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Milford-Orange Times

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April 9, 2026

The Egg Hunt Is On In Orange



The Orange Lions Club hosted their 64th annual Easter Egg Hunt at the High Plains Community Center field on March 28. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

St. Patrick's Day Makes Milford Green



Milford hosted its annual St. Patrick's Day parade through downtown on March 14. A reception was also held to honor 2026 Grand Marshal John Mager and 2026 Miss Emerald Isle Callie Morrison, Photo by Robert Creigh.

Milford Finance Board Approves BOE, City Budget

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Milford's Board of Finance narrowly approved the \$118,952,091 budget passed by the Board of Education for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at their March 12 meeting.

The budget, which was adopted by the education board as presented by the superintendent, would increase by \$4,934,674, or 4.3 percent from the prior year.

It was the first time in several years that the Board of Finance did not cut the Board of Education's proposed budgets. On some occasions the Board of Aldermen, who have the final say on city spending,

have restored the finance board's cuts – but not always.

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

Board of Finance members recognized the work that was done by education officials to keep costs contained.

"This budget is the result of a disciplined effort and identified savings without compromising the quality of our education," member Lauren Ranges

Continued on page 23

Orange Takes Step Toward Automatic Traffic Cameras

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Board of Selectmen on March 11 unanimously approved a plan to seek proposals from vendors to add automatic traffic enforcement cameras to the town's roads.

Town Attorney Owen Weaver delivered a draft for a request for proposals that would allow the town to solicit bids from companies that make and operate the devices.

The chosen vendor would assist the town in conducting a comprehensive traffic safety study required by the state Department of Transportation before such cameras can be installed, as well as

eventually help implement the program.

Automated traffic enforcement devices, particularly red light cameras and license plate readers, have been cropping up around Connecticut in recent years. Several nearby municipalities have pursued or installed them. Weaver mentioned that West Haven had recently put out its own request for proposals. Milford received approval from the state to install nine cameras in October.

Under Weaver's suggestion, the Board of Selectmen would create an evaluation

Continued on page 23

Orange Town Attorney Launches State Senate Bid



Weaver

Orange Town Attorney Owen T. Weaver, announced on March 18 his candidacy to become the Republican candidate for Connecticut's 14th State Senate District.

Weaver, a native of Orange, said his campaign will focus on supporting policies that will make Connecticut more affordable, strengthen municipalities and ensure state government understands the real-world impact of its decisions on towns and taxpayers.

The 14th District seat has been held by James Maroney, a Democrat, since 2019.

"I have spent my career working with local governments, residents and

Continued on page 2

Milford To Phase In Reval Increases

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Milford's mill rate may come down when the Board of Aldermen finalizes a budget this spring. But a recent-completed property revaluation would drive taxes up significantly for many city residents anyway.

That was the conundrum before the Board of Aldermen at a special meeting in the Parsons Government Complex on March 10, during which the board overwhelmingly voted to phase in the revaluation over the course of five years.

Under the plan, the results of the revaluation will be adjusted by 20 percent

each year until they reach the full amount.

Mayor Rich Smith told the board that residential property values under the revaluation had increased an average of 40 percent, the largest such increase in the city's history.

"We're known across the nation as a highly desirable community," Smith said. "With that recognition of desirability comes a predictable outcome: our residential property values have shot up. It's simple economics. When demand

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Alexandra Joy Photography Award-winning PPA professional photographer

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Weaver

(Continued From 1)

businesses to solve complex problems,” Weaver said. “I’m running for the state Senate because our communities need practical and balanced leadership, thoughtful advocacy and someone who understands the real world impact state policy has on our towns and citizens. For over a decade, the leadership in Hartford has been passing policies that have only driven the cost of living and taxes up for the residents of Milford, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge.”

Weaver is a partner at the law firm of Zabel Schellenberg, PLLC, where he represents several municipalities throughout the state, including Orange.

In addition to his legal career, Weaver has long been active in civic and nonprofit organizations that support economic development and youth programs. He serves on the board of directors for the Connecticut Association of Municipal Attorneys, the Amity Chamber of Commerce and the Orange Economic Development Corporation.

He is also president of the Board of Amity Youth Lacrosse, where he coaches and mentors young athletes, reflecting a longstanding connection to Amity athletics dating back to his time as a member of the high school’s first varsity lacrosse team and co-captain his senior year.

“These organizations represent the backbone of our community, volunteers, parents and local leaders working together,” Weaver said. “That collaborative spirit is exactly what we need more of in Hartford.”

Weaver graduated from Ursinus College, where he met his wife, before both pursued graduate degrees in Boston. His wife later earned her PhD from Boston University and now works as an engineer developing

medical technology.

Weaver and his wife began their professional careers in New Jersey. While living in New Jersey, Weaver served on local government boards, including his town’s historic preservation commission and zoning board. The family returned to Orange in 2021 to raise their three sons.

A deeply personal experience also shaped his decision to run. His oldest son, Logan, lives with type 1 diabetes and was selected as one of only two Connecticut delegates to Breakthrough T1D Children’s Congress, where he advocated before Congress in Washington, D.C. for continued federal research funding.

“Watching my son stand up and advocate for himself and other children was a powerful reminder that government must listen to the people it serves,” Weaver said. “That experience strengthened my commitment to public service.”

Weaver said his campaign will focus on the following common-sense solutions, including creating a more affordable Connecticut by cutting burdensome taxes, providing property tax relief and implementing no tax on tips and overtime; reducing the cost of energy prices by eliminating the public benefits charge and supporting an all-of-the-above energy approach; restoring local control of zoning policies and protecting from overdevelopment; supporting small businesses by removing unnecessary regulations and taxes; advocating for families navigating health, education and youth-related challenges; and delivering practical, bipartisan solutions grounded in real-world experience.

“My career has been about helping communities navigate challenges and finding solutions,” Weaver added. “I want to bring that same problem-solving approach to the state Senate on behalf of the residents of the 14th District.”

Zeoli Honored With Flag



Orange First Selectman Jim Zeoli was presented an American flag by Dominick J. Lombardi at the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner held on March 16 in Orange. The flag was flown over the US Department of Agriculture building in Washington, D.C. at the request of Lombardi, a presidential appointee to the Trump administration in honor of Zeoli for his dedicated years of service to rural America as a livestock and vegetable farmer, for his volunteerism within his community and in recognition of his tenure as the longest-serving first selectman of Orange. Photo by Ann Denny.

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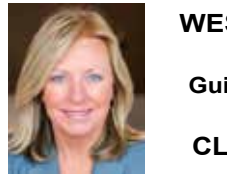
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Orange Residents Added To Amity Halls Of Fame, Honor



Orange residents were added to the Amity Academic Hall of Honor and Athletic Hall of Fame at an induction ceremony and banquet on March 31 at Grassy Hill Country Club in Orange. From left: Sean Mahon, Hall of Fame, cross country, indoor track and outdoor track coach; John Belfonti, Hall of Honor, class of 1990, engineering; Max Russell, Hall of Fame, class of 2007, baseball; Debbie Davis, Hall of Honor, retired teacher; Pat Couden, Hall of Fame, class of 1982, boys soccer and baseball; Mitch Goldblatt, Hall of Honor, class of 1975, government; and Stuart Anderson, Hall of Honor, class of 1982, journalism. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Collins Campaign Says It Meets Criteria For Citizens' Election Program



Collins.

Ray Collins III, a Republican candidate for state representative in Connecticut's 117th District, today announced that his campaign has met the strict fundraising threshold for the Connecticut Citizens' Election Program grant.

The state-funded election program grants unlock substantial funding for candidates, including up to \$15,430 for a state representative primary and up to \$38,575 for the general election.

To qualify for the grant, a candidate must collect at least 150 qualifying contributions

of \$5 to \$340 from residents of the district for a total of \$6,700. Collins team says it is the first, and currently only, candidate in the 117th District to reach this milestone.

"This is a clear sign that voters across Milford, Orange and West Haven are energized and ready for change," Collins said. "Our campaign is being fueled by local support, and this milestone shows we're building real momentum as people grow frustrated with skyrocketing costs and failed leadership in Hartford."

The last 117th District race was decided by fewer than 250 votes, flipping a previously Republican-held seat to first-term Democrat Rep. MJ Shannon.

"Rep. Shannon's voting record is in complete contrast to the promises he made during his last campaign. Residents of the 117th District are tired of failed promises while their taxes and cost of living continue to rise," Collins added. "I'm running to deliver real results: property tax relief, eliminating the public benefits charge on your electric bill, and protecting local control over zoning and education."

The campaign's application is now under review by the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

MILFORD EARTH DAY

April 25th, 2026
10 AM - 1 PM

Downtown Green

Artisan Market Returning To Milford

The 10th Annual Milford Artisan Market will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 9 and 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Milford Green at 168-176 Broad Street in downtown Milford.

Over 160 local crafters and makers will be selling their handmade items including jewelry, crochet, décor, apparel, food products and more. In celebration of its

10th anniversary, the event will have giveaways for the first 150 attendees, raffle prizes, Mother's Day photo opportunities, dance demonstrations, free yoga classes, live music and food vendors.

Admission is free. The event is organized by Artisan Events by Ally. Learn more at facebook.com/milfordartisanmarket.

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MAC Hosting Boogie Woogie Concert For Families

The Milford Arts Council will hold a “Boogie Woogie Family Experience” with pianist Arthur Migliazza on Saturday, April 11 in Milford.

Migliazza will bring the boogie woogie and blues piano tradition to life through virtuosic playing and storytelling. Acting as a living historian of a music form rooted in African American culture, Migliazza takes audiences through its origins and lasting influence on American popular music, including jazz and rock and roll.

Migliazza is a master pianist who grew up immersed in boogie woogie and blues, learning directly from several contemporary leaders of the style. He began performing professionally at age 13 and was mentored

by legendary artists Henry Butler, Ann Rabson and Mr. B.

A hands-on craft activity hosted by The Giggling Pig will encourage young audiences to participate and engage beyond the music.

Kids are encouraged to bring a favorite stuffie, pillow or blanket and sit close to the stage. The concert is open to audiences of all ages.

The family pillow series begins at 3:30 p.m. Migliazza will also hold an evening concert at 7:30 p.m. The MAC is located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

For tickets and more information contact the Milford Arts Council at 203-878-6647 or visit milfordarts.org.

Amity Chamber Launching Legal Seminar Series

The Amity Chamber of Commerce will launch the legal seminar program “Breakfast & Briefs” starting Tuesday, April 21 in Woodbridge.

Breakfast & Briefs will cover a wide range of legal subjects for organizations of all types and sizes.

The first program will be presented by Amity Chamber member Zabel Schellenberg Attorneys at Law, and led by two of the firm’s partners, Owen Weaver and Courtney George.

The initial seminar will provide a legal update on Connecticut legislation that passed in 2025 and its associated business impacts, obligations and opportunities, including changes to consumer protection laws, including increased compliance obligations for advertising, warranties and dispute resolutions; changes to the state set-aside program for certain state-financed municipal public works or quasi-public agency contracts, including definitions for which businesses can

compete for contracts, potentially expanding opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses; and changes to workers’ compensation.

The event is free to Amity Chamber members businesses, entrepreneurs and nonprofit associations.

The seminars will be held on the third Tuesday of the month, rotating between Charter Senior Living of Orange at 197 Indian River Rd. in Orange and Charter Senior Living of Woodbridge at 330 Amity Rd. in Woodbridge. Both Charter locations will provide a free, catered breakfast.

Future seminars will focus on Connecticut leave laws, business liability and other topics that are essential to business competitiveness, productivity, obligations and profitability, according to the Amity Chamber.

For more information and to register, visit <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/jqagtwe>.

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Cathy Bradley, Running
Barry Lee Cohen, Amity Chamber
Cyndi Consoli, Arts
Steve Cooper, Restaurant Reviews
Theresa Rose DeGray, Bankruptcy
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews
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Saturday, April 26, 2025

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Milford Students Honored By DAR



Joey Kaminski of Joseph A. Foran High School receives the DAR Good Citizens Award from Elizabeth White-Peters, regent of the Freelove Baldwin Stow Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution on March 12. Photo courtesy of the DAR.

Academy of Our Lady of Mercy.

The DAR Good Citizens Award and Scholarship Contest is a national program recognizing high school seniors who exemplify dependability, service, leadership and patriotism. Each student received a DAR Good Citizens pin, certificate and monetary award. The presentation was made by chapter regent Elizabeth White-Peters on behalf of Good Citizens Committee Chair Casey Heyer.

Kaminski contributes to her school community with Natural Helpers, Key Club, Science Olympiad, Drama Club and several honor societies while earning multiple academic awards and the Mayor's Youth Recognition honor. She volunteers with Beth-El Center, Homes for the Brave and the Thanks for Giving Food Drive. Her leadership also includes teaching Sunday school, serving as a camp counselor and volunteering in service projects supporting veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and disaster relief efforts.

Markowitz has held numerous leadership roles, including captain of the Law Girls' Swim and Dive Team, president of the Key Club, cofounder of the Jewish Student Union, editor-in-chief of the Advocate and captain of the tennis team. She is also a member of multiple national honor societies and earned a score of 4 on the AP US history exam. She also presented a TED Talk examining women's equality in US history.

Sessler serves as a Student Council representative, peer mentor, and member of the Mayor's Youth Council while participating in the Advanced Vocal Ensemble, Model UN and Spanish Club. She is also cofounder of the Yarn Ministry and volunteers as a student docent with the Milford Historical Society.

Three Milford high school seniors were honored with the DAR Good Citizens Award by the Freelove Baldwin Stow Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution on March 12 in Milford.

The honorees were Joey Kaminski of Joseph A. Foran High School, Kayla Markowitz of Jonathan Law High School and Lydia-Grace Sessler of Lauralton Hall

MAC's Eastbound Theatre Presents Reimagining Of Faulkner Classic

The Milford Arts Council's Eastbound Theatre will present a staged reading of "Mosquitoes," a reimagining of William Faulkner's 1927 novel of the same name, written by Germaine Shames on Sunday, April 12 at 4 p.m. at the MAC, 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

The reading, presented as part of Eastbound's Plays in Development series, is directed by Martha Schmoyer LoMonaco of Milford.

When Mrs. Maurier, a widowed society patron of the arts in New Orleans, invites a ragtag assortment of French Quarter artists aboard a luxury yacht to entertain her impulsive teenage niece, mayhem ensues. Sharp dialogue propels the eccentric characters as they try to save the ship – which has run aground without help in

sight – and themselves as provisions run out and passengers mysteriously disappear. Both a coming-of-age and coming-to-terms-with-age story, this reimagining of "Mosquitoes" showcases Faulkner's understanding of class differences from a feminist perspective.

Actors in the program are Walter Aguirre, Nancy A. Herman, Matt Simmons and Susan Schiff, all of Milford; Liliana Esposito of Woodbridge; Alicia James of Guilford; Leslie Jones of Bridgeport; and Mark Lambeck of Stratford.

The program is free and open to the public. Donations are accepted.

For more information, contact the Milford Arts Council/Eastbound Theatre at 203-878-6647 or visit <https://milfordarts.org>.

Spring Book Sale Coming Up At Case Memorial

The Case Memorial Library Spring Book Sale will be in full swing on April 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., where shoppers will find a well-stocked bookstore in the library basement.

For avid novel readers, there is a selection of fiction that ranges from the most iconic classics to the latest releases.

Inquiring minds will discover a wide array of nonfiction books including art, history, politics and science. Those into lifestyle will find books on health, self-care, cooking, gardening and sports.

There will also be a children's book section that has been arranged according to age for easy shopping.

There will also be specialty tables. The Staff Picks Table hosts books that volunteers think readers will enjoy. On the Banned Books table, each book has a bookmark that explains the ban. There will be a Science Fiction and Fantasy table and a One-of-a-Kind Finds table stocked with a variety of quirky topics.

There will be a special offer on romance and cozy mysteries: fill a bag provided for you for only \$15. Bring your bags for all other regular purchases. Only cash or checks are accepted; no credit cards. The Case Memorial Library is located at 176 Tyler City Rd. in Orange.

Hospice, Palliative Care Discussion Coming To Milford Library

The Milford Public Library will host a presentation by Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus's Marissa Lavin titled "The Next Step: Palliative Care vs. Hospice" on Tuesday, April 14 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The talk will aim to dispel some myths and help people understand what works.

The event takes place in the library's program room and is free and open to the public. No registration is required.

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Dietch Honored With O'Sullivan Award



Former Orange Democratic Town Committee Chair Jody Dietch was honored by the town's Democrats with the 2026 O'Sullivan Award for her service to the community and her long tenure leading the party in Orange. The ODTC held a commemorative program to recognize Dietch on March 25 at Birchwoods Banquet Facility in Woodbridge. Photo by Lexi Crocco.



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Opinion & Editorial

Orange Coach Tony Borelli Retires With Joy, Memories

By Lorie Borelli

Tony Borelli started playing softball when he was young and absolutely loves it. He started a family and helped coach and manage his kids in baseball and softball for about 15 years.

Craig Winkle Jr. started a Tuesday and Wednesday night league and asked Borelli if he wanted to pitch. Without hesitation, he was thrilled to accept the offer. Borelli has been friends with the Winkle family for years and is so grateful for their friendship.

He started pitching at the age of 60 and has won over 400 games and 12 championships

over 16 years. He never could have done this without God, who has blessed him and has given him the strength and will to play along with the support of his family.

Without the players, Borelli never would have won all of the games he did. It was their fielding and hitting that did it. He wants to thank all of his fans who came to every single game – especially the ones from the very beginning. His best friend is “ice,” since he has been playing for so many years and has been injured from head to toe while pitching.

Borelli won the best of the town the first year it started and went on to win three cham-

pionships when he pitched the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night league. There was great competition in the leagues and always good sportsmanship. The umpires always explained the calls that were made and addressed any and all questions that were asked.

Winning is great, but it isn’t everything. The most important part of the game is having fun.

Playing has also helped Borelli stay in shape and gave him peace, relaxation and concentration in his heart and mind. Before every game, he started off by praying for everybody on the field. He would always throw

50 pitches to get warmed up. You know the saying: a boss is only as good as his employees are. Well, a pitcher is only as good as his players are.

Borelli played for 16 years and decided to retire this year with such gratitude for the wonderful memories and friends he has made over the years all while playing the best sport in the world. He hopes that his love for the game encourages children who enjoy playing sports to keep practicing and grow to love playing just as much as he did.

Lorie Borelli is the daughter of Tony Borelli.

The Importance Of A Savings Account

By Jorge Santiago

Building an emergency savings fund is one of the smartest financial steps you can take.

Life is unpredictable, and having money set aside can help you handle unexpected expenses – like car repairs, medical bills or temporary job loss – without relying on high-interest rate credit cards or loans. A general guideline is to aim for three to six months’ worth of essential expenses, but starting small is perfectly okay. What matters most is consistency.

Begin by reviewing your monthly income

and expenses to determine how much you can comfortably save each week or month. Even \$10 or \$20 at a time adds up over the long term.

Setting up an automatic transfer from your checking or direct deposit to your savings account can help the habit stick. When money moves without you thinking about it, you’re more likely to reach your goals.

Consider keeping your emergency fund in a separate savings account that’s easy to access but not tied to everyday spending. This helps

reduce the temptation to dip into the money for non-emergencies. Putting your emergency savings in a passbook account is a great way to have the funds available but separate from everyday expenses.

As your fund grows, review it once or twice a year to make sure it still meets your needs. Major life changes – like a move, new job or growing family – may require you to adjust your target amount.

Most importantly, remember that building an emergency savings fund takes time. Cele-

brate small milestones, keep contributing consistently and treat your savings as protection for your future self. A little planning today can bring peace of mind tomorrow.

Jorge Santiago is president and CEO of The Milford Bank. The Milford Bank was founded in 1872 and is a mutual institution with five offices in Milford and Stratford. The bank offers a wide variety of banking and financial products and services to businesses, individuals and organizations.

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.

Welcoming the New Chair of the ODTC

To the Editor:

As a member of the Orange Democratic Town Committee, I am proud to welcome Melissa Johnston as our new chair and to mark the beginning of an exciting new chapter for our organization. Johnston brings energy, thoughtfulness and a clear commitment to strengthening our connection with the community.

We are building on the strong momentum of the past year, and I am especially excited about the opportunities ahead. Under Johnston’s leadership, we look forward to expanding our outreach, engaging more residents and creating meaningful ways for people to get involved. A thriving community depends on participation, and this year we are eager to broaden that engagement even further.

I am confident that Johnston will help guide us forward with purpose and enthusiasm. Together, we are ready to grow, connect and continue making a positive impact in our town.

Mark Moyher
Orange

Post Office Keeps Orange Connected

To the Editor:

I was so heartened to read your article on March 12 preparing your readers for hummingbirds to arrive after this long winter. As author Pat Dray aptly points out, it’s been a crazy season.

Sharing a love of nature is a wonderful example of the spirit and engagement that makes this community so special. This year, with our newly released Sunflowers Forever stamps, we would like to help the

community connect with nature and join in the hummingbird celebration. The stamps, issued on March 14, honor one of the many flowers beloved by hummingbirds and customers alike.

As the nation nears its 250th anniversary, the Postal Service remains proud to carry forward a public service mission that has helped connect the country since its earliest days. Like the hummingbird, we too travel great distances to bind the nation together. In Connecticut, the rural delivery routes can often be 60-80 miles of travel per day.

The Postal Service has long been woven into the fabric of small towns and rural America. Here in Orange, the Post Office helps people stay connected, supports local commerce and remains a steady presence in the everyday life of the community.

We hope that the stamps of 2026 bring joy to the community and connect us together as we enjoy the simpler pleasures in life – whether that’s a visit from a hummingbird or a letter from a loved one.

We look forward to serving you at the Orange Post Office.

Ann Marie Daugherty
Postmaster, Orange Post Office

Town Email Policy Concerning

To the Editor:

We are living through an important and challenging period in our nation’s history – one that affects all of us, even at the local level. In times like these, it is essential that our voices are heard and that we continue to respect differing viewpoints. A well-functioning government depends on checks and balances, ensuring that our democracy operates fairly and transparently.

For that reason, it was discouraging to read the March 12 article regarding the town email policy. The suggestion that elected officials must strictly separate their personal roles, individual responsibilities and their collective role as a board is understandable in theory. However, taking it a step further by discouraging – or even forbidding – individual members from re-

sponding directly to constituents raises serious concerns.

While communication methods may have evolved, the fundamental responsibility of elected officials has not. They are accountable to the people who elected them and should be able to respond openly to questions and concerns. Preventing individual responses does not strengthen transparency; rather, it risks limiting it.

Furthermore, I disagree with the notion that individual communication creates an appearance of impropriety, as suggested by John Carangelo. I elected each official based on their principles, judgment and ability to represent my interests – not simply to echo a unified “party line.” Open dialogue between elected officials and constituents is not only appropriate, but essential to maintaining trust in local government.

In the end, responsiveness and accessibility should remain central to public service. Our local officials should be encouraged – not restricted – from engaging directly with the people they represent.

Carol Appel Greene
Orange

School Budget Conversation We Should Be Having

To the Editor:

As a parent with children in both Amity and Orange public schools, I want to share what I’ve observed from their board of education meetings over the last few months. Both are proposing very low budget increases compared to our peer and neighboring districts. That’s a concern for another day. What strikes me more is the difference in how they show their work.

At the Amity Board of Education, the superintendent shared extensive budget materials, including early drafts showing how proposals evolve and details about academic and extracurricular opportunities. This information was posted online along with full board packets and detailed meeting minutes. During the meetings, board members engaged in real dialogue with each other and administrators. I un-

derstood not just what decisions were made, but why this mattered to our students and their futures. I remain genuinely impressed.

At the Orange Board of Education, I had a different experience. The superintendent’s budget presentations were narrowly focused on dollars and cents, not the quality of learning or the opportunities available to our children and families. Board discussion of the budget lacked the depth of engagement you’d expect, particularly for these critical early years of education. In fact, several members didn’t ask any questions or make any comments at all. Substantive discussions, when they occur, were not captured in the meeting minutes.

This matters even if you don’t have children in our schools. These are public institutions, funded by all of us. A transparent and collaborative process, especially for the budget, is foundational.

Don’t take my word for it. Visit the websites for both boards of education: OESS.org/Board-of-Education and AmityRegion5.org/BOE. Read their budget and meeting materials. Attend their next meeting in-person or watch online. The differences are there for anyone willing to look, and they’re worth paying attention to.

Dan Fitzmaurice
Orange

Homeschooling Bills Infringe on Parental Rights

To the Editor:

Connecticut parents should be alarmed by SB-6 and HB-5468, two bills that threaten homeschooling freedoms and parental rights. These measures, backed by Sen. James Maroney (D-14), Rep. MJ Shannon (D-117) and Rep. Mary Weland (D-114), would impose state surveillance on families who withdraw children from public schools.

They appear driven by the horrific Waterbury captivity case – a failure of the Department of Children and Families, which received multiple reports over years yet failed to protect the child withdrawn from

Continued on page 7

Opinion & Editorial

Standing Up For Homeschooling



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

The recent passage of HB-5468 out of the legislature's Education Committee was disappointing – especially for homeschooling families in communities like Milford and Orange.

Over the past several weeks, I have heard from hundreds of parents in our area who homeschool their children through emails, phone calls and testimony to share their concerns about this proposal. Their message: they believe HB-5468 represents unnecessary government intrusion into the lives of responsible parents who have chosen a different educational path for their children.

Parents took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the legislative process and make their voices heard. Hundreds shared thoughtful personal testimony, and more than 3,000 families submitted written testimony about how homeschooling works for their families and why they fear this bill could make it more difficult to continue providing the individualized education their children rely on.

Despite that strong outpouring of opposition, the Education Committee voted to advance the bill.

Homeschooling is often chosen because it allows parents to tailor education to their children's specific needs. Some students thrive in a more personalized environment. Others benefit from flexible schedules that allow them to pursue interests in the arts, athletics or advanced academic studies. Parents in our communities devote significant time and effort to ensuring their children receive a well-rounded and high-quality education.

Connecticut has long maintained a cooperative relationship with homeschooling families, and many local districts – including those serving Milford and Orange – have worked constructively with parents who choose this option. That balance has allowed families the freedom to educate their children in a way that works best while maintaining appropriate communication with local schools.

HB 5468 risks upsetting that balance. While supporters say the proposal is meant to strengthen oversight, many parents worry it could open the door to burdensome mandates that treat responsible families with suspicion rather than trust. At a time when families are seeking greater flexibility in education, proposals like this raise legitimate questions about whether the state is moving in the right direction.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this debate has been the level of civic engagement from homeschooling families. Parents from Milford, Orange and across Connecticut stepped forward to share their stories and advocate for their children. That kind of participation is exactly what our democratic process should look like.

The legislative process is not finished. If HB-5468 is called for debate in the House of Representatives, it will face further scrutiny and discussion. I will be watching closely and staying vigilant as the bill moves forward.

In the meantime, I want the homeschooling families of Milford and Orange to know that their concerns have been heard. I remain deeply wary about any legislation that could undermine parental rights or place unnecessary mandates on families that already do so much to educate their children.

Speaking as a mother of two, now grown adults: parents know their children best, and our policies should reflect that.

Setting The Record Straight



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

You may have heard that one of the proposals the Education Committee raised this year addresses homeschooling in Connecticut. While this topic has been discussed more recently in the news because of new horrific cases of abuse and neglect, it is a subject that has been brought before the legislature multiple times since the mid-1990s.

I have been part of a small team working diligently on this issue since last May when the legislature held an informational hearing on the matter. We created a working group that met several times with advocates and a separate series of meetings with just legislators – both bipartisan efforts. While those discussions were not as fruitful as we had hoped, they did lead to the inclusion of important elements, such as curricular flexibility for families.

Unfortunately, there have been efforts to deliberately mislead people about what the proposal would do, resulting in unnecessary confusion and upset. Simply put, we are trying to create a framework that ensures that all kids in Connecticut are being educated in some form and are cared for.

For those who may not know, Connecticut is one of the least regulated states in the country for homeschooling. Currently there is only a suggestion (not a requirement) that a parent or guardian complete a withdrawal form when exiting their child from public school. Beyond that, there are zero regulations for curriculum or assessments. Most other states have regulations ranging from basic reporting requirements to approved curriculum options, annual assessments, or even requiring the parent be a certified teacher. Connecticut has none of those.

While there is an expectation that certain academic subjects will be taught, there are no mechanisms to ensure instruction is happening. In fact, there is nothing that requires that the homeschooled child ever be seen again by any educational or state authority.

Over the last year we have had thoughtful discussions with many homeschooling families and advocates from across the state, and we recognize that most families who choose homeschooling are providing their children with a strong education in a safe environment.

However, we must also acknowledge that some adults are purposefully using the state's complete lack of regulations (and therefore the inability to enforce any laws) to hide that they are not educating their children, or worse, to hide serious neglect and abuse.

As a legislator committed to the well-being of all children, I believe it is our responsibility to address those gaps. HB 5468 is intended to work in parallel with HB 5004, a bill from the Children's Committee focusing on strengthening transparency within the Department of Children and Families as well as providing more supports for families and children.

I understand that no one policy can prevent every tragedy, but I know that if any of the attempts at this legislation over the last 30 years had been successful, it could have prevented some of the educational neglect, hidden abuse and deaths of children in our state. I will continue to do what I can to protect our kids and give them the best chances for success.

I welcome any feedback at mary.welander@ct.ga.gov.

Making Elections Accessible, Secure



STATE REP. (D-117)
MJ SHANNON

Free and fair elections are the foundation of our democracy. We are fortunate in Connecticut to have strong systems in place to ensure that every eligible voter can cast their ballot safely and securely.

But protecting our democracy is not something we can take for granted. It requires ongoing effort to guard against intimidation, interference and barriers to participation.

This session, I've been proud to work with colleagues and advocates to advance policies that strengthen voter protections. No one should feel unsafe, pressured or discouraged when exercising their right to vote. Whether it is ensuring clear guidelines at polling places, protecting election workers or reinforcing safeguards against misinformation and interference, this work is about maintaining trust in our democratic process.

At the same time, protecting our elections also means expanding access. One of the most important ways we can do that is by modernizing how people are able to vote. That is why House Democrats have made no-excuse absentee voting a top priority this session through HB 5001.

Connecticut voters took an important step on this issue when they approved a constitutional amendment allowing no-excuse absentee voting in 2024. That ballot question passed, and now it is our responsibility in the legislature to write the law and put it into practice in a way that is thoughtful, secure and accessible.

Voters must currently meet specific criteria to vote absentee. HB 5001 would allow any eligible voter to request an absentee ballot – no excuse required. This is a common-sense update that reflects how people live and work today. Not everyone can easily make it to the polls on Election Day due to work schedules, caregiving responsibilities, health concerns or other commitments. Expanding absentee voting gives people more flexibility while maintaining the integrity of our elections.

As a member of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I've been directly involved in advancing this legislation. I've listened to testimony, worked with colleagues and supported efforts to move this bill forward, and I will continue doing everything I can to help get it across the finish line.

It is important to be clear that expanding access and protecting election integrity go hand in hand. Connecticut already has strong safeguards in place to ensure that absentee voting is secure, and those protections will remain. This proposal makes our system more accessible, more equitable and more reflective of the needs of today's voters.

At the end of the day, our goal should be simple: every eligible voter should be able to participate in our democracy without fear, without barriers and with confidence that their vote will be counted.

I remain committed to this work, both in the legislature and in partnership with our community. Protecting our elections is not about politics; it is about ensuring that every voice is heard.

Letters (Continued From 6)

school under the claim of homeschooling.

SB-6, cosponsored by Maroney and Shannon and advanced by the Children's Committee (where Welander serves), requires local boards of education to notify the Department of Education within two days of any withdrawal. The state must then alert DCF for database checks. HB-5468, which passed the Education Committee on a 26-20 party-line vote despite massive opposition, goes further: it mandates in-person withdrawal forms, DCF approval in certain cases, annual proof of "equivalent instruction," education portfolios and entry of homeschooling families into a statewide data system.

Many public schools wouldn't be able to meet the rigorous standards of attendance, grade proficiency and academic progress that this legislation would demand of homeschooling families. Connecticut schools continue to struggle with chronic absenteeism around 17 percent in 2024-25 and proficiency rates hovering near 50 percent in English language arts and 46 percent in math.

These bills infringe on parental rights, presuming every homeschooling family is a risk. Instead of trusting parents who already bear full responsibility for their children's education, they burden families with proving they are not neglecting their kids. This erodes the fundamental liberty to direct our children's upbringing without unwarranted government interference.

Similar legislation has failed in other liberal states. Proposals in Illinois, California and New York to impose mandatory notifications, DCF-style checks and detailed reporting were defeated or stalled after parental-rights backlash showed such measures create a "surveillance state" without improving child safety.

Maroney, Shannon and Welander have championed these bills. Milford and Orange families deserve better. Contact your legislators today and urge them to reject SB-6 and HB-5468. Parental rights and individual freedom are not negotiable.

Craig Stahl
Orange

Orange Absent at Critical Meetings

To the Editor:

It is very concerning Orange was not represented at recent opportunities that could have directly benefited our community. First Selectman Jim Zeoli did not attend a meeting with Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro where every town in the 3rd Congressional District was invited regarding funding and other opportunities, nor did he attend the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities event recently.

These are not routine events – they are critical, bipartisan forums where local leaders advocate for their towns, learn from other towns and secure vital resources.

Other communities understand this. Woodbridge showed up and requested \$1.5 million in emergency services funding. That is proactive leadership. It raises a simple and troubling question: could Orange have done the same? The answer is yes.

This issue is not about politics or what side you are on. This is about presence,

Continued on page 8

Orange Democratic Town Committee

Moving Into Our Next Era

At our March meeting, the Orange Democratic Town Committee elected a new slate of officers. I'm honored to serve as chair alongside Vice Chair Michael S. Muttitt, Secretary Daniel Fitzmaurice and Treasurer Patricia Romano. We also welcomed 15 new members to the ODTC. Welcome to our team.

While we are deeply grateful for the leaders who came before us, this moment feels like a turning point. Our leadership team reflects the reality of life in Orange today. We are working professionals raising families. Between us, we have two young grandchildren, four elementary schoolers, a middle schooler and a high school freshman. We understand firsthand how challenging it can be to get involved in town while juggling

work, school events, sports and everything in between. However, I believe that our community is stronger when diverse families like ours are actively involved in our small town.

My goals as chair are straightforward. I want to be approachable, communicative and transparent. I want to help people in Orange understand the issues affecting our town, state and country, and support those who share our values. Just as importantly, we will focus on growing our networks and developing the next generation of leaders here in Orange. Reach out to me any time at msmelissajohnston@gmail.com - I'd love to



MELISSA JOHNSTON

get to know you better.

I want to make it easy for you to stay informed and get involved. The best outcomes always happen when more people have a seat at the table. That means creating space for different perspectives and focusing less on labels and more on those shared values. You do not have to be a registered Democrat to attend our meetings or participate in our events and initiatives. Sign up for our monthly newsletter at

OrangeCTDems.org or follow us on Facebook and Instagram so you're always in the loop.

In the months ahead, we will provide clear

and accessible information on the budget referendum votes in May and the elections in November. We want to help ensure that Orange continues to be represented by strong and effective leaders who embody our principles.

I'm excited to connect with you through this regular column and in person around town. Progress does not happen by standing still. It happens when people show up, speak up and roll up their sleeves together.

For our team, that means stepping confidently into our next era, ready to move forward with fearless energy and purpose.

Melissa Johnston is the chair of the Orange Democratic Town Committee.

Letters

(Continued From 7)

relationships and results. When Orange is absent, we are not just missing meetings; we are missing opportunities, funding and a seat at the table where decisions are influenced and partnerships are formed.

If the first selectman is unable to attend, then he should designate someone to represent the town. There is no acceptable reason for Orange to go unrepresented when so much is at stake.

Our residents deserve leadership that shows up, speaks up and fights for every available resource. Representation matters and Orange should never be left out of the room. I hope to see a reversal in the decision made to not go to these important events and hope to see our town

represented in the future.

Lauren Gray
Orange

Lost Opportunity in Milford

To the Editor:

On March 2, the Board of Alderman of Milford were asked to vote on opening the charter of the city of Milford. The charter has not been examined since 1983. More than four decades have passed without a comprehensive look at the document that defines how our local government functions.

There were many aspects of the charter that could have been reviewed. The length

of the mayor's term (it would not have effected this mayor), staggering the Board of Education election as is done with the Planning and Zoning Board, and modernizing outdated language among other topics. A proposed committee, composed of three Republicans and two Democrats, all of them devoted to doing what is best for the city, might have recommended changes, or it might have concluded that the charter should remain exactly as it is.

Either way, any proposed revisions would still have required approval by the Board of Aldermen and, ultimately, by Milford voters in a referendum. However, they never had a chance to examine the document. It takes 10 votes to open the charter, the vote was nine to five along party lines.

Many residents hope to see our elected officials work together on issues that shape Milford's future. Yet too often, meaningful

action seems possible only when one party holds an overwhelming majority. This was an opportunity for genuine bipartisan cooperation, for public engagement and for a transparent review of the document that guides our city government. Instead, the opportunity was lost - not because the merits were debated and rejected, but because the minority did not want the majority to win, even for the good of the city, exasperating.

Charles Montalbano
Milford



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Orange Republican Town Committee

ORTC Active In The Community

March has truly lived up to its reputation, coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb. It is hard to believe how quickly the weeks fly by. While I often comment on how quickly time passes, I am especially glad to say that winter is behind us and spring has officially arrived. Now if only the weather would catch up with the calendar. I hope everyone enjoys a beautiful spring season filled with joy, sunshine, family time and new beginnings.

March also brought an important milestone for our Orange Republican Town Committee. At our recent meeting, members gathered to elect our executive board for the 2026–2028 term. I want to thank everyone who came out to support our town, our committee and the candidates on the slate. Congratulations to our newly elected officers: Chairman Chad Lombardi, Vice Chairman Jude Toohey, Secretary Annie Gloria and Treasurer Phyllis Kraut.

I also extend my deepest gratitude to Debbie Esposito for her outstanding leadership and dedication over the past two years as treasurer. Her hard work has made a real difference, and we are grateful she will continue to support our efforts in the months ahead.

Many residents may not be familiar with the role of the committee. We are continually active and look forward to volunteering in the coming months. While our primary mission is to help elect Republican candidates who share our values, we are so much more than that. We are moms, dads, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, friends and neighbors who deeply care about Orange.

We are committed to responsible growth, strong schools, a thriving business community and good government that serves all our



JUDE TOOHEY

residents. We respect our town leaders and work collaboratively to keep Orange moving forward while honoring its proud heritage.

We encourage everyone to get involved. We strongly believe in moving forward; however, we believe our strength is in our history along with our concern for our neighbors and their families.

Our members stay active in the community year-round. You will find us volunteering at local festivals and fairs, supporting the Senior Center, helping with the Fireman’s Carnival, and cooking and serving meals for our veterans, just to name a few of the many ways we give back.

We have planned several fun community events for the coming months:

- A pickleball tournament on Saturday,

April 26 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 401 Boston Post Rd. in Orange.

- A Cinco de Mayo Celebration on Tuesday, May 5.

- A Freedom Family Picnic with a date to be announced soon.

More activities and events will be added as the season progresses. If you have any questions about the ORTC, please reach out. Anyone wishing to get involved in any way, you can contact us at ORTC.Secretary@gmail.com. We would love to welcome new members and hear from our neighbors.

Here’s to a productive and enjoyable 2026–2028 term – getting to know more of our wonderful community and working together to keep Orange a great place to live, work and raise a family.

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

Milford Senior Center

Inside The Community Keeping Milford Seniors Thriving

The Milford Senior Center recently held its second annual Easter Luncheon on March 27. This event, along with last year’s Christmas and Thanksgiving gatherings, was made possible through the generosity of Milford resident and center member Anthony Silvestro.

In his final wishes, Silvestro set aside funds to ensure that Milford seniors could enjoy a special holiday meal together during these three celebrations for the next 15 years. It is an extraordinary and deeply meaningful gift.

Nearly 265 guests joined us, filling three rooms with conversation, laughter and the comfort of being together. Members enjoyed a delicious catered lunch from Lasse’s Restaurant. But the true highlight was the sense of connection: old friends catching up, new friendships forming and a shared holiday moment that felt warm and welcoming.

Anyone who walks through the center on a typical morning will recognize that same energy. The building hums with people talking, learning, moving and engaging. That activity reflects something more than simply staying busy. In occupational therapy, Ann Wilcock

describes four dimensions that support healthy living: being, doing, becoming and belonging. These concepts are straightforward, yet they capture something essential about how people grow and maintain well-being throughout their lives.

Doing refers to the routines and responsibilities that shape much of adulthood. Being is the ability to slow down, be present and enjoy the moment. Becoming reflects the ongoing process of personal growth as life changes. Belonging is the sense of connection to a community that supports and values you.

For many older adults, the doing phase of life begins to shift. Long-held roles evolve or come to an end, and the question becomes: What now? What fills the space that work, caregiving and daily responsibilities once occupied?

This is where the Milford Senior Center plays a vital role. People do not simply stay active here. They rediscover themselves. They try new classes, reconnect with old in-



LEONORA RODRIGUEZ

terests and enjoy the company of others who understand their stage of life.

I see this every day. Someone may come in for an activity, but over time they become a more confident, connected version of themselves.

Research supports this experience. A 2023 study by Zhao et al. published in the journal *SSM – Population Health* found that older adults who feel healthier are more likely to participate socially, and that social participation in turn improves how healthy they feel. It is a reinforcing cycle, and we see it in action at the Milford Senior Center.

When people show up, they feel better, and when they feel better, they continue to show up.

This movement between doing and being, and between becoming and belonging, is where the heart of the center lives. You see people engaged and curious, but you also see people simply being themselves, finding comfort in familiar faces, taking a moment

to sit, talk or just exist in a place where they feel they belong.

This is why the senior center matters. This is why investment in community spaces is essential. Yet stigma around aging and senior services still exists, and it often influences how senior centers are funded and understood.

As I write this, I am preparing for the aldermanic budget meeting on April 22, where I will present the center’s needs. I have also shared information about the aldermanic budget public hearing that will be held on April 15 at 7 p.m. in Milford City Hall. These meetings matter because they give us the opportunity to speak up for the people who fill our center and this city with life every day. They allow us to remind our community that older adults deserve the support and the welcoming spaces, like the Milford Senior Center, that enable them to feel grounded, purposeful and connected.

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

Milford Marine Institute Running Summer Camps

The Milford Marine Institute will run its hands-on science programs this summer for the 43rd year in conjunction with the Milford Recreation Department.

The institute runs a number of camps.

The Marine Biology Science/Art Camp A runs from June 15-19 and is for ages 7 and

up. The Marine Biology Science/Art Camp B runs from June 22-26 and is for ages 7 and up.

The Marine Biology Science Camp C runs from June 29-July 3 and is for ages 12 and up.

The Bird Identification Art Camp runs from July 6-10 for ages 6 and up.

The Archaeology/Native Culture Camp A

runs from July 13-17 and is for ages 9 and up.

The Archaeology/Native Culture Camp B runs from July 20-24 for ages 9 and up.

All camps begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 1 p.m. Campers bring a lunch and drink each day. All camps are \$175 for the week which includes all materials (pegboards,

wood, paints), except for the Marine Biology Science camp, which is \$185 for the week (test kits included).

For more information contact Camp Director Tim Chaucer at 203-988-0918, email tchaucer@msn.com or visit milfordmarineinstitute.org.

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Understanding Carbon Monoxide Risks

Many homeowners install carbon monoxide detectors on the main living level and in the basement, then assume they are fully protected. As long as the device is powered, whether plugged in or operated by battery, it is often considered sufficient.

However, this sense of security can be misleading, particularly in homes with older heating systems. Aging furnaces and related mechanical systems can emit low levels of carbon monoxide over time. Recent findings suggest that symptoms such as morning headaches, dizziness, nausea or feeling noticeably better after leaving the home may be linked to undetected CO exposure.

Several common household systems have the potential to produce carbon monoxide, including boilers, forced air furnaces, hot water heaters, heat pump systems (via coil-based heat exchangers) and radiant heating systems connected to boilers.

While owning an older furnace is not inherently unsafe, it does increase the importance of proper monitoring. A cracked or

compromised heat exchanger – an essential component that transfers heat without allowing gases to mix – can allow exhaust gases, including carbon monoxide, to enter the living space.

The heat exchanger plays a critical role in a heating system by transferring heat from combustion gases to air or water without direct contact. When functioning properly, it safely contains harmful gases. However, any failure or deterioration can lead to dangerous leaks, underscoring the need for regular inspection.

Carbon monoxide exposure often presents first during overnight hours, making detector placement especially important. At a minimum, detectors should be installed in or near bedrooms and near the furnace or primary heating system.

Modern detector options now include both standard alarms and low-level monitors. While standard alarms meet code re-



BARBARA LEHRER

quirements, low-level monitors can detect early-stage exposure before it reaches critical levels, and many homeowners choose a combination system for added protection.

Even well-maintained systems can present unexpected risks. In my own case, a clogged chimney flue triggered the furnace alarm. Neither the furnace maintenance man nor the fireplace maintenance person included a four-foot pipe that went from the forced air furnace in the basement to the wall, where it was cemented so there were no air openings. The pipe was closed in well on the wall, but there was an accumulation of hair from my dogs on the inside.

Luckily, we were all fine. We were away and the animals were checked. It was very scary. The Orange Fire Department showed up with our friend who was watching the house.

Who knows what would have happened to the dog and cat – or to us if we were home. Situations like this highlight how easily hidden issues can develop, even in relatively newer systems.

Maintaining a safe home environment doesn't require complex measures, but it does require consistency. Homeowners should schedule annual furnace and system inspections, ensure heat exchangers are checked regularly, upgrade carbon monoxide detectors as technology improves, consider combination detectors with low-level monitoring and pay attention to subtle health symptoms that may indicate exposure. These precautions are especially critical for households with young children, elderly residents or pets.

Proactive maintenance and updated carbon monoxide detection technology can make a significant difference. Stay safe, stay informed and enjoy the season ahead.

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

The Influence Factor

Why Clear Communication Matters More Than You Think

I wrote about first impressions and how quickly people form opinions last month. Those early moments matter because they shape what people notice, what they trust and whether they stay engaged. This month, I want to build on that idea.

If people do not understand you clearly, they are less likely to move forward.

Most of us have experienced this. Someone explains what they do, what they need or what they are asking, and by the end of it, we still are not quite sure what they mean. The words may sound polished. The message may even sound impressive. But something important is missing. It is not clear.

That matters because confusion rarely announces itself. Most people do not stop and say they do not understand. They do something quieter. They hesitate. They wait. They delay the decision. Sometimes they move on altogether. In everyday life, that creates frustration. In business, it can quietly cost trust, response and opportunity.

A customer may not call back. A potential client may not take the next step. A referral may go nowhere because the other person cannot easily explain what you do. A strong idea may not gain support because people are still trying to figure out what is being said. What looks like disinterest is often something else. It is confusion.

Behavioral science helps explain why.

People are more likely to respond to what feels easy to understand. When something is clear, it feels easier to process. It feels more manageable. People can tell what it means and what to do next. When something is unclear, hesitation goes up.

You can see this in practical places. A school sends home an update, but parents are left unsure what action they need to take. A community group promotes an event, but the important details are buried. A local organization explains its mission in a thoughtful way, but people still do not know how to help. A business owner describes what they do, but the explanation is so broad or polished that others cannot quickly repeat it to someone else.

In each case, the problem may not be the value of the idea. The problem may be that the message is making people work too hard. That is the hidden cost of unclear communication.

Many people think they need to sound more impressive to be taken seriously. They use more words, more formal language or more background than the moment requires. The intention is understandable. They want to sound capable, informed and professional. But often, the more complicated the mes-



EZIO SABATINO

sage becomes, the harder it is for other people to act on it.

Clear communication is not about dumbing things down. It is about making things easier to understand. That is a sign of respect. It shows that you are thinking not only about what you want to say, but also about what the other person needs in order to follow it.

For business owners and professionals, this matters more than it may seem. If people cannot

quickly understand what you do, who you help or why it matters, they are less likely to choose you. If your website sounds polished but vague, people may leave without taking action. If your introduction is too broad, referrals become harder. If your service explanation makes sense to you but not to someone hearing it for the first time, you create friction without realizing it. And friction slows decisions down.

That does not just apply to marketing. It applies to leadership, meetings, community communication, customer service and everyday conversations. Any time you need another person to understand something, clarity matters.

Sometimes the fix is simple. Use shorter sentences. Lead with the main point. Re-

place words people rarely use with words people hear every day. State the next step clearly. Do not assume others know what you know.

When we know our own work, organization or topic very well, it becomes harder to notice what may be unclear to everyone else. We fill in the gaps automatically. Other people cannot. That is why one useful question to ask is this: Where am I making people work harder than they need to in order to understand me?

That question can improve a business description, a presentation, an email, a school message, a website or even a conversation at home. Because when people understand you, they are more likely to trust you, respond to you and move forward.

That is why clear communication matters more than many people realize. And whether you are running a business, leading a team, serving your community or simply trying to communicate something important, that small shift can make a big difference.

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.

Wine Talk

The Rise Of South African Wines

With the coming of spring, it's time to try some great South African wines.

South Africa is well known for its diversity in world-class wines. It is a primary producer of Chenin Blanc, which is often referred to as steen. This is the most widely produced wine in South Africa, and it is gaining in popularity.

South African wine has a history dating back to 1659. The first bottle was produced in Cape Town by its founder and governor Jan van Riebeeck. These wines have a long history and are of excellent quality and price.

The signature red is Pinotage. This is a spectacular red wine that was developed by mistake.

It was developed in 1926 by a group of scientists who were trying to grow Pinot Noir. They took the Pinot Noir grape and grafted on some Hermitage, which is a very hardy grape that grew well in South Africa (they call it cinsault).

After some years they found they had developed a different grape variety. They put Pinot Noir and Hermitage names together and came up with Pinotage.

The wine has big fruit flavors, but it includes smoky, earthy notes. It has become wildly popular in most of the world. In the US it is a little harder to find due to some political issues in South Africa. It is available here in most stores, though. Once you try it you'll be hooked.

South Africa makes some great Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Chardonnay. Most of these wines come from "old vines." This adds great depth and complexity as well as fruit to the wines.

The most widely planted variety is Chenin Blanc. This white wine is generally dry. It is, however, ripe and crisp. It's a fruity wine



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

that is full-bodied. It is very popular in South Africa.

The country exports lots of Chenin Blanc to Australia, New Zealand and Europe. But it hasn't caught on here in the states to any great degree.

This wine is similar to Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. Ten years ago, no one in the US had ever heard of it. Now even in the smallest stores there are several brands, and it sells like crazy. My prediction is this wine will become very popular.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir are top-quality wines – especially those produced from the Stellenbosch region on the western cape are known for their high quality and great prices. They make some great cool climate wines as well, especially in the coastal areas.

Walker Bay and Elgin are famous for making great Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. They also make a popular dessert wine. Vin de Constance is world-renowned.

Great red wine regions include Stellenbosch, Perl and Breede River Valley.

Try some of these great South African wines. You will be glad you did.

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

Declaration Of Independence Was Signed By CT Woman

By Marilyn May

How many men signed the declaration?
You are right if you said 56.
How many women have their names on the document?

If you said none, you are wrong.
Mary Katharine Goddard (1738-1816), a Baltimore printer, was authorized to print her name on the bottom of the January 1777 edition of the document, which was the first time all the names of the signers were published.

As the official printer appointed by Congress, she was allowed to write: "Baltimore, in Maryland: Printed by Mary Katharine Goddard" on the bottom of the document. Hers was the second printing, but she was ordered by the Continental Congress to print an official copy of the declaration that would publicly identify the signers.

Goddard was born in New London, Connecticut and worked in the family printing

businesses in Providence, Philadelphia and Baltimore. By the early 1770s she operated the Baltimore print shop largely on her own, and that's where she printed the declaration.

The very first printing of the document, however, was done July 4-5, 1776 by John Dunlap (1747-1812) at his shop in Philadelphia. He purposely left off the names of the signers to protect them from prosecution by Britain. The only names he did include were John Hancock, President of Congress and Charles Thomson, Secretary.

The heading of Dunlap's printed version reads: "In Congress, July 4, 1776. A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America...."

Dunlap's copies were printed as single-sheet posters that came to be called Dunlap's broadsides. He printed 150 to 200 copies that were meant to be read out loud to inform people of the government's call for independence. There

are only 26 of Dunlap's known to exist, and they are in either the Library of Congress or the American Antiquarian Society.

Dunlap's broadsides and Goddard's copies helped spread the seeds of independence to colonial villages and military encampments far from Philadelphia. The work of these two printers meant the voice of the declaration reached as many as possible.

Who signed the document on July 4, 1776?
No one signed the document on that date. We celebrate that day because it was the day the decree was approved by Congress. Most delegates signed it on Aug. 2, 1776, but some signed it even later because of illness or the time needed to travel back to Philadelphia.



Mary Katherine Goddard.

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

Time Management

Getting To A Clean Desk

We all run into people from time to time who work with a messy desk and messy work environment. They have stuff piled up here and there, on the floor, on the shelves and even on a table behind their desk. They must buy furniture to put this stuff on.

Whenever you try to encourage that person to clean up their messy work area, they get defensive. They have snappy retorts like, "A messy desk is the sign of an organized mind," or "This is my external filing system." If you really push them, they will always tell you, "But I know where everything is!"

"Out of sight; out of mind," the old saying goes. The reverse of that is just as powerful. When it's in sight, it's in mind and most cannot help but be distracted by what is before them: "I know I should be working on this

report but let me just go through this junk email really quick."

A messy desk can easily lead to lost items and missed deadlines. It is time consuming too, having to go through the same pile of stuff day after day.

Some studies suggest that as much as 15 percent of your work week can be consumed with a messy desk, either by being distracted by things that are in sight or by having to look for things.

I recommend working with a clean desk, a clean work environment. You don't have to take me on literally for this. I typically work with two or three files before me, but as best as I can, I keep the number



DON WETMORE

of items around me to a minimum to keep my focus sharply on what truly needs to be done.

If you have a bunch of stuff on your desk it will be easy (just time consuming) to get your desk cleaned up.

Take each item one at a time, decide when you will get to it, put it on your to-do list for that day and then put that item away. For example, the first item on my desk is a research project. I will be able to get to that next Tuesday. I will open my calendar to Tuesday's to-do list and add, "Do research project." I then file that item in a file for retrieval next Tuesday.

The next item in my pile is the budget for the next quarter. I will get to work on that next Wednesday. I open my calendar to next Wednesday and add to the to-do list, "Work on budget," and I file that item away for retrieval next Wednesday. I continue this procedure until all the items have been scheduled on my to-do lists for the day. I will tackle them and my desk is clean.

If you have a lot of items, it may take you all day to clean up your messy desk, but your investment will provide you with a clean desk that will permit you to have a better focus on what you need to do.

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

MILFORD, CT | WOMEN'S LONGEVITY & HORMONE HEALTH

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- ▶ Mood swings, anxiety & emotional exhaustion
- ▶ Brain fog, low energy & zero motivation
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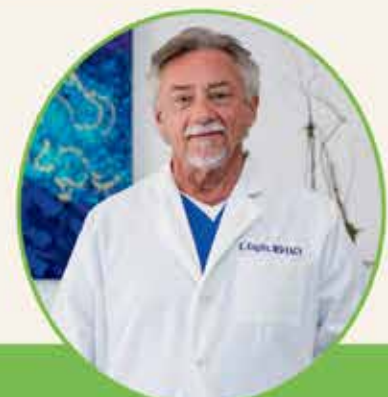
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Orange Board of Finance

Orange Board Of Finance Approves 2.5% Budget Increase

The Orange Board of Finance recently concluded budget deliberations and sent a budget package of \$88,243,670 forward to a town meeting that will occur on April 22. The budget represents a \$2,160,108 increase, or 2.5 percent of the total (town, Amity and Orange BOE) over the prior year's budget.

The town portion of the budget contains an overall \$2.4 million increase, driven by contractual salary increases of \$1.1 million, \$500,000 to fund the operations for the Orange Visiting Nurse Association, a \$324,515 increase to fund health insurance, worker's compensation, town and police pensions and an additional \$200,000 increase to properly fund the Orange Volunteer Fire Department.

These expenses account for 90 percent of the increase on the town side. If you factor in the decrease of \$559,281 within the town's debt service account for the coming year, the town's budget increase drops to a 5.4 percent overall increase.

The budget increase this year also factors in the final year of a phase in of higher residential property values from the most recent revaluation. Home values continue to soar throughout Connecticut, averaging between 38 percent and 50 percent over the four-year

period depending on the city or town.

This is pure economics, based on high demand and short supply of residential properties throughout Connecticut. It is not unique to Orange.

The average tax increase for a single-family home within Orange beginning July 1 will be right around 4.3 percent, or \$325. However, it is important to understand that the increase will vary among single-family homes depending on the value, size and type of home.

The Orange Board of Education's budget contained a nominal increase of 2.1 percent. The Amity school district budget came in at a -0.6 percent. This was driven by student enrollment shifts, leading to a \$324,533 reduction in Orange's portion.

The Amity budget also contained a significant reduction within the debt service budget, which offsets wage increases for teacher salaries. The Amity budget continues to expand academic opportunities within world languages, with continued investments in technology, special education and athletics.



KEVIN MCNABOLA

Most importantly, it continues to build on strong academic performance and student achievement.

The fiscal year 2025 audit results for Orange were recently published and presented to the Board of Finance. The audit results indicated no significant compliance findings, positive fund balance results and continued strong revenue results.

The strong revenue results are mainly driven by strong property tax collections, which came in just over \$76.3 million for fiscal year 2025, representing 90 percent of total revenues. Other key drivers within revenues were investment income, which came in \$476,000 over budget and additional revenue streams from cell tower and land leases.

Expenditures finished the year slightly under budget by \$414,000 on a \$83.8 million budget. The total unassigned fund balance came in at \$19,230,936, or 22.4 percent of the general fund balance. However, when you factor in the town's annual contributions to fund the Orange Visiting Nurse Association, transfers to fund road reconstruction

and other critical capital infrastructure projects, the projected fund balance for the 2026 fiscal year is projected to be 16 percent. That is where the rating agencies (Moody's, S&P and Fitch) require municipalities to land if they want to maintain the highest AAA rating.

At the end of the budget process, I made a proposal to review and evaluate the future sustainability of some of the town's special revenue funds. Special revenue funds are used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specific purposes other than debt service or capital projects. These funds are essential for providing accountability and facilitating effective financial management.

This proposal was discussed at length among all members of the Board of Finance. It has full bipartisan support and will be examined further with the Board of Selectmen in the near future.

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

Orange Recycling Committee

Recycling Electronics, Batteries, Lightbulbs In Orange

Residents of Orange now have more opportunities to safely, conveniently and responsibly dispose of common household items.

Thanks to a new partnership with Take 2 Recycling, residents may now recycle a broader range of electronics along with household batteries and lightbulbs – all at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center.

Recycling, rather than throwing items away, helps protect the environment by keeping toxic materials out of landfills, thus reducing pollution in our soil, water and air.

This free service is for residential use and is not intended for businesses. The partnership provides a financial benefit to the town: Orange is paid by the ton for collected materials, helping offset waste removal costs.

The all-volunteer Orange Recycling Committee led the effort to partner with Take 2 Recycling; an agreement was then approved

by the Board of Selectmen and finalized by the first selectman.

E-waste/electronics recycling is available at the transfer center and at the twice-yearly paper shredding events held at High Plains Community Center. Residents can recycle a wide array of items, including cell phones, computers, televisions, routers, tablets, wires, VCRs, and DVD players. See a full list at take2recycling.com.

Electronics contain hazardous components such as lead and mercury, so they're strictly prohibited from going in the hopper or trash bins. Recycling also allows valuable materials like metals and plastics to be recovered and reused, reducing the need for new mining and conserving natural resources.

Security and environmental responsibility



ILENE MOYHER

are central to the recycling process. Data devices are securely destroyed, and facilities are monitored to keep materials safe.

Residents may now recycle a wide range of household batteries, including alkaline, rechargeable, lithium (including button or coin cell), nickel-cadmium, zinc carbon and lead-acid batteries. There are no limits on typical household quantities.

Put loose batteries in the proper container at the transfer station, located at the electronics recycling trailer. Residents are strongly encouraged to tape battery terminals or place batteries in individual plastic bags prior to drop-off. This simple step helps prevent fires, which can occur when batteries touch, particularly with small button cell batteries.

Residents can now recycle most com-

mon household lightbulbs – including LED, CFL, fluorescent tubes (up to four feet), incandescent and halogen bulbs. Bulbs should be placed in the designated bins at the transfer station in the electronics recycling trailer.

This program is also designed for household use, so unusually large quantities may be rejected if they appear to come from commercial sources.

By taking advantage of these expanded recycling options, Orange residents can play an active role in protecting the environment, safeguarding personal data and reducing municipal waste costs. Proper disposal of these everyday items makes a meaningful difference for both the community and the planet.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Milford Women's Group Fills Easter Boxes



Women Redefining Retirement filled boutique boxes that had been transformed previously at a workshop into Easter bunny baskets at their March 9 meeting at the Milford Senior Center. There was enough candy donated by the members in addition to small stuffed Easter toys to fill 60 boxes. They will go to behavioral clinic BH Care for distribution. From left: Martha Shea, Sharon Voris, June, Susan Reher and Evelyn Duffner. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Stanley.

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The Garden Spot

Let Nature Do Your Garden Pest Control

I recently took an online course sponsored by the National Garden Clubs that briefly covered integrated pest management.

One of the key components of IPM is biological control – letting nature do more of the work for you. The core idea is simple: use living organisms – predators, parasites and pathogens – to keep pest populations in check, reducing the need for chemicals.

Since most insects are beneficial insects, biological control helps to restore the balance of nature in your garden. You want to encourage beneficial insects to reduce the need for chemicals.

Predators are the “good guy” insects you may already have in your garden. Some examples are lady beetles that devour aphids, predatory mites that feed on thrips and scale

insects and spiders which help keep a wide range of pests in check. Predators actively hunt and consume pests, often eating dozens per day. Yum.

Parasites are mostly tiny wasps and flies that lay eggs in or on pest insects. An example is parasitic wasps, which can lay an egg inside an aphid. The developing larva then kills the aphid from within.

Many parasites specialize in specific pests, making them highly targeted and effective. They’re invisible garden heroes working quietly in the background. Don’t fear the insects.

Pathogens are microorganisms such as



PAT DRAY

bacteria, fungi, nematodes, protozoa and viruses that cause disease in pests. Some are available commercially as bio-insecticides. Probably the best known is H. bacteriophora, a nematode (tiny worm) that attacks caterpillars and immature beetles, among other insects. It can also be used against white grubs in lawns. These are especially useful for soil-dwelling pests or large infestations.

Just like our pollinators, predators and parasites need a nectar source and a habitat. Some plants to consider for both include marigolds to attract lady beetles, white alyssum to attract parasitic wasps and dill, fennel, yarrow and cosmos to support a wide

range of predators.

For habitat, consider mulch, perennials, a water source and an overwintering site such as leaf litter and hollow stems from plants.

Please avoid broad-spectrum insecticides that kill beneficial insects along with pests, disrupting the natural balance you’re trying to build.

In the next Garden Spot, I’ll cover another part of IPM: companion planting to reduce garden pests. In the meantime, enjoy the spring weather.

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

Rotary Club of Orange

Rotary Scholarships For Orange Graduating Seniors

Graduation is rapidly approaching for high school seniors, marking the end of their structured and shared K-12 educational journey. Surrounding that ceremonial day are ongoing individual decisions about next steps – be it gainful employment, post-secondary education, military enlistment or religious service. The act of commencing that next stage is both exhilarating and anxiety ridden.

For those continuing their educational journey, one factor that adds to the anxiety is the ever-increasing cost of college or professional technical training. Most Rotary clubs in the US try to help high school grads get started with post-secondary educational opportunities, and the Rotary Club of Orange is glad to be among those who can provide some support.

The Orange club annually offers scholarships to Orange residents who are graduating secondary school, seniors planning on attending college/university or other recognized post-secondary technical institutions in the year following graduation. This year, scholarships in the amount of \$2,500 each will be awarded to four graduating seniors.

The scholarships are a one-time lump sum given directly to seniors who have been accepted at an accredited institution and plan to attend in 2026-2027.

Application forms are available at area school guidance counseling offices (including Amity Regional High School, Platt Technical School, Notre Dame High School, Luralton Hall and Hopkins School) and are currently featured on the club’s home page at rotarycluboforange.org. Completed applications and supporting materials are due May 15.

Scholarships and other youth services are a core funding area for Rotary clubs. The funds are primarily obtained from year-round fundraising activities in the community. Two fundraisers are coming up soon – the spring paper shredding event organized with the Orange Recycling Committee that will be held on the morning of Saturday, April 11 at High Plains Community Center, and the annual Mother’s Day Rose Sale with online



DAN MAY

orders picked up at High Plains as well on the Friday afternoon (May 8) before Mother’s Day. Both events provide program support “for the children,” which is the official tagline for the 2026-2027 Rotary year across southern Connecticut.

Educational support is integral to all 46,000 clubs that comprise Rotary International with programs supporting all ages from pre-K through graduate school. At the post-college level, RI itself sponsors several scholarship and

fellowship programs that primarily focus on graduate-level study abroad. Although many high school seniors are not often thinking that far into the future, these programs might be of long-term interest for some.

RI Global Grant Scholarships provide one to four years of generous support for graduate study in one of Rotary’s humanitarian focus areas – ranging from education to public health and maternal/infant care to economic development to environmental

restoration. More specifically, RI Peace Fellowships fully support master’s degree and certificate programs in conflict resolution at centers around the world. Our local Rotary district supports several scholarships and fellowships every year, welcoming individuals from abroad as well as sending US residents overseas.

One of the more thought-provoking questions on the Rotary scholarship application form for graduating students is, “What would you like to be doing five years from now?” If you are an upcoming graduate – or know someone who is – with a long term interest in humanitarian careers, check out the future graduate school opportunities that are funded through Rotary International at rotary.org/en/our-programs/scholarships.

To quote American poet Mary Oliver, it’s never too early to “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life.”

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



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Orange Town Budget 2026-2027

Orange Lions Charities First Annual Golf Tournament



Join Us for a Day of Fun, Friendly Competition, and Community Spirit!

Event Details

- Date: Thursday, May 14, 2026 (Rain Date: June 11, 2026)
- Time: 7:30 AM Registration, 8:30 AM Shotgun start, end at 2:00 PM
- Location: Orange Hills Country Club, 389 Racebrook Rd. Orange, CT

Tournament Highlights

- 18-hole scramble format
- Teams of 4 players, singles will be combined into foursomes
- Prizes for top teams, longest drive, closest to pin, **major** prize for hole-in-one
- Raffle drawings and giveaways
- Light breakfast, on-course refreshments and lunch provided at end of tournament

Registration Information

- Entry Fee: \$175 per player, Early bird (by May 1st) \$165 per player
- Register online (sign up at <https://bit.ly/3WJufhw> or use QR Code above) to secure your spot
- Questions or Concerns: contact kenlenz382@gmail.com | (203) 641-3843

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Town of Orange, Connecticut



FINANCE DIRECTOR'S BUDGET MESSAGE

April 2026

On behalf of the Honorable James M. Zeoli - First Selectman, and the Orange Board of Finance, I submit our recommended Town of Orange General Fund Budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027. This document is the result of many hours of careful consideration by the Board of Finance, Department Heads, Town Boards, Commissions, Management and Staff. The focus of the 2027 budget is to continue to offer the level of services to which our citizens have become accustomed, tempered by the ability of our taxpayers to pay for those services.

Federal pass-through funds and State initiated funding have remained level. In the past, the State Legislature and Governor have proposed many pieces of tax legislation that if passed could have a very significant impact on the Town of Orange. The October 1, 2025, Grand List reflects an increase of 9.40% when compared to the 2024 net grand list mostly due to revaluation. However, in the past, increases in interest investment earnings, licenses, permits and fines and other revenues have helped to offset some of the budget increases and state funding losses. We have carefully designed this financial plan to balance the growing demand for municipal services, the needs of the Town's infrastructure, public safety, recreation and community health and welfare while maintaining our commitment to the education of our children: the leaders of tomorrow.

The Budget Process

The budget process begins in late September when each department prepares and then reviews with their Board or Commission, the department budget request for the new fiscal year. After Board or Commission approval, the department submits their budget to the Director of Finance. Each departmental request is reviewed and evaluated together with the First Selectman for submission of a recommended budget to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance then spends a day in the town hall conducting individual hearings and discussions with department management as required. The Town employees are members of six unions of which four contracts expire on June 30, 2025. The contracts for three of the unions (Police, Dispatchers & Clerical) were settled this fiscal year. Supervisors' union contract is under negotiations and the town should have a tentative agreement shortly. Salary budget lines carry the new negotiated wage figures. There are inevitably unanticipated costs that occur when projecting expenditures eighteen months into the future. Toward that end, it is

incumbent on the administration of any municipality to maintain a sufficient undesignated fund balance to provide for such unforeseen events and circumstances.

Fund Balance

The Town's Fund Balance is a measure of its capacity to withstand financial emergencies or to provide for unforeseen emergent projects and expenditures. I am projecting the undesignated portion of the fund balance on July 1, 2026 to be approximately 13.8 million dollars, or 15.69% of the 2026-2027 operating budget, which may be used to offset any revenue loss or unexpected expenses.

Revenue

The net taxable grand list for October 1, 2025, equaled \$2,999,488,238 which is compared to the October 1, 2024 net taxable grand list as below:

Category	2025 Net Grand List	2024 Net Grand List	\$ Change	% Change
Real Estate	\$2,459,916,745	2,241,960,116	217,956,629	8.86
Motor Vehicles	206,833,760	195,093,520	11,740,240	5.68
Business Personal Property	332,737,733	280,432,264	52,305,469	15.72
	\$2,999,488,238	\$2,717,485,900	282,002,338	9.40

Departmental Operating Expenditure:

The budget for all town operations has increased by 2.51% or \$2,160,108 for fiscal year ended 6/30/2027. Included in this Public Safety increased by 12.08% or \$897,233 mainly due to an increase in the Town's contribution to the Orange Volunteer Fire Department and the new police contract. Debt service contribution decreased by 17.34% or \$559,281 while our share of the Amity budget decreased by \$170,380 or 0.622% due to an Orange student population decrease and a significant lowering of debt service in the coming year. The Orange Board of Education costs increased by 2.08%, or \$523,903. At this time of publication of the budget if no adjustments are made to this budget the mill rate will drop to \$27.40 from \$29.10. This is due to the revaluation phase in now at 100.0% of your assessment.

Capital Replacements and Expenditure:

Several years ago, at the recommendation of the Town's auditors, the Board of Finance developed a Capital Fund Account to pay for future capital expenditures. The auditors recommended this fund for future capital purchases to avoid bonding and borrowing costs on some items. The funded items for the 2026-2027 fiscal year include \$196,000 for the Orange Board of Education for paving renovations to the playground at Racebrook School and ceiling tile replacement at Racebrook School and the Board of Education Offices. The Town side includes \$1,000,000 for this current season paving program. The Board also allocated \$74,715 to the Police department for a first phase to replace the officers' pistols and for new portable radios for the officers, which is the second year of a four-year replacement schedule. The Board may allocate funds for further Capital outlays in the coming months.

The annual budget development is an intensive task that requires a concerted and coordinated effort on the part of all. I want to express my personal gratitude for the support and cooperation from all our professional department managers and their dedicated staff. I would also like to thank my staff in the Town's Finance Department, specifically Karin Lewis, Sylvie Napoli, and Arthur Williams.

It takes a team effort to compile this budget. On behalf of First Selectman Zeoli, and the Board of Finance, I want to acknowledge the many committed professionals who selflessly serve on our Boards and Commissions without compensation. It is that kind of public spirit that makes Orange a unique and special community in which it is to live.

Respectfully Submitted,

John M. Cifarelli
John M. Cifarelli
Director of Finance and Administration

Karin Lewis
Karin Lewis
Assistant Finance Director

Members of the Orange Board of Finance

Kevin Houlihan, CPA - Chairman James Leahy - Vice Chairman
Dr. Ajeet Jain, Dr. Anna Mahon, Kevin McNabola, Joseph Nuzzo,
Charles Lombardi, Alternate
Deborah Satonick (Recording Secretary)

TOWN OF ORANGE NOTICE OF HEARING TOWN BUDGET

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the statutes in such cases provided, the Orange Board of Finance will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 7:00pm **In High Plains Community Center Cafeteria**, 525 Orange Center Rd. Orange, CT 06477 relative to the expenditures and proposed budget of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Citizens may present oral and/or written comments. The proposed budget will be available for examination in the Office of the Town Clerk in the Orange Town Hall on Wednesday, April 9, 2026.

Dated at Orange CT this 1st day of April 2026.

Orange Board of Finance

Kevin Houlihan
Kevin Houlihan
Chairman

TOWN OF ORANGE, CONNECTICUT
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-27

GENERAL FUND REVENUE					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Property Taxes	76,193,899	78,493,821	81,646,618	3,152,997	4.02%
Property Taxes Prior Years	251,883	280,000	280,000	0	0.00%
Tax Interest & Liens	272,130	240,000	240,000	0	0.00%
Intergovernmental Revenue	1,923,198	1,756,391	1,737,202	-19,189	-1.09%
Licenses, Permits & Fines	1,221,105	1,311,800	1,071,800	-240,000	-18.30%
Investment Interest	1,526,182	1,320,300	1,095,300	-225,000	-17.04%
General Government Revenue	1,149,021	1,250,700	1,086,500	-164,200	-13.13%
Fund Balance & Amity Revenue	514,595	500,000	0	-500,000	-100.00%
Other	1,162,156	930,750	1,086,250	155,500	16.71%
Total General Fund Revenue	84,214,169	86,083,562	88,243,670	2,160,108	2.51%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
General Government					
21-100 Selectmen	194,180	198,450	208,375	9,925	5.00%
21-101 Assessor	270,054	285,404	300,152	14,748	5.17%
21-102 Board of Assessment Appeals	143	6,000	10,000	4,000	66.67%
21-103 Director of Finance & Accounting	414,915	428,075	442,640	14,565	3.40%
21-104 Board of Finance	4,970	7,800	7,400	-400	-5.13%
21-105 Building Inspection	241,996	256,619	266,275	9,656	3.76%
21-106 Conservation Commission	22,870	4,800	4,800	0	0.00%
21-107 Economic Development	96,536	102,450	112,450	10,000	9.76%
21-108 Director of Technology	710,090	630,017	637,735	7,718	1.23%
21-109 Legal	384,542	330,000	330,000	0	0.00%
21-110 Planning & Zoning/Wetlands	265,245	174,852	188,575	13,723	7.85%
21-112 Zoning Board of Appeals	1,399	2,840	2,840	0	0.00%
21-113 Pension	0	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
21-114 Probate Court	7,559	7,835	8,844	1,009	12.88%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
21-115 Tax Collector	168,071	174,106	188,672	14,566	8.37%
21-116 Town Clerk	227,027	259,951	243,242	-16,709	-6.43%
21-117 Town Hall	174,378	208,800	219,300	10,500	5.03%
21-118 Treasurer	119,026	124,000	130,297	6,297	5.08%
21-119 Voter Registrars	144,695	159,200	174,250	15,050	9.45%
Total General Government	3,447,696	3,361,199	3,475,847	114,648	3.41%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Public Safety					
21-200 Police: General Services	982,162	914,684	996,035	81,351	8.89%
21-201 Police: Uniformed Patrol	4,127,973	4,226,229	4,699,535	473,306	11.20%
21-202 Police: Investigative Services	557,864	581,598	648,955	67,357	11.58%
21-203 Police: Communication/Dispatch	448,077	473,623	526,680	53,057	11.20%
Sub Total: Police Services	6,116,076	6,196,134	6,871,205	675,071	10.90%
21-220 Fire Marshal	305,959	317,227	330,425	13,198	4.16%
21-221 Emergency Medical Service	310,797	325,000	333,732	8,732	2.69%
21-223 Physicals By Physician	8,858	14,000	14,000	0	0.00%
21-223 Volunteer Fire Department & Utilities	235,140	460,000	660,000	200,000	43.48%
21-230 Emergency Management (Civil Def.)	15,025	14,495	14,727	232	1.60%
21-235 Animal Control	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	0.00%
Total Public Safety	7,091,855	7,426,856	8,324,089	897,233	12.08%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Public Works & Public Buildings					
21-250 Administration & Engineering	1,087,362	1,106,305	1,150,400	44,095	3.99%
21-255 Roadways	1,582,759	1,397,836	1,443,725	45,889	3.28%
21-257 Snow Removal	179,202	247,000	254,000	7,000	2.83%
21-258 Vehicle Maintenance	359,741	391,583	402,138	10,555	2.70%
21-261 Refuse	1,346,008	1,513,122	1,535,400	22,278	1.47%
Sub Total: Public Works	4,555,072	4,655,846	4,785,663	129,817	2.79%
21-271 Community Center	498,721	520,050	559,550	39,500	7.60%
21-272 Clark Building	45,870	62,600	62,600	0	0.00%
21-273 Case Library Building	159,197	162,000	164,000	2,000	1.23%
21-274 643 Orange Center Road	2,005	6,150	6,150	0	0.00%
Sub Total: Public Buildings	705,793	750,800	792,300	41,500	5.53%
Total Public Works & Public Buildings	5,260,865	5,406,646	5,577,963	171,317	3.17%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Culture & Recreation					
21-280 Library	764,761	850,880	909,749	58,869	6.92%
21-300 Parks & Recreation - Admin	176,042	173,394	181,005	7,611	4.39%
21-301 Parks & Recreation - Maint	461,519	351,520	443,300	91,780	26.11%
21-302 Parks & Recreation - Pool	339,305	381,814	383,775	1,961	0.51%
21-303 Parks & Recreation - Programs	5,652	9,500	9,500	0	0.00%
21-320 Town Contributions	28,030	28,030	28,030	0	0.00%
Total Culture & Recreation	1,775,309	1,795,138	1,955,359	160,221	8.93%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Health & Welfare					
21-330 Environmental Health	199,408	225,584	239,750	14,166	6.28%
21-334 School Nursing	386,649	406,180	432,435	26,255	6.46%
21-335 Director of Health	49,839	33,781	46,319	12,538	37.12%
21-336 Board of Health	0	50	50	0	0.00%
21-337 Orange Visiting Nurses	0	0	500,000	500,000	#DIV/0!
Sub Total: Health Services	635,896	665,595	1,218,554	552,959	83.08%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Community Services					
25-341 Community Services-Administration	174,252	178,700	184,935	6,235	3.49%
21-346 Community Services-Counseling	118,864	120,000	130,000	10,000	8.33%
21-342 Community Services-Disabilities	1,425	5,000	5,000	0	0.00%
21-345 Community Services-Elderly	165,656	165,925	176,925	11,000	6.63%
21-344 Community Services-Transportation	90,947	96,300	106,263	9,963	10.35%
21-343 Community Services-Youth	44,309	48,450	63,515	15,065	31.09%
Sub Total: Community Services	595,453	614,375	666,638	52,263	8.51%
Total Health & Welfare	1,231,349	1,279,970	1,885,192	605,222	47.28%

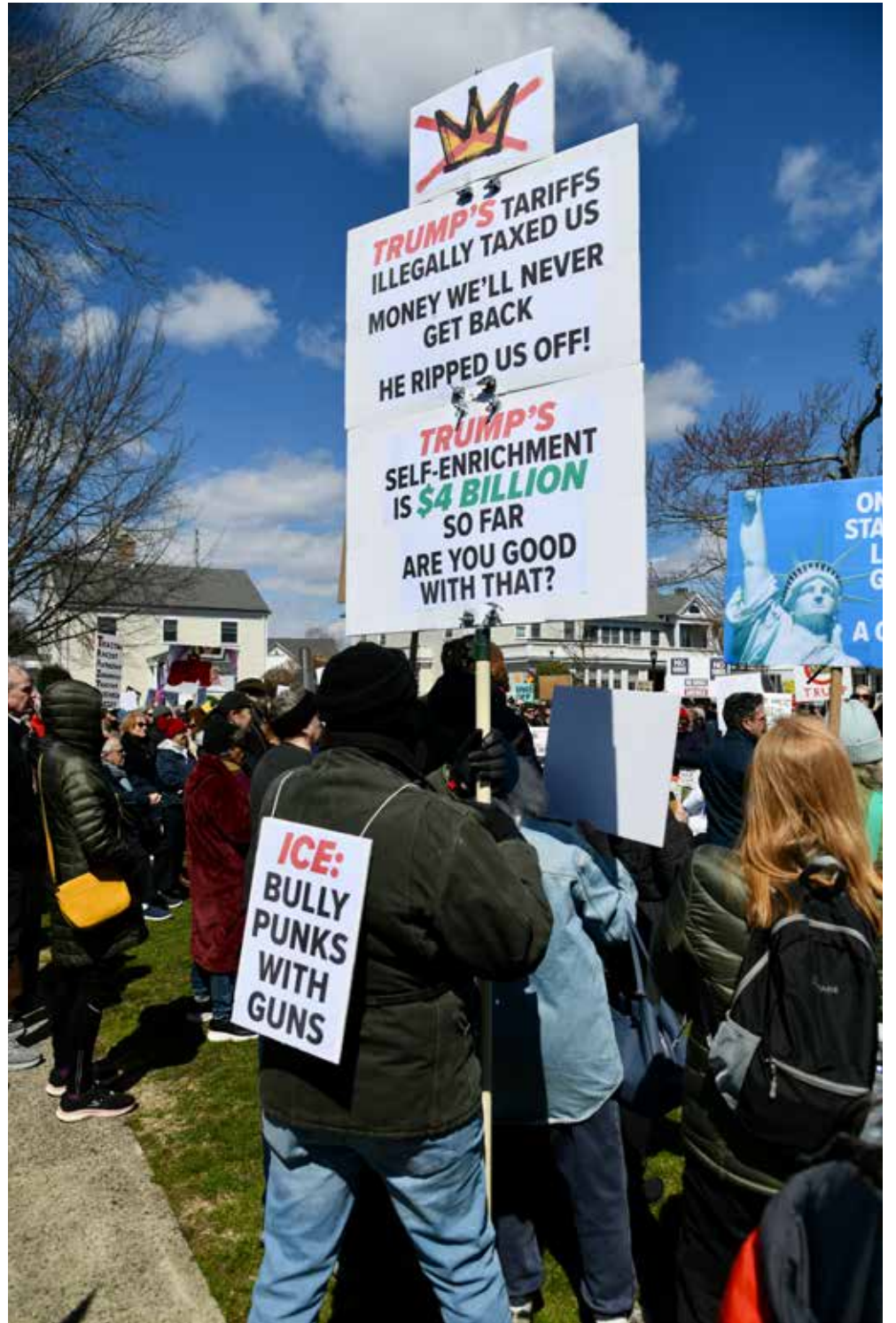
BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Employee Benefits					
21-400 Employee Benefits	9,847,190	10,084,217	10,408,582	324,365	3.22%
Total Employee Benefits	9,847,190	10,084,217	10,408,582	324,365	3.22%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Town Services					
21-420 Property Insurance	460,936	617,500	692,100	74,600	12.08%
21-425 Government Access TV	45,830	48,000	54,260	6,260	13.04%
21-430 Town Services and other	289,003	90,450	102,450	12,000	13.27%
Total Town Services	795,769	755,950	848,810	92,860	12.28%

SUBTOTAL - TOWN BUDGET 29,450,033 30,109,976 32,475,842 2,365,866 7.86%

BUDGET SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT					
Classification	FY 2024-25 Actual	FY 2025-26 Budget	FY 2026-27 Board of Finance	Increase/(Decrease) Amount	Percent
Capital Projects & Debt Service					
21-450 Capital Projects	139,830	0	0	0	
21-460 Debt Service	3,292,551	3,225,895	2,666,614	-559,281	-17.34%
Total Capital Projects & Debt Service	3,432,381	3,225,895	2,666,614	-559,281	-17.34%
Education					
21-410 Orange Public Schools	24,268,483	25,214,154	25,738,057	523,903	2.08%
21-415 Amity Regional Schools	27,479,040	27,533,537	27,363,157	-170,380	-0.62%
Total Education	51,747,523	52,747,691	53,101,214	353,523	0.67%
Total Budget	84,629,937	86,083,562	88,243,670	2,160,108	2.51%
control totals	84,629,937	86,083,562	88,243,670		

Milford Site Of 'No Kings' Rally



Milford was the site of one of the thousands of "No Kings" protests decrying the actions of the Trump administration held throughout the US and around the world on March 28. Milford Mayor Rich Smith was among the speakers at the event. This was the third No Kings protest, which does not focus on a specific issue but broadly opposes President Donald Trump. *Photos by Robert Creigh.*

Lunar New Year Celebrated In Milford



More than 300 community members gathered on March 7 at the New England Asian American Cultural Center in Milford to celebrate the Lantern Festival with an afternoon of cultural performances, martial arts demonstrations and community activities. The event celebrated the conclusion of the Lunar New Year and the inception of the year of the horse. The celebration opened with a lion dance accompanied by traditional drums. The program continued with a variety of performances including traditional Chinese dance, vocal performances and instrumental music featuring classical Chinese instruments. There was also a martial arts demonstration by students from Wu Dang Kung Fu Academy. A potluck reception followed the performances. *Photo courtesy of the NEAACC.*

Orange Senior Center

Fostering Social Connections

Margaret told me the only reason she comes to the senior center is so she does not have to eat alone. Robert said he comes to the senior center to be around people. Pat comes to the senior center to have something to look forward to.

An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association from May 2024 sites a national poll on healthy aging that one in three older adults are experiencing social isolation, a significant public health issue linked to severe physical and mental health issues. Social isolation has been shown to increase the risk for heart disease, dementia, depression, obesity and premature death.

Causes of social isolation can include several factors.

One is life transitions – the loss of a spouse or partner, friends or family, retirement or children moving out. All of these may lead to a decreased participation in socialization.

Health issues can also cause social isolation. Limited mobility, low energy or a decline in hearing and or vision make it hard to engage with others.

Then there are environmental factors: living alone, lack of access to transportation and living in rural or inaccessible areas can also contribute to social isolation.

I spoke with one senior who uses technology for social media like Facebook to stay connected, video conferencing to stay in touch with the grandkids living across the country and text messaging to invite a neighbor over for tea. She starts her day logging on and sending the family an email just to say she is up. She uses Orange Senior Transportation to get to the doctors, grocery shopping and go to the senior center for lunch.



DENNIS MARSH

Another person volunteers at the local theater. Not only does she get to see the plays for free, but it gets her out of the house. She engages with others and receives a sense of purpose and value from helping the patrons find their seats. Volunteers meet up for dinner before the show, carpool to the theater and discuss the performances, acting and all other elements of the show.

The Orange Senior Center is here for you. Our doors are open Monday through Friday with activities throughout the day. Many activities are free and the people are welcoming. Just wander in and say hi. Check us out on Facebook or read the newsletter on the Orange town website to see the many activities offered. Call the office at

203-891-4784 and we will happily mail you a copy. I'm sure you will find something of interest. It is all about building connections and nurturing existing relationships.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or having suicidal thoughts, immediate free and confidential help is available 24/7 by calling or texting 988.

Dennis Marsh is the senior services coordinator of Orange Community Services, which includes the Orange Senior Center. The center provides activities that promote independence, creativity, physical and emotional health, and lifelong learning for residents over the age of 55. For more information on the Orange Senior Center call 203-891-4788, visit orange-ct.gov/783/Orange-Senior-Center or email dmarsh@orange-ct.gov.

Ponder This

All Politics May Indeed Be Local

The mantra that "all politics is local" is attributed to former Massachusetts Congressman and long-term Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" P. O'Neill, who served in that role from 1977 to 1987.

O'Neill was hailed for bipartisan deal making during difficult political times. His tenure in the House of Representatives from 1953-1987 included the Civil Rights era, the Vietnam war and the American development of a middle class. Regardless of one's party affiliation, O'Neill was considered a formidable politician and legislator during periods of intense political debate, cultural shifts and changes in American society.

An unabashed New Deal Democrat, O'Neill managed to govern civilly and successfully, especially with those with whom he had significant and intense differences. Former President Ronald Reagan and O'Neill shared a mutual respect for one another and the governing process despite important and often fierce disagreements on national policy issues.

The "all politics is local" philosophy apparently stemmed from an early legislative loss that O'Neill experienced. He learned



ELLEN RUSSELL BEATTY

from his initial local electoral defeat in a bid for city council that it is most important to listen to local people. His first political run and loss may have been due to taking his local supporters for granted.

He learned to actively listen to what mattered locally. In his memoirs, O'Neill wrote in detail about how to win elections, govern and remain in power, noting that local issues motivate voters.

Politics can be thought of as the activities engaged in by a government or political party. From within this narrow view, the statement that all politics is local holds true. All seekers of local positions on councils and boards should heed it.

But there is also a broader definition of politics that refers to governing a nation, and the administration and control of both internal and external affairs. Traditionally, and perhaps in times of civil discourse, the broader view of national politics may not be necessary, with a local focus remaining most important.

There is a different interpretation of the mantra about local politics that is now needed. Our national political landscape is changing rapidly, and O'Neill might agree that this requires a more inclusive approach than what matters locally. Politics is also about making decisions in groups that affect distribution of resources, appropriation of funds and enactment of policies.

National political decisions have an effect, perhaps indirectly and in the longer term, on local conditions and the people. Changes in policies regarding health care, Social Security, education, veterans' benefits, tariffs and taxes have a profound impact eventually. Local political discourse can no longer focus on a protected area of distinction that is separate from what is happening nationally.

An example that may best illustrate this

national-to-local connection may be the federal changes in contract administration at the national level. Federal employees have recently had contracts changed, terminated or delayed without notice. This does not bode well for local businesses or employment contracts in general.

What will happen locally if violation of contracts is normalized as a justifiable practice at the national level? Economic recession, competing funding priorities and/or shifting national defense goals may be presented as justification. The impact on local business operations, establishment of new small businesses and the cost of distribution of goods and services will have profound local effects.

National decisions affect everything locally, from classrooms to road repairs. Our local political leaders must be held to account to pay attention and respond to expenditure and contract mismanagement at the national level. It is our local leaders who have the obligation to educate constituents and potential voters to understand these connections. It is our local constituents, including veterans, seniors, families and children, who will bear the brunt of these more national decisions.

Never could it be truer than that all politics, in the broader sense, is local.

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.

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Tips to Optimize Sleep with **Dr. Wendy Hurwitz**

Tuesday April 14 at 6:30pm

A graduate of Yale University School of Medicine, Dr. Hurwitz is a nationally recognized expert on stress. A former medical researcher for ABC News, Dr. Hurwitz is an expert in two fields: Mind/Body Medicine and Energy Medicine.

Foodie Foursome

Cast Iron Steakhouse Minutes From Orange And Milford

For quite a while now there have been many requests from my followers and my Facebook page about local high-end "steakhouse specialty" restaurants. I met Chef Attilio Marini years ago at his mom's restaurant in Trumbull, called Marisa's. He definitely honed his culinary talents during those years and brought them to his new restaurant, Cast Iron Chef Chop House and Oyster Bar on State Street in New Haven in 2017. It is the former space of Carmen Anthony Steakhouse. Marini has been awarded Best Steakhouse in New Haven County by CT magazine for seven consecutive years, and this year won the title statewide.

His use of the timeless cast-iron skillet is the main cooking vessel at the Cast Iron Chophouse. Cast-iron cookware has been used for over 2,000 years and is valued for its durability as well as its ability to retain and maintain even heat. The dishes are not just prepared in the cast iron, but served in it too.

The Cast Iron Chef Chop House is one of the finest steakhouses in New Haven. The meats used in the restaurant are butchered in-house as they trim their beef tenderloins, filets and chateaubriand to be used in the burgers, meatballs and chili. Every offering at the restaurant holds unexpected wonder. Marini has become a celebrity chef and is a regular on New Haven's ABC affiliate WTNH.

Cindy and I were joined by longtime friends Tammy and Steve for a fun evening of food, drink and conversation.

We started with appetizers, prosecco and a signature espresso martini with its own special twist. First up was the cast iron clam

chowder and burrata cheese salad. I originally was thinking of ordering French onion soup, as I am not usually a clam chowder guy. But I'm so glad we decided on the chowder. It was incredible. The broth was creamy and luscious. The silky broth held an abundance of nice chunks of potato and clam that I would definitely order again.

The simplicity of the salad exceeded expectations. The creative plating featured a large mound of creamy, but not overly moist, burrata adorned with arugula, strawberries, pistachios, olive oil and a strawberry balsamic glaze. The textures and varied tastes worked so well together. The peppery and fresh taste of the arugula was offset by the sweetness of the strawberries and glaze.

Our appetizer choices showed off the chef's expertise in presenting a variety of offerings. The tuna tartare reminded me of an artistic ceviche with an Asian flare. It was constructed of large, diced fresh tuna with avocado, jalapeno and red onion topped with tobiko and served with corn tortilla chips. If that was not enough, the sauce made with olive oil, white soy sauce, mirin and yuzo was outstanding. The cast iron spicy braised meatballs had the perfect texture with a definite spicy kick that was served with a dollop of fresh ricotta and tomato sauce.

Next up was their unique vision of a crab cake. It was baked, not fried, and designed as a tower of jumbo lump crab, bread crumbs, parsley and scallions that was cast-iron seared and served over a corn bisque



STEVE COOPER

and roasted red pepper puree.

The last two appetizers were the Korean short ribs and lobster arancini. The short ribs were some of the best I have had. The thinly sliced American wagyu short rib was made with white soy, gochujang and topped with scallions. The beef was tender, the sauce sweet, gooey and savory.

The lobster arancini was a superb, baseball sized, round construction of lobster, risotto, peas, grated cheese and mozzarella served with a luscious lobster bisque and topped with langostinos.

Our first main course was the homemade fettuccini smothered in a meaty bolognese sauce made with a touch of cream, a dollop of fresh ricotta and fresh basil. The second entrée was a classic – the cast iron chateaubriand for two. This 27-ounce hand-cut, premium roasted tenderloin was simply seasoned with salt and pepper, with roasted garlic butter and fresh thyme. It was sliced and served with a sweet potato, sautéed broccoli and gorgonzola sauce.

The third entrée was the cast iron seared duck, which was an 8-ounce tender breast, served with sautéed broccoli and garlic mashed potatoes (sprinkled with roasted cloves of garlic). The exquisite finishing touch was the signature chop house duck sauce.

The final main course selection is my favorite cut of meat. The 26-ounce cast iron "prime" bone-in rib eye was perfectly seared and cooked to a spot-on medium rare.

The seasoning was a classic salt and pepper that adds great flavor when seared. The garlic butter and thyme adds that nice sheen and beautiful taste. It was served with plenty of incredibly seasoned roasted potatoes with a little crunch and creamy interior. When I am in a first-class steakhouse, this steak is usually my go-to. This finishing act was perfect.

We ended with two wonderful cast iron specialty desserts. The cinnamon cake was awesome and gave me a "bananas foster" vibe. The moist cinnamon cake was engulfed with a glaze made with Captain Morgan and salted caramel surrounded by caramelized bananas and topped with vanilla ice cream. The s'mores with strawberries was exquisite. The s'mores was a hot plated deconstruction of huge strawberries, toasted marshmallows and chocolate sauce served with graham crackers. It was the perfect end to a perfect evening.

The décor and room layout lends itself to a night out with friends or family, yet the elegance takes on the perfect ambiance for a business meeting or romantic night out. There is also a great bar area and terrific daily happy hour specials. Every table gets the chef's "secret spiced" signature popcorn.

They are open daily for lunch at 11:30 a.m. and dinner until closing. They are located at 660 State St. in New Haven, eight miles from the Orange/Milford line. Reservations can be made at 203-745-4669.

Steve Cooper is a local, national and international award-winning photographer, culinary influencer, author and executive director of the Milford Performance Center. Contact him at 203-723-3672.

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Here's To Your Health

Exercise And The Power Of Proper Injury Recovery

Spring always brings a renewed sense of energy. As the days grow longer and the weather warms up, many people feel inspired to head outdoors, join sports leagues, start walking or running programs or ramp up fitness routines that may have slowed down during the winter months.

This seasonal shift is wonderful for physical, spiritual, emotional and mental well-being. But it also comes with an increased risk of injury if we don't prepare and recover properly.

After months of reduced activity, our muscles, joints and tendons may not be ready for sudden bursts of movement. Whether it's returning to tennis, jogging in the neighborhood, playing baseball or softball or simply gardening for longer periods, spring activities often involve motions the body hasn't performed consistently in a while.

This is why gradual progression is key. Start slow, increase intensity over time, and listen carefully to your body. A brisk 15-minute walk may be more beneficial rather than jumping into a three-mile run. Consistency beats intensity, especially early in the season.

Warmups and cooldowns are critical to preventing injury, yet often overlooked. A prop-

er warmup increases blood flow, loosens muscles and prepares joints for activity. I suggest dynamic movements – such as arm circles, leg swings, knee cars and ankle cars – which will reduce the chance of strains and sprains.

Post exercise, gentle static stretches are best. These will help prevent stiffness, promote flexibility and set your body back to a parasympathetic state of rest. These small habits can make a big difference in staying active all season long.

Spring sports are also a great opportunity for community and connection. From pickleball games to youth baseball, family bike rides and physical activities encourage social interaction that we all need to boost our emotional health. Exercise releases endorphins, improves mood and reduces stress.

Being outdoors adds another layer of benefit: sunlight exposure supports vitamin D, which contributes to bone health and boosts immune function.

Even with precautions, injuries can still hap-



MICHELE TENNEY

pen. Common spring injuries include ankle sprains, muscle pulls, tendonitis and overuse injuries such as runner's knee or shin splints. When discomfort appears, it's important not to ignore it. Pushing through pain can turn a minor issue into a more serious problem. Early recovery is just as important as the activity itself.

The basics of injury recovery start with rest. Giving your body time to heal prevents further damage. Applying ice in the early stages can also help reduce inflammation, while gentle movement, when appropriate, can promote circulation and healing.

Hydration and proper nutrition also play a major role. Foods rich in protein, vitamins and minerals support tissue repair. Omega-3 fatty acids and leafy greens are particularly helpful during recovery.

Equally important is patience, something I struggle with when injured. I understand it. Many people rush back into activity too soon because they don't want to lose progress. But true wellness means respecting the body's timeline and limitations.

Gradually reintroducing movement and strengthening surrounding muscles helps prevent re-injury. Sometimes, cross-training, like swimming or cycling, can maintain fitness while allowing an injured area to heal.

I am a strong supporter of cross-training, but also a huge advocate of physical therapy. A good physical therapist will be able to restore you back to health and perhaps make you even stronger than before.

This season, embrace the fresh start that spring offers. Get outside, move your body, enjoy sports and connect with others. But balance enthusiasm with wisdom. Warm up, progress gradually and honor recovery when needed. By doing so, you'll not only reduce injuries; you'll build strength, resilience and lasting wellness. You've got this. Here's to your health.

Michele Tenney is a Certified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist & Wellness Coach. She is a member of the Orange Board of Health. Her website is www.elevatePTW.com. She can be reached at 203-668-2969 or email at Hmgbdr3@gmail.com.

'A Lad In Manhattan' To Debut In Milford

Pantochino Productions, a professional, not-for-profit theatre company in Milford, will debut its new musical "A Lad in Manhattan" on Friday, April 24 at the Milford Arts Council in downtown Milford. The family-friendly, all ages musical plays through May 10.

"A Lad in Manhattan," featuring book and lyrics by Bert Bernardi and music by Justin Rugg, takes the familiar story of Aladdin and reimagines it set in Times Square, the heart of New York City during the 1970s. Here, a young man from Long Island journeys to the

Big Apple to find fame and fortune and, to a decidedly disco beat, gets all that and more with the help of some colorful characters and outrageous situations.

"Giving new life to a familiar story is our passion," says writer/director Bernardi. "Setting the story in the big city has truly created a 'whole new world' for the adventure and magic of Aladdin to live and breathe. It's fast, funny, campy and is great entertainment for children who will be dazzled and delighted, and adult audiences who will get

humor beneath the humor."

The cast includes company members Mary Mannix, Shelley Marsh Poggio, Rachele Ianniello, Valerie Solli, Justin Rugg, Jimmy Johansmeyer and in the title role, Chad Celini who has appeared in Pantochino's "What Now Voyager" and "Dorothy's Christmas in Oz." Special guest star for this production is Victoria Sautee. Known as the comical "quintessence of effervescence," Sautee has been called "remarkable and hysterical" by the Hartford Courant. The new musical features setting

by Von Del Mar, costumes by Johansmeyer, lighting by Jakob Kelsey, musical direction by Rugg and stage management by T. Gadowski.

Performances are on Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Seating is cabaret-style and audiences are invited to bring their own food and drink to enjoy during the show. The MAC is located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. Parking is free at showtime in all train station lots. Tickets are available online at pantochino.com.



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Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

A Community Responsibility We All Share

As we move into spring here in Milford, there's a natural sense of renewal in the air. Our downtown comes alive, our shoreline fills with activity and our local businesses begin to hit their stride for the season ahead. It's one of the many reasons we are proud to call this community home.

But alongside that energy, there are also real and growing challenges that deserve our attention.

Across our region, individuals and families are facing increasing pressure from rising costs, gaps in health care access and shifting federal policies that are making it harder for many to find stability. Food insecurity remains a daily reality for too many, and for those experiencing housing instability, the path forward has only become more complex.

Over the past several months, the Beth-El Center's No Freeze program has once again served as a critical safety net in our communi-

ty. As the program wraps up for the season, it's worth pausing to recognize what it has accomplished. This year alone, more than 300 individuals in our region had a safe, warm place to sleep because of this effort.

That number is significant, but what matters even more are the people behind it.

I had the opportunity this year to volunteer overnights at the No Freeze overflow shelter. It was an experience that was illuminating and deeply humbling. You gain a different perspective when you engage with people, hear their stories and understand just how quickly circumstances can change in someone's life.

What struck me most was not just the need, but the resilience. The dignity. The appreciation for something as simple as a safe place to rest for the night.



MICHAEL
MOSES

Programs like No Freeze don't happen on their own. They are made possible by an extraordinary network of volunteers, nonprofit leaders, faith-based organizations and community partners who step up, often quietly, to meet a very real need.

And there is room for more of us. Whether it's volunteering your time, supporting organizations like Beth-El, contributing resources or simply learning more about the challenges facing our neighbors, there are meaningful ways for everyone to get involved.

Because this isn't just about addressing hardship, it's about strengthening our entire community.

When people have access to shelter, food and basic health care, our region becomes healthier. When individuals are supported, they

are better positioned to contribute, to work, to engage and to move forward. And when that happens, our local businesses are stronger, our workforce is more stable and our economy grows.

We often talk about Milford as a vibrant place to live, work and visit, and it is. But part of what makes that true is how we show up for one another, especially when it matters most.

As we head into the months ahead, I encourage all of us to keep that in mind. There is important work happening every day in this community, and each of us has a role to play in moving it forward.

We are, quite simply, better together.

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

Case Memorial Library Events

The Case Memorial Library is located at 176 Tyler City Rd. in Orange. The library is open Mondays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Programs are free (except as noted for materials charges) and open to the public. Registration is recommended for all programs, unless otherwise noted. Visit casememoriamlibrary.org for more information.

The library has a new app where you can manage your account, search the catalog and place holds, register for events, access e-books and use your digital library card. Find the app by searching Libraries Online in your app store.

Passport to CT Libraries

Visit libraries across Connecticut this April for a chance to win up to a \$200 Visa gift card.

Nearly 140 libraries are participating in the Connecticut Library Association's Passport to Connecticut Libraries program. Visit participating libraries across the state. Show your passport and collect stamps along the way. Visit at least 5 libraries to qualify. Return your completed passport by May 11 for a chance to win. A total of six \$200 gift cards will be awarded – one adult and one child winner in each category.

Preschool Storytime

Mondays, 10:30 a.m.; for children ages 3-5.

Music, movement, and literacy for preschool friends. Join the library to get ready for the school years. There will be a craft session after the storytime session. This program is designed for children and engaged adults. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Lapsit Storytime

Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.; for babies up to 24 months.

Little ones and their caregivers are invited to explore books, sing songs and practice interactive nursery rhymes with Angela Badore. This program includes storytime followed by an optional group playtime. This program is designed for children and engaged adults. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Toddler Storytime

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.; for children ages 18 months-2.

Get the wiggles out with Angela Badore. Stories, music, dancing, and more fill this high-energy storytime for toddlers and their grownups. This program includes storytime followed by an optional group playtime. This program is designed for

children and engaged adults. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Weaving 101 for Tweens

Monday, April 13, 3 p.m.-4 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Learn basic weaving techniques using looms and alternative tools and create your own woven project. Registration is required.

STEAM Club: Spring Break Edition

Tuesday, April 14, 3 p.m.-3:45 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Experiment with engineering challenges and hands-on building projects inspired by leftover candy. Registration is required.

Drop-In Craft: Color a Kite

Wednesday, April 15, all day; for children through grade 6.

Decorate your own kite using provided materials, available while supplies last.

LEGO Club

Thursday, April 16, 3 p.m.-3:45 p.m.; for children in grades K-3.

Build and problem-solve with LEGO bricks during this guided free-build session. Registration required.

Sensory-Friendly Movie: The SpongeBob Movie: The Search for SquarePants

Friday, April 17, 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m.; for children through grade 6.

Enjoy a sensory-friendly screening of the latest SpongeBob movie with the whole family. Registration is required.

Simple Sewing: T-Shirt Bag

Thursday, April 23, 6 p.m.-7 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Learn basic sewing techniques while transforming an old T-shirt into a reusable bag. Participants should bring a T-shirt. Registration is required.

Preschool Sensory Play

Saturday, April 25, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; for children ages 18 months-5 years.

Explore hands-on sensory stations with bins, textures and simple experiments designed for young children. Registration is required.

Role-Playing Game for Tweens

Monday, April 27, 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Learn the basics of tabletop role-playing games through a beginner-friendly campaign of Dungeon World. Registration is required.

High School Volunteer Club

Saturday, April 11, 10 a.m.-noon and Thursday, April 23, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; for students in grades 9-12.

Earn community service hours through the library's high school volunteer club. Volunteers can work on special projects or train to become a volunteer shelf reader. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Teen Book Boxes: March

Pick up dates: April 20-25; for students in grades 7-12.

Each month that you register you will pick up a box containing two books selected by the librarians based on your reading preferences for you to borrow as well as some treats to keep. Registration is required and opened April 1.

Teen Book Bedazzling

Saturday, April 25, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.; for students in grades 7-12.

Make your favorite book sparkle. Bring your own hardcover or paperback book and use gem diamond art techniques to bedazzle your book cover. All bedazzling materials will be provided. Registration is required.

American Mah Jongg Club

Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Come to an open play club with fellow Mah Jongg enthusiasts. These sessions are intended for players of all skill levels who are familiar with American Mah Jongg, as instruction is not provided. Participants are encouraged to bring their own American Mah Jongg set and official Mah Jongg card. The library also has a limited number of Mah Jongg sets and cards to use during open play. Games are non-betting as gambling is not allowed in the library. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Adult Book Boxes: April

Pick up dates: April 20-25

Each month that you register you will pick up a box containing two books selected by the librarians based on your reading preferences for you to borrow as well as some treats and other surprises for you to keep. Registration is required and opened April 1.

Friends of the Library Book Sale

Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Friends of the Case Memorial Library will host their spring book sale. There are books for all ages, DVDs, music and specialty displays. The "One-of-a-Kind Finds" table, back by popular demand, will be stocked with a variety of topics. Cash or check only. They are unable to accept

credit cards. Please bring your own bags.

Crochet Club

Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m.

The Hooked on the Sound Crochet Guild meets monthly to share stitch successes, assist with pattern problems, education and generally have a great time crocheting. Bring any crochet project you are working on or one you may need help with. All skill levels are welcome. Please bring your own supplies. This is a drop-in event.

Crash Course Cooking: Cannoli

Saturday, May 2, 2 p.m.

Learn how to make cannoli in this hands-on workshop led by Matthew Yanarella. Space is limited. Registration is required and begins April 11. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

The Bookcase Discussion: Wuthering Heights

Monday, May 4, 7 p.m.

Join Bookcase leader Toby Zabinski for a Zoom discussion of Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte. Registration is required to receive the Zoom link.

Oscar Film Screening: Marty Supreme

Monday, May 11, 6 p.m. and Wednesday, May 13, 1 p.m.

After losing their son Hamnet to plague, Agnes and William Shakespeare grapple with grief in 16th-century England. A healer, Agnes must find strength to care for her surviving children while processing her devastating loss. The film is 2 hours and 5 minutes and rated PG-13. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Mystery Book Discussion Group: The Frozen River

Thursday, May 14, 2 p.m.

Join the library for a discussion of The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon led by Rebecca Harlow. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Banned Books Discussion Group: 1984

Monday, June 1, 7 p.m.

1984 has been frequently challenged in US schools, most recently in Texas, Florida, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Missouri and Idaho, and was historically banned in Soviet-aligned nations, Cuba and North Korea. Join the library for a discussion of this as a work of literature as well as an object of censorship. The discussion is led by Librarian Rebecca Harlow. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Giving Back

A Spotlight on The Canvas Patch

For the past five years that I've run my Purple Pantry Boxes food drive and fundraiser, one local business owner has shown up consistently to support the cause: Marti Reed of The Canvas Patch in downtown Milford. Her generosity is exactly why I started this column – to shine a light on the small businesses that quietly give back to our community year after year.

At a time when we're seeing too many beloved shops and restaurants closing their doors, it's more important than ever to recognize and support the businesses that support us. These are the places that make our towns feel warm, connected and uniquely ours. They are the foundation of our cozy communities.

Marti Reed opened The Canvas Patch in 1977 with her then-husband in Milford. Inspired by their love for the shoreline town they called home, the shop was created as a nautical-inspired retail space featuring canvas goods like bags, hats and log carriers – items thoughtfully chosen to reflect the

Travel Matters

lifestyle and tastes of the local community.

Nearly five decades later, The Canvas Patch remains a staple in downtown Milford.

Reed's connection to the community runs deep. Not only has she built a business here, but she's raised her four children through the Milford school system and stayed actively involved through her church and local organizations like the Milford Arts Council and the Audubon Coastal Center.

Her commitment to giving back is steady and genuine. Reed regularly promotes local charity events in her shop, donates gift cards for fundraisers and supports outreach programs like First Church Outreach Ministries, including Food 2 Kids.

One story she shared perfectly captures the heart behind her business. Years ago, a loyal customer lost her home in a fire. Among the many things lost was a cherished Christmas



WENDY BARRY

heirloom she had purchased from Reed. By chance, Reed still had one left, and was able to gift it to her. It's something that customer never forgot.

Moments like that don't show up on balance sheets, but they define what small

businesses truly mean to a community.

Reed is also candid about the challenges of running a small retail shop today. While kind words and social media praise are always appreciated, she shared an honest truth: they

don't pay the rent. Real support comes from showing up – walking through the door, making a purchase and choosing local whenever possible.

Small businesses, she notes, are often the first to sponsor, donate and show up for local causes. They are deeply woven into the fabric of our towns – not just economically, but

personally.

Reed is excited to participate in Milford's upcoming Pirates Day on June 7, a fun, family-friendly event that brings the community together.

She also wants residents to know about a long-awaited improvement: the new parking garage on River Street. Located less than a block from her shop at 5 River St., it offers 100 free parking spaces, removing one of the biggest barriers people have mentioned about visiting downtown.

Her message to the community is simple, but important: if you value your local businesses, support them in real, tangible ways. Once they're gone, we don't just lose a place to shop – we lose part of what makes our town feel like home.

Know a local business that deserves to be recognized? Email wendy@wbarryrealtor.com to nominate a business for an upcoming column. Let's keep celebrating the people who keep Milford and Orange strong.

Bucket List Cruise To Rio

Sometimes you get lucky enough to sail to somewhere you never thought you would experience. Someplace you can get to on a ship, but not on most itineraries except for world cruises or transatlantic itineraries.

That was what my husband and I just experienced.

For our company's reward cruise for the top 2 percent of agents nationwide, we sailed on the Scenic Eclipse, an all-inclusive luxury yacht that averages 200 guests with a full spa, six restaurants, a marina platform off the back of the ship and butler service for each cabin. Sailing on a yacht this size is similar to a river cruise in that you meet people easily over the course of your eight-day trip.

Eclipse is purpose-built for expeditions. Our sailing embarked from Buenos Aires, just after the November-March Antarctica season, to head north to Rio de Janeiro before sailing over to Europe. When not on ex-

pedition, Scenic Eclipse specializes in off-the-beaten-path destinations. We sailed to Montevideo and Punta del Este in Uruguay, and then up the Brazilian coastline to Porto Bela, Ilhabela and Paraty before arriving to the city that inspired so many hit songs – Rio de Janeiro.

I highly recommend Rio de Janeiro. Much has been said about security issues, but we experienced none of that. We walked on Copacabana Beach, a true "pinch me" moment, and stayed directly across the street. We had a blast at the new Roxy show, which showcases each region of Brazil in music, dancing, costumes and great video effects. It was selected by Time Inc as one of 100 "Not to be missed" activities in 2025.

The next day we climbed Sugar Loaf



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

Mountain by cable car. (The current version is quite improved from the first one built in 1912.) We were amazed to find cafes and boutiques on top along with beautiful viewpoints for photos.

The final stop was saved for the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue, which can be seen from all over Rio de Janeiro. Just the process of climbing that mountain by two different minivans, then a system of elevators and escalators, is jaw-dropping. Nothing prepares you for the moment when you are standing right below the statue looking up at this iconic structure yourself.

Scenic is an Australian company that owns three shipyards, with an ever-growing fleet of river cruise ships along with their luxury yachts. Some of those river cruises are com-

binated with extended luxury land tours such as the Romantic Rhine & Moselle with Wonders of Switzerland and Austria – a 29-day journey that includes Zermatt, Interlaken, Salzburg and Vienna. It's perfect for a celebration of retirement, milestone anniversary or birthday.

Separately, they own another brand called Emerald that offers both river and luxury yachts in warmer climates. We are hosting a group on the brand-new Emerald Kaia in June, with only 128 guests onboard. Sailing the Istrian peninsula of Croatia and Slovenia, it's one of the few ships allowed into the Grand Canal of Venice.

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

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Book Reviews

Good People By Patmeena Sabit

The Sharaf family escaped war-ravaged Afghanistan with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Through hard work and discipline the family has achieved a level of success they never could have imagined. They live in an exclusive neighborhood, and the children go to the most prestigious schools in the area.

Zorah is the family's shining star. Smart and beautiful, she is the perfect student, excelling in her studies. She is also a dutiful, obedient daughter to her parents, Rahmet and Maryam, close to her brother Omer and a faithful adherent to the strict Muslim code enforced by her parents.

Things begin to change when Zorah enters her senior year. Her grades slip, and because of that she is denied a school trip to Paris, a place she longs to see. She begins to lie, and her close friendships deteriorate. It appears that Zorah's attentions have been focused on a teenage boy to the detriment of everything else, including her family.

Along with the physical and psychological changes that happen during her teen years, Zorah begins rebelling against the strict guide-

lines of her Muslim faith – especially when it comes to interacting with non-Muslim boys. Her parents try to do what they believe is right, but her behavior continues to escalate.

The restrictions Zorah faces force her to do something drastic. The results of that action are at the heart of this engrossing novel.

What happened to her? How could a well-raised Afghan girl do what she did? Zorah's questionable behaviors are the main topic of conversation at a neighborhood gathering put on by Rahmet and Maryam.

A suggestion is made that Zorah is now, in the community's eyes, considered damaged goods and should be given in marriage to a less-than-desirable young man. That statement does not sit well with Rahmet. A physical confrontation occurs that causes a division among the Afghan community.

The answer to the question of what happened to Zorah comes from a variety of sources. Through police reports, neighbor statements



CARMELA DEVITO

and newspaper reports, a frightening picture emerges of the Sharafs. To the outside world they present a picture of the perfect family. As doting parents with well-behaved children, they are the epitome of the American success story.

Behind closed doors, however, it is a totally different story. Rahmet is described as a dictator by Zorah. Maryam is complicit in Rahmet's traditional familial structure by not voicing any disagreement with what he says or does.

The one thing the Afghan community all agrees on is that Zorah, running away and living with her boyfriend, brought shame on her family. Somehow the family's honor must be restored.

The Sharafs are not at all cooperative with the police investigation. They hire an attorney to speak for them; part of his job is to act as a barrier between the Sharafs, the police and the local and national media who have picked up on the story.

The family's Muslim background, and the lack of understanding about their culture and traditions from the non-Muslim community, leads to the formation of hate groups focusing on immigrants in general and the Sharafs in particular.

When the official investigation into what happened to Zorah is released, public opinion is divided. Many are convinced that the Sharafs were somehow involved and were absolved of any wrongdoing because they could afford a high-priced attorney. Others fervently believe that the Sharafs were a close, loving family and held firm to the belief that children are a gift from God.

The ending to this book will lead to a great amount of discussion among readers. The novel touches on many subjects that face society today. The book has a very interesting format and was a joy to read. I thoroughly enjoyed this.

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.

Vets Rock Organization Performing In Milford

Rockin' 4 Vets will bring its Rock n' Roll Circus "House Party" to the Parsons Auditorium in Milford on Friday, April 24 in a benefit fundraiser event for the Purple Pantry Boxes, a local food pantry serving the greater Milford area.

The Rock n' Roll Circus features three Grammy nominees, two New England Music Hall of Fame inductees, one Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame inductee, a New York Blues Hall of Fame inductee and more.

The lineup features Jon Butcher, known for his days of Johanna Wild, Jon Butcher

Axis, Barefoot Servants and performing on Experience Hendrix tours. Butcher has toured the country opening for the J. Geils Band, Def Leppard, Rush and the Scorpions among others.

Steve Gaspár, former Epic/CBS recording artist and Grammy-nominated songwriter, will be making his debut with the show. He has toured and recorded with James Brown, Edgar Winter and the Rascals.

Also performing will be James Montgomery, a figure in blues music for over 40 years, an accomplished blues

harpist, singer, front man and bandleader, with his own band, The James Montgomery Band. Montgomery has done sessions and tours over the years with Gregg Allman, Johnny Winter, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Aerosmith, the Rolling Stones, Joe Cocker and James Brown. He's also hosted his own syndicated blues radio show, interviewing and playing the music of numerous blues and blues-rock luminaries.

The show also incorporates a horn section featuring Dan Cipriano, whose career includes performances with Joan Jett, Wilson

Pickett, Mitch Ryder and Spencer Davis. Joining him is Baron Raymonde, who has toured as a member of Rod Stewart's band and performed alongside Blues Brother Matt "Guitar" Murphy.

Greg Sherrod, a Connecticut-based singer whose style spans soul, blues, rock, funk and more will deliver vocals at the event vocals.

Doors open at 7 p.m.; the show runs from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Ticket start at \$43.45. For tickets and more information, visit rockin4vets.com/tickets.

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Cameras

(Continued From 1)

committee to vet the proposals that come in before the full board approves a contract.

The cameras generally capture images of license plates as cars pass them. They have primarily been adopted to deter unsafe driving, but police have also used the data to help solve certain types of crimes.

Though automated traffic cameras have been proliferating, there have also been recent revelations that the data collected may not be as secure as promised. Several jurisdictions have found that their data was used in searches from other states, raising concerns that it could be used for such things as going after immigrants or people coming to Connecticut for reproductive care.

Disclosing such information could run afoul of state laws, including the Trust Act meant to prevent local law enforcement from cooperating with federal immigration authorities.

The town of Windsor in February turned off its license plate readers over privacy concerns while they revisit their contract with vendor Flock Safety.

The state legislature is also considering a bill that would further restrict how license plate reader data could be used. It would require the data to be deleted after seven days unless it is being used for a court proceeding or to collect fines. It would ban use of the data for immigration enforcement, investigating people seeking abortions or transgender care, or for identifying people “engaged in an activity protected under the First Amendment.”

Selectman Mitch Goldblatt asked Weaver about data protection during the

meeting.

“I know this is a concern of a lot of people...the information that is garnered by all this is kept by the town of Orange and will not be disclosed unless the town of Orange allows it to be, am I correct in that?” he asked.

“I put in safety protocols that should be part of the bid proposal for us to consider,” Weaver responded. “So you can evaluate the vendors in terms of how they’ll protect the information that’s gathered through the cameras.”

Board of Finance

(Continued From 1)

said in opening the discussion, pointing to \$1.75 million in savings that the Board of Education had managed to find in their proposal.

Finance member Damon Ralph said a tour of the schools he had taken with education officials had been “a little alarming.”

“I found several of our buildings to be lacking, from inadequate classroom sizes, to toilets installed before I was born, to boilers that could go literally any day, to buildings themselves being at or beyond their useful life. The only conclusion a reasonable person could come to is that we have been underinvesting in our schools for too long,” he said.

“This budget is struggling just to maintain the status quo, and I’m not sure it does,” he added, listing cuts that were made to professional development, summer school, technology and instructional supplies.

Board member Jeffrey Matchett, however, called the budget request “disproportionately large.”

“Over the past several years, Milford’s

Board of Education budget increases have exceeded those of surrounding towns and communities despite similar pressures. We cannot continue down this path without it risking greater strain on our taxpayers and imbalance across city priorities,” he said. He added that other city departments have implemented reductions to keep taxes from rising as much.

Member Ray Arnold pointed out that a proposal to add armed security officers to the eight elementary schools and The Academy, plus a lead officer, accounted for a significant portion of the budget increase. The cost to the district for the officers would be about \$576,000.

Arnold said Superintendent Anna Cutaia’s lobbying for the officers during budget workshops with the Board of Finance had impressed him.

“Dr. Cutaia’s commitment to the safety of the students was awe-inspiring,” he said.

Arnold voted for the budget along with Ranges and Ralph. Matchett and Chair Scott Moulton voted against it.

The finance board also approved an increase of 5.75 percent on the city side of the budget, bringing the combined total to \$278,267,615.

The mill rate, which determines property taxes, would fall by 0.98 from last year to 28.57 thanks to a large boost in the city’s grand list. However, a recently-completed citywide revaluation will likely mean that many taxpayers will still end up paying more for properties that have risen in value.

Phase-In

(Continued From 1)

rises, so does the cost.”

All Connecticut municipalities are

required by the state to undergo a revaluation every five years to update property values.

Home values around Connecticut have risen rapidly since the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting an exodus of people from nearby cities and a multi-decade dearth in new housing construction.

At the same time, many types of commercial properties have stayed flat or lost value, thanks in part to the rise of e-commerce, remote work and the long-running ebb of manufacturing.

Finance Director Peter Erodici said the only type of commercial properties that rose significantly in Milford were apartments, which went up at a similar rate to other homes, by 43 percent.

Smith said that implementing the full results of the revaluation all at once would lead to tax increases well over 10 percent for many residents. Those increases would come even though the city is likely to lower the tax rate by nearly one full mill through the \$278 million budget proposal currently under consideration.

“It still catches up with us,” Smith noted. “But what we’ve done is softened the blow.”

Alderman Michael Casey suggested that some businesses might feel that a phase-in would be unfair, since for them it would mean the city continues collecting a larger proportion of taxes from them than would be the case under immediate implementation.

Erodici responded that regardless of how anyone felt about a phase-in, the city had the authority to enact it under state law.

Milford last adopted a phase-in starting in 2006 but cut it short in 2009.

Casey and Win Smith, both Republicans, were the only votes against the proposal.

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Milford Garden Club To Demonstrate Early Blooms For Summer Bulbs



Primavera.

The Milford Garden Club will host Patricia Primavera, certified master gardener through UCONN, for a presentation on April 29 at the Milford Public Library on how to force summer bulbs for earlier bloom.

Primavera will demonstrate how to plant bulbs, tubers or corms in containers for porch and patio gardens. The program will be held in the library's meeting room. Doors open at 6 p.m. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. with a Q&A and refreshments to follow.

The Milford Public Library is located at 57 New Haven Ave. For more information, visit facebook.com/MilfordCtGardenClub or email milfordgardenclubct@gmail.com.

Milford Attorney Elected To State Fellows Program

Attorney David Slossberg of Milford was elected a 2026 Fellow of the Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows Program.

Fellows are nominated by their peers based on their outstanding service to the profession and larger community and are elected by CBF's board of directors.

"I am so pleased to welcome our new fellows," said attorney Anika Singh Lemar, president of CBF's board of directors. "Their nominations and selection evidence their service to this legal community and our shared commitment to the rule of law and access to justice. I look forward to their contributions to the James W. Cooper Fellows Program."

CBF's mission is to facilitate systemic change that advances civil justice for all, regardless of power or resources, to achieve a more just and equitable society. Fellows' programs tackle topics of timely importance to the legal community and include several speaker series, symposia, roundtable discussions, mentorships, and a high school

essay contest.

Slossberg is owner and managing partner at Hurwitz Sagarin & Slossberg LLC in Milford. He received a bachelor's from Columbia University in 1986 and a JD from New York University School of Law in 1988. He was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1994.

Slossberg has been active in several professional organizations, including the Federal Bar Council, the Federal Bar Foundation, the Federal Court's Public Outreach Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, the Connecticut Class Action Rules Committee and the Connecticut Statewide Grievance Committee.

He has also been active in the Milford community with Milford Progress, Inc., the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Devon Rotary Foundation, The United Way of Milford and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

Slossberg's wife is former state Sen. Gayle Slossberg. They live in Milford and have three children: Becca, Alex and Jeremy.

Daycare Center Opens In Orange



The Amity Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on March 10 to celebrate the grand opening of early child care and education business Cozy Place Learning Center at 109 Boston Post Rd. in Orange. Owner Maria Anthony, pictured center with scissors, was joined by her husband, Ralph, along with Cozy Place parents, friends, staff and family members. An open house and tours of the facility followed. Photo courtesy of the Amity Chamber of Commerce.

Orange Industrial Property Sold For \$2 Million

Colonial Properties of Orange represented buyer HIS Group, LLC, in the March purchase of 283 Indian River Rd. in Orange, a 22,090 square-foot freestanding light industrial building situated on 2.5 acres. The property sold for \$2,090,000.

The buyer, represented by Kosta Eliopoulos of Colonial, acquired the property as an investment. The building is currently occupied by Kelvion Corporation and a business specializing in boiler parts.

The seller, PTNT Properties, LLC, was represented by Bruce Wettenstein, managing

partner of Vidal/Wettenstein in Westport.

The seller was represented by Attorney Peter Ambrose of Ambrose & Strazza in Fairfield. The buyer was represented by Attorney Nate Hakanoglu of Hakanoglu Law in West Haven.

"This was a very appealing industrial investment opportunity, which are in high demand and short supply. We were pleased to be able to present this property to our client and facilitate a successful negotiation and purchase," said Colonial President Michael Richetelli.

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Local Poets Share Their Musings

In celebration of National Poetry Month in April, the Milford-Orange Times invited area residents to submit their poetry for publication. A selection of those submissions is printed here.

A Necklace Made of Rubies Awaits the Moon

Elaine Nadal
Milford Poet Laureate

Father says no one cries blood.
I imagine my tears red,
realizing the moon has specks of blood too.
I want to wipe them the way I long to be held
so that I don't break.

I carry a monster that's loud
and a silence and shame that are louder.

Blue notes to wash the soil.
Red chords and strings of arpeggios.

I'm alone. My grandmother was alone
with twelve kids and twenty grandchildren.

Blue notes to gather the soil.
I pick up the guitar and make it cry.
My song has bridge, body, backbone, boundless soul,
blue bell flowers, roots of palm trees, an avocado seed,
my grandmother's eyes, her morning prayers:

You're going to be okay. The whale will spit you out. You will revive dead stars.

Blue notes to part the sea.

Untitled

Marie Brown
Orange

On a tree-lined green in Ct.
Resides
A town known for its friendly
Neighborhoods
Generous and community- oriented
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Untitled

Sierra Tarantino
Milford

I want to take the bits of you I love
and press them like flowers between
the page of my favorite book

and I want to take all the scraps
that you dislike in yourself
and display them on my refrigerator,
to show you I'm still proud
of the person you are
and the person you are becoming

but most of all, I want to spin you
like a globe and drag my finger
across till it stops,
to discover the pieces of you that you've
yet to reveal to anyone else

I want to wrap them up in a blanket
and place them in a box.
I'd tuck it away safely in the
top drawer of my bedside table,
so you know I'll never let
these pieces of you go

because when you share hidden
parts of yourself with someone else,
you're trusting that person
to hold the secret sections of your heart
and to love the bits you thought
were unlovable

Shadow Box

Brandon T. Bisceglia
Editor-in-Chief

When you smile,
your cheeks purse and draw upward,
framing your eyes like the window of a shadow box.

My reflection is absorbed
by the fathomless glass of your gaze.

Wandering on the Farm

Matilda Y. Dumbrill
Orange

Trees once leafed full green now bare-limbed with spikes like hands
Reaching out to catch the snow.
Blossoms soon will fall to bring apples from the buds
Greens or reds—who knows

Big puffy white clouds form animals in the sky
Shaped by artists in the blue.
Alas, the brushless wind cares nothing for the art
It blows— art, all gone

Caterpillars crawl over bark and leaves of trees
Some green, some striped, fat or thin.
The future form hidden until the right time comes
Ah— a butterfly.

Try to remember golden leaves of October
In the dark of winter days.
Come spring, come summer, come fall—Nature promises
Golden leaves again.

Cows moo, sheep baa and farmers heed their pleading calls
To milk or feed them daily.
No day off in the farming life for man or beast
Thanks— we all eat well.

Veins of the Earth

Blayze Germain Markoya
Orange

As is above
so is below

the leaves
of the tree

the roots
that will grow

these
veins of the Earth
that pulse
and live so

from where
do they come
to where
do they go

such questions
are those
that
concern none

what life
is on Earth
is part
of the One

Morehouse

Nicholas Saylor
Milford

Bloom and press the lilac flower,
Lay her under glass,
Hang her face askew and sour
For those to gaze and pass.
Salt the earth where once she stood
And mark it with a stone,
As even those who walk the town stride just to be alone.
A changeling borne of distant love
Hair darker by the day
What is now a frosty, bleak October
Was once a verdant May.
Ache for nothing, want for not
Be quickly on your path
Leave the city, leave the shore
Avoid the winter's wrath.
Through the woods and past the meadow
Rapt on her chore,
She came about a place to settle
And built a house upon the moor.

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.

Gerald T. Benson, 83, of Milford, beloved spouse of Judith Benson for 54 years, passed away on March 27, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Magda Emelia Borroto, age 94, of Milford, beloved wife of the Guillermo Borroto, entered peaceful rest on March 30, 2026 at her home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Jennifer Lynn Brenes, 50, of Milford, passed away peacefully on March 30, 2026 at Yale New Haven Hospital while surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Joan M. Costello, of Milford, beloved wife of Peter Costello for 69 years, passed away peacefully on February 26, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Jeffrey Michael Detoro of Milford passed away unexpectedly on March 17, 2026. He was born on February 13, 1984. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Jean Y. Dorfeuille, age 71, of Milford, beloved husband of Nancy Marcelin for 25 years, died peacefully at home on March 12, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Martha Constance Farrington, née Gerlormine, aged 79, passed away on March 14 2026. Marti was a well-known figure in Milford. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Dorothy Louise (Jarmie) Flynn, 85, of Orange, entered into rest on March 26, 2026. (West Haven Home)

Joseph V. Giorla Sr., 91, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Vernell Giorla nee Iden, passed away on March 25, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Joyce Patricia Held, 65, of Milford, passed away on March 8, 2026. Born on March 13, 1960 in Milford, CT, she was the daughter of the late Raymond and Helen Brown. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Patricia A. Hoey, 90, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away peacefully at her home on March 8, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Patricia Lilly, 81, of Milford, beloved wife of the late John Patrick Lilly, passed away on March 7, 2026. (Cody-White Doyle Funeral Home)

James W. O'Brien, 89, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of the late Georgette (Haskins) O'Brien, passed away on March 5th at home surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

It is with profound sadness the family of **Aaron J. Pelaccia** announce his passing on March 20, 2026 at 42 years old. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Carmela M. "Bunny" Petrucelli, age 87 of Milford, passed away peacefully on Friday March 6, 2026, at Orange Rehabilitation and Health Care Center in Orange. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Joan Rainey, 96, of Milford, beloved wife of the late David Rainey, passed away on March 13, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Brian (Richie) Turner, 83, of Milford, beloved husband of Jacqueline Berry Turner, passed away on Saturday, March 14, 2026 with his loving family by his side. (Abriola Parkview Funeral Home)



Elmer G. Rowe, 90, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Susan MacDonald Rowe passed away on March 22, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dr. Pang-Hsung Wang, 85, of Milford, beloved husband of Mei-Lee (Pan) Wang, passed away on March 10, 2026 just 3 days before his 86th birthday. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Joseph Vincent Shay, of Milford, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family, on March 26, 2026, the day after his 96th birthday. (Abriola Parkview Funeral Home)



Ulrich Sigmund "Uli" Weil passed away suddenly on March 8, 2026. He was predeceased by his parents, Dr. Ulrich Weil and Ruth Weil.



Diane Deborah (Kane) Smith, age 69, of Milford, CT, beloved wife of John Smith, passed away after a brief illness into the loving arms of Jesus on Saturday, March 7, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Daniel W. Wywoda, age 93, of Milford, beloved husband of Anne Wywoda, passed away peacefully on March 15th, 2026 surrounded by his family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



TOWN OF ORANGE: Legal Notice

A certified list of party-selected candidates for the Republican Party in the Town of Orange for participation as DELEGATES to the conventions of said Party specified below is on file in my office at 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut, and copies are available for public distribution:

Conventions:

- State Convention
- State Senate 14th District
- State House 114th District
- State House 117th District
- State House 119th District

Mary Shaw, Orange Town Clerk
Orange, CT

TOWN OF ORANGE: Legal Notice

A certified list of party-selected candidates for the Democratic Party in the Town of Orange for participation as DELEGATES to the conventions of said Party specified below is on file in my office located at 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, Connecticut, and copies are available for public distribution:

Conventions:

- State Convention
- 3rd Congressional District
- State Senate 14th District
- State House 114th District
- State House 117th District
- State House 119th District
- Judge of Probate

Mary Shaw, Orange Town Clerk
Orange, CT

2026 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program Now Accepting Applications

A "fillable" form NAA-01 is available on the DRS website at portal.ct.gov/DRS. Using the fillable form NNA-01 enables you to input information directly onto the form via computer.

Copies of the completed forms may be submitted to Ann Denny by fax at 203-891-2185, emailed to adenny@orange-ct.gov, mailed or hand delivered to Town of Orange, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT 06477.

All applications must be received in the Town of Orange First Selectman's Office no later than Monday May 4, 2026. Following receipt of the applications, the Selectmen will schedule a public hearing to receive comments on the applications.

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