves crashing on the sand," Ed Abbazia recalled. "Then I was surprised to see two guys with headphones walking out there right where the waves were rolling up on the sand."

He realized they had metal detectors and were finding coins and jewelry that had come closer to the surface as the waves curled at the water's edge and pulled the sand off the beach.

Some years later, he said "I went to Radio Shack and bought a metal detector. But it didn't work. It just went beep, beep, beep all the time, and I never found anything with it," he said. "Forty years later I brought a \$90 detector from Facebook Marketplace, and I went to Woodmont and Gulf beaches only to find tent stakes and bottle caps."

He decided if he could eventually find \$90 in change he would buy a better machine.

"I found \$1.84," he said.

Later on, however, he did buy a more expensive detector, and now finds coins, horse-shoes, part of a license plate, a gate latch, a square brass buckle with a bit of leather still attached and lots of cast iron, hand-forged fragments of metal. It's hard to date the finds, but he suspects some were from the 1800s, perhaps earlier.

What would he like to find?

"I've always collected coins, so I'd like to find some gold coins. I have found a few mercury silver dimes," he said, referring to the pre-1965 dimes that contained 90 percent silver. Today's dimes contain none.

There are three rules about metal detecting among the like-minded:

1) You have to get permission to go on private property.

2) If you hear beeps telling you there's buried metal and you dig it up, you must remove whatever you find.

"There are tons of garbage out there," Abbazia said, citing gum foil wrappers, beverage can pull tabs, common bottle caps, fishing line

sinkers – "lots of metal."

3) You have to fill in the hole you just dug and replace the turf. Those who go "dirt fishing," as some people call it, have, over the years, cleaned beaches and fields of lots of rubbish.

Abbazia likes to go out three to four hours a week and has found his own special kind of treasure.

"When you go to the beach by yourself in the morning you are in a different place, not thinking about what's going on in the world. I'm always wondering what I'm going to find. God gave me this day; I don't have to work and metal detecting is fun," he said.

He has a number of finds from old farm fields. His guess is that most of them are parts that broke off farm tools, and some came from old doors or gates. Other typical finds are foreign coins, rings (gold, silver, tungsten), necklaces, chains, bracelets, earrings, nails, screws, aluminum cans and wheat pennies. Wheat pennies, also called "wheat cents" or "Lincoln cents," were made from 1909 to 1958 and have a distinct design with sheaves of wheat. Comparatively few were made and consequently they are rare.

Most items are found 2-4 inches deep, but with expensive equipment, the finds are sometimes down as much as 24 inches. Low-cost detectors are typically \$50-\$200; mid-range detectors are \$200-\$500; and the high-range models can be \$500-\$2,000.

Metal detecting is Abbazia's avocation, but there are few people who have a work resume like he does. He went to the Connecticut School of Electronics and his first job was with Dun & Bradstreet as a data communications tech.

"That's the same company Abraham Lincoln worked for," he said with a grin.

Lincoln worked for Dun & Bradstreet's predecessor, The Mercantile Agency, which sized up the credit status of businesses.

With that job, he said, "We basically flew all around the world installing private networks that became the internet that we all use today." The job took him to Tokyo, Hong Kong, Australia, England, Ireland, Hawaii and "all over South America."

Next Abbazia worked for the NASDAQ exchange as a Cisco certified engineer. "We were

the ones who kept the stock market running," he said.

Then he took a technical sales job and worked on Wall Street, where he dealt with such firms as Reuters, Prudential Financial, Bloomberg Financial and the Knight Capitol Group, all companies that support traders, investors and financial institutions and analyze and report market trends.

It was during this time that he got a US patent on a system

he designed to ensure reliable delivery mechanisms for what he calls inherently unreliable data and a way to quickly spot errors on stock market feeds. When a stock is bought or sold, he explained, it takes about one second to report and clear a transaction. Then it's disseminated all over the world. It also updates the brokers' ledgers or what they call their "book." If market makers or brokers do not have the correct pricing in their books, then they cannot trade in that market.

After NASDAQ, Abbazia was ready for a change. "I no longer wanted to work in the corporate environment world," he said.

His next job was with a friend who ran a machine shop where Abbazia worked for eight years. He learned a whole new skillset.

"I liked having machine shop experience where I could make something useful," he said.

When the machine shop closed, he walked to a company next door. "I need a job," he told the owner. The reply was "You're hired."

He became the shipping and receiving person, but that title didn't sound quite right to him.

"I reinvented the name of my position. I became the customer interface and engagement person and hand-delivered parts to the custom-



The large, cast iron, hand-forged item looks like it was deliberately made with curves on one side to make places for fingers to grip. Ed Abbazia thinks it may have been a latch on a gate or door. The oblong pointed fragment has holes at each end, but its use is unknown. It was found in a backyard on Prospect Street in Milford. Photo courtesy of Abbazia.

ers," he said.

Today he works for Xcel Tool & Mfg. in Milford in shipping and receiving. He still likes the customer interface and engagement aspect of his work.

He didn't leave the tech world behind completely. Today he helps veterans and senior citizens who need help with their computers.

If Abbazia had written this story, he probably would have started with the fact his friends call him the "Jerky King." One day in 1982, his father, Ed Abbazia, Sr., asked if he wanted to make flank steak into beef jerky. So, they thinly sliced the meat and marinated it for 24 hours. Their first batch to dry was put in the oven of their home kitchen. It took another seven hours to dry the meat – and fill the house with smoke. Then it took a lot more time to wash the curtains and everything else. But the beef jerky was delicious.

"My father and I ate it all," he said. During the next 44 years, the marinade and drying processes were perfected. He has shared the jerky with relatives and friends who gave him his nickname.

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

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Knights Of Columbus Delivers Donations To Local Organizations



The Knights of Columbus at Holy Infant (Council 12523) recently donated \$868 to disability and support service provider Marrakech in Woodbridge and \$1,400 to the Beth-El Center homeless shelter in Milford through its fundraisers. Top: Knights of Columbus Grand Knight Allen Grealish, left, with Marrakesh Development Director Jay Korman. Bottom: Grealish with Richard Popilowski, chief development officer at Beth-El. Photos courtesy of Allen Grealish.

Kennedy Testifies For Milford Veteran

State Rep. Kathy Kennedy (R-119) testified on Feb. 24 in support of Senate Bill 269, An Act Concerning Workers' Rights, on behalf of Milford constituent and veteran Jes Kraus.

After a long and dedicated public service career as a veteran, a municipal and state employee in both Vermont and Connecticut, Kraus was diagnosed with stage 3B colorectal cancer at age 48 and underwent a prolonged course of radiation, chemotherapy and surgery. Kraus asked to purchase military service credit to count toward eligibility for disability retirement. That would have made him eligible in the fall of 2028.

"I have a better shot at living two-and-a-half years than six-and-a-half years," Kraus said during testimony. "Veterans should simply not be disadvantaged in

this way."

Since he had purchased four years of military service credit, Kraus believes that the requirements would be shortened to six years, but the state's retirement division will not count the military service. It can only be done by a legislative fix.

"No one should ever have to choose between their health and supporting their family, faced with the possibility of losing their home, their income and health insurance due to invasive medical treatment while undergoing a terminal illness. I strongly encourage the Labor Committee to look at current legislation and see if there is a fix to the current statutes.

The bill had not advanced beyond the Labor Committee by press time.

Auditions Open For Play In Milford

Auditions are open for the Milford Arts Council's Eastbound Theatre production of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" by Simon Stephens, adapted from the award-winning novel of the same name by Mark Haddon.

Auditions for the Tony award-winning play will be held at the Margaret Egan Center, located at 35 Matthews St. in Milford, Monday and Tuesday, March 30 and 31 beginning at 7 p.m.

The show will be directed by Kevin Pelkey of Prospect and will run Friday through Sunday, June 12 to 27 at the MAC in Milford.

Narrated by Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old boy with autism who lives in Swindon, England, the play begins when Boone discovers that his neighbor's dog, Wellington, has been killed with a garden

fork. Determined to solve the mystery, he decides to investigate the crime, inspired by his love of logic and detective stories. As Boone interviews neighbors and gathers clues, he uncovers secrets that go far beyond the dog's death – secrets that send him on a journey alone to London.

There are roles for 10 actors (four principal players plus six ensemble actors who play multiple roles) ranging in ages from 30s to 60s. Auditioning actors will read scenes from the script.

For a breakdown of characters and roles, visit milfordarts.org/event/open-auditions-curious-incident/2026-03-30/. Questions about the play can be sent to the director at kevinpelkeydesigns@gmail.com. For more information about auditions, contact Milford Arts Council/Eastbound Theatre at 203-878-6647.

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Kennedy Opposes Bill To Open Safe Injection Site In CT

State Rep. Kathy Kennedy (R-119) on March 2 opposed legislation under consideration in the state legislature's Public Health Committee that would authorize a safe injection site – also referred to as a supervised consumption or overdose prevention center – in the state. Senate Bill 195 survived a divided committee a vote and now moves to the full state Senate for further debate.

“Connecticut should never sanction the use of illegal drugs – especially at a time when families are fighting every day to keep their children safe from addiction,” Kennedy said. “Opening a government-approved drug consumption site sends exactly the wrong message. It tells our young people that drug use is something the state will manage instead of prevent.”

Last year, nearly 1,000 Connecticut residents died from unintentional drug overdoses, marking the third consecutive year with high fatalities, despite a recent statewide decline. Official data show approximately 982 overdose deaths in 2024, many of which involved fentanyl – a deadly synthetic opioid – and related substances.

“These are real mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, friends and neighbors,” Kennedy added. “Every one of these deaths represents heartbreak for a family and a community. We must be honest about the danger drugs pose – especially to our children and young adults – and take every step to prevent use in the first place.”

Kennedy stressed that while overdose deaths remain a serious public health concern, creating designated locations for the use of illegal substances does not address the underlying causes of addiction

and risks normalizing harmful behavior that devastates families.

“As a mother and as a legislator, I cannot support a policy that risks making drug use seem acceptable or inevitable,” Kennedy said. “Our priority must be prevention, education, enforcement and recovery – not accommodation.”

Kennedy pointed to the work of the Milford Prevention Council, which partners with schools, parents, law enforcement and local organizations to educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse and promote healthy, drug-free choices.

“The Milford Prevention Council works tirelessly to reach our youth before addiction takes hold,” Kennedy said. “They focus on awareness, early intervention, and equipping families with the tools they need. That’s where our energy and funding should go – stopping drug use before it starts.”

Kennedy emphasized that addiction is a serious physical and mental health challenge requiring compassion and strong public policy. However, she argued compassion must be paired with accountability and a commitment to reducing drug use, not facilitating it.

“We owe it to our children to stand firm,” she said. “The state should be expanding access to treatment, strengthening mental health services and cracking down on traffickers who poison our communities with fentanyl and other deadly drugs. I will continue to oppose any measure that legitimizes illegal drug use and instead fight for policies that protect families, restore lives and keep our neighborhoods safe.”

Perimenopause Subject Of Film, Discussion In Milford

The Milford Arts Council will host a screening of *The (M) Factor 2*, a film exploring perimenopause symptoms, solutions and real women’s stories, with an expert discussion afterward on Thursday, March 26 at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

The film follows the original, *The (M) Factor*, which covered menopause, and continues the conversation about women’s hormones, health and the changes that shape this stage of life. The film looks at how perimenopause affects your heart, bone, brain and sexual health, and solutions helping women thrive through it.

There will be a Q&A afterward with Dr. Mary Jane Minkin, a Yale physician and Menopause Society certified practitioner, who is featured in the film.

Local artist Shanna T. Milton will

perform a poetry piece celebrating women.

Mermaid Books will be on-site with recommended titles, and attendees can sign up for a future book discussion group and talk. These will be designed as safe, supportive spaces for females to learn and share experiences.

There will be a perimenopause/menopause book discussion group with Dr. Abisola Afolalu, Menopause Society certified practitioner and a talk for middle school girls regarding body image with Diane Frankel-Gramelis, a Yale Health educator. More details will follow at the event.

To register, visit eventbrite.com/e/the-m-factor-2-before-the-pause-perimenopause-expert-qa-milford-ct-tickets-1982169345872?aff=ebdsbdestsearh.

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Adopt A Pet: Kota



Kota is a sweet boy who knows numerous commands, such as sit and paw, and is very good on a leash. Kota has Addison's disease, which is a hormone deficiency that leads to low production of cortisol. Kota will need daily medication (which he takes very easily inside a pill pocket) and a monthly injection to regulate his hormone level. However, Kota's illness does not stop him from loving long walks and playing outside. Kota has made tremendous progress while at the shelter and will make the right adopter extremely happy. 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.

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, 2025.
Dated at Orange, Connecticut, this the 2nd day of March 2026.

Mary Shaw
Orange Town Clerk

TOWN OF ORANGE Legal Notice

Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec 7-394, there is on file for public inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk, the Auditors' report for the Amity Regional School District #5 Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025.
Dated at Orange, Connecticut, the 2nd day of March 2026.

Mary Shaw
Orange Town Clerk



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- Home Safety and Supervision
- Respite Care
- Surgical Care

- Fall Prevention Services
- Cognitive Impairments
- Companionship
- Assistance with Technology
- 24-Hour, Overnight or Live-in Care
- Resident Assistance Care
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- Assistance with obtaining care from Home Health or Outpatient Therapy Services
- Transitional Care: from hospital to home or from current home to a senior living community

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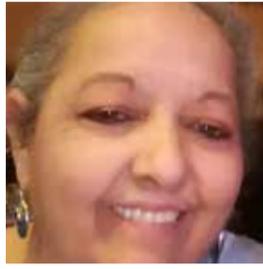
Obituaries

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.

Arlene Capozzi, 80, of Milford, beloved wife of Angelo Capozzi, peacefully passed away on 01/27/26. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Bernadette Gonçalves Dutton, 68, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on February 19, 2026, while surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous battle against cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Elisabeth Jennings Maley ("Betsy") of Orange, passed away on February 15, 2026, surrounded by her loving family after a brief illness. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Stephen L. Bates, 60, of Milford, passed away on February 8, 2026, at his home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dennis James Cimmino, 73, of Milford, passed away peacefully on February 8, 2026 at his home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



LynnAnne Eddington, age 69, of Milford, beloved wife of Max Kay Eddington for 46 years, died at home on Sunday, February 22, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Andrew George Mayshar, 75, of Milford, beloved husband of Nikki Mayshar, passed away on February 12, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Andrew Louis Biagioni of Milford passed away at Yale New Haven hospital surrounded in love with his family beside him, on February 17, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



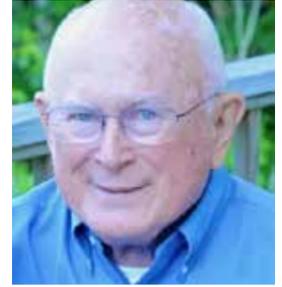
Joan De Aquino, 91, of Orange, Connecticut, passed away on February 21, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Barbara Ferrigno, born May 14, 1935, in New Haven, Connecticut, lived a long and beautiful life filled with love, creativity, curiosity, and generosity. (Porto Funeral Home)



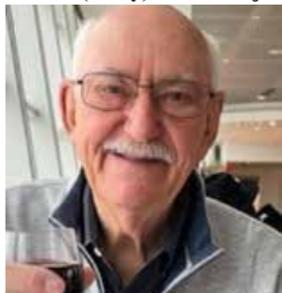
John Francis Meuser, longtime resident of Milford & Fairfield, Connecticut, and beloved husband of the late Barbara Jane (Macy) Meuser, passed away on 2/18/26 at age 90. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



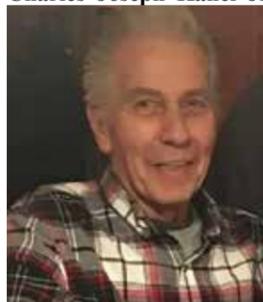
John George Breuler, 72, of Orange, passed away peacefully on February 12, 2026, while surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rudolf (Rudy) Louis Divjak, age 81, of Milford, beloved husband of Ina (Ashen) Divjak, passed away on Friday, February 20, 2026, after suffering a severe spinal injury due to a fall. (Lesko Funeral Home)



Charles Joseph Kanel Jr., 83, of Milford, passed away peacefully on February 18, 2026, while surrounded by his loving family at his home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



His family and his legion of friends lost a generous, considerate, and kind-hearted man, **Francis (Frank) James O'Connor**, on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, at Connecticut Hospice. (Sisk Brothers Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Harvey Joseph Paight, age 76, of Milford, passed away on February 27th, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Patricia Ann Porto, 76, of Orange, loving mother and beloved wife of over 59 years to John Porto, passed away peacefully at home on March 2, 2026 after a long illness. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Joseph H. Romick, 93, lifelong resident of Milford, entered into eternal rest while at his home surrounded by family on Wednesday, March 4, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Yvonne J. Wannop, 90, of Milford, beloved wife of the late George Wannop, passed away on February 13, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



David Michael Pecoraro, age 66, of Milford, CT passed away peacefully on February 2, 2026 at Yale New Haven Hospital surrounded by his loved ones after a lengthy illness. (Porto Funeral Home)



Entered into rest, Feb. 20, 2026, peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, **Rosemary Prete**, 95, of Orange, CT. (Maresca & Sons Funeral Home)



Manuel "Max" Ruggiero Jr., a longtime resident of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on February 7, 2026, after a brief illness. (Porto Funeral Home)



George A. Weber Jr., 75 of West Haven, passed away on March 3, 2026 at his home. George was born on July 29, 1950, in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rosalie R. Platko, 87, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Frank E. Platko, passed away on February 11, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Miriam Ramirez, 90, of Orange, beloved wife of the late Julio C. Ramirez, passed away on February 6, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Patricia A. Sowka of Milford, passed away peacefully on Monday, February 16, 2026 with her beloved wife, Charlotte, by her side at Maplewood at Orange. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Crystal Weber, 66, of West Haven, Connecticut, passed away on February 15, 2026. She was a kind, funny, selfless, and deeply caring woman. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Eugenia L. Porto, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away peacefully after her battle with Alzheimer's on February 8, 2026, surrounded by family in Orange, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dominick Reis, Jr., 86, of West Haven, passed away peacefully at home with his family on February 27, 2026, after a brief illness. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Maryann Dedinsky Wanciak, age 90, died on March 3, 2026, in the comfort of her home. (James T. Toohey & Son Funeral Home)



Lori Zimmerman, 61, of Milford, CT, beloved wife of Hank Zimmerman, passed away peacefully on Thursday, February 26th, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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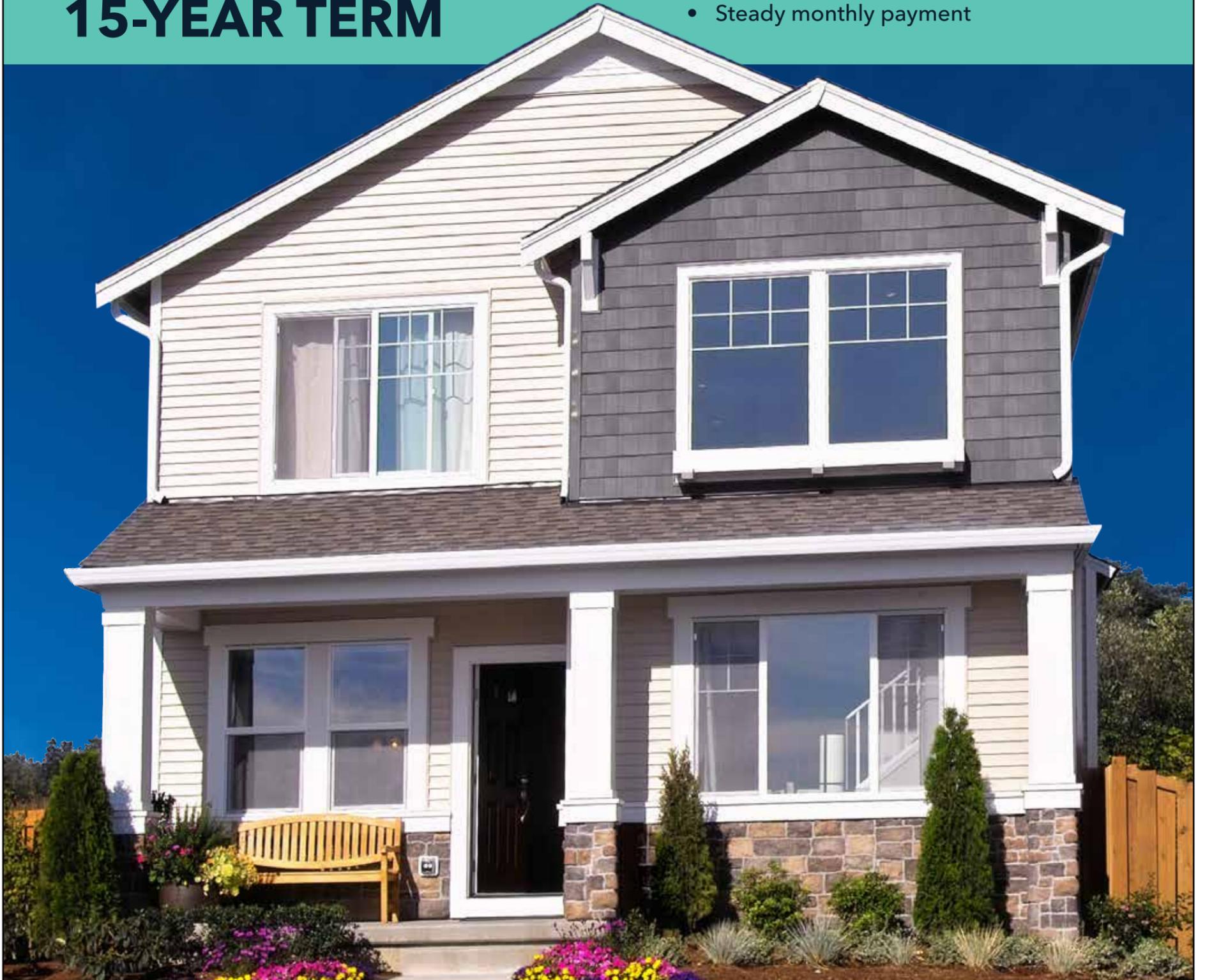
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