



Milford-Orange Times

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Colonial Times Come To Life In Orange



Vexillologist and History Reenactor Tom Angels visited the Orange Congregational Church on April 25 to discuss the symbolism of Americas Colonial flags at a program sponsored by the Orange Historical Society celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Milfordites Walk 'In Her Shoes'



The Rape Crisis Center of Milford held its 19th annual "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" fundraiser walk in downtown Milford on April 26. The event encourages participants to walk in women's heels to raise awareness against rape, sexual assault and gender violence. Additional photos on page 22. Photo by Robert Creigh.

Milford BOE Delays Vote On School Consolidations

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Board of Education on April 27 delayed a planned vote on a long-range plan to replace and consolidate the district's aging suite of school buildings.

The delay came after members of the community at a meeting the week prior raised conflicting concerns over the construction schedule and implementation details.

"We are grateful for our community participation throughout the entire process, including at more recent public engagement sessions. Your feedback, questions, and insights have been invaluable. It is clear that our community is deeply invested in

the future of our district, and we want you to know that all feedback has been heard and is being taken into consideration," Superintendent Anna Cutaia and Board Chair Susan Glennon wrote in a joint letter to the community prior to the April 27 meeting.

The board has already decided that it will maintain two high schools. It has also voted to reduce the number of middle schools from three to two, merging the students from Harborside between East Shore and West Shore.

Continued on page 23

Fred Wolfe Park Enters Phase 1

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Phase 1 of the Fred Wolfe Park Master Plan is officially a go.

The Orange Board of Selectmen voted unanimously at their April 8 meeting to move forward with the initial stage of the park's overhaul as designed by contractor BL Companies.

Phase 1 would focus primarily on the south and southwest portion of the park and include the redevelopment of entrances at Oakview Drive and Hollow Road. It would eliminate a current roadway that cuts through the center of the park and has been identified as a safety hazard, instead looping cars around the southern edge.

This would only be the first of a five-phase process to be completed over a number of years. BL has estimated the total cost at around \$20 million.

Phase 2 would see a third entrance built out to Meetinghouse Lane and complete the park's internal loop for cars.

Phase 3 focuses on rehabilitating the central fields. The fourth phase tackles the eastern section with environmental remediation and the building of sport courts, maintenance buildings and a possible community building. Finally, Phase 5

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Kennedy Running For Reelection In 119th District



Kennedy

Republican state Rep. Kathy Kennedy on April 9 announced she is running for reelection to serve a fourth term representing the 119th Assembly District, which includes parts of Milford and Orange.

"Affordability isn't a slogan - it's a necessity. I'm running for another term to make sure families can afford to live, work and thrive right here at home," Kennedy said. "I have fought for additional property tax relief for homeowners, the elimination of the onerous public benefits charge on your UI electric bill, as well as the repeal of the prepared meals tax."

First elected in 2018, Kennedy currently

Continued on page 2

Wheeler's Farm Office Park To Become Apartments

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

A former office park on Wheeler's Farm Road in Milford near the Merritt Parkway will become an apartment complex with over 500 units under a plan approved by the city's Planning and Zoning Board on

April 21.

The plan calls for seven four-story buildings containing 364 apartments; one building with 150 age-restricted apartments for

Continued on page 11

Graduating?

Are you a graduating high school student living in Milford or Orange? We want to share your story. Email editor@theorangetimes.com by May 25.



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Milford Sets Spending, Hiring Freeze

Milford Mayor Rich Smith has announced the implementation of a spending and hiring freeze for all city Departments effective April 1, according to a release. He has requested city grant agencies, as well as the Board of Education to take the same or similar budgetary controls.

“As we enter the last quarter of fiscal year 25/26, we face pressing budget challenges, some resulting from new labor contracts the city entered last year as well as increasing health care costs, rising operational costs, an unusually difficult winter as well as other current economic conditions. This hiring and spending freeze will serve to steady the financial landscape as we work within the final quarter of FY 25/26 budget,” Smith said.

The following spending controls were enacted:

- A freeze on all new hires, including seasonal/temporary, and vacant positions

will not be filled for the remainder of the fiscal year without approval of the mayor.

- No transfers out of wage accounts.
- No transfers out of utility and fuel accounts.
- A spending freeze on all non-essential operational or capital expenditures.
- Out of state travel will be frozen except for that which was previously approved.
- Overtime must be used only in an emergency or under extenuating circumstances. Use of overtime must be controlled by department heads.

“I understand these fiscal constraints may present challenges, but I’d like to thank the department heads and all city personnel for their flexibility and support of this initiative as we look to a smooth landing to close out FY 25/26 and on to FY 26/27,” Smith added.

Milford is currently in the final stages of adopting a new budget for the coming fiscal year.

Kennedy

(Continued From 1)

serves on the Appropriations, Public Health and Education committees, and is the House ranking member of the Transportation Committee, where she has worked to advance policies to improve affordability, safety and opportunity for district residents.

Kennedy’s campaign highlighted some of the key points of her tenure, including supporting historic tax relief, including the largest income tax cut in Connecticut’s history to help families and seniors keep more of their hard-earned dollars. She has also championed public safety and traffic safety legislation, such as a law to install wrong-way driving detection systems and support safer roadways. She has advocated for enhanced protections for domestic violence victims, improved children’s mental health services

and better health care outcomes for women.

Kennedy said she has worked to preserve local control over zoning, opposing efforts at the state level to override that control.

She has also served as the Connecticut state director for Women in Government, which helps elevate the role of women leaders in policy development.

Kennedy mentioned how she is proud of her work in the Transportation Committee, crediting laws passed through that committee with a significant reduction in highway deaths last year.

She said she remains committed to listening to her constituents, fostering bipartisan solutions and putting the needs of Milford and Orange residents first.

“I am honored to serve this community, and I look forward to continuing our work to make Connecticut more affordable, safer and stronger,” Kennedy said.

Orange To Celebrate Living Treasures At Pasta Festa

Orange Community Services will host the 21st annual Pasta Festa supper and Living Treasure Awards on Friday, May 15 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at St Barbara’s Greek Orthodox Church in Orange.

This year’s Living Treasure recipients are

Carla Birmingham, Joe Davis, Jim Ewen and Ken Lenz.

St. Barbara is located at 480 Racebrook Rd. in Orange. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased by calling 203-891-4784.

Case Memorial Show To Portray Life Of Abigail Adams

Actress Sheryl Faye will perform her live, one-woman, multimedia show entitled “Abigail Adams - Liberty and Legacy” at the Case Memorial Library in Orange on Saturday, May 30 at 2 p.m.

“Through Adams’ own letters and writings – paired with contemporary staging, original music, and technology – the show invites audiences to experience her enduring relevance in conversations about liberty, equality, leadership and civic responsibility,” Faye says of her performance. She adds that Adams was “a stalwart feminist, a champion of women’s rights and equality under the law.”

The Friends of the Case Memorial Li-

brary will host their annual business meeting prior to the show at 1 p.m. The agenda includes the election of new board members, awarding of the Lucia Scillia scholarships and a report from the treasurer. President of the Friends Phyllis Gwatin will also present her year-end review that includes how donations and book sales have helped to fund events and other projects for the library.

At 1:30 p.m., guests may enjoy refreshments before the show begins.

The event is free and open to the public; registration is required. Registration opens May 9 at 7 a.m. Register at casememoriallibrary.org or call 203-891-2170.

Milford Creative Nonprofit Launches

Milford Makes, a new nonprofit founded by local graphic designer Jen Conlon, is building toward a makerspace and creative reuse center in Milford. The long-term goal is to provide a shared space for making, learning and access to donated creative materials, according to a release from the organization.

While that vision develops, the organization is already hosting workshops and pop-up events focused on creativity, accessibility and sustainability. Recent and up-


coming programs include weaving, collage and visible mending sessions designed for beginners.

“I wanted to create something that felt approachable,” said Conlon. “This is about removing barriers and helping people get started.”

Milford Makes is also collecting donated art and craft supplies to support workshops, community partnerships and future low-cost creative reuse access. More information is available at milfordmakes.org.



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Italian Deli Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on April 22 to celebrate the grand opening of Italian deli R & M Cutlet Co. at 575 New Haven Ave. in Milford. The deli features cutlets, imported Italian salami and house-made spreads. From left: Milford Mayor Rich Smith, co-owners Matt Nittoly, Ryan Trevehan and Michael Hazzard, Milford Director of Economic and Community Development Robert Townes and MRCC Director Simon McDonald. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*

Barber Studio Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on April 14 to celebrate the grand opening of Most Wanted Barber Studio at 225 Bridgeport Ave. in Milford. The barber shop specializes in modern and classic haircuts, beard grooming and personalized styles tailored to each client. From left: MRCC Director Simon McDonald, Milford Mayor Rich Smith, Milford Director of Economic and Community Development Robert Townes and owner Hector Santana. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*

Smith Appoints Carol Mitten As Director Of Permitting & Land Use

Milford Mayor Rich Smith on April 9 announced the appointment of Carol Mitten as Milford's new Director of Permitting & Land Use following a thorough and extensive recruitment process. Mitten began her role on April 6.

Most recently, Mitten served as city administrator for the Urbana, Illinois, where she led complex initiatives to enhance service delivery, strengthen financial sustainability and guide long-term planning efforts. She resigned from that role in May 2025 shortly before Urbana Mayor De-Shawn Williams was sworn in, according to The News-Gazette.

"Her collaborative leadership style, commitment to transparency, and focus on 'firm, fair and consistent' service have made a lasting impact on the communities and organizations she has served," Smith's office said in a release.

Mitten holds a master of business administration in real estate and a bachelor of arts in English from The Ohio State University.

"We are excited to welcome Carol to our team," Smith said. "Her experience, perspective and leadership will be invaluable as we continue working together to serve our community."

Creative Studio Opens In Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on April 9 to celebrate the grand opening of Rumble Creative Studios at 427 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. The studio provides styled sets, professional photography and video production. From left: Milford Mayor Rich Smith, co-owners Brad Rumble and Karen Rumble-Carter, and MRCC Director Simon McDonald. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*



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Orange Elementary Students Compete In District Spelling Bee



Grades 5 and 6 spelling bee participants from left to right: Md Rakin Ahsan, Peck Place; Bihan Sharma, Turkey Hill; Alessia Calcaterra, Peck Place; Charlee Wolverton, Turkey Hill; River Vora, Race Brook; and Max McCutchen, Race Brook. Photo courtesy of Denise Arterbery.



Grades 3 and 4 spelling bee participants from left to right Hana Tran, Peck Place; Caroline Wong, Peck Place; Blaise Parlato, Race Brook; Aiden Ku, Turkey Hill; Iditri Nadadur, Race Brook; and Alexander Burns, Turkey Hill. Photo courtesy of Denise Arterbery.

Students across the Orange elementary school district showcased their spelling skills at two spelling bees held on April 9 at the Board of Education office.

The evening began with a competition featuring students from grades three and four competing in a bee, followed by a second bee for students in grades five and six. Each elementary school was represented by two contestants per division, all of whom earned their place through a rigorous process that began with classroom spelling bees. Classroom winners advanced

to school-wide competitions, where the top two spellers on each grade level were selected to represent their schools at the district level.

Friends, families, teachers and administrators were able to celebrate the spellers during intermission.

The grade 3 and 4 division winner was Caroline Wong of Peck Place; the runner-up was Blaise Parlato of Race Brook. The grade 5 and 6 division winner was MD Rakin Ahsan of Peck Place; the runner-up was Max McCutchen of Race Brook.

Girl Scouts Clean Up In Orange



Girl Scout 6th grade Cadette troop 60165 from Orange helped and picked up trash at the local Wepawaug Trail off Mapledale Drive on June 21 in coordination with the Orange Conservation Committee in honor of Earth Day. Photo by Sarah Jorge.

Milford Artisan Market Coming For 10th Year

Celebrating 10 years as Milford's creative community event, the 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 St. in downtown Milford. Admission is free.

"We're excited to celebrate our 10th year of showcasing local talented artists and craftspeople at the Artisan Market," said event organizer Alison Kosakowski, owner of Artisan Events by Ally. "Shop for a gift for mom or bring her and the family to the market during Mother's Day weekend to browse all of the unique, handmade products for sale."

The biannual event will feature over 160 local artisans and makers, its largest vendor group ever, who will be offering 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, and it will feature Mother's Day photo opportunities and kids' activities.

The market will include a full hour of free Kundalini yoga on Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m., plus entertainment from Carol Farrell School of Dancing and live music from Lord of the Cello, The Sawtelles, Inner Groove and Hannah's Field. Street food will be offered from vendors including TT's BBQ, Paradise Island Food, Brew Haus and Pickle Culture along with homemade treats from various artisan vendors.

Learn more at facebook.com/milfordartisanmarket.

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Tuesday, May 19th, 5:30-7:30 pm
 Stonebridge Restaurant - Milford
 Join Us For A Meet & Greet • Raffles • Tasty Apps & More

The Network of Executive Women cordially invites all women in management and entrepreneurs to our annual Open House.

Come and meet supportive business women and find out about our organization which has been in existence for over 45 years!

Limited space. Please register early and bring lots of business cards!

Experience What Happens When Professional, Empowering & Compassionate Women Come Together!

Optional: Stay And Join Us For Dinner Too!!

Please join us at Stonebridge Restaurant's Funds for Friends Tuesday, May 19th -All Day-

Bring this slip with you and give to your server. N.E.W. will receive percentage of sales for our scholarship fund based on your food bill.

We hope to see you there!

Network of Executive Women

Scan QR code to register or visit our website for more information. www.networkofexecutivewomen.org

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Milford Serves Up Foodie Fest



The Downtown Milford Business Association brought regional tastes to Wasson Field in Milford on May 1 and 2 during its second annual CT Foodie Fest. The festival featured food trucks, a tug-of-war battle, live bands, and a Pizza Battle in partnership with the New Haven Pizza School where attendees could taste and help judge the competition. *Photos by Robert Creigh.*

Calling Students in Grades 4, 5, and 6

Explore America 250

ESSAY CONTEST

Calling Students in Grades 4, 5, and 6

Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary!

Write an essay on:

- ★ What stories, people, or events helped shape our country?
- ★ What makes America special today?
- ★ What are your hopes and dreams for the next 250 years?

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1776

Join the Journey to 2026! ★

- ★ One student in each school will be selected.
- ★ Winners will read their essays at the Orange 4th of July fireworks celebration on July 3rd, 2026
- Submissions due to Town Hall by May 25th, 2026
- ★ Should be typed response.

Opinion & Editorial

State Rep., District 114

Better Support For Families

This has been a difficult year in Connecticut with many very publicized incidents of children being abused and neglected, and in some incredibly tragic cases, children dying.

As a body, the legislature knew that we needed to do something to address these situations, but there were additional concerns within the child welfare space that also needed attention. Foster families had not seen an increase in rates for over a decade, and neither had financial support for grandparents who have taken in their grandchildren in times of need.

Between the pandemic and what we called the “silver tsunami” in 2022 (a larger than typical group of state employees retiring early), the Department of Children and Families saw a massive drop in the number of experienced case workers on staff. Simultaneously, the

acuity of the needs of children within the DCF system rose drastically, and the number of foster families dropped significantly.

The work done within DCF is some of the most critically important but also the most challenging in the state, and any policy work addressing it needs to be done with care and respect for the people who provide that care and those who receive it.

Over the past many months, the Children’s Committee has been listening to families, advocates, various agencies in the state, and too many others to list here as we tried to craft legislation that would lay the foundation for more transparency and accountability within



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

DCF and lead to better support for families and case workers.

We brought the resulting proposal to the floor in the House on April 30. It contained 23 sections. Some sections increased financial support for foster families of all kinds, created grant programs to help offset the costs of child care and enrichment programs for kids in the foster care system and codified an existing program that assists in post-secondary education expenses. Other sections created a stipend for experienced case workers who mentor newly hired case workers and provided funding for personal emergency communication devices for employees. It also created an oversight committee that will look at

all aspects of the agency and the work that it does to both improve the process and inform the public about the internal work that is already done.

I am incredibly proud to share that our bill passed unanimously out of the House. At the time I am writing this the Senate has not yet taken it up, but I am confident it will be strongly supported in that chamber as well.

No matter the topic, no one piece of legislation can fix everything, and that doubly applies to a subject as sensitive and nuanced as child welfare. But I believe this legislation is a reasonable and necessary first step.

I welcome any feedback on this, or any other topic. You can reach me via email at mary.welander@cga.ct.gov or through options on my state webpage at housedems.ct.gov/Welander.

Maintaining Your Calm During Market Volatility

By Gray Peckham

Not surprisingly, we’ve fielded many calls and had frequent meetings with our clients in the last month, many of whom have expressed worry about their finances and the ability of their portfolios to withstand a stock market downturn.

While the actual volatility of the market is beyond our control, we help clients in times like this regain a sense of agency and a degree of calm by focusing not on the ups and downs of the market itself, but on their overall preparedness for those ups and downs.

Focusing on a simple, repeatable process that we use throughout the year helps filter out some of the noise so clients can make decisions more clearly.

I watch a good bit of sports on TV, and within the last year, athletes giving interviews to sports reporters have taken to talking about how they “stick to their process” to prepare or win games. I can see why – it helps them focus in times of stress or when the game starts to move quickly. We do the same with our clients, on a frequent basis.

Beyond market and financial volatility, we find our framework to be useful because it

promotes a better understanding of the various roles that each dollar and type of account plays in a client’s planning. Once the basic framework is in place, we can integrate details like taxation by account type and tax efficiency to bring the framework to life.

When it comes to making sure our finances are durable during times of volatility, we start by looking at cash for unexpected expenses. It’s old-school advice, but hard-won and time-tested. Having cash in the bank for the inevitable unforeseen expenses that we all encounter (new appliance, car repair, medical expense) can prevent us from having to raid our investment accounts at times when the market is down, which hurts long-term asset value. How much cash a given person or family should maintain and how to maintain it efficiently are areas that we put a good deal of work into and tend to vary by a given client’s situation.

Once we have ensured that a client has cash to bridge potential shortfalls, we focus on protection. The meaning of protection in finance frequently depends on your stage of life. If you are just starting a family, protection can mean making sure that there is life insurance in place. In the context of the

volatility conversation, protection typically means protecting a client’s principal from the market while attempting to earn interest. There are several ways to do this, but common protection tools include treasury and municipal bonds for tax efficiency, money market funds for short-term use and sometimes tax-deferral vehicles like fixed annuities.

If we’ve put the work into protection, we can move on to growth. Taking a true measure of a client’s risk capacity as well as their risk tolerance is important in making sure a given portfolio can withstand volatility. At its core, the task is to ensure that the level of risk in your portfolio is appropriate for your situation in life. We accomplish this through simple but effective analytics.

One of the key components of the growth conversation is to ensure that even when the market trends downwards and clients naturally feel more defensive, they maintain enough exposure to certain asset classes to keep up with inflation. It can be a balancing act and sometimes uncomfortable, but knowing that we have cash and protection vehicles can blunt the discomfort of watching a down day in the market.

Once we’ve put the work into these three categories and have made any necessary adjustments, we find that clients generally come away with a higher level of financial resilience, have better visibility into how their money will react to volatility and an easier time cutting through the clutter to make better decisions. They will know that they have put the work into making sure that they are covered for unexpected expenses, have a level of protection and that their market portfolios are appropriate for them.

Gray Peckham is an Osaic Institutions financial advisor for TMB Financial Solutions and a vice president of The Milford Bank. He has almost 25 years of financial industry experience, having spent the first 18 years as an analyst and capital allocator for financial research, Wall Street brokerage, foundation and asset management firms. He has served as an advisor since 2019 and enjoys immensely the work of helping clients plan for their futures. Gray is a retirement income certified professional, earned a BA from Boston College, an MA from Yale University, and spent nine years as an intelligence officer in the US Naval Reserve.

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.

Orange Celebrating America at 250

To the Editor:

As the days pass, our nation draws ever closer to celebrating its 250th birthday, a historic milestone in the life of the US.

Our nation recently welcomed His Majesty King Charles III and Queen Camilla as part of the official commencement of this national celebration.

As chairman of the America 250 Orange CT Committee, I would like to provide an update on our local celebrations since my initial report at April’s Board of Selectmen meeting.

I am pleased to share that our America 250 Essay Contest has officially launched within the Orange Elementary School system.

I would also like to note that students who are homeschooled or town residents who attend schools outside of the Orange school system are absolutely welcome to participate as well.

I am also excited to announce that we have secured a very special guest – and a rising star in Connecticut – to lead us in our National Anthem during our July 3 celebration. Addison Prunier of New Haven County will be our featured vocalist. Prunier currently performs the National Anthem for Quinnipiac sports as well as the Hartford Yard Goats, and we are honored to have her join us in celebrating our nation.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that the Chester Fife and Drum Corps will officially open our July 3 event with the timeless patriotic music that stirred the spirit of 1776 and helped shape the birth of our republic.

In coordination with Chris Kelly of Orange Government Access Television, along with our local veterans, law enforcement and emergency services personnel, we will also be filming and broadcasting a special reading of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence. This video will be recorded over Memorial Day weekend and released ahead of our July 4 celebration. More details will be announced soon.

As you pass by Town Hall, you will see our official America 250 flag flying proudly beneath the American flag, a visible reminder that Orange stands ready to honor our nation’s past and celebrate its future.

We have much more to come and are deeply grateful for the support of our com-

munity as we continue preparing for this once-in-a-generation celebration.

Dominick Lombardi

Chairman, America 250 Orange Committee

Thanks for Town Improvements

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the recent progress made on several important community initiatives and to recognize the value of continued collaboration between residents and the Board of Selectmen.

Over the past several years, I have brought forward a number of proposals aimed at improving our shared spaces, including the need for updated and safer basketball courts at High Plains, necessary upgrades to the High Plains pool – such as HVAC, dehumidification and roof repairs – and enhancements to Fred Wolfe Park to better align with the quality of recreational facilities in neighboring towns. These were not abstract concerns, but tangible improvements intended to benefit the entire community.

At times, it felt as though these issues were not being fully heard. However, I am

encouraged and grateful to see meaningful progress now taking place. Although I was unable to attend the most recent Board of Selectmen meeting, I reviewed it and was pleased to learn that new basketball courts will soon be completed, the High Plains pool roof project is underway and Fred Wolfe Park has been approved to move into Phase 1, with additional phases planned for the future.

These developments are exciting and serve as a strong reminder that when community members and local leadership work together – and when concerns are heard – real progress can be achieved. Change is not always easy, but it is necessary to improve and strengthen our town for everyone.

I would also like to thank Megan Lasto for taking the time to meet with me. Her openness, transparency and enthusiasm for improving the town pool were refreshing. It was particularly encouraging to hear her commitment to reopening and repairing the balcony bathrooms – an issue that has gone unaddressed for many years. This is a meaningful and long-overdue improvement for both the facility and its visitors.

Thank you to First Selectman Jim Zeoli and the entire board for their efforts and for recognizing the importance of investing in projects that benefit the broader community. It is encouraging to see this forward mo-

Continued on page 7

Opinion & Editorial

Why The Fed Matters To Your Wallet And The Markets

By Philip Ucci III

There's a well-known saying on Wall Street: "Don't fight the Fed."

The phrase exists for a reason – few institutions have as much influence over the economy and financial markets as the Federal Reserve.

The Federal Reserve operates under a dual mandate: keeping inflation under control while also supporting strong employment levels. To do this, the Fed adjusts short-term interest rates in an effort to either slow down or stimulate economic activity.

Think of it like driving a car. If the economy is moving too fast and inflation rises, the Fed may "hit the brakes" by raising interest rates. If economic growth slows too much, it may "hit the gas" by lowering rates to encourage borrowing and spending.

When interest rates are lowered, borrowing often becomes less expensive. Consumers may benefit from lower rates on credit cards,

auto loans, personal loans and some home equity products. Businesses may also find it cheaper to borrow money for expansion, equipment purchases or hiring employees.

However, lower interest rates can hurt savers. People who rely on interest income from bank savings accounts, money market accounts or certificates of deposit often earn less when rates decline.

On the other hand, when inflation becomes a concern, the Federal Reserve may raise interest rates to slow spending. Higher borrowing costs can reduce consumer spending and make it more expensive for businesses to grow. While this can pressure borrowers, it often benefits savers through higher yields on savings accounts and fixed-income investments.

Many people mistakenly believe the Federal Reserve directly controls mortgage rates. In reality, the Fed primarily influences short-term interest rates. Mortgage rates are more

closely tied to long-term bond markets and broader economic expectations. While Fed policy can eventually influence long-term rates, those effects often take time to filter through the economy.

Interest rates can also affect the stock market and corporate profits. Lower borrowing costs may improve profit margins and encourage businesses to expand. Higher rates, however, can reduce profitability and make companies more cautious about growth plans and investments.

While interest rates are an important part of the financial landscape, they are only one piece of a much larger puzzle. Investors should also consider factors such as risk tolerance, time horizon and diversification strategies when building a financial plan.

A financial professional can help investors understand how changing interest rates may affect both their portfolios and long-term financial goals.

Philip Ucci III is a financial advisor with Sound Financial Partners in Milford. The information has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable, but we do not guarantee that the foregoing material is accurate or complete. Any opinions are those of Philip Ucci III and not necessarily those of Raymond James. Expressions of opinion are as of this date and are subject to change without notice. There is no guarantee that these statements, opinions or forecasts provided herein will prove to be correct. Investing involves risk and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. Sound Financial Partners is not a registered broker/dealer and is independent of Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. Investment advisory services offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc.

Letters

(Continued From 6)

mentum, and I look forward to continued progress in making our town an even better place to live.

Erika Higgins
Orange

State Vaccine Bill Shreds Freedoms

To the Editor:

Connecticut House Bill 5044 is a reckless and authoritarian power grab that shreds individual freedoms and parental rights. This bill empowers an unelected public health commissioner to unilaterally set a "standard of care" for immunizations, forces health insurance policies to cover state-recommended vaccines and explicitly declares that Connecticut's Religious Freedom Restoration Act does not apply to school vaccine requirements. It cements the 2021 elimination of religious exemptions and blocks families from challenging these mandates on religious grounds.

The insurance mandate is especially coercive. By tying the new state "standard of care" to required coverage in health plans,

the bill opens the door for insurers to treat non-compliance as deviation from accepted medical practice. Families who refuse recommended vaccinations risk higher premiums, increased deductibles, denied coverage for related services or other financial penalties through their insurance – effectively punishing personal choice with higher out-of-pocket costs. No specific dollar amount is mentioned in the bill, but the mechanism is clear: opt out and pay the price.

This heavy-handed overreach is hypocritical. Law-abiding Connecticut residents who work hard, pay taxes and seek to make informed medical decisions for their children now face eroded religious liberty and financial coercion. Meanwhile, the state continues to extend benefits and protections to illegal aliens with far less scrutiny. It is a shameful two-tiered system that clamps down on citizens while going soft on those who break our laws.

State Reps. Mary Welander (D-District 114) and MJ Shannon (D-District 117), and state Sen. James Maroney (D-District 14) all voted in favor of this bill. Their enthusiastic support for gutting religious freedoms, overriding parental authority and imposing insurance-linked penalties on dissent is an outright betrayal of the hardworking families in Derby, Orange, Woodbridge, Milford, West Haven and surrounding communities. They chose bureaucratic control and

political ideology over the constitutional rights of their constituents.

Connecticut deserves better. This dangerous legislation must be opposed at every level, and voters must hold these repre-

sentatives accountable for prioritizing state power over personal liberty.

Craig Stahl
Orange

Milford-Orange Times

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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
Pat Dray, Gardening
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Don Wetmore, Time Management

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The briefing will address employer obligations and compliance, including:

- Paid and unpaid sick/medical leave laws
- How to recognize/respond to statutory leave
- Best practices for administering leave

Orange Democratic Town Committee

Budgets A Chance For All To Weigh In

In Orange, we have two budget votes in May. On May 5 we voted on the Amity Regional School District budget. On Wednesday, May 20, our vote is on the town budget. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the gym in the High Plains Community Center. If you are not able to vote in person, you can request an absentee ballot in the town clerk's office from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The often low turnout for these votes does not reflect how consequential they are for our community. These budgets, shaped for many months behind the scenes by our locally elected officials, determine how we fund every aspect of our town, from our roads to our parks, to public safety and the education of our children.

I believe that when residents understand

what is in the budget and how these decisions are made, they are better equipped to engage, ask meaningful questions and help shape the future of our town. That's why the Orange Democratic Town Committee recently hosted an informational session to help people better understand the budget and to serve as a resource for our community.

These budget votes are not just about decisions made once a year; they are about building a community where people understand, engage with and influence the choices that affect our daily lives. We encourage everyone to participate in the process by voting in both budget ref-



MELISSA JOHNSTON

erendums.

Our state legislators are doing something similar. I attended a community information session in April at the HPCC hosted by state Sen. James Maroney and state Reps. Mary Weland and MJ Shannon. It was a valuable opportunity to hear updates on the current legislative session and for residents to engage directly with them about upcoming bills and policies. These sessions reflect what government is all about and should be: open, accessible and rooted in dialogue.

As a working mom, I know time is limited; you shouldn't have to attend every meet-

ing to stay informed. Orange Democrats are committed to meeting people where they are through email, social media and helpful meetings and events. We are always open to suggestions, too.

Sign up for emails at OrangeCTDems.org, follow us on Facebook and Instagram or reach out to me directly any time. If you're able, join us at our next monthly meetings on May 12 and June 16, both at 7 p.m. at the HPCC.

At the end of the day, decisions about our community belong to all of us, and we are strongest when more of us take part in shaping them.

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

Milford Makes To Host Clothes Mending Workshop

Arts nonprofit Milford Makes will host a hands-on Visible Mending Workshop on Tuesday, May 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Firehouse Gallery in Milford.

Participants will learn how to repair and creatively transform worn or damaged clothing using visible mending techniques.

Led by Robin Mazzola, costume shop manager and assistant adjunct professor of theater at Wesleyan University, the workshop will introduce participants to practical stitching, patching and embroidery methods that both strengthen garments and add decorative elements.

Visible mending is a growing movement within sustainable fashion that encourages extending the life of clothing rather than

discarding it. Participants will bring their own garments or textiles in need of repair and learn techniques they can continue using at home.

"This workshop is about more than fixing clothes. It's about slowing down, being creative and rethinking how we value the things we already own," said Jen Conlon, founder of Milford Makes.

All materials will be provided, and the workshop is open to all skill levels. Attendance is limited to 14 participants to ensure a hands-on, guided experience.

The cost is \$55. The Firehouse Gallery is located at 81 Naugatuck Ave. For tickets, go to milfordmakes.org/events. For questions, contact hello@milfordmakes.org.

MAC Hosting Piano Jazz Concert

The Milford Arts Council will host a piano jazz concert featuring Helen Sung on Friday, May 15 in Milford.

Sung is an acclaimed jazz pianist and composer, and a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow. She diverged from her classical roots after an unexpected encounter with jazz during undergraduate studies in piano performance at the University of Texas at Austin. She went on to become part of the inaugural class of the Thelonious Monk Institute (now the Herbie Hancock Institute) at the New England Conservatory of Music.

Now with nine leader albums to her credit, she has also worked with such luminaries as Clark Terry, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter, Wynton Marsalis, Regina Carter, Terri Lyne


Carrington, Cecile McLorin Salvant and the Mingus Big Band.

She currently teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Columbia University, where she was the first jazz artist-in-residence at its Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute exploring intersections of jazz and neuroscience.

Doors open at 7 p.m.; the show starts at 7:30 p.m. The MAC is located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$45 at the door. Tickets are \$5 for children under 17 with an accompanying adult.

For more information and tickets, go to milfordarts.org/event/helen-sung-piano-jazz-concert or contact the MAC at 203-878-6647.

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Orange Republican Town Committee

Always Choose Kindness

Happy May to each of you. We are fortunate in this part of our country to experience the beauty of changing seasons. Spring has always been a time of wonder, filled with new beginnings and the promise of life. Before long, summer will be here, bringing with it all the wonderful activities our town has to offer.

Have you ever wondered why so many of us have chosen to make Orange our home? As someone who tries to see the good in people and lives with a grateful heart, I often reflect on this question.

Many have roots here that run generations deep – families whose names grace our streets, parks and buildings. Others thoughtfully researched where they wanted to live and deliberately chose Orange.

This week, while speaking with a business owner, I shared some of what makes our town so special and how strong our sense of community feels. This person, who nei-

ther lives in Orange nor operates a business here, told me they believe our town is a wonderful place to live. They credited our strong community spirit to our town leaders and noted that, even as we grow we do so in a respectful way. I have always been proud to call Orange my home, but comments like these fills me with an even deeper sense of pride.

I have been reminded this month of how important it is to stay positive. But I would not be true to myself if I did not gently share a concern that seems all too common in today's world.

Over the past few years, our politics have become increasingly polarizing, and at times quite harsh. We seem to have lost the art of disagreeing respectfully. It saddens me and many others who grew up valuing respect



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for all people – when families and friends stop speaking, or when the lines between right and wrong feel blurred.

Sadly, a difficult situation recently arose in our town. It was a serious and very personal matter. In situations like this, taking responsibility and holding oneself accountable is important. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Instead, at a public meeting someone chose to bring up a lengthy list of past issues stretching back many years. These actions felt unkind and out of place in our close-knit community. Using painful moments from the past to score points has no place here. If this is how we choose to handle disagreements, it goes against everything our town stands for.

We should always treat one another with kindness and respect. Challenging decisions

will sometimes need to be made, but they should never be delivered with malice or carelessness.

As we approach our 250th anniversary, I ask that we pause to appreciate how precious our freedoms are – the freedoms so many men and women have fought to protect. We are truly fortunate to live in a town that continues to grow while still honoring its deep roots. A place where neighbors become friends, and friends become family.

When I think of Orange, I think of all that is good. I have often said that as we look toward our future, we must remember our past. As we embrace these new beginnings, I ask that we always choose kindness – even when we disagree. Healthy debate has its place, but there is no room for ugliness here. Let us remember that.

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

Time Management

Your Experience Is More Valuable Than You Think

I speak each month with professionals who feel stuck in a situation they didn't expect to be in. Some are underemployed. Others have been recently downsized. Many are still working, but quietly uneasy about how secure their role really is.

If any of that sounds familiar, you're not alone – and more importantly, you're not without options.

After 30 years as a certified business coach, I've seen one pattern repeat itself again and again: highly capable people underestimate the value of what they already know. They assume their experience only "counts" if it fits neatly into a job description someone else has written.

But here's a different way to look at it.

What if your experience could start paying you – this month? Not through another job offer, but by working directly with people who need your help. In other words, consulting.

Now, before you dismiss that idea, let's clear something up. Consulting isn't about being a celebrity expert or having all the an-

swers. It's not about flashy branding or complicated systems. At its core, consulting is simply this: helping someone solve a problem you already know how to solve.

That's it.

Over the years, I've helped professionals – from corporate managers to independent contributors – turn their existing skills into consulting income on the side. Many started with little to no upfront investment. No website. No complex technology. Just a clear understanding of what they could offer and who might need it.

And that's where most people get stuck: not in capability, but in clarity.

Here's the simple framework I often use to help people get started. Think of it as a practical way to turn "I have experience" into "I have something people will pay for."

First, identify what you can offer. This usually happens faster than people expect. Look at the problems colleagues, clients or



DON
WETMORE

managers have consistently come to you for. Those patterns matter.

Second, position it clearly. You don't need jargon or buzzwords. You just need to describe your value in a way that makes someone say, "That's exactly what I need."

Third, find your first client. Not your tenth – your first. This is often someone already in your network. Consulting doesn't begin with a mass audience; it begins with a single conversation.

Fourth, deliver real value. You don't need to be perfect. You need to be helpful, reliable and focused on results. Confidence grows quickly when you see the impact of your work.

Finally, build momentum. One successful project leads to another. Referrals happen. Your confidence strengthens. What started as a small step begins to feel like a real opportunity.

If you've been thinking, "I should be doing something on the side," or "I can't keep relying on one income stream," I'd encourage you to take that instinct seriously. It's not just worry – it's awareness.

The goal isn't to abandon what you're doing. It's to expand your options.

In today's environment, waiting for certainty can leave you standing still. Exploring consulting, even in a small way, puts you back in motion. It gives you a sense of control, a way to test your value in the market, and potentially, a new stream of income.

You don't need to have everything figured out. You just need to start looking at your experience differently. Chances are someone out there is already looking for exactly what you know how 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.

Bridges Receives \$15,000 Gift From Local Foundation For Mental Health

Bridges Healthcare received a \$15,000 gift from the It's Free to Dream Foundation in March to support its mission of providing mental health services to individuals, children and families throughout Milford, Orange and surrounding communities.

"Our community really benefits from partnerships like this," said Jennifer Fiorillo, Bridges Healthcare's president and CEO. "We are incredibly grateful to the It's Free to Dream Foundation for their commitment to supporting local mental health initiatives. At a time when federal funding resources are unpredictable, community resources like this are necessary. Without these critical gap funds, we risk experiencing reductions in programs and staff plus longer wait times for our clients."

The It's Free to Dream Foundation,

founded in August 2025, is a Milford-based nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness for mental health and suicide prevention.

Nearly 48,000 Americans lose their lives to suicide annually, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. It is the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24.

Founders Ken Steeves and Chris Taft's firsthand experiences with mental health and suicide motivated them to establish the foundation and their mission is to help people, especially local youth, access support and feel empowered to speak up about their mental health. The foundation was established in memory of Steeves's mother, Randi May Steeves, and is committed to ensuring that no one faces their mental health struggles alone.

Bridges was one of three local beneficiaries at the inaugural It's Free to Dream 2025 Mental Health Gala on Dec. 14, the tenth anniversary of Randi May Steeve's passing. Boys & Girls Village in Milford and NAVI, a mental health app designed to provide self-guided support and connect users to live counseling in crisis situations, were also donation recipients.

"The \$15,000 gift to Bridges is unrestricted, allowing us to direct funds where they are needed most," Fiorillo said. "This is especially important for our child outpatient services which are historically underfunded, even though our youth are often the most vulnerable to high rates of suicidal ideation, hopelessness and depression."

For children and families, Bridges provides a host of services including outpa-

tient therapy, behavioral health services on-site at designated schools in Milford and West Haven, and intensive in-home child and adolescent psychiatric services for children with complex psychological and behavioral needs.

Bridges will be recognizing the It's Free to Dream Foundation as a mental health wave maker at their Rock the Dock for Mental Health fundraiser on May 28 in celebration of Mental Health Awareness Month.

"We are honored to partner with Bridges Healthcare and support the incredible work they're doing in our community," said Steeves. "Our goal is to make sure young people, and everyone know they are not alone and that help is always available."

MAC Fundraiser To Feature Local Food, Drinks, Jazz

The Milford Arts Council's Board of Directors will host their 5th annual Taste & Graze 2.0 event with wines, spirits, food and live jazz during a silent auction on Thursday, May 7.

The fundraiser will support the MAC's mission of fostering artistic, cultural and educational opportunities for the benefit of the greater Milford community. It will feature

curated wine pairing by Milford-based Rivercliff Wine & Spirits and gourmet small plates provided Bin 100, also of Milford.

The event begins at 6 p.m. at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. Tickets are \$125. For more information contact the MAC at 203-878-6647, and for tickets go to milfordarts.org/event/board-of-directors-taste-graze-fundraiser-event/.

Orange Scouts Collecting Donations, Hosting Field Day

Orange Scouts Pack 922 will collect non-perishable food, personal care and household items donated by members of the community on Saturday, June 6. The scouts will collect donations from residents' doorsteps and deliver them to the Orange Food Pantry. Visit pack922.scouting4food.org or call 203-902-9500 to sign up.

The pack will also host a Raingutter

Regatta and Field Day on Saturday, May 30 at High Plains Community Center from 10 a.m. to noon. Kids of all ages are invited to build, decorate and race small boats. There will also be a slip n' slide, field games and a cookout. Donations for the food pantry are suggested for entry.

Email cubmaster@orangecubscouts.com with any questions.

Milford-Orange Probate Court

Changes To ABLE Account Eligibility And Benefits

For eligible individuals with disabilities in Connecticut and across the US, Achieving a Better Life Experience, or ABLE, accounts offer a powerful tool for financial planning without jeopardizing essential government benefits like Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid.

Congress recently enacted a significant change to the eligibility requirements, which will make approximately 6 million more people eligible. Previously, only individuals whose disability started before age 26 were eligible. The age was raised to 46 as of Jan. 1.

Established by the federal ABLE Act of 2014, ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings and investment accounts specifically designed for people with disabilities. Historically, individuals with disabilities faced a difficult choice: save money for their future needs and risk losing critical benefits tied to asset limits, or forgo saving entirely to maintain eligibility. ABLE accounts address this dilemma by allowing individuals to save and invest funds that are generally excluded from these asset limits.

ABLE accounts function similarly to 529

college savings plans, meaning contributions are made with after-tax dollars, earnings grow tax-free and qualified withdrawals are also tax-free. The funds can be used for a variety of “qualified disability expenses” which include housing, transportation, education, employment training, assistive technology, health care and other costs that enhance health, independence or quality of life.

The benefits of ABLE accounts include:

- Protection of benefits: Funds in an ABLE account (up to \$100,000 for SSI) generally do not count against resource limits for federal means-tested benefits.

- Tax advantages: Tax-free growth and tax-free withdrawals are allowed for qualified disability expenses.

- Financial independence: ABLE accounts provide individuals with disabilities greater control over their finances and the ability to save for both short-term needs and long-term goals without fear of losing essential benefits.



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GETTINGER

- Flexibility: Funds can be used for a wide array of expenses that improve health, independence and quality of life.

In increasing the age from 26 to 46, Congress has recognized that disabilities can emerge later in life due to various factors, such as unforeseen accidents and progressive medical conditions. The change covers a large segment of veterans and first responders, whose service-related injuries or qualifying conditions often begin after the age of 26.

Other changes in 2026 include raising certain contribution limits. The standard contribution limit has increased from \$19,000 to \$20,000 for 2026. A key provision for working ABLE account holders, known as “ABLE-to-Work,” allows eligible employed individuals who are not participating in an employer-sponsored retirement plan to contribute an additional amount above the standard limit. This additional contribution has increased to up to \$15,650 for Connecticut residents in 2026.

To be eligible for an ABLE account, a person must have a disability or blindness that began before age 46, and it must have lasted or be expected to last at least one year. Eligibility can be established by receiving SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits based on a disability or blindness. There is also a self-certification process for those not receiving SSI or SSDI.

If you or someone you love has a disability, an ABLE account may be a good way to ease some of the financial burdens. More information, including eligibility requirements, risks and expenses, can be found at ct.savewithable.com or by calling 888-609-3268.

This information is for general informational purposes only. You should consult a benefits and/or tax professional before opening an ABLE account. An ABLE account may not be right for everyone who qualifies. The qualifications, plan advantages and disadvantages and account thresholds are subject to change and differ by state.

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

The Influence Factor

The Small Frictions That Quietly Cost You Results

Last month I wrote about clarity and why clear communication matters more than many people realize. When people do not understand what you mean, what you offer or what comes next, they hesitate. Clearer communication helps people make sense of things more quickly and move forward more easily.

But understanding is only part of the process.

Even when people understand you, they still need a path that feels easy enough to follow. If that path feels confusing, inconvenient or harder than it should, action often slows down. Sometimes it stops completely. That is where friction comes in.

Friction is not always dramatic. Most of the time, it shows up in small ways. A form is too long. A message asks for too much at once. A website makes the next step hard to find. An event sounds worthwhile, but signing up feels like work. A conversation is clear, but what happens next is vague. People may still be interested. They just do not move.

This happens in everyday life as much as in business. A parent puts off responding to a school message because the instructions feel harder to sort through than they should. A resident means to attend a local event but never registers because the process feels in-

convenient. A volunteer wants to help but is not sure where to begin. A customer is interested in a service but delays because the next step feels unclear or too involved.

In each case, the problem is not always disagreement. It is not always lack of interest either. Often, the problem is that action feels just a little too hard in the moment.

Behavioral science has shown for years that people are more likely to follow through when something feels simple, manageable and easy to do. That does not mean people are lazy. It means effort affects behavior. The more friction we add, even unintentionally, the more likely people are to delay, avoid, or abandon the decision.

That matters because many people assume that once the message is clear, the work is done. It is not. First people need to understand. Then they need an easy path to act. If either part breaks down, momentum gets lost.

You can see this in practical places. A business owner explains a service clearly, but the website makes it difficult to contact them. A nonprofit communicates its mission well,



EZIO
SABATINO

but the donation process has too many steps. A community organization promotes a worthwhile event, but the details about where to go, when to arrive or how to participate are scattered. A team leader gives clear direction, but the process for following through feels cumbersome. The value may be there. The friction is what gets in the way.

This is one reason good ideas stall before they start. People often do not fail to act because they disagree or don't care. They fail to act because something in the process makes action feel harder than it should.

The challenge is that friction often hides in plain sight. We get used to our own systems, our own language and our own steps. We know where to click. We know what we mean. We know how the process works. Other people do not. What feels obvious to us may feel slow, unclear or inconvenient to them.

A useful question to ask is this: Where am I making action harder than it needs to be?

That question applies to more than marketing. It applies to customer experience, leadership, community communication, events, volunteer outreach and even every-

day requests at home or at work. Any time you want someone to move from understanding to action, friction matters.

Sometimes the fix is surprisingly small. Reduce the number of steps. Make the next action easier to find. Clarify what needs to happen. Ask for only what is necessary. Remove details that can wait. State the value and the next step in plain language. Small changes like these can make a meaningful difference.

Small frictions rarely look important in isolation. But over time, they quietly cost trust, response, participation and results.

When people do not move forward, the problem is not always the idea itself. Sometimes the real issue is that the path feels harder than it should.

When that is the case, removing friction can make a bigger difference than adding more persuasion ever could.

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

Clean Off The Grill And Try Some Red Wines

Red wines seem to match very well with grilled foods. Let's look at some great reds as warmer weather approaches.

Pinot Noir is a difficult grape to grow. It matches very well with roasted chicken and soft cheeses. Salmon and mushroom dishes go well, also. The major growing regions are in New Zealand, Burgundy and the Willamette Valley in Oregon. Raspberry and cherry flavors are pronounced.

One of the most food friendly wines is Gamay. It is the major grape used in making Beaujolais. It produces wines that are floral and easy drinking. It matches well with light meats and just about anything else.

Merlot is a favorite red. It has flavors of black cherry and chocolate, with some hints of blackberry. It has aromas of black fruit, plum and black cherry. Lambchops and roasted duck are some of my favorites. Great

regions include Bordeaux, the Napa Valley and Chile.

Sangiovese is the grape that makes the great Chianti wines. It has flavors of raspberry and cherry. The aromas include herbs, tomato and earth. It pairs well with grilled meats and pizza, as well as any dish with tomato sauce. The best comes from the Chianti region of Northern Italy.

Tempranillo is a big, earthy Spanish red wine grape. It has cherry and plum flavors. When aged, there is a leather flavor as well. The wine has a big berry nose with some vanilla and cedar. Rioja is the region and is great with grilled steaks and barbeque.

Cabernet Franc has flavors of red cherry, raspberry and plum. These make it a great



RAYMOND
SPAZIANI

wine to mix with other grapes. The aroma is of herbs and red berries. This is a food-friendly wine that is great with lamb and cheese dishes.

Cabernet Sauvignon is a wine that includes ripe black cherry flavors with a big tannin finish. It is called an Old World wine, with its blackcurrant and cedar flavors and big dry finish with lots of tannins. This is a big meat wine that works with steak. Choose wines from Napa, Bordeaux and Aus-

tralia. Zinfandel is another of my grill favorites. It has blackberry and cherry flavors with a raspberry jam that is great. It has aromas of dark fruit and black cherry with a nice vanilla finish. California is the place to get

Zin – especially Napa, Lodi and Sonoma. The Italians make it in Puglia and they call it Primitivo. This is good too. It can go with pork and any big meat dishes.

Clean off the grill and try some of these great red 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.

Insuring Your Future

Reasons Why Connecticut Is The Insurance Capital

Connecticut is known as the insurance capital of the US. It gained that identity because several large insurance companies are headquartered here – Aetna, The Hartford, Cigna and Travelers all call Hartford home.

However, Connecticut also has some of the most generous insurance regulations that protect consumers.

The Affordable Care Act prohibits discrimination based on health conditions for health insurance, but not all types of health insurance. Connecticut takes it one step further and prohibits discrimination by insurance companies for any kind of health insurance, including Medicare Supplement plans. This year Gov. Ned Lamont also replaced a portion of the premium tax credits for individual insurance plans through the health exchange and is supporting a small group program known as an individual coverage health reimbursement arrangement.

Health insurance companies are regulated by each state. Connecticut is one of four

states that prohibits discrimination for Medicare Supplement plans based on age or health conditions. The other three are Massachusetts, New York and Vermont. Medicare Supplement plans are portable, which means that you can keep your current policy if you move to another state. This is not true of Medicare Advantage plans or prescription drug plans. You must be enrolled in a plan that is based on the county in which you live. Medicare Advantage and prescription drug plans are not subject to health conditions for approval. However, the benefits and premiums may be slightly different from state to state.

Many people who get insurance through the health exchange (under 65) lost eligibility for an advanced premium tax credit in 2026, or it was reduced due to the lack of an extension to the Affordable Care Act in-



TRISH PEARSON

come eligibility guidelines. The governor allocated funds to assist people in this situation, replacing a portion of the lost benefit known as temporary premium assistance.

As a result, people who did not renew are now eligible for some assistance with their premiums and have a special enrollment period through June 2026. The special enrollment period includes people who did not apply during open enrollment or people who chose a less expensive plan because of their lower advanced premium tax credits. They can switch to a different plan if they are now eligible for temporary premium assistance. If any of these situations apply to you, contact Access Health CT or a certified broker who can assist with the renewal or a new application.

There is also good news for small busi-

ness owners who wish to provide health benefits for their employees, but haven't be of the cost of traditional plans. Connecticut's health exchange is now offering plan designs that allow employees to apply for an individual plan of their choice and for the employer to contribute to the premiums at an amount they choose. Traditional health insurance plans require a minimum 50 percent employer contribution to an employee's premium.

The individual coverage health reimbursement arrangement program was introduced last July and got off to a rocky start, but many of the processing glitches have been resolved. For businesses with fewer than 20 employees this plan could be a good option for both the owner and the employee.

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

Apartments

(Continued From 1)

those 55 and older; revamping two existing commercial buildings; and a central clubhouse.

Some 15 percent of the apartments would be deemed affordable under state regulations.

The developers, now under the name of Wheelers Farm Partners/Greenview Equities, had previously discussed their vision for the struggling office park to the board in 2024, when they were seeking to change the property's zone to an Adaptive Reuse Design District, allowing them to introduce residential into what had been a commercial

site.

The 47-acre property currently contains a five-building office complex with a parking garage. The parking garage would remain as part of a total 1,535 parking spaces.

The office complex was constructed in the 1980s. The property was purchased in foreclosure in 2021. The owners had argued for turning the complex into apartments in part because, they said, demand for office space around the country has declined over the last decade, leaving much of the complex unoccupied and floundering financially.

The property contains a wetland and some green space, which developers said they will try to maintain and expand, including by creating a 1.25-mile walking trail around

the perimeter of the site with educational signs to teach about the wetlands. Under plan, a total of 25.8 acres would remain open space.

Patrick O'Leary of Continental Properties told the board that construction at the site would likely begin by the fall and be completed in about three years.

One change from the 2024 proposal is the standalone clubhouse, which would include a pool and expanded outdoor recreation area.

"Throughout the design process for this site, recreation amenities has been a key element for us – in creating open space and a place that represents a more suburban environment, a more country environment,

and doesn't look like something that's from an urban environment forced back into the suburbs," O'Leary said.

Several of the board members questioned the specifics of the affordability component. They had set the 15 percent requirement back in 2024. The developers said that the affordable units would be spread out among all the apartments.

"There ought to be a specific affordability plan that's on file with us," board member Bryan Anderson said. "With that provision, I would certainly be in favor of the proposal."

The board voted 6-1 for the plan, with the condition that an affordability plan be filed with the city.

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Orange Recycling Committee

Batteries And Lightbulbs Now Accepted In Orange

Residents of Orange now have an easy and convenient way to properly recycle some commonly discarded household items. New drop-off bins for batteries and lightbulbs have been added at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center, expanding the town's commitment to reducing waste and protecting the environment. These clearly marked bins are housed within the Electronics Recycling trailer, to the right of the info booth.

The battery and lightbulb recycling program is for residential use only and builds on Orange's new partnership with Take 2 Recycling. Take 2 began handling electronics recycling for the town earlier this year, expanding the range of accepted items to make it easier for residents to responsibly dispose of materials that should not go in the trash.

Batteries and lightbulbs are not suitable for regular trash disposal. When sent to landfills, they can release hazardous materials such as mercury, lead and other heavy metals into soil and water. Recycling these items helps recover valuable materials, reduces pollution and supports a more sus-

tainable waste system.

Residents can simply place household batteries in the designated bin within the electronics recycling trailer. Accepted types include alkaline (AA, AAA, C, D, 9V), rechargeable, lithium-ion, nickel-cadmium (NiCd), and nickel-metal hydride (NiMH), button and specialty batteries used in watches, hearing aids and small electronics.

Residents should tape the ends of batteries (especially lithium and rechargeable types) to prevent sparks, and keep batteries separated from other recyclables.

Batteries contain materials that can be safely recovered and reused through recycling, providing a critical alternative to disposal in the waste stream, where harmful toxins can be released into the air, water and soil.

Residents may place lightbulbs into the appropriate bin in the electronics recycling trailer. Many types of lightbulbs are accepted: LED, incandescent and halogen bulbs,



ILENE
MOYHER

compact fluorescent lamps, fluorescent tubes up to 4 feet long and specialty bulbs.

To avoid breakage, bulbs should be gently placed into the bin. This is important because bulbs may contain small amounts of mercury and therefore must be handled properly to avoid contamination.

Over the last decade or two, the Orange Recycling Committee,

town officials and employees at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center have worked together to continually increase recycling options for residents. The transfer station has recycling for a broad range of materials: plastics, cardboard, glass, textiles, paint, food scraps and more. By adding lightbulbs, batteries and a wider range of electronic devices, Orange continues to make recycling more accessible and comprehensive for residents.

The twice-yearly shredding day event held April 11 was once again a roaring success. Affordable Solutions shredded over 10,000 pounds of documents. Bye Bye

Mattress collected a record 80 mattresses and box springs (including 44 mattresses from Camp Cedarcrest). HazWaste Central collected household chemicals from 116 vehicles (including 92 from Orange). Take 2 Recycling collected over 1,000 pounds of electronic items. Orange Community Women collected nearly 2,500 pounds of clothing and household goods (which they sell to Savers as a fundraiser for their charitable work), and Buy Nothing Orange hosted a fun swap meet. The next event will take place on Oct. 24.

The Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center is open to Orange residents Monday through Saturday. The Orange Recycling Committee's website at orangerecycles.com provides information about accepted items and other recycling options. Follow the committee at facebook.com/ORCinCT for updates and tips.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Your Health

Tuberculosis Resurgence A Growing Public Health Concern

An article published recently in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report titled "Large Tuberculosis Outbreaks – United States, 2017–2023" highlights an important and often underrecognized public health concern.

Fifty large outbreaks of tuberculosis were identified across 23 states during the period the article covered, with the majority occurring among US-born individuals. Nationally, 10,260 TB cases were reported in 2025, with an incidence rate of 3.0 per 100,000 people.

The data also point to important social and environmental factors. Individuals involved in large outbreaks were more likely to report substance use, homelessness or a history of incarceration. Notably, nearly two thirds of these outbreaks occurred within family and social networks, underscoring how TB can spread quietly through close, everyday in-

teractions rather than only in institutional settings.

TB remains a reportable disease in Connecticut, and recent trends are concerning. One hundred and four cases were reported in 2025, representing an incidence rate of 2.8 per 100,000 residents. This reflects a 20 percent increase in cases – and a 19 percent increase in incidence – compared with 2024, when 87 cases were documented.

A closer look at Connecticut data highlights several key risk factors. Approximately 15 percent of individuals diagnosed with active TB had a prior history of latent TB infection (meaning the bacteria were present but inactive) and had either not received treatment or had not completed it. Other contributing conditions included diabetes



DR. AMIR
MOHAMMAD

in nearly one in five cases, along with smaller proportions involving substance use and HIV.

Public health efforts remain active and ongoing in Orange. Since 2022, both active and latent TB cases have been identified and closely monitored. Clinical oversight and contact tracing are provided by our public health nurse, Lynn Peckhan.

The recent rise in TB cases, both nationally and locally, serves as a reminder that this disease has not disappeared. Public health experts continue to emphasize the importance of early detection and prevention. Individuals at increased risk should consider screening, which is typically performed using a blood test (interferon-gamma release assay) or a skin test, followed by further evaluation if results are positive.

Treating latent TB infection remains one of the most effective strategies to prevent progression to active disease. Shorter, evidence-based treatment regimens – such as three to four months of combination antibiotic therapy – are now preferred because they are easier to complete and highly effective.

Addressing TB requires more than clinical care – it depends on sustained public health infrastructure, community awareness and individual participation in screening and treatment. By recognizing risk factors, providing timely education in recognizing risk factors and ensuring treatment completion, communities like Orange can help prevent the spread of TB and protect public health.

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

Here's To Your Health

Spring Reset

As the chill of winter slowly goes away and longer, brighter days arrive, spring offers more than just a change in weather: it provides a natural opportunity to reset your health and wellness routines. As we open windows to let fresh air in, this season invites us to clear out habits that no longer serve us, allowing us to embrace simple practices that support us in spirit, soul and body.

One of the easiest ways to begin your spring reset is by getting outside. After months of colder temperatures and shorter days, our bodies crave sunlight and movement. I've noticed more people out and about these past few weeks, either walking or running. Exposure to natural light helps regulate sleep patterns and boosts mood by increasing serotonin levels. Even a short 15-20 minute walk each day can improve cardiovascular health, reduce stress and elevate your overall sense of well-being. You don't need an intense workout, just consistent movement in the fresh air can make a noticeable difference.

Spring is also the perfect time to refresh your nutrition. Heavier comfort foods usually dominate winter meals, but this season offers an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Lettuce is a hearty plant that will survive

cooler temperatures and will be useful in helping your body detox those hearty comfort foods you enjoyed in the winter. Think leafy greens, berries, asparagus (this is the first year it finally sprouted in my garden) and citrus – all packed with vitamins, antioxidants and fiber. These foods support digestion,

strengthen the immune system and provide good energy throughout the day. A simple shift like adding a colorful salad or fresh fruit to your daily routine can help your body feel lighter and more energized without that 3 p.m. stop at the coffee shop.

Hydration is key, but often overlooked. As temperatures rise and activity levels increase, your body needs more water to function properly. Drinking enough water also supports digestion, keeps your skin healthy and maintains energy levels. I often hear that water is boring or it has no taste. Try infusing it with lemon, cucumber or mint. I put ginger and lemon in my water, but must say cucumber water is my favorite. It definitely makes water more enjoyable.

Spring cleaning isn't just for your home. It can be a powerful time for your mental



MICHELE
TENNEY

health. Cluttered spaces often lead to cluttered minds. Taking time to organize your environment can reduce stress, improve focus and create a sense of calm and control. Start small. One drawer, one room, or even just your workspace. Take notice of how a cleaner space can positively affect your mood.

Equally important is being intentional about your emotional well-being. Spring is a season of new growth, making it a perfect time to reflect on personal goals and intentions. I've set a goal on resetting my central nervous system. Life throws us curveballs and it's common for us to just plug on with the "life goes on" attitude. Ignoring trauma will never benefit any of us.

Consider journaling, practicing gratitude, breathing exercises throughout the day or simply taking a few quiet moments each day to check in with yourself. Really let go of lingering stress or hurts of the past this spring. Focus on what you want to create and grow moving forward, whether it's more balance, meaningful relationships, more energy or more peace.

Sleep should never be overlooked, especially during this seasonal transition. It's

easier to stay up later with more daylight hours. But maintaining a consistent sleep schedule is essential for overall good health. Aim for seven to eight hours of quality sleep each night. It really does help if you wind down in the evening by limiting screen time and creating a calming bedtime routine. Because I struggle with sleep, I recently added relaxing instrumental music five to 10 minutes before I fall asleep. A warm cup of almond milk with cinnamon chamomile has also been helpful.

Ultimately, a spring wellness reset doesn't require drastic changes. Small healthy decisions become bigger healthy habits, which eventually become a healthy lifestyle. By aligning your habits with the rhythm of spring, you can step into the season feeling renewed, energized and ready to thrive. I believe in you. You 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 Hmgbrd3@gmail.com.

The Garden Spot

Reducing Pesticide Use Through Natural Methods

Most of us are exposed to pesticides in our daily lives – through bug sprays, lawn treatments, pet flea and tick products and even in the foods we eat. Scientists have not determined a safe level of exposure, but you can easily lower pesticide risks at home by using integrated pest management strategies.

Not all insects are pests; about 95 percent of insects are beneficial in some way. We can use that knowledge to improve the health of our gardens.

This column will cover companion planting. Companion planting is the practice of growing certain plants near each other so they help one another. Companion planting primarily attracts or repels insects and pests. It amazes me that these plants evolved to protect themselves and their “companions.”

Let’s start by discussing how to attract

beneficial insects. Beneficial insects are those that eat harmful ones, such as aphids and caterpillars. Aphids are one of the most destructive plant insects, eating the plant roots and causing the plant to shrivel and die. They are tiny, pin head sized insects that feed on plants in the crucifer family, such as cabbage, collards, kale, turnips, mustard, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and radish. Check the underside of leaves for clusters or sticky residue.

One way to reduce aphids in the garden is by attracting the ladybug. Ladybugs are one of the most common beneficial insects, and even in the larval stage, eat aphids. Along with eating insects, ladybugs also look for



PAT DRAY

pollen for a food source, so there are numerous plants you can grow to help attract them. Flowers and herbs such as cilantro, dill, fennel, caraway, yarrow, tansy, angelica, scented geraniums, coreopsis and cosmos are good choices for luring the ladybug. Plant any of them to attract this beneficial insect and reduce aphids.

You can also use several strategies to repel and/or attract pests away from the garden. Certain plants, such as marigolds and garlic, emit scents that deter pests. Aromatic plants confuse the pests and make it harder for pests to “find” a crop. An example of this is planting basil with your tomatoes. The basil will also attract pollinators if you allow it to flower.

Radishes can act as a trap for striped cucumber beetles when planted near cucumbers, squash and melons. Plant nasturtiums as a trap crop near brassicas such as (broccoli and cauliflower).

You can also plant a small “sacrifice” area of pest-attracting plants to draw them away from your garden. A small patch of brassicas (as sacrificial plants) – can draw pests that love the crucifer family (like aphids and some caterpillars) away from your “main” brassica crop.

Try these various methods to reduce your pesticide usage and enjoy your planting season.

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

Rotary Club of Orange

Helping People Move And Meet With Mobility Aids

The Rotary Club of Orange works with the Orange Senior Center and the town’s Community Services Department to provide loaner equipment for those needing temporary use of mobility aids.

Most people have needed such assistance at one time or another, often due to injury or recovery from surgery or another debilitating event. Medicare, Medicaid and/or health insurance providers typically provide such durable medical equipment for chronic and long-term disability challenges, and the loaner pool is intended to assist with short-term recovery needs and serves people of all ages.

The loaner pool currently stocks standard walkers, crutches and canes. We are seek-

ing donations of front-wheel, three-wheel and four-wheel walkers (rollators), knee walkers or scooters and transport wheelchairs. Foldable rollators and lightweight wheelchairs of all sizes are in particular demand.

If you have one of these unused devices at home and would like to donate it for others to use, please contact either the Orange Senior Center or the Rotary Club at rotarycluboforange.org.

The US has made good progress in making parking lots, buildings and restrooms



DAN MAY

more accessible, but assistance is sometimes needed to move an individual from a vehicle into the building or out again. Not everyone has a readily transportable walker or wheelchair, and they are challenging to transport in buses or even in taxi or Uber/Lyft services.

Rotary was recently asked if it could provide a transport wheelchair to be stored indefinitely at a not-for-profit service organization to help visitors when those intermittent needs arise. Our club would therefore like to learn if this is a general need among community service

groups where members and/or the public convene for meetings or presentations. Please let me know.

Mobility aids improve balance and movement for individuals with injuries, disabilities or age-related limitations and foster independence. They expand opportunities for group participation. One of the most important services a community can promote is avenues for social interactions, and mobility aids help bring all of us together. Let us know if you can help with an equipment donation.

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 Board of Finance

Property Tax Reform Essential For A Competitive CT

I recently had the opportunity to attend the spring Connecticut Government Finance Officers Association meeting, which included a keynote by state Comptroller Sean Scanlon. I was pleased to hear and commend Scanlon for leading the charge in Hartford and taking property tax reform head on.

His proposal focuses on addressing the “inherent unfairness” of the current system, with the goal of making Connecticut more competitive.

Whether you are a leader within the corporate world or government, your main objective is always the same: how do you achieve competitive advantage?

One of the main drivers of why Connecticut needs to reform the current property tax structure is that Connecticut has lost ground nationally over the past two decades. It is no secret that Connecticut is no longer competitive nationally. In several recent national surveys, Connecticut received mediocre-to-poor ratings for its business climate, economy, cost of living and property taxes.

A recent CNBC poll ranked Connecticut 38th on the economy, 44th on the cost of doing business and 37th on cost of living. Connecticut also ranks third highest in the country for property taxes, behind New Jersey and New Hampshire.

This has become a growing challenge for Gov. Ned Lamont. All in all he has done a great job, with six straight years of budget surpluses and paying down over \$12 billion in pension debt while delivering three years ago on the first state income tax rate cut since the mid-1990s.

However, today’s reality for Connecticut taxpayers doesn’t really feel like things are

better than they were six years ago due to significant cost increases for electricity, gas, health insurance, home heating oil and significant federal cuts to Medicare. The state is now faced with having to fund the shortfall while still trying to maintain the state’s \$4.3 billion rainy day fund.

Property tax reform is a heavy lift, and reforming it will not be easy. But Scanlon taking on the challenge tells me a lot about his character as a leader. He is one of the few in Hartford who truly understands the future viability of Connecticut and is comfortable with working to change the trajectory of the status quo.

Property tax reform has been discussed for decades in Connecticut, but no one in Hartford wanted to address it because it is a laborious task that has many moving parts. If not done correctly, it could significantly impact future revenues.

So what does Scanlon’s reform plan look like?

The “fairness” credit (statewide property tax credit). The centerpiece of the plan is a statewide property tax credit aimed at the middle class and lower-income families. The goal is to offset the high cost of local property taxes by providing a direct credit against the state income tax. The plan is “needs-based,” ensuring that the relief reaches those whose property tax burden is highest relative to their income.

The proposal includes a credit of up to \$600 per child (capped at three children). While not a direct property tax cut, the argu-



KEVIN MCNABOLA

ment can be made that this is the most effective way to help families offset the crushing burden of local property taxes.

Overhauling the PILOT program. There is the need to fully fund and stabilize the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program. Many of Connecticut’s cities (like Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport) host large amounts of tax-exempt property (hospitals, universities, state buildings). This forces the remaining taxpayers to pay higher mill rates to cover city services.

The plan advocates for a more reliable, tiered reimbursement system where the state more accurately compensates cities for the revenue they lose from these tax-exempt properties, theoretically allowing those cities to lower their mill rates.

Expanding the property tax credit. Scanlon has supported broader efforts (often aligned with Lamont’s budget) to increase the existing state income tax credit for property taxes paid. He would move the credit from \$300 to \$500 (or more depending on budget surpluses). He would also expand eligibility so more middle-class residents qualify for the credit, helping to blunt the impact of high local mill rates.

Structural reform: reducing reliance on local levies. Connecticut is an outlier nationally and not competitive due to its heavy reliance on local property taxes. Scanlon’s proposal should allow municipalities to explore other revenue streams beyond just property taxes, which would allow towns to lower their mill rates.

A key part of his reform platform involves the state taking on a larger share of education funding (through the Education Cost Sharing formula) to prevent towns from having to raise property taxes to cover school costs.

Based on the recent federal passage of the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act in 2025, one has to also factor in analyzing how federal tax changes – such as the \$40,000 state and local tax deduction cap – interact with state relief.

While federal changes may provide temporary relief for some, the state needs its own permanent “circuit breaker” programs to protect residents from future volatility. Connecticut needs a system where property taxes are capped at a certain percentage of a household’s income, ensuring that seniors and low-income homeowners aren’t taxed out of their homes.

Restructuring Connecticut’s property tax system is long overdue. I believe what Scanlon has proposed is a great start, and I am sure it will be discussed further in the coming months.

However, it is important that the state legislature supports Scanlon’s proposal so that it can include cutting taxes across the board in order to make Connecticut more affordable and competitive nationally. Affordability and competitiveness are key in order to attract corporations/major taxpayers and expand the overall tax base. This is truly the only way Connecticut can gain future economic viability and be competitive nationally.

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

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



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Book Reviews

Theo Of Golden By Allen Levi

I have never said this about any book I've loved in the past, and I have loved many: do whatever it takes (legally of course) to get your hands on this amazing, beautiful novel.

Theo arrives in Golden with no set agenda or plan. Within days he becomes a regular at The Chalice, the local coffee shop, becoming friends with the barista Shep. He spends quite a bit of his days there.

Theo becomes particularly interested in the pictures that adorn the shop's walls. Through a magazine article he learns the pictures were done by Asher, a local artist who sketched some of the customers as they drank their coffee, read a book, played with their phones or simply stared into space. Surprised that no one has bought any of the portraits, Theo purchases one of a young woman. The sadness in the woman's eyes is particularly appealing to him.

It was at that point that an idea begins to formulate in Theo's mind. Through some internet searching he learns that the woman in the picture is Minette Prentiss, a certified public accountant who lives in Golden.

He writes her a letter stating he would like to meet her and gift her the painting. He sets a time and place for them to meet on a bench by the town's water fountain.

Minnette is skeptical about Theo's intentions, but is curious. Minnette's husband, Derrick, is outright suspicious. They agree that Derrick will read the letter at least three more times before they make a final decision. They decide to proceed, and the meeting goes swimmingly.

Theo explains the reason behind his presenting Minnette with her picture. In the course of the conversation, Minnette reveals the reason for the sadness in her eyes.

Theo's exploration of the town has him meet Tony, the owner of the town's bookstore, Penny Loafers. He learns of a group of men who visit Tony daily, and Mr. Ponder, who reluctantly rents Theo an apartment.

Theo finds it easy to ingratiate himself with Golden residents. He has the uncanny ability to engage the individual by asking



CARMELA DEVITO

questions formulated to elicit as much information as possible.

When asked about his own life, though, he deftly turns the conversation around.

This is very clear in his conversation with Asher. When Asher asks why Theo is doing what he's doing with the pictures, Theo says he felt that gifting the pictures to those they represent is simply an act of kindness.

Theo's gifts are met with surprise initially, but gladly accepted. That, however, is not the case with Ellen, a woman who is deeply connected to her bicycle and a frequent guest at the homeless shelter. Presenting the picture to Ellen, Theo asks her a simple question. Her response leads to a cacophony of answers, none of which make much sense. With gentle questioning, Theo begins to get a better sense of who Ellen is.

Theo's impact on the Golden community is felt in many ways. By being a good listener, he enables Tony to talk about his

experiences in Vietnam. A newspaper writer wishes to do a feature article on him. By giving her one of the pictures, Theo enables her to see the beauty within her.

There is one person who is immune to Theo's charms: Mrs. Gidley, Mr. Ponder's assistant. She's quite skeptical of Theo's intention and doesn't trust him at all. But she soon becomes one of his most ardent supporters.

The end of the book is somewhat sad. I would have tissues ready (I did). There is so much joy to be found in Golden and all the people who are touched by Theo's kindness. In the book there is a quote by Theo that sums up the book perfectly: "For anything to be good truly good there must be love in it."

Love and kindness are the main themes in this exquisitely written heartfelt book with an amazing surprise at the end. I absolutely adore it.

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.

Amity BOE Names Awards For Excellence

The Amity Board of Education has named two members of the school community as recipients of this year's Amity Awards for Excellence.

Matt Benton, a paraeducator with the Amity Transition Academy, has been named the Award of Excellence recipient.

"Benton is known for his calm and welcoming presence, helping to create a positive and inclusive environment where

students feel supported and valued," the board said in its announcement. "He builds strong, authentic connections with students and consistently meets them where they are, supporting both their growth and independence. His work extends across many areas of the district, including Unified Sports and extracurricular programs, and he is widely recognized for his teamwork, flexibility, and unwavering focus on

student success."

Jen Blais, a Spanish teacher at Amity Middle School Bethany, was named Teacher of the Year.

"An Amity graduate, Blais has dedicated more than two decades to the district and brings a deep sense of pride and purpose to her work. She creates a classroom environment where students feel welcomed, engaged and inspired to learn," the announcement said.

"Her commitment to student-centered instruction, along with her positive and compassionate approach, fosters both academic growth and a strong sense of belonging. Ms. Blais is also a leader among her colleagues, sharing her expertise and supporting school-wide initiatives while building meaningful connections with students and families."

Both honorees will be recognized by the board at its June 8 meeting.

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The Arts

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With spring upon us, we look forward to the sights and sounds of the season, awakening our senses to both the new and the familiar. We are fortunate to be minutes away from so many unique cultural, musical, artistic and theatrical offerings.

Take a lovely spring drive to see a spectacular visual and musical candlelight performance. Take the back roads to enjoy the shoreline views on your way to see the unique harp-guitar instrument in concert. Visit your local gallery to participate in a community art experience along with local artists. Listen to orchestras and choirs, some offering audience participation. Immerse yourself in classic dramatic works on a local stage. Take time to treat yourself to a fresh start in this new and beautiful season.

Town Players of Newtown presents **The Shadow Box** by Michael Cristofer with matinee and evening performances now through May 16 at Town Players of Newtown Theatre, 18 Orchard Hill Rd. in Newtown. This Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning play revolves around three terminally ill patients living in hospice cabins on forested hospital grounds. In cabin one is Joe, at peace with his diagnosis, but whose wife Maggie is in denial. In cabin two we find Brian, a man of many projects whose significant other, Mark, finds himself at odds with Brian's ex-wife, Beverly. In the third cabin resides Felicity, cared for by her daughter, Agnes, who hides a heartbreaking secret. Through interviews with an unseen doctor, the characters confront fear, denial, love and mortality. Tickets range from \$25 to \$30 and can be purchased by visiting newtownplayers.org or by calling the box office at 203-759-8343.

A **Community Art Doodle** hosted by the Milford Arts Council Artist-2-Artist Group will take place on three dates: Friday, May 15 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Firehouse Gallery, 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. All ages are welcome to participate in this special community experience. The doors will be open for anyone to mingle, commune and share a few words, doodles, drawings or images on the interior walls of the Firehouse Gallery, which will be covered with craft paper. The MAC will supply markers. The goal is to add art with items by others in the space to create a totally organic and unique statement of the community. The event is free. A donation box will be available. Come make your mark, tell a story or hang out and watch the doodle grow and change. All artists, writers, residents, visitors, family and friends of all ages are invited to attend and participate. This will be a safe space encouraging creativity, positivity, imagination and joy. For more information visit milfordarts.org or call 203-878-6647.

World Ballet Company presents **Swan Lake** by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky on Sunday, May 17 at 6 p.m. at Stamford Palace Theatre, 61 Atlantic St. in Stamford. Featuring a live orchestra, a cast of 50 international dancers, over 150 radiant hand-sewn costumes and stunning hand-crafted sets, this legendary tale takes flight in a breathtaking production as fate and magic entwine in a timeless battle between good and evil. Princess Odette has been cursed by the evil sorcerer, Von Rothbart, and must live her days as a swan and only turn human at night. The spell can only be broken by a vow of true love. But the sorcerer tricks Odette's true love, Prince Siegfried, to pledge his love for the sorcerer's daughter, the Black Swan. Good prevails over evil in the end. Tickets start at \$40 and can be purchased by visiting palacestamford.org or by calling the box office at 203-325-4466.

The Milford Arts Council presents a **Harp Guitarist Concert with Stephen Bennett** on

May 22 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the MAC, 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. An acclaimed harp guitarist, Bennett is a winner of the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship and the 2024 International Finger Style Guitar Championship at the Walnut Valley Festival. Bennett is celebrated for his brilliant technique, expressive compositions and rare sensitivity. Recognized worldwide as one of the foremost exponents of the harp guitar, he has created a body of work that spans solo recordings, collaborations and original compositions. This performance offers audiences a rare chance to experience Bennett's artistry live as he shares both beloved works and music from his forthcoming release. Table and row seating is available. Tickets are \$30 with advance purchase and \$35 at the door. Children age 17 and under enter for \$5 with a paying adult ticket. Tickets can be purchased by visiting milfordarts.org or by calling 203-878-6647.

Curtain Call Theatre presents **My Mother & The Michigan/Ohio War**, a new play written by Paul Stroili, with matinee and evening performances through May 17 at Curtain Call Theatre, 1349 Newfield Ave. in Stamford. Izzy's history buff husband Freddy had a dream: a full-scale reenactment of the Michigan-Ohio War. But when a bizarre papier-mâché accident leaves Izzy a widow, she calls on her Wolverine daughter and Buckeye son to see Freddy's vision realized. Historical becomes hysterical in this comedy about family, football and the fight for the Toledo strip. Tensions flare when this forced-to-downsize Michigan matriarch and her grown children, clash over everything from tofu to Toledo to goal posts to Gordon Lightfoot. It's a laugh-out-loud look at the battles we never outgrow, no matter how old we get. It contains adult language and subject matter. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased by visiting curtaincallinc.com or by calling the box office at 203-309-6601.

The Milford Arts Council will host the Milford Photo Expo Opening Reception on Thursday, May 14 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Firehouse Gallery, 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. The opening reception is free and open to the public. Award winners will be announced and light refreshments will be provided. For updated information visit milfordarts.org or call 203-878-6647.

The Case Memorial Library will host **Liberty and Legacy**, a performance by Sheryl Faye, following the Friends of the Case Memorial Library annual meeting on Saturday, May 30 from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Case Memorial Library, 176 Tyler City Rd. in Orange. The annual meeting will begin at 1 p.m. followed by the performance at 2 p.m. This dynamic multimedia performance brings Abigail Adams to life through her own words, blending live theater, music and immersive visuals. This engaging production highlights her role as a visionary thinker and advocate during the American Revolution. Registration is required beginning Saturday, May 9 at 7 a.m. by visiting casememoriallibrary.org.

Castle Craig Players presents **Harvey** by Mary Chase, with matinee and evening performances through May 17 at Almira F. Stephan Memorial Playhouse, 59 West Main St. in Meriden. This classic Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway and Hollywood comedy tells the story of Elwood P. Dowd, who is charming and kind with one character flaw: an unwavering friendship with a six-foot-tall, invisible white rabbit named Harvey. When Elwood starts to introduce his friend to guests at a society party, his sister Veta can't take it anymore. To save the family's social reputation, Elwood's sister



CYNDI CONSOLI

takes him to the local sanatorium. But when the doctor mistakenly commits his anxiety-ridden sister, Elwood and Harvey slip out of the hospital unbothered, setting off a hilarious whirlwind of confusion and chaos as everyone in town tries to catch a man and his invisible rabbit. The show has cabaret-style table seating. Patrons are invited to bring their own food and beverages. Tickets are \$25 for general admission and \$20 for seniors. All tickets for Castle Craig productions are sold exclusively online by visiting castlecraigplayers.org.

The Shubert presents **Kimberly Akimbo** with book and lyrics by David Lindsay-Abaire, score by Jeanine Tesori, choreography by Danny Mefford and direction by Jessica Stone with matinee and evening performances from May 14-17 at the Shubert Theatre, 247 College St. in New Haven. This powerful and inspiring musical is very funny, unexpected, off-kilter and ultimately uplifting – it is about how we live in the time that we are here, about growing up and growing old, and about how we choose to treat each other and ourselves. In other words, life is short; enjoy the ride. Kimberly is about to turn 16 and recently moved with her family to a new town in suburban New Jersey. In this funny yet heartbreaking show, Kim is forced to navigate family dysfunction, a rare genetic condition, her first crush...and possible felony charges. Ever the optimist, she is determined to find happiness against all odds and embark on a great adventure. Tickets start at \$29.80 and can be purchased by visiting shubert.com or by calling the box office at 203-562-5666.

Lumos Experiences presents **The Beatles Candlelight Experience** on Friday, June 12 with two available seatings. Performances will be held at the Church of the Good Shepherd Episcopal, 182 Coram Ave. in Shelton. This classic musical Beatles tribute offers an enchanting concert experience in a setting of candlelight while listening and singing along to 16 favorite Beatles songs masterfully played by a string trio. There will be two seatings offered: the first seating is at 7 p.m. with doors opening at 6:15 p.m., and the second seating will be at 9 p.m. with doors opening at 8:30 p.m. Age 8 and above is suggested for this event. Seating is first come, first served to your allocated tiered ticket zone offered in platinum for front row \$70, gold for \$35, silver for \$30, and bronze for \$25. Disability access is offered for \$25. Tickets can be purchased by visiting lumos-experiences.com.

Magnolia Theatre Company presents **The Importance of Being Earnest** by Oscar Wilde, with performances running from June 17-20 at 7:30 p.m. at Pilgrim Congregational Church, 65 East Grand Ave. in New Haven. This witty comedy centers around two young men, Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, who use fake identities to evade family duties and chase romance without consequences. Jack, who pursues Algernon's cousin Gwendolen, pretends to be his friend's dissolute brother, Ernest, while Algernon visits Jack's estate under the name Ernest to court Jack's ward, Cecily. The play explores the consequences of their deception and the importance of being earnest in their lives. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased by visiting magnoliatheatre.org or at the door.

The Milford Arts Council will host the **Walnut Beach Fairy Frolic Art Show & Sale** by McAlt Studio, the Whimsical World of N.A. McConkey and guest artists of the Artist 2 Artist Group of the MAC. A review day will be offered on Saturday, June 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the event will take place on Sunday, June 21 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Firehouse Gallery, 81 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford. Visit a magical world filled with whimsical art created

by N.A. McConkey and guest artists who will transform the space into a fairy wonderland that will delight all ages. Enjoy fantasy art and unique fairy houses created by award winning local artists. Immerse yourself in the color and whimsy inside and out. For more information visit milfordarts.org or call 203-878-6647.

Eastbound Theatre presents **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Simon Stephens, based on the novel by Mark Haddon and directed by Kevin Pelkey. Matinee and evening performances run June 12 to 27 at the Milford Arts Council, 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. The incident concerns a mystery surrounding the death of a neighbor's dog. Fifteen-year-old Christopher is a math whiz, but he is ill-equipped to deal with everyday life situations. When he falls under suspicion for killing his neighbor's dog, he sets out determined to identify the true culprit. This leads to unexpected discoveries and a journey that will change his life forever. Tickets are \$32 in advance and will also be available at the door. To purchase tickets online visit milfordarts.org or call 203-878-6647.

Shubert Theatre presents **Les Misérables**, produced by Cameron Mackintosh with book, music and lyrics by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil. Matinee and evening performances run June 2 to 7 at Shubert Theatre, 247 College St. in New Haven. Set against the backdrop of 19th century France, this hauntingly beautiful musical tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice and redemption – a timeless testament to the survival of the human spirit. This epic and uplifting story has become one of the most celebrated musicals in theatrical history. Tickets start at \$34.50 and can be purchased by visiting shubert.org or by calling the box office at 203-562-5666.

The Bushnell presents **Water for Elephants**, a musical with book by Rick Elice adapted from the novel by Sara Gruen and score by PigPen Theatre Co. Matinee and evening performances run June 2 to 7 at William H. Mortensen Hall, 166 Capitol Ave. in Hartford. After losing what matters most, a young man jumps a moving train unsure of where the road will take him and finds a new home with the remarkable crew of a traveling circus, and a life – and love – beyond his wildest dreams. Seen through the eyes of his older self, his adventure becomes a poignant reminder that if you choose the ride, life can begin again at any age. Tickets start at \$45.50 and can be purchased by visiting bushnell.org or by calling 860-987-5900.

Curtain Call Theatre presents **Guys & Dolls**, with book by Abe Burrows and Jo Swerling and based on the stories and characters created Damon Runyon. Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser. Matinee and evening performances run June 5 to 27 at Curtain Call Theatre, 1349 Newfield Ave. in Stamford. In this musical comedy, gambler Nathan Detroit tries to find the cash to set up the biggest craps game in town while the authorities breathe down his neck; meanwhile, his girlfriend and nightclub performer, Adelaide, laments that they've been engaged for 14 years. Nathan turns to fellow gambler Sky Masterson for the dough, and Sky ends up chasing the straight-laced missionary Sarah Brown as a result. The story takes us from the heart of Times Square to the cafes of Havana, Cuba and even into the sewers of New York City, but eventually everyone ends up right where they belong. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased by visiting curtaincallinc.com or by calling the Box Office at 203-309-6601.

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

Recalling The Early Days Of Milford Hospital

By Marilyn May

Milford Hospital was built on the hopes of the community, and it independently served Milford and surrounding towns for decades because of dedicated people who raised money to build it, plus the many nurses, technicians and doctors who made it happen.

Two women who remember those early days when the first “permanent” hospital was built are Ruth McLaughlin and Alyce Merwin.

When Milford was a rapidly growing town with no hospital, critically ill and surgical patients were sent on arduous journeys to New Haven or Bridgeport hospitals. There were no surgeons in Milford.

The Milford Hospital Society was formed in 1920 to establish Milford’s first community hospital, first by setting up a “temporary” one, while at the same time planning to build a “permanent” one.

A “temporary” hospital with 15 beds and nine nurses was set up in 1920-1921 in the historic circa-1659 Clark-Stockade house on Bridgeport Avenue. An adjacent 3.5 acres of land was generously donated by Judge Charles Beardsley as the site for a “permanent” hospital. (Many wanted to call the new hospital Beardsley Hospital, but he insisted it be called Milford Hospital.)

After much fundraising and the pooling of community resources, a three-story, red-brick building was constructed and opened in 1923 as the first permanent hospital. In later years, this facility was added to many times until we had the hospital as we see it today.

Two hospital employees remember the early days and witnessed the many changes.

Former nurse Ruth McLaughlin will be 94 in December, and former laboratory technician Alyce Merwin is 100 years old, although she’s quick to tell you she’s one

third of the way to 101. Both lived in Milford. Their working careers overlapped, but it wasn’t until they joined a church fellowship group that they realized how much in common they had.

McLaughlin said she had always wanted to be a nurse, which makes sense considering her mother and two aunts in the Hokunson family were nurses at Milford Hospital. Her mother met her husband-to-be while he was visiting a relative there. Ruth McLaughlin herself was born in Milford’s maternity ward.

When the first permanent hospital was being built, she remembers taking her grandson there to watch the workmen.

She started her training at Bridgeport Hospital, where she worked with premature infants. Later she went to Milford Hospital, where she started in the medical and new surgical department.

In the early days, she said, only routine procedures, such as tonsillectomies and appendectomies, were done in Milford by surgeons who were called in from Bridgeport Hospital.

“Milford still had no surgeons in the early days,” she said.

Critical cases were sent to Grace-New Haven Hospital, a precursor to Yale New Haven Hospital.

“One day” she said, “someone asked ‘Who wants to work in delivery?’ So I said, ‘I’ll give it a try.’”

She spent much of her career as a pediatric nurse. She fondly remembers working with obstetrician Dr. Alvin Wolfson, who came to Milford in 1964.

“He would sing Happy Birthday to the infants as soon as they were born,” she said, smiling at the memory.

“I loved the babies. When I talked to them, they would calm right down and look at me. It was like they were trying to understand what I was saying.”

What job doesn’t have its amusing moments?

Her mother had worked in the operating room with Edith Oddy, who went on to become hospital administrator. Earlier, Oddy had the responsibility for the nurses who lived in a residential building that once stood in front of the hospital.

“There was a strict rule that everyone had to be in the residence by 8 p.m. and then the doors were locked,” McLaughlin recalled.

But it didn’t always work out that way. It seems Oddy’s brother was dating one of the nurses. More than once the couple arrived after curfew. The nurse had to be lifted up by the brother and pulled through a window by the other nurses.

Alyce Merwin was a laboratory technician. She was born in Bridgeport Hospital

but spent her life in Milford. Her father, Fred H. Merwin, was the owner and president of the Milford Rivet & Machine Co. located at 857 Bridgeport Ave., about where the recently closed Stop n’ Shop is located today.

Milford Rivet was founded about 1947-1948, and helped shape Milford’s postwar economy. At its peak, the firm employed 800 office and factory workers and annually generated \$63 million in sales. Ask your oldest family members and you are likely to find a relative who worked there. The original factory closed in 1969. Today, refurbished Milford Rivet machines are still sold online.

Merwin went to Lauralton Hall, where she said she was one of six Protestants in a class of 26 students. From there she went to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida and was a graduate of the Class of 1947.

“They called Rollins ‘The country club of the South,’” she recalled. Country Club or not, she graduated with a degree in chemistry. “My last year in college they introduced a new course called clinical technique, and I was fascinated by it.”

That led her to taking a year of practical training at the Paine School for Technicians in New York. Eventually, she started working at Milford Hospital, which was not far from her home on Robert Treat Parkway.

She was on call two or three nights a week getting phone calls in the middle of the night to come to the hospital. Not even snowstorms stopped her from walking to work. What did stop, her, however, was that her father, being awoken so often, told her she had to get her own phone. Fred Merwin preferred daytime work, and later became chairman of the board of Milford Hospital.

After a few years, Ruth Merwin decided to travel and spent a number of winters in Arizona. But she eventually came back to Milford year-round.

Then another nighttime call changed everything. She guesses it was about 1958 when “Dr. Jack Parrella called me one night and asked if I would come back as a tissue technician.”

The late Dr. Parrella was a highly regarded, long-time general surgeon at the hospital. Merwin said she didn’t have to work, but she loved the job.

“I was ready to do something meaningful again,” she said.

Her early hospital work had been drawing and analyzing blood samples, but the new job had a new challenge. She was to learn to analyze tissue samples, so she went to St. Raphael’s for training.

When she came back to Milford, she said, “I had the honor of spending \$10,000 for equipment.”

She was always ready to help wherever she was needed. One time, she remembered,



Merwin

“I was called into the operating room, given a fancy camera and told to take pictures.”

Another time there was an autopsy to be done. The regular forensic pathologist was not available, so someone else was called in from Bridgeport, and she was told to assist.

“I always separated myself from what I was doing. I had seen plenty of blood and guts in the operating room,” she said. Her attitude was that “There was a job to be done, and that was it. It was part of my job.”

She may be close to being one third of the way to 101, but she still drives her 19-year-old Lexus SUV.

“I recently had to renew my license, and I was offered a two-year or eight-year license,” she said and laughed, remembering she told the clerk she thought a two-year license would suffice.

Her work was never dull. She went from lab technician to tissue technician and then was promoted to laboratory supervisor.

How did that feel?

“I was long past the days when I could be called in the middle of the night for something,” she said. The new position meant “I could play golf all the time that I wanted to.”

Merwin retired in 1970 and has the golf trophies to prove her love of the game.

Today, Milford Hospital is no longer an independent entity. In June 2019 it became a satellite campus under Bridgeport Hospital, which is part of the broader Yale New Haven Health network. Telephone calls to Milford Hospital now are answered by an operator who says, “Bridgeport Hospital – Milford Campus.”

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



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May 19th Ribbon Cutting - **AT Sangha Yoga**
44 River St, Milford @ 3:00

Business After Hours

West Haven Veterans Museum and Learning Center
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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 casememoriallibrary.org for more information.

The library will be closed for Memorial Day on Saturday, May 23 and Monday, May 25.

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. Visit casememoriallibrary.org for the weekly email newsletter and for updates on events at the library.

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.

Boba Fett's Tea Party

Monday, May 4, 5 p.m.-6 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Do you think Boba Fett likes boba tea? This May 4, come to the library and see if you like it. Create your own drink worthy of the Star Wars cantina. The library will be using green tea, which contains some caffeine. Registration is required.

Books and Barks

Thursday, May 7, 4 p.m.-5 p.m.; for children in grades K-6.

Come and read to Elvis, a Shih Tzu therapy

dog. You can bring your own book or use one of the library's. This is a drop-in program with no registration required. However, time slots will be assigned on a first come, first served basis starting at 3:50 p.m. There will be limited time slots for readers ages 4-12.

Tween Book Bedazzling: Mother's Day Edition

Saturday, May 9, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.; for tweens in grades 4-6.

Bedazzle a book cover with your favorite female – your mom, aunt, grandmother, guardian – anyone you want to celebrate Mother's Day with. Bring books with interesting covers to decorate. Please register everyone who will be attending.

Take and Make: Rain Gauge

Monday, May 11, all day; for children in grades K-6.

Be your own weather reporter. With a simple DIY rain gauge, you can stop guessing the rainfall amounts and start measuring. No registration is required; kits are available on a first come, first served basis.

STEAM Club: Space Edition

Tuesday, May 12, 4 p.m.-4:45 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Engineering challenges, building projects, technology and more activities will be available based on the theme of the month. This time the library will belatedly celebrate National Space Day. Registration is required.

LEGO Club

Thursday, May 14, 4 p.m.-4:45 p.m.; for children in grades K-3.

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

ABC Book Club

Saturday, May 16, 10:30 a.m.-11 a.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

The goal is to read something for every letter of the alphabet. The letter can match the author's first or last name or the book's title. The group will meet every couple of months to share progress, talk books and eat. This program requires registration.

Memorial Day Craft

Thursday, May 21, 4 p.m.-4:45 p.m.; for children in grades K-3.

Make your own patriotic keychains with diamond art (similar to bedazzling). Whether you want to deck out your backpack or give a gift to a hero, these keychains are the perfect way to show your spirit. Registration is required.

Role-Playing Game for Tweens

Thursday, May 28, 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.

Preschool Sensory Play

Saturday, May 30, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; for children ages 18 mos.-5 years.

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

High School Volunteer Club

Saturday, May 9, 10 a.m.-noon; 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: May

Pick up dates: May 26-30; 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 May 1.

Teen Book Bedazzling

Saturday, June 6, 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.

Crash Course Cooking: Cannoli

Saturday, May 2, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.; for adults and teens in grades 7-12.

Learn to make cannoli from scratch with Matthew Yanarella. This is a hands-on workshop. Space is limited. 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.

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.

Art of the Busy Mind: Sound Bath & Meditative Art Workshop

Monday, May 4, 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.

Quiet your mind with a restorative sound healing journey using gongs and singing bowls, followed by calming process art with watercolor and ink. Release stress, explore creativity and reconnect with stillness in this meditative, no-pressure experience. Registration is required.

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.

Adult Book Boxes

Pick up dates: May 26-30

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 May 1.

Banned Books Discussion Group: The Sword of Summer

Monday, June 1, 7 p.m.

The Sword of Summer by Rick Riordan was one of the more than 160 books a library director in Tennessee was fired for refusing to move to a restricted section of her public library. Join a discussion of this book as a work of literature and an object of censorship. The discussion will be led by Librarian Rebecca Harlow. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Crochet Club

Saturday, June 6, 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.

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Orange Garden Club Holding Plant Sale **Travel Matters**

The Garden Club of Orange will host its May Market Plant Sale in advance of Mother's Day on Saturday, May 9 at the High Plains Community Center pavilion in Orange.

and baked goods for sale. The sale runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine. High Plains is located at 525 Orange Center Rd.

For more information, go to gardencluboforange.com.

The event will feature annuals, perennials

From Tokyo With Love



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

Tokyo is a city of many contradictions.

One minute you are visiting a temple from 623 AD surrounded by beautiful sakura (cherry tree blossoms). The next minute you are in the middle of Shibuya Crossing with thousands of people at multiple crossroads surrounded by skyscrapers and neon lights everywhere, making Times Square in New York look tame.

We were fortunate enough to go to Tokyo this past month during cherry blossom season. Although it was crowded, there were plenty of places in Tokyo that were peaceful and serene, like Hamarikyu Gardens with the only saltwater pond in Tokyo and an authentic Japanese teahouse. In the midst of the financial district, it reminded us of Central Park in New York, only with fewer people.

We started our visit at Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo – a perfect place to experience Japanese culture and tradition with its Japanese restaurants, artwork and one-of-a-kind gardens. All rooms have huge cantilevered windows overlooking the gorgeous Chinzanso Garden and the Sea of Clouds – a phenomenon that is produced with “a fusion of modern technology and traditional craftsmanship” (steam generated by a waterfall). As a guest, this is truly a magical experience, featuring over 100 varieties of camellias and sakura that is further heightened in the evening with pink lights.

You really don't want to leave the hotel, whether you're in your room or walking the gardens or dining at one of their four restaurants on the premises. Even better, the garden is never crowded because it's open only to hotel guests.

But leave we did – and experienced a walking food tour of Tsujiki Fish Market, which offers more than just fish at this modern date. Famous for its historic tuna auctions, it's still a good location to sample sushi, sashimi and sake, as well as wagyu beef soup,

From Tokyo, you can explore Mount Fuji in a number of ways. The iconic Fuji is only seen about one third of the time due to its height (12,388 feet) and microclimate.

Located on Honshu Island, you can approach from a few locations. We visited Hakone, with its famous hot springs, one of the most popular locations to see Fuji. But the mountain was socked in with clouds. Two days later, our second attempt from Shimizu proved successful, with blue skies and our photos capturing the quintessential sakura blossoms with Fuji in the background.

From Tokyo, we boarded the Crystal Symphony for a 13-night cruise, where we created our own artwork with petrified coral stamping in Okinawa; visited the beautiful Fushimi-Inari Shrine with the dramatic red Torii gates in Kyoto; an active volcano in Kagoshima, and toured gardens all over Osaka, Kyoto and Kochi. We even made our own steamed dumplings in Taiwan.

This was a great way to visit Japan, unpacking only once and enjoying the value of included food and drink with choices of Western or Asian menus. I highly recommend this trip.

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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Orange Post Office Holding Passport Fair

The Orange Post Office will host a passport fair on May 9, giving residents an opportunity to apply for a US passport without an appointment.

Passport services will be available from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Post Office lobby. The Orange Post Office is located at 36 Old

Tavern Rd. Customers should read the instructions, download and complete the passport application at usps.com/international/passports.htm beforehand. Be sure to bring the proper proof of identity and citizenship. Do not sign the application.

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Milfordites Walk 'In Her Shoes'



The Rape Crisis Center of Milford held its 19th annual "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" fundraiser walk in downtown Milford on April 26. The event encourages participants to walk in women's heels to raise awareness against rape, sexual assault and gender violence. *Photos by Robert Creigh.*

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Milford Schools (Continued From 1)

The plan is to close two of the city's eight elementary schools, but the details have not been determined.

Many of the buildings will be rebuilt over a period lasting into the 2040s. According to planners for Perkins-Eastman, which was hired to develop the strategy, the overall cost could be between \$.105 billion and \$1.7 billion.

The consolidation plan has been driven by long-term declines in student enrollment and outmoded facilities that are becoming more expensive to maintain than replace.

According to Parkins-Eastman's analysis, Live Oak Elementary School and Calf Pen Meadow Elementary School will be in the worst shape over next decade. But most of the buildings will get to the point of needing replacement in that time.

The most recently-built school, Joseph A. Foran High School, was erected in the 1970s.

"Your whole portfolio is sort of in the need of major capital investment," said Patrick Davis of Perkins-Eastman.

The board had originally considered starting the rebuilding process with two of the elementary schools, then the middle schools, the remaining four elementary schools, and finally the high schools.

Several residents had concerns about this arrangement, though, as it would entail some elementary students being in swing spaces or on the same property with active construction at multiple points in their school careers.

The consultants came up with four alternatives in response. One would start with replacing the high schools, meaning students would only experience disruption once in their school years.

However, that plan would likely extend the entire process for several years more.

Another scenario would begin with one elementary school and one middle school, then move on to the other middle school and a second elementary school.

Splitting the middle schools up might logistically require the closing of Harborside before the new facilities are built.

A fourth concept envisions rebuilding the middle schools first. As with the high schools, that would likely require doing one at a time and require multiple moves for John F. Kennedy and Live Oaks middle schools.

Finally, it is possible that both middle schools could be built at the same time, with West Shore constructed on a new site. That would still leave Live Oaks students moving back and forth multiple times between swing spaces.

The Board is expected to make a decision on which route to take some time in May.

Fred Wolfe Park (Continued From 1)

would make adjustments to the north end, which is currently occupied by leased farm fields. The plan envisions either conversions to athletic fields or meadowland.

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission in February gave a favorable recommendation to adopt the master plan. BL developed it over the course of four years in conjunction with the town's Fred Wolfe Park Committee.

Tom Pisano, head of the Orange Soccer Association, criticized the plan for failing to consider in depth the need to schedule field use for multiple athletic organizations,

including those currently playing at Mary L. Tracy School.

"They clearly stated they did not include relocating any athletic fields in the town of Orange to Fred Wolfe Park," he said. "They were just dealing with what they were told - maximize the fields that are there."

"It will be a significant amount of additional open space for grass," First Selectman Jim Zeoli said of the first phase.

"I hope we get your input on it. And should you decide to work with the committee... to develop that space into something that's acceptable to you for your Sunday programs, I'm more than glad to work with you on it."

Several of the residents who live around

the park expressed worry that their lives will be disrupted by the construction of the new entrances.

"It's going to be a lot of taxpayers' money, for what? To make now a third entrance and exit for soccer fields in Orange?" said Carrie Richards, whose lives near one of the proposed entrances would be built. "I just feel like it's a little bit of overkill for a park that is in the middle of a residential area."

Clare Ankawi, who lives in the same neighborhood, voiced a similar sentiment about the planned traffic configuration.

"We have concerns about the traffic that's coming in, that's it's going to close off part

of our community," she said, adding that she wasn't aware of BL reaching out to anyone in the affected neighborhood.

"We did not receive anything in the mail asking for our feedback, or had anyone come to our door," she said.

Zeoli said he had heard more concerns in recent months than in the previous three years during which the plan was being created. He also said that there will be more opportunities to weigh in as the town goes out to bid for the first elements of the park overhaul.

"We do take everybody's considerations very seriously," he said. "There will be evolutions as this develops."

Rock The Dock Returning To Milford

Bridges Healthcare's 3rd annual Rock the Dock for Mental Health event is planned for Thursday, May 28 at 5:30 p.m. at Lisman Landing, located at 37 Helwig St. in downtown Milford.

Rock the Dock will feature an evening of music by local band The Alpaca Gnomes, and include two drink tickets and appetizers from local vendors plus a raffle and silent auction.

Proceeds from the event, held during Mental Health Awareness Month, will support Bridges Healthcare's mental health and addiction recovery programs that serve more than 8,000 local people each year.

Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased at support.bridgesct.org/RocktheDock26. Corporate sponsorship opportunities are available.

Milford, Orange Honoring Memorial Day

Milford and Orange will host several events commemorating Memorial Day this year.

Milford will place flags on graves at Saint Mary's Cemetery, Milford Cemetery and Kings Highway Cemetery on Saturday, May 23 at 8 a.m.

The following day, there will be a wreath-laying ceremony at 9:45 a.m. at Milford

City Hall. The city's Memorial Day parade will step off from the Parsons Government Complex at 2 p.m. the same day.

Orange will host a Memorial Day ceremony and parade on Sunday, May 24 at 10:30 a.m. The parade will begin at High Plains Community Center and travel down Orange Center Road.



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Diesel is about 5 years old, 60 pounds, vaccinated, neutered and full of life. He's learning basic obedience, leash manners, sit – and is preparing for the new home that awaits him. Diesel is excited to meet new people, sniff new smells, get out for walks, romp around in the yard and show off his stylish bandanas. He is looking for a home that has experience in his breed, which is mainly Husky. He can be adopted from Milford Animal Control, located at 49 Silver Sands Parkway in Milford. For more information, call 203-783-3279. Photo courtesy of Milford Animal Control.

Former Amity Students May Claim School Records

Amity Regional School District #5 will be disposing of student special education records of former Amity students who were born between 2001-2003 and/or graduated in 2020.

The records of any student who has received special services are maintained for six years after their class graduates and then destroyed following state guidelines.

Former Amity students who have received special services at the Amity Middle School Orange; Amity Middle

School Bethany or Amity Regional High School may obtain their special education records.

To obtain records, call 203-397-4820 prior to claiming the records to allow the district sufficient time to retrieve your records from archives and schedule a time for pickup. Leave a detailed message with student name, date of birth and phone number.

Records that are not claimed by June 30 will be destroyed.

TOWN OF ORANGE Notice of Annual Town Meeting

Notice is hereby given to the legal voters and those persons qualified to vote in Town Meetings of the Town of Orange, that the Annual Town Meeting of said Town will be held on Wednesday,

May 13, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. in the gymnasium of the High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT for the purpose of taking action at that time upon the following matters:

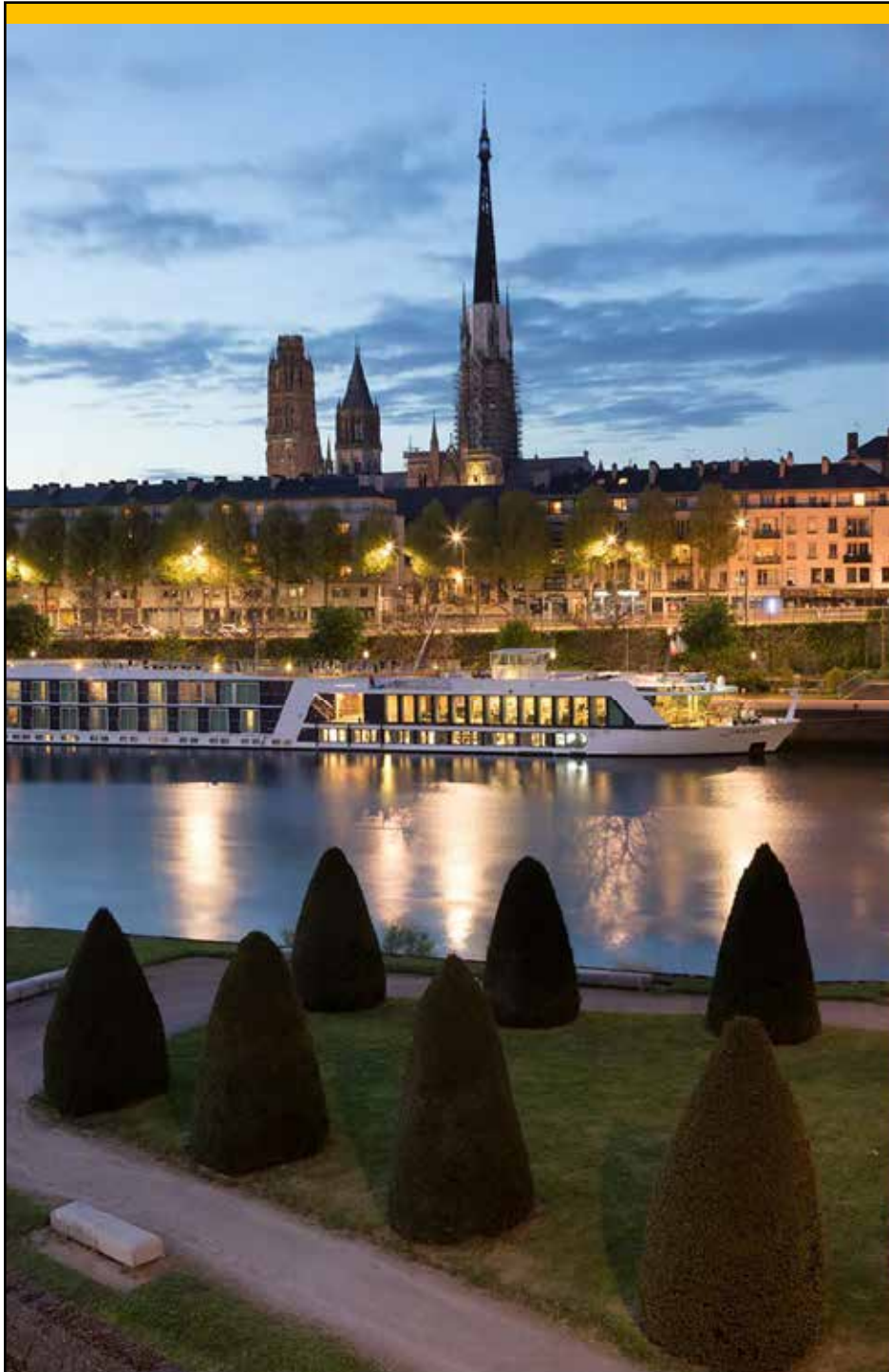
1. To authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell and convey land acquired by the Town through foreclosure of tax liens or by deed in lieu of foreclosure of tax liens.
2. To determine in accordance with Sections 12-142, 12-144 and 12-144(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes the installment due dates for all property tax including the property tax on motor vehicles.
3. To receive and discuss the report of the budget prepared by the Board of Finance for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026.
4. To approve, pursuant to Section 13a-49 of the Connecticut General Statutes and other applicable law, the discontinuances by the Board of Selectmen of a portion of Old Coach Road, being the former turnaround area as shown on the map entitled "Record Subdivision, Map Oak Forest Estates, Orange, CT" dated November 7, 2001, Sheet 1 of 7, which map is filed on the Land Records of the Town of Orange as Map # 263-A, as a public road. The discontinuance was voted on by the Board of Selectmen on April 8, 2026.
5. To approve, pursuant to Section 13a-49 of the Connecticut General Statutes and other applicable law, the discontinuances by the Board of Selectmen of a portion of Skyview Road, being the former turnaround area as shown on the map entitled "Record Subdivision Map, Field View, Orange, CT" dated February 16, 1998, Sheets 1, 2, and 3 of 3, which map is filed on the Land Records of the Town of Orange as Map # 78-A, 78-B and 78-C, as a public road. The discontinuance was voted on by the Board of Selectmen on April 8, 2026.

By virtue of Town Charter Section 2.6(c) and a vote of the Board of Selectmen, Item 3 shall be voted on by machine ballot at an adjourned Town Meeting-Referendum to be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (E.S.T.) at the High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT 06477.

Dated at Orange, Connecticut this 27th day of April 2026.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN OF ORANGE

ATTEST: Mary Shaw
Town Clerk



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Obituaries

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

Mary Ann Benjamin, of Milford, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy of love, faith, and devotion to her family and community. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Barbara Cairney of Milford passed away on 6/28/2023. Unfortunately, due to circumstances her death was not to be publicly reported until her husband **Peter's** passing. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Allison Gable, 67, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved wife, mother, and friend, passed away peacefully on April 12, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Sarah Swinson Agro, 103, long-time resident of Milford passed away peacefully on April 24, 2026. She was the beloved wife of Joseph M. Agro Sr. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Robert James Bishop, 67, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Cheryl Bishop, passed away on April 12, 2026, following a fall and injury on a golf course. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Frank Coscia, 86, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Silvia Coscia, passed away on April 27, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Michael Patrick Harvey, 64 from Milford, passed away peacefully on April 4, 2026 at his home in West Haven, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Nancy J. Amann, age 92, of Milford, passed away peacefully on April 15, 2026, at the Masonic Care Center in Wallingford. Nancy was the beloved wife of the late Arthur F. Amann. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



John Geoffrey Bissell, 78, of Milford, beloved husband of Mary P. Bissell, passed away after a long battle with multiple sclerosis on March 31, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Ryszard J. Cwiczak, 65 of Milford, passed away on April 17, 2026, at his home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dennis Arthur Hoben, 86, formerly of Milford passed away at Bridgeport Hospital on April 8, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Joan Marie Stankawich Barre, 94, a lifetime resident of Milford, beloved wife of the late Frank Barre, passed away on April 7, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Ernest C. Brown, aged 96, of Milford, Connecticut and St. Augustine, Florida, passed away peacefully on April 30, 2026, at his home, surrounded by his family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



On April 14th, 2026, **Jason Alan Dragonette** passed quietly at his home in Milford. He is the beloved son of Richard and Heidi Dragonette and older brother to Megan. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Rosemarie Hohman (September 18, 1926 - April 6, 2026) was a creative and talented woman who found joy in making things beautiful.



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Obituaries

Dolores Celina Jenney, 93, of Milford, passed away peacefully on April 7, 2026 at Autumn Lake Health Care while surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Clifford Bruce Lowman, of Milford, CT, passed away on April 13, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



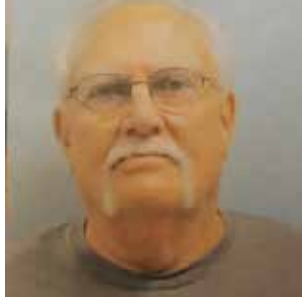
Ralph George Okenquist, of Orange, passed away on April 3, 2026, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



John Robert Richards, age 71, of Milford, died on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at his home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



John E. Jones, Jr., known affectionately as "Jack", of Milford, died on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 with his family by his side. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Tracy R. Molitor (Reed), 80, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on April 21, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



With deep love and aching hearts, we announce the passing of **Armida Orlando**, who was called home to be with the Lord on April 10, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Alminda Roth known to all of her many friends as Mindy, passed away on April 7, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Mr. Peter W. Kachila, age 77, of Punta Gorda, FL, passed away on Friday, (April 17, 2026) in Punta Gorda. He grew up in Milford, CT. (Kays-Ponger & Uselton Funeral Home)



Maria Graca Cacote Murphy of Milford, passed away on April 11, 2026 in Hartford Hospital. Maria is survived by her devoted husband, James Murphy. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Thomas Alden Reichlen, age 76, passed away on Monday, April 13, 2026 at his home in Milford Connecticut surrounded by those who loved him. (Pistey Funeral Home)



James Alexander Sautter, 65, of West Haven, CT, passed away on March 22, 2026, at Yale New Haven Hospital. (Beecher & Bennett Funeral Home)



Sharon S. LaBelle, 73 years of age, of Milford Connecticut, beloved wife of Richard E. LaBelle passed away April 20, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Gloria Ann (Tudgay) Nastu, age 87, of Milford, CT, passed away April 6, 2026. (Cyril F. Mullins Funeral Home)



Herman Rempfer, of Milford, devoted husband of Ann Rempfer, passed away on April 2, 2026, surrounded by his family just one day after celebrating his 92nd birthday. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Marilyn "Mutch" Silverman, age 90 of Orange, passed away on April 9th peacefully at home after a long illness. She was the beloved wife of the late J. William Silverman. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

John S. Skarlos, 88, a longtime resident of West Haven, entered into rest on April 22, 2026. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Jennie Vece, of West Haven, passed away April 19, 2026 in Yale New Haven Hospital. She was the beloved wife of the late Peter Vece. (Iovanne Funeral Home)



Harold Louis Toronto, 86, of Milford, passed away peacefully on April 10, 2026, at Ludlowe Center for Health & Rehab, surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Valletta Rose Wall, 86, of Orange, beloved wife of Donald, passed away on April 22, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



William David Toth, Sr., 87 of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Maureen Rogers Weber, 68, of West Haven entered eternal rest on April 15, 2026, after a five-year courageous battle with cancer. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Eleanore E. Turkington, age 91, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Robert Nelson Myers Sr., and Richard Turkington died on Sunday, April 5, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Sami Ziada, "The Barber", 91 years young, passed away peacefully at the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Adele and Anthony (Porky) Gaudino, on April 11, 2026. (West Haven Funeral Home)



TOWN OF ORANGE: Legal Notice Notice of Referendum

Pursuant to Section 2.6(c) of the Town Charter of the Town of Orange, notice is hereby given to the legal voters of the Town of Orange who are qualified to vote in Town Meetings, that a referendum will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (E.S.T.) at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange CT for the purpose of voting on the following question:

SHALL THE OPERATING BUDGET OF THE TOWN OF ORANGE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AS PROPOSED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$88,243,670 BE ADOPTED?
YES NO

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

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

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

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

Dated at Orange, CT this 27th day of April 2026.

Mary Shaw, Town Clerk

Orange Seeking Planning and Zoning/ Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Administrator and Enforcement Officer

The Town Of Orange is seeking an individual to fill the position of Planning and Zoning/Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Administrator and Enforcement Officer. Under the general direction of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Inland Wetland and Water Courses Commission, by overseeing the administration and enforcement of the Towns and States Regulations and Ordinances as well as the Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetland and Watercourses Regulations. This is a full-time union position with benefits. Hours: 37.50, Annual Salary \$91,702.26 (\$97,523.06 upon contract ratification), \$375 monthly car allowance. Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Job description is attached. Applications are to be sent to First Selectman James M. Zeoli, c/o Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT 06477 or jzeoli@orange-ct.gov by 4:00 p.m. on May 12, 2026. EOE

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