



Milford-Orange Times

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June 4, 2026

Orange Honors Memorial Day



Rain dampened some of Orange's planned Memorial Day festivities on May 24, but speeches and ceremonies to honor the holiday continued indoors at High Plains Community Center, including with a visit from Gov. Ned Lamont. Photo by Lexi Crocco.

Tech, Curriculum, Safety:

Milford Teachers Mull Modern Classroom

By Lukman Seyal

Recent changes in technology, curriculum, accessibility and school safety have affected the way students learn – and the way teachers work.

Inside Joseph A Foran High School in Milford, teachers say that they're seeing many of those trends firsthand.

World language teacher Wendy Valleau said that the single biggest change she has witnessed in the 16 years she has been teaching has been the rise of cell phone distraction use among students.

"I would say the use of cell phones is probably top of the list," she said. "It's a huge change in terms of how the students

are engaged, how they respond, their attention spans. Their literacy has gone down the tubes."

Valleau explained that students today often struggle to focus on reading and written instructions because of students being more accustomed to fast-paced digital content. She said students have trouble comprehending written English, making it even more difficult to teach a language that students don't know.

"The deterioration of students' engagement, attention span and literacy

Continued on page 18

Orange UNH Campus To Become Special Ed School

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

A special education facility plans to buy the University of New Haven business school property at 584 Derby-Milford Rd. in Orange and convert it into a K-12 school, adult administrative office and an ancillary day care facility.

Private nonprofit Aspire Living & Learning provides treatment and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, "allowing them to live more fully and more independently in their communities," according to their website.

The organization's headquarters are located in Vermont, with locations in several New England states and Maryland. It has five facilities in Connecticut.

Aspire Director of Facilities John Sullivan said that the Orange facility

would maintain business hours of 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and begin with about 90 supported individuals and 100 staff. Students would be transported to and from the campus via minivans in the morning and afternoon.

Aspire plans to renovate the interior of the existing facility, but not to construct new buildings on the site.

UNH was granted a special permit to locate its business school on the site by the Orange Town Plan & Zoning Commission in 2013, but has since decided to move the school back to its main campus in West Haven.

But it was unclear at the May 19 TPZC meeting whether the educational permit granted to UNH would apply to Aspire.

Continued on page 17

Milford Aldermen Approve \$278 Million Budget

By Lukman Seyal

The Milford Board of Alderman approved a \$278 million spending package for the 2026-2027 fiscal year on May 7, despite frustrations over "playing politics."

The accepted budget has a \$14 million increase compared to last year's and decreases Milford's mill rate for the first time since 2022, down to 28.67 from 29.55.

Although the mill rate decreased by 2.98 percent, members of the board argued that residents would pay more due to residential property values substantially increasing during the recently-completed revaluation.

The budget approved by the Board of Al-

derman remained largely unchanged from what was originally proposed by Mayor Rich Smith, later approved by the Board of Finance. One of the largest accepted increases in the budget came from the Board of Education, which requested a 4.3 percent increase to address rising operational costs, employee salaries and special education costs.

The meeting opened with Chair Philip J. Vetro pleading that both parties "transcend political concerns" and focus on

Continued on page 17

Hopkins Endorsed By GOP For 114th District



Hopkins

Brooke Hopkins was unanimously endorsed on May 21 as the Republican candidate for state representative in the 114th House District, which includes parts of Orange, Woodbridge, Derby and Hamden.

Hopkins accepted the nomination with a message that the communities of the 114th District need a stronger voice in Hartford to stand up against mass housing mandates.

"Woodbridge, Orange, Derby and Hamden should not have their future dictated by one-size-fits-all mandates from Hartford," said Hopkins. "We all care about making Connecticut more affordable, but affordability cannot come by stripping local commu-

Continued on page 2

Armstrong Running For 119th District



Armstrong

Milford resident Alex Armstrong unanimously won the Democratic nomination for state representative in the 119th District, which includes Milford's Gulf Pond neighborhoods, north Milford, and western Orange, on May 19.

"Connecticut families need new leadership and new solutions," Armstrong said as he spoke before supporters, friends and family. "Prices are rising – the average monthly electric bill is expected to hit \$300 this summer. And that's while food, health care, housing and child care keep getting more expensive, too. It's time to try something new."

Continued on page 3

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Hopkins (Continued From 1)

nities of their voice. Our towns know their roads, schools, infrastructure, neighborhoods and residents better than Hartford does. I am running because our communities deserve someone who will stand up for local control and fight back when state policy ignores the people who actually live here.”

Hopkins also pointed to Connecticut’s rising cost of living, especially utility rates, as a major concern for families, seniors and young people trying to remain in the state.

“People are being squeezed from every direction,” Hopkins said. “Gas prices are rising, utility bills are too high, groceries cost more and families are being asked to absorb the impact of decisions they had no real say in. Connecticut needs to become a place where people can afford to stay, not a place that keeps pushing families and young people away.”

She will face incumbent Democrat Mary Welander, who is in her third term, in the November election. The seat was held by Republican Themis Klarides prior to 2021.

Hopkins has lived in Woodbridge for 19 years and has three children in the Amity district schools. She is a social worker with 30 years of experience working in the mental health field in both nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

She founded the Kelly Ryan Foundation in 2012, which raised more than \$150,000 for families in need to assist in burying their children. She later co-founded CT Youth Resources, which works with at-risk youth and families.

She also serves as an adjunct faculty advisor, admissions coordinator and practicum instructor to students at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

Daniel Mowerman of Woodbridge placed Hopkins’ name into nomination and focused his remarks on the impact of Hartford’s housing mandates on local communities.

“Woodbridge, Orange and Derby are facing real pressure from Hartford’s affordable housing mandates,” said Mowerman. “These policies take power away from local residents and local leaders, and they give too much control to developers with too little regard for the towns being affected. Brooke understands that we can support affordability without giving up local control. As a younger resident, I want our towns to remain places where people my age want to move, build a life, raise a family and stay. Brooke is the kind of leader who will fight to keep our communities desirable, affordable and locally controlled.”

Judy Szewczyk of Derby seconded the nomination, emphasizing the need for relief from the growing cost of living in Connecticut.

“Families in Derby, Woodbridge, Orange and Hamden are tired of paying more and more just to live in Connecticut,” said Szewczyk. “Utility bills, taxes, costs and everyday expenses have become too much for too many people. Brooke understands that affordability is not a slogan. It is whether seniors can stay in their homes, whether young families can settle here and whether working people can get ahead. She will bring a practical voice to Hartford and put the needs of our communities first.”

Hopkins said her campaign will focus on protecting local decision-making, opposing harmful state housing mandates, lowering the cost of living, and addressing utility costs that continue to burden Connecticut residents.

“Government should be working for the people, not against them. Our communities have had negative experiences with their state government recently, but I hope our voters won’t judge a Brooke by her cover,” Hopkins said. “I have spent my life working with families, listening to people and solving problems. I am ready to bring that same approach to Hartford and fight for Woodbridge, Orange, Derby and Hamden.”

Weaver, Collins Get Republican Endorsements



Weaver



Collins

our towns and families and will be a strong advocate for the 14th District.”

“Owen Weaver’s strong leadership as the Orange town attorney and his extensive volunteer work in our community make him the ideal candidate. He understands our towns and has consistently put service first,” said Chad Lombardi, chairman of the Orange Republican Town Committee.

Collins’ campaign says it will champion “practical, common-sense solutions that deliver real results: lowering property taxes, easing the crushing energy costs driven by Hartford’s failed policies, and restoring affordability so working families, seniors and young people can thrive.”

“I am truly grateful for the unanimous backing from the Milford, Orange and West Haven delegates. Their confidence means everything as we carry that energy forward to flip the 117th District,” Collins said.

Collins is the former chair of the West Haven Police Commission, a past member of the West Haven Board of Education and is a youth sports coach.

Katie Martino, who nominated Collins, said, “As a woman, I find it absolutely disgusting that MJ Shannon couldn’t even answer the simple question ‘What is a woman?’ when asked on the House floor. He didn’t know – or refused to say. This is the kind of out-of-touch nonsense Connecticut families are tired of. Ray represents real values and common sense, unlike the failed liberal ideology that can’t even define basic reality.”

West Haven Republican Town Committee Chairman Jeff Christman, who seconded the nomination, said, “Ray understands the real needs of our communities because he lives them every day. He knows what it’s like to raise a family, the pressures of high taxes and the daily challenges our residents face.”

Local Republicans in May unanimously endorsed Owen Weaver as their candidate for the 14th Senate District covering Milford and Orange, as well as Ray Collins in the 117th House District that includes parts of Milford and Orange.

Both seats are currently held by Democrats. State Sen. James Maroney is in his fourth term; state Rep. MJ Shannon is in his first term.

Weaver’s campaign focuses on affordability, local control and “common-sense solutions for families across Orange, Milford, West Haven and Woodbridge,” according to his campaign. Weaver lives in Orange and serves as town counsel.

“For too long, Hartford has ignored the voices of our towns and burdened our families with rising costs and top-down regulations,” Weaver said upon receiving the endorsement. “I’m running to bring common-sense representation back to the Capitol, fighting for lower costs, safeguarding local control and delivering real solutions that strengthen our communities and our families.”

“Owen Weaver will bring experienced, balanced, and effective leadership to Hartford,” said state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, who nominated Weaver and whose House district overlaps with Senate District 14. “He has real insight into the challenges facing



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Armstrong (Continued From 1)

“I’m running because I believe we can still tackle the big problems. We can lower energy costs, bring more tax dollars back to our communities and improve our coastal resiliency. But we need to work together. And we need strong leadership with fresh ideas,” he said.

The 119th District seat is currently held by Republican Kathy Kennedy, who is serving her fourth term and is running for reelection in November.

Armstrong grew up in Milford, where he attended public schools – Orange Avenue, Harborside and Foran – and where he now lives with his wife, Julie, and their two daughters. He graduated from Georgetown University, where he studied government and

history, and has a master’s degree in American political science from Yale University. He works as a vice president at global non-profit organization Mighty Earth, combatting commodity-driven deforestation in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Armstrong served for three years on the Milford Sewer Commission, the final year as vice chairman. He previously served a term on the Milford Pension and Retirement Board, which manages the city’s pension fund. He is also a volunteer with the Friends of the Milford Public Library and a member of the Milford Irish Heritage Society.

Election Day is Nov. 3, with early voting beginning Oct. 19 and no-fault absentee voting available beginning Oct. 2 as part of a new law passed by Connecticut’s general assembly in May.

Milford To Celebrate America 250

Milford will hold a trio of events on Saturday, June 20 to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence.

The America 250 Grand Parade steps off at 11:00 a.m. with marching bands, decorated floats, community groups and tributes honoring the nation’s history. The procession begins at Wasson Field, turns onto West Main Street, travels down River Street and continues along the Milford Green.

The city’s seventh annual Juneteenth celebration and cookout is then planned from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the Green and at Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church. Recognizing the significance of June 19, 1865, the event will honor freedom, culture, resilience and unity through music, perfor-

mances, educational exhibits, food, local vendors and family activities.

Finally, the city will host a “kickoff to summer” at Lisman Landing Marina in downtown starting at 5 p.m. The celebration will include music featuring Sapphire and the Rum Runners, as well as food trucks, then culminate at 9:15 p.m. with a fireworks display over the harbor.

A free shuttle service will run from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. from Harborside Middle School, Wasson Field and the Milford Senior Center. Parking will be prohibited behind the library, near the harbor and at Lisman Landing.

For more information, email Milford-250parade@gmail.com.

Voting Open For ‘Best Of’ Milford

Voting has opened for the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce’s Best of Milford and West Haven awards.

The annual awards honor local business-

es, organizations and people in the area. Final voting closes on June 14.

For more information and to vote, go to milfordct.com/best-of-milford.

Milford Pride To Host Event On Green

Milford Pride is set to host its third annual Pride on the Green event on Saturday, June 27 from noon to 4 p.m. on the Milford Green.

The event is meant to recognize LGBTQIA+ Pride Month in June.

The event will feature DJ Mixmaster Cayes, live music with Carrie Ashton, performances by Sapphire Bills, speakers,

local food trucks, dozens of local vendors, LGBTQIA+ organizations and more. The all-ages community event is free and open to all.

More information on Milford Pride on the Green can be found at milfordctpride.org and through Milford Pride’s Facebook and Instagram pages (@milfordctpride).

Griffin Health Nurse From Milford Honored For Patient Care



Griffin Health Nurse Milly Delaney of Milford recently received the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. Photo courtesy of Griffin Health.

Griffin Health in Derby recently honored nurse Milly Delaney of Milford with the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses.

The award is part of the DAISY Foundation’s mission to recognize the extraordinary, compassionate care nurses provide patients and families every day. Winners can be nominated by patients, patients’ family or friends, or fellow caregivers for their exemplary care.

Delaney, a nurse for Griffin Hospital’s inpatient units, was nominated by a patient’s caregiver for her compassion and dedication

to caring for her patients and their family.

“Milly immediately exhibited compassion and empathy for our mom and cared for her as if she were part of her family,” the nomination for Delaney said. “It is an honor and privilege to have met Milly as a nurse and person. She brought dignity, respect and care to my mom. She brought us comfort, empathy, and concern.”

The award recipients are chosen by a committee at Griffin and the award is presented throughout the year.

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Marine Exhibit Displayed In Milford



The Milford Marine Institute and the Milford Preservation Trust hosted a marine biology, whaling and marine shipping exhibit at the Taylor Memorial Library in Milford from May 22-24. Photos by Lukman Seyal.

United Insurance Expands In Orange



After five decades in Orange, United Insurance Group held a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Amity Chamber of Commerce on May 14 to open its new offices, which double the size of its former location and offer expanded capabilities. The 3,400-square-foot office is located on the top floor of the Firelite Professional Building at 35 Old Tavern Rd. Suite 203. Founded in 1973 by the late Jerry Ucci, the agency has grown into a second-generation, family-owned business serving clients throughout the Northeast and beyond. From left: Amity Chamber CEO Barry Lee Cohen, United Insurance employees Kimberly Aksu, Joann Murray, Dan Boemmels, Christine Schardan, Valeria Castro, United COO Scott Gaudet, President Rachel Gaudet, Laurinda Crowley, Kathy Sabitsky, Maryann Long, Stacey Schutska and state Rep. Kathy Kennedy. Photo by Steve Cooper.

Yoga, Wellness Shop Opens In Milford



AT Sangha Yoga and the Amae Collective celebrated the opening of its new and expanded location with a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by an open house celebration on May 19. Located at 44 River Street, 1A, in Milford, the 4,000-square-foot yoga studio is nearly triple the size of its former locations, and includes a wellness collective boutique of curated goods, handmade jewelry and healing experiences. Co-owners Amy Rushow and Traci Weber, center right and left, were joined by Milford Mayor Rich Smith, Amity Chamber of Commerce CEO Barry Lee Cohen, Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce Director Simon McDonald, Milford Director of Economic and Community Development Robert Townes, state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, along with clients, friends and family. Photo by Robert Creigh.

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988 Signs Installed In Orange



Orange Youth Services recently installed signs for the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in several locations around town. Photo courtesy of the Orange Youth Services.

Orange Youth Services and the Orange Prevention team recently installed three “988 There Is Hope” signs in town. Two are located at High Plains Community Center, and one is at the Wepawaug Conservation Area.

The signs are meant to provide support, encouragement and mental health resources to individuals who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

The signs prominently display the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, the national prevention hotline. The hotline was created to provide immediate support for suicidal thoughts or crisis situations; mental health challenges; substance use concerns;

emotional support for anyone in distress; and support for friends or family worried about someone.

People can call or text 988 any time to connect with trained counselors confidentially and free of charge.

By placing these signs in outdoor community spaces, organizers said they hope to remind residents that help is available and that no one has to struggle alone.

“We want every person who visits these areas to know there is hope and there are people who care,” Orange Youth Services and Prevention said in a release. “A simple message at the right moment can make a meaningful difference.”

Orange Raffling Treats During Dog Licensing Month



Orange will raffle off a basket of treats and toys to one of the dog owners who obtain licenses in town this June. Photo courtesy of the Orange town clerk.

June is the renewal month for dog licenses for all dogs six months and older in Orange, and the town is automatically entering all those who obtain a dog license into a raffle to win a basket of dog treats and toys.

The raffle drawing will take place on Monday, July 1. In celebration of the 250th anniversary of US independence, there are treats and trinkets for dog owners also included in the basket.

One of the three ways to obtain a license is to visit the town clerk’s office at Town Hall Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you are unable to stop by in person, you can visit the town website

at orange-ct.gov for instructions on how to renew a dog license electronically or by mail.

The costs to obtain a dog license are \$8 for spayed females or neutered males, and \$19 for unspayed/unneutered dogs.

An up-to-date rabies vaccination certificate and a neutering/spaying certificate are required to renew or obtain a new dog license. According to state law, it is the responsibility of the dog owner to obtain a license in June each year. After June 30, there is a state mandated \$1 per month penalty for unlicensed dogs.

For questions, call the town clerk’s office at 203-891-4030.

Opinion & Editorial

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.

Left in the Dark by Zoning Officer Departure

To the Editor:

I am writing to express concern about the recent departure of our town's zoning officer and the lack of communication surrounding unresolved zoning cases left behind.

Residents who took the time to file complaints or requests through the zoning office deserve transparency and follow-through. Instead, people with open cases were never notified, myself included, that the zoning officer had left his position. Calls go unanswered, calls to the departed zoning officer's phone line still have his voice and his mailbox works, emails receive no response, and there appears to be no automatic forwarding system directing residents to another staff member or department for assistance.

This is not simply an inconvenience. Zoning issues often involve property disputes, safety concerns, permit questions and enforcement matters that directly affect neighborhoods and homeowners. Leaving cases unresolved without notifying the individuals involved creates confusion, delays and a loss of confidence in local government operations.

At a minimum, the town should have implemented a formal notification process for anyone with an active case; an automatic email reply identifying the interim contact person; phone forwarding or a recorded message directing callers appropriately; and a public update explaining how pending zoning matters will be handled moving forward.

Municipal government should continue functioning smoothly regardless of personnel changes. Residents should not be left wondering whether their cases have been abandoned or who is now responsible for handling them.

I hope town officials, be it the first selectman or the zoning board, address this situation quickly and improve communication procedures so residents are treated with the professionalism and accountability they deserve.

Stacy Deurquiza
Orange

Post the Packet

To the Editor:

I want to thank the Orange Board of Selectmen for recently forming a Communications Ad Hoc Committee to improve how residents share their questions, ideas and concerns with our elected representatives. The committee met twice already and had good conversations about how to handle constituent emails and whether members of the Board of Selectmen should use official town email addresses.

If you care about how your town government engages with you, these meetings are worth attending. Their next meetings are June 29, July 27 and Aug. 24 at 6:30 p.m. Check the exact location when they post their next agendas at Orange-CT.gov/AgendaCenter.

While this committee might take some time, other solutions don't require months of discussion to implement.

In March, I wrote to the Board of Selectmen asking that they post their full meeting packet online every month. Currently, residents can access the agenda and minutes online, but only the selectmen have easy access to the supporting documents that give those agenda items their meaning. Without the full packet,

it's hard for residents to follow what's actually being discussed and decided.

We don't have to look far to find examples. Both Orange and Amity public schools publish their full meeting packets online. Our neighboring towns of Trumbull, Milford and West Haven do, too. Of course, they remove any confidential information that can't be shared publicly. I've compiled examples of their meeting packets so you can see for yourself at bit.ly/meetingpackets.

This is simply what neighbors should expect from a town that belongs to all of us. I hope you'll join me in asking for this simple act of transparency. Contact members of the Board of Selectmen, or members of other boards and commissions, and ask them to post their full meeting packet online.

Dan Fitzmaurice
Orange

Not the "Reasonable First Step" Families Deserve

To the Editor:

State Rep. Mary Welander (D-114), after a heartbreaking year marked by highly publicized cases of children known to the Department of Children and Families being abused, neglected and tragically killed, Connecticut families expected real accountability and serious reform.

Instead, the Children's Committee, with her leadership advanced HB 5004, a bill heavy on spending and bureaucracy, but light on fundamental changes needed to protect vulnerable children.

Her recent column portrays this legislation as a thoughtful response. In reality, it represents more of the same: expanding government programs and oversight structures while Connecticut taxpayers foot the bill.

Cost to Taxpayers

According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, HB 5004 carries a minimum state cost of \$1.29 million in fiscal year 2027, with substantially higher ongoing costs. This includes foster care rate increases, caregiver grants, mentoring stipends, child care and enrichment programs, postsecondary support, and funding for a new 28-member oversight committee all on top of DCF's already enormous budget.

Why This Bill Falls Short

1. More Bureaucracy Instead of Real Accountability

Creating another oversight committee does little to address the core failures: missed home visits, inadequate supervision of inexperienced case workers, and poor decision-making in high-risk cases

2. Spending More without Demanding Results

Increasing support for foster families is understandable, but pouring more money into a system with repeated documented safety failures does not guarantee better outcomes for children.

3. Avoiding the Hard Reforms

The bill fails to meaningfully tackle issues like excessive telework, poor frontline supervision, or real consequences when critical safety policies are ignored.

Even more concerning, this bill does not stand alone. While HB 5004 focuses on DCF operations, the same legislative majority has simultaneously pushed HB 5468, a separate bill that restricts parental freedoms by imposing new regulations on homeschooling families. This includes mandatory DCF registry checks, restrictions on who may homeschool and greater government oversight of education choices.

Together, these efforts reflect a troubling pattern: expanding state involvement in fam-

A Chance To Help Families Missed



STATE REP. (R-119)
KATHY KENNEDY

For months now, folks across Connecticut have been hearing the same thing: help is on the way. People were told – pretty plainly – that tax relief was coming, maybe even in the form of rebate checks showing up in their mailbox. That sounded like real, tangible help at a time when families are feeling squeezed from every direction.

Well, that didn't happen.

The final budget deal between the governor and legislative leaders dropped that idea altogether. Instead of putting money directly back into people's pockets, the plan sends hundreds of millions of dollars to municipalities and hopes local officials can keep property taxes from going up.

Maybe they will – but there's no guarantee. And "maybe" isn't much comfort when your bills are already piling up.

Let's call it what it is: there's no broad-based tax relief in this budget.

Families are still dealing with higher grocery bills, rising energy costs and property taxes that never seem to go down. What they needed was something direct and dependable – real relief they could count on. Not a promise that things might not get worse.

And here's another issue that doesn't sit right. A big chunk of the new funding is headed to the state's largest cities – Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Those cities absolutely have challenges, no question about it. But towns like Milford and Orange are feeling the strain too. Costs are going up everywhere, not just in big cities. Our residents pay their fair share, and they deserve to see that reflected in how state dollars are handed out.

There are also hundreds of millions being set aside for a child care endowment fund. Investing in childcare is a good thing – we all know families need support there. But it's hard to square that with all the talk we heard not long ago about budget shortfalls. And it's even harder when taxpayers were told relief was right around the corner.

Connecticut had a real opportunity this year. Revenues came in stronger than expected. That could have been the moment to make lasting changes: cut income taxes, ease the burden on property taxes and give working families some breathing room.

Instead, we got a plan that feels like a patch, not a fix. I did ultimately support the budget proposal due to the new additional money given to both Milford and Orange; we need every dollar they can send us.

I'm going to keep pushing for policies that actually help people – not just sound good on paper. Families in Milford, Orange and across Connecticut aren't asking for miracles. They're asking for a little fairness and some real relief they can see and feel.

Affordability isn't just a talking point – it's a daily reality. And right now, too many people are still waiting for that relief to show up.

MOT
Milford-Orange Times

Protecting Our Kids Online



STATE REP. (D-114)
MARY WELANDER

I was thrilled in 2023 when my bill, "An Act Establishing the Crime of Harmful Communication with a Minor," passed both chambers and was signed by Gov. Ned Lamont into law, ultimately becoming Public Act 23-123. The bill established parameters that would finally allow for predatory adults who purposefully mislead, coerce or have inappropriate communications with a child online to be prosecuted criminally.

I worked on that bill for years with my colleague from New Fairfield, Rep. Pat Callahan; we still reach out to each other whenever we see a report of someone charged with the crime our bill addresses.

Unfortunately, the law is often lagging behind what is actually happening on most sites. We continue to see individuals purposefully using gaps in our legal system to exploit and harm children online.

While Sen. James Maroney has been leading the legislative fight to create more accountability, regulation and ultimately safer spaces online here in Connecticut, there continue to be companies and platforms where this dangerous and destructive behavior still occurs.

That's why I am incredibly grateful that Attorney General William Tong has launched an in-depth investigation into child exploitation concerns on the platform Roblox to ensure that these companies are held accountable to the promises and expectations that are advertised to families.

Whenever there is an opportunity to have direct communication with a minor, predatory adults will show up. This happens on social media platforms, streaming platforms, community sites, even platforms that are coloring books marketed to very young children.

While we continue to address this kind of heinous behavior through law, there are some important things that we as parents and trusted adults can do to help protect our kids.

Be as aware as possible of what your child is doing online, and dangerous online trends (such as "764 network"), and any current tricks that are marketed to kids (like apps they can download to hide chat-based platforms so it looks like a calculator or another innocuous phone function). Then it is important to talk to your kids and make sure they understand what appropriate online communication is and establish rules for your household (such as only messaging people you know "in real life").

Sometimes these conversations can be a little uncomfortable, but necessary to make sure that your kids are safe, and most importantly, ensuring they know that they can come to you if something happens to them. Kids are being targeted online, and they won't be able to recognize some of the warning signs if we don't talk to them about it.

Resources that can help can be found by going to the American Academy of Pediatrics Online Health and Safety Resources page. Locally, SOSA has tips on their FAQ page on how to have these conversations and what to do if this has happened to your child.

If I can ever be of any help, please reach out.

Continued on page 7

Opinion & Editorial

Letters

(Continued From 6)

ily life while delivering limited accountability for a child welfare system that has failed too many children.

No single piece of legislation can fix everything. But after this year's tragedies, Connecticut's children and families deserve far more than additional spending, another committee and new restrictions on responsible parents. They deserve a Department of Children and Families that is truly accountable and effective at keeping kids safe.

Brooke Hopkins
Republican Candidate for District 114

Kindness and Respect Are Two-Way Streets

To the Editor:

Each local major party in Orange has the opportunity to write a column in this paper every issue. I have found reading Jude Toohey's column representing the Orange Republicans interesting, if not always factual.

She often tries to touch on the theme of kindness and calls politics "polarizing." Yet she fails to get to the root of that issue. I can only assume, since we don't know how people actually vote, that she has supported and voted for the most polarizing "politician" the US has ever seen. This "politician" calls people ugly, piggy, nasty, dog and low IQ.

Kumi Naidoo, Amnesty International Secretary General, said, "As President of the United States, Trump has demonized minority groups, whipped up hatred, fear and sowed division." Yet Toohey insinuates it is others who are polarizing.

I would recommend Toohey and the Orange Republicans look at their history and their current actions. Actions speak louder than words. Their attacks of people they don't like have shown that their support of this administration is cemented in the rhetoric they engage in.

Let's not only "treat people with kindness and respect" but offer those going through difficult times the same privacy as has been afforded others, including elected officials. When we start treating everyone equally, the respect and kindness will follow.

Jody Dietch
Orange

Focused on Affordability?

To the Editor:

State Sen. James Maroney claims in his recent mailer to be laser-focused on affordability for constituents in Milford, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge. His voting record reveals a different reality that burdens working families.

Maroney supported the \$55.8 billion two-year state budget in 2025, which included new business tax increases exceeding \$357 million. To enable \$2.6 billion in extra spending, the Democratic majority used multiple guardrail workarounds: diverting approximately \$300 million earmarked for pension debt repayment, shifting costs into off-budget accounts and under-funding retiree health benefits by nearly \$230 million. This equates to roughly \$900 per family annually across Connecticut's 1.43 million households.

Connecticut families already endure the nation's third-highest property tax burden, with median payments often exceeding \$6,000 annually. Electricity rates are among the highest in the US, with monthly bills frequently \$200-\$330, inflated by the public benefits charge and renewable energy mandates that Maroney has supported. These add hundreds of dollars yearly to household costs.

Critically, he opposed Republican-backed proposals for broader tax relief, including larger income tax cuts, property tax reforms to ease unfunded mandates on towns and rollbacks of hidden energy charges. These blocked measures could have saved families hundreds to thousands annually.

Throughout his tenure as deputy majority leader, Maroney has worked in close concert with Democratic Party leadership, rarely if ever voting independently. His near-perfect party-line record has enabled the Democratic supermajority in Hartford to pursue unchecked spending and mandates that drive up costs for everyone.

While some targeted credits passed, the overall approach of high spending and resistance to structural reforms keeps Connecticut's cost of living among the highest nationally. Families need over \$126,000 yearly for basics. The supermajority's grip has failed to deliver real relief – it is time for change.

State Reps. Mary Welander (D-114) and MJ Shannon (D-117) generally voted in concert with Maroney and the Democratic majority on these key budget and affordability measures.

Residents deserve genuine affordability, not rhetoric. Voters should review the full record ahead of elections.

Craig Stahl
Orange

Personal Choice Comes with Responsibility

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Craig Stahl's letter "State Vaccine Bill Shreds Freedoms." He claims that "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."

My question is: why shouldn't people who refuse vaccinations pay more?

Personal choice is great, but you should also be held accountable for your personal choices. Smoking is personal choice. Smokers pay more in insurance because they are taking medical risks that could result in additional medical costs for the individual and

the company. It would be unfair to increase everyone's premiums because individuals decided to take a personal medical risk. The one responsible for making that choice should be the one to bear the additional cost of that risk.

The same holds true for vaccinations. Vaccines are safe and effective. Simply believing that they are not safe and effective does not make it so. The vast majority of evidence bears this out despite what the current administration would have you believe. When someone refuses a vaccination, they should be the one to bear the additional cost of covering the risk of infection in the way a smoker, through their own "personal choice," must bear the cost of the additional risks that smoking poses. Refusing a vaccination is really no different.

It seems as if Stahl wants people to be able to make risky decisions, in the name of personal choice, while also believing that those same people should not be held accountable for that choice. He wants others to bear the cost of his personal decisions. Those who opt out of safe and effective vaccinations should be the ones to bear the cost of the additional risk of that decision.

Michael Antonetti
Orange

Thank You To Cyndi Consoli

The Milford-Orange Times appreciates the tireless work of our retiring arts columnist and wishes her the best in her future endeavors.

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MJ Shannon (D-117)

Senator's Seat: Sen. James Maroney (D-14)

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Barry Lee Cohen, Amity Chamber
Steve Cooper, Restaurant Reviews
Theresa Rose DeGray, Bankruptcy
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews
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Orange Democratic Town Committee

What's Up With The Orange Dems?

The end of the school year is always such a busy time. I'm certainly feeling it now as we head into the home stretch filled with concerts, celebrations, graduations and all the memorable moments that come with June. I'm also feeling all the emotions that come with watching my youngest graduate from elementary school and prepare to head off to middle school next year. This season is a reminder that growth and change often happen all at once.

While June feels like a whirlwind, May was also an especially busy month for members of the Orange Democratic Town Committee. Many of our members were elected as delegates to conventions where candidates were endorsed for state, national and local offices. Over the course of several weeks, we attended the Connecticut Democratic State Convention, the convention for the 3rd Congressional District, four conventions to endorse state legislative candidates and a convention to endorse a candidate for probate judge.

State Sen. James Maroney and state Reps. Mary Welander and MJ Shannon were endorsed at our convention for state legislators. These lawmakers have played import-

ant roles in shaping and passing legislation that positively impacts Connecticut families.

Newcomer Alex Armstrong was endorsed for state representative for the 119th House District. Many residents in his district, myself included, will likely be seeing Armstrong at our doors in the coming months as the campaign season ramps up. Armstrong is focused on preparing our communities for the challenges of a changing climate, addressing the rising cost-of-living crisis facing working families and reforming Connecticut's utilities to provide cleaner, more reliable and more affordable energy.

Ben Gettinger was once again endorsed for probate judge for Milford and Orange.

I hope you will all join us for our annual Candidates Picnic on Aug. 21 to meet them.

Rosa DeLauro received the party endorsement for the 3 Congressional District. Our incumbent lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller, treasurer and secretary of the state all received endorsements as well. Ned Lamont received the endorse-



MELISSA JOHNSTON

ment for a third term as governor, while challenger Josh Elliott earned enough delegate support to qualify for the primary ballot on Aug. 11.

Between now and the primary, it is our responsibility as Democrats to learn more about the candidates, their priorities and their visions for the future. Primaries are a healthy and important part of the democratic process. They allow more ideas to be heard and debated. But at the end of the day, we often share many of the same core values. Once voters have made their voices heard, we move forward together, focused on ensuring those values are represented in November.

In addition to participating in conventions, we also welcomed two new members at our May meeting. Although Mother Nature disrupted our plans to march in the Memorial Day Parade, it was still wonderful to see so many familiar faces at the ceremony at High Plains Community Center. We celebrated the raising of the Pride flag in Orange in recognition of Pride Month in June, and we are look-

ing forward to participating in the upcoming Milford Pride event. We are also very excited to sponsor upcoming events connected to the America 250 celebration in Orange.

Our next meeting will be held on June 16 at 7 p.m. at HPCC, and we encourage anyone curious about what we do to join us. We also publish a comprehensive email newsletter, Orange Happenings, which includes local events, news, board meeting updates and more. Anyone can sign up on our website at OrangeCTDems.org.

As we move through this hectic but meaningful time, I hope that once the flurry of June settles, everyone is able to take time this summer to relax, recharge and enjoy the moments that matter most. Just as this season brings transitions in our families and our community, it also reminds us of the importance of staying engaged in our democratic process, showing up, staying informed and participating in the decisions that shape our shared future.

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

Auditions Open For MAC's PlayFest

Auditions will be open on June 8, 9 and 10 for the Milford Arts Council's Eastbound Theatre's East/West PlayFest 2026, a festival of short original plays. Auditions will take place at the Margaret Egan Center, located at 35 Matthews St. in Milford, beginning at 7 p.m. each night.

The festival of five original works co-produced by the MAC's Eastbound Theatre in Milford and Westport Community Theatre

will be presented with two 4 p.m. matinee performances on Saturday July 11 and Sunday, July 12 at the Milford Historical Society. They will be repeated the following weekend with two evening shows at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 17 and Saturday, July 18 at Westport Community Theatre.

The short plays featured in this year's festival are "The Cardboard Prophets" by Hannah Crothers of Saint John, New

Brunswick-Canada, directed by Ann Baker of Milford; "Spark of Life" by Ellen Abrams of New York City, directed by Mark Ferguson of Newtown; "Taken to School" by John Busser of Avon, Ohio, directed by Elayne Gordon of Norwalk; and "The Collegians" by Tim Lehnert of Cranston, Rhode Island, directed by Tom Rushen of Stratford. A fifth play, directed by Erin Sullivan of Norwalk, will be added and announced at a later date.

Actors will be reading from the scripts which have male and female roles for performers from their 20s through their 60s. Resume and headshots are preferred but not required.

For more information about the East/West PlayFest 2026, contact the Milford Arts Council/Eastbound Theatre at 203-878-6647 or visit <https://milfordarts.org/about-eastbound-theatre/>.

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All Day: Blood Pressure Checks	Orange Visiting Nurse Association
All Day: Face Painting	Good Child Transitional Center
All Day: Rock Painting Craft	Milestones Behavioral Services
4:00 – 4:30 Dance Performance	Brennan-Lucey Irish Dance Academy
4:30 – 5:00 Strings Performance	Suzuki Music School
5:00 – 6:00 Children's Foam Fun	Foam Fun Parties
6:00 – 8:00 Concert	Gunn Street Revival

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Orange Republican Town Committee

Honoring The Fallen On Memorial Day

Over this Memorial Day weekend, our community came together to plan a joyful celebration in remembrance of our military heroes. This year felt especially meaningful as we draw closer to our nation's 250th birthday – a milestone that reminds us just how far we've come and how deeply we are blessed.

Though Mother Nature had other plans and many events were canceled due to weather, the spirit of the day could not be washed away. While some festivities moved indoors or were postponed, many of us still gathered for the solemn military dedication ceremony. Honoring those who served and sacrificed doesn't depend on sunshine – it lives in our hearts, in our actions and in the way we choose to show up for one another. That is the true heart of Memorial Day.

As a proud daughter, wife, mother, cousin and family member of many veterans,

this day holds profound personal meaning for me. I carry their stories with deep gratitude and quiet awe: their steady strength, unwavering sense of duty and heartfelt love of country.

Their service taught me that freedom isn't free. It has been courageously purchased, fiercely protected and lovingly passed down by generations of brave Americans who answered the call when it mattered most.

Memorial Day is not only about remembering the fallen; it is about honoring their legacy by living with greater purpose. It is about teaching our children what real courage looks like. It is about standing confidently in the values that make this nation so worth defending: liberty, opportunity, resilience and the belief that every person de-



JUDE
TOOHEY

serves a chance to pursue happiness. Even when storms arrive – whether they come as rain clouds or life's heavier challenges – we remember. We show up. We carry forward.

As America prepares to celebrate 250 years since its founding, Memorial Day feels especially full of hope and meaning. We pause to thank the men and women who gave everything so we could enjoy backyard barbecues, family laughter, neighborhood gatherings and the simple, beautiful freedom to build lives filled with love – complete with wagging tails and furry companions who make our homes even warmer.

To every Gold Star family, every veteran and every currently serving member of our military: thank you. Your sacrifice is never

forgotten. It inspires us to be kinder, stronger, more grateful and more united.

Even though some festivities were softened by rain, let us hold this day with full hearts. Let us fly our flags a little higher, speak with pride about the country our loved ones defended and commit with confidence and compassion to being worthy of their extraordinary gift.

This Memorial Day, I am proud to stand with my community, proud of my family's legacy of service, and deeply hopeful for the bright next chapter of our American story.

To all who served: we remember you. We honor you. We thank you, today and always, because freedom is not free.

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

Time Management

How To Create Clear Priorities

Most people say they do not have enough time. Time is rarely the core issue, though. Everyone gets the same 24 hours. The real challenge is deciding what truly matters within those hours.

When priorities are unclear, everything feels urgent. When priorities are clear, time begins to work for you instead of against you.

Here are five practical steps to create clear priorities and take control of your decisions.

Step 1: Define What Matters Most

Clarity begins with values, not tasks. If you do not know what matters most, you will treat everything as equally important – and that leads to becoming overwhelmed. Ask yourself: What are the top three to five outcomes that truly matter in my work and personal life right now? These should be results, not activities. For example, "grow revenue by 10 percent" or "improve my health," not "answer emails" or "go to the gym."

When you define what matters most, you create a filter. Every task, request or opportunity can now be measured against those outcomes. If it does not support them, it is not a priority – it is a distraction.

Step 2: Decide, Do Not Default

Many people do not consciously set priorities; they inherit them. They respond to whoever shouts the loudest, whichever email arrives first or whatever feels urgent in the moment. That is not prioritizing – that is reacting.

Take control by making deliberate decisions. At the start of each day (or better yet, the night before), decide your top two to three priorities. These are the tasks that, if completed, will move your most important outcomes forward. Everything else is secondary.

This is where the shift happens. Instead of asking, "What do I have time for?" ask, "What deserves my time?" That subtle change transforms your entire approach.

Step 3: Separate Urgent from Important

Urgency is loud. Importance is quiet. Urgent tasks demand immediate attention, but they are often tied to other people's priorities. Important tasks, on the other hand, are the ones that create long-term value, but they are easy to postpone.

To create clear priorities, you must learn to distinguish between the two. A ringing



DON
WETMORE

phone is urgent. Strategic planning is important. Answering routine emails is urgent. Building relationships or improving systems is important.

Train yourself to protect time for important work, even when nothing is screaming for your attention. That is where real progress happens.

Step 4: Eliminate or Delegate the Non-Essential

Once your priorities are clear, the next step is just as critical:

removing what does not belong. You cannot do everything, and trying to do so guarantees that your priorities will suffer.

Look at your task list and ask three questions:

- Does this directly support my top priorities?
- Am I the only person who can do this?
- What would happen if I did not do it at all?

If the answer is "no," "no" and "not much," you have found something to eliminate or delegate. Every "yes" you give to low-value work is a "no" to what matters most.

Step 5: Commit and Recommit Daily

Priorities are not set once. They are maintained. New demands, interruptions and opportunities will constantly try to shift your focus. That is why clear priorities require daily recommitment.

At the beginning of each day, revisit your top priorities. Ask yourself: If I only accomplish three things today, what must they be? Then structure your day around those decisions.

At the end of the day, review your progress. Did your actions reflect your priorities, or did you drift back into reacting? This simple reflection strengthens your decision-making muscle over time.

You don't need more time; you need better decisions. When you decide what truly matters, protect it and act on it consistently, your priorities become clear. And when your priorities are clear, productivity is no longer about doing more; it is about doing what matters most.

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.

Rotary Club of Orange

Tomorrow Is Another Day

Commencement speakers at college campuses have been having a tough time this year, with those forecasting a rosy AI-powered future often receiving boos. I sympathize with young adults given the gloomy nature of much global news and their own sense of diminished career or home ownership prospects.

Some days I avoid doom scrolling and instead call to mind advice provided by that fictional Civil War heroine, Scarlett O'Hara. She possessed a valued trait called resilience, and in the middle of the epic 1939 film *Gone with the Wind* declares: "I can't think about that right now. If I do, I'll go crazy. I'll think about that tomorrow."

Fostering resilience in children and young adults – the process of building mental and emotional strength as well as skills to adapt to adversity and significant stress – is something parents, other adult family members, teachers, coaches, etc., all try to promote to varying degrees. It's as challenging as teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, but there's no SAT at the end to measure aptitude to cope with life's ups and downs.

Community organizations, like Rotary, also try to develop resilience in middle and high school students. For example, the Rotary Club of Orange sponsors and moder-

ates an after-school club at St. Martin de Porres Academy in New Haven. That tuition-free, private middle school serves students from the New Haven area who live with a family below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

Rotary established a student-led club there, formally known as an Interact club, that enhances school features and the surrounding neighborhood, and partners with local service groups. During the winter holidays, the students also organized a major fundraiser to provide toys for children's units at Yale New Haven Hospital's downtown campus. It is inspiring to see 10- to 13-year-olds work together, and garner guidance from academy alumni attending nearby high schools and colleges.

Orange Rotary also sponsors an Interact club at Amity Regional High School, promoting a range of activities there that foster the "7 Cs of resilience" – competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control. This Interact club named itself Connecticut Speech and Action, and was formed jointly with students from



DAN
MAY

Amity, Hamden Hall and Hopkins schools.

CTS&A combines public speaking contests with community service projects and virtually engages with students from across the Northeast. Most recently, they organized and hosted a Leaders of Tomorrow Conference at the New Haven Public Library for Interact club members from across Connecticut. It featured remarkable workshops on networking and pitching that would benefit any organization. The adults observing wanted to rename it Leaders of Tomorrow and Today.

Rotary also recruits students from area high schools to compete in its own public speaking competition and leadership academies. For the second year in a row an Amity student won the speech contest for the Rotary district across southern Connecticut with a moving discourse on the perils of gossip. And a team from Amity won second place at the Rotary district's own spring leadership academy in designing a service project to engage with children who are bedridden in hospitals.

Club members recently reviewed applications for a Rotary scholarship from graduating high school seniors who reside in

Orange. It is encouraging to see firsthand the depth of talent and engagement across a large field of applicants, and hard to select a necessarily limited set of recipients. Applications arrived from six area high schools, and the winners this year will graduate soon from Amity, Hopkins School, Sacred Heart Academy and the Sound School.

As a retired college professor, working with young adults has almost always been a joy. It remains enjoyable to continue that a bit with Rotary and makes the future appear brighter when learning the breadth of talent and character of some of those who will be responsible for tomorrow.

I have never actually been able to sit through the entire four-hour runtime of *Gone with the Wind*. However, I have caught the ending several times when it used to air on cable TV. Clark Gable got a lot of notoriety with his sweeping exit line from the movie, but I prefer Scarlett's ending to Rhett's: "After all, tomorrow is another day." If the high school grads I've encountered optimistically continue with their convictions, I believe tomorrow will also be a better day.

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

Insuring Your Future

Big News About The Cost Of GLP-1 Drugs

The cost for GLP-1 weight loss drugs will begin to drop beginning July 1. Insurance companies will add Zepbound to their drug formularies by Oct. 1, which will make it easier to prescribe and provide some cost sharing through insurance plans. CVS health will restore coverage of Zepbound and start covering its new obesity pill on its standard drug plans. The new drug, Foundayo, will be added to the formulary beginning July 1. And Medicare recipients will be allowed access to specific GLP-1 weight loss drugs, including Zepbound, at a reduced cost.

What does all this mean?

These medications will be covered by three of the nation's largest pharmacy benefit managers, including CVS Caremark. Pharmacy benefit managers are third party administrators that manage prescription drug programs for health insurers. They act as the middleman between insurance companies, pharmacies and drug manufacturers.

In other words, they hold all the cards.

They negotiate drug prices, create lists of covered medications (formularies), process claims and contract with retail pharmacies. The major PBMs are CVS Caremark, Express Scripts and Optum Rx.

If a drug is not included in an insurance company's formulary, the patient must pay the entire cost of the medication and it does not count toward the maximum out of pocket threshold.

GLP-1 medications generally cost between \$900 and \$1,000 per month. By adding them to the standard formulary, the drugs will be assigned a "tier," which defines the copay. This amount is well below the retail cost; usually less than 25 percent. While it is still expensive, it is much more affordable.

GLP-1 authorizations were also generally only approved for patients who were diabetic or with certain diagnosed heart conditions.



TRISH
PEARSON

It will now be available to treat obesity.

Medicare is expanding its coverage of GLP-1 weight loss drugs. Eligible Medicare beneficiaries will be able to obtain certain GLP-1 medications for \$50 per month beginning July 1. The special program will be in effect through Dec. 31.

The program is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and eligible beneficiaries include those enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan with prescription drug coverage or a standalone prescription drug plan.

Insurance companies will not send notices to their members, nor will they perform any type of outreach to inform them of the program. Information on the availability and how to participate will come from the prescribing provider during an appointment, or

through the pharmacy after CMS approves the provider's request for authorization.

There is no self-enrollment or sign-up process for beneficiaries. Access to this program begins only when a provider initiates a request.

CMS should share more information when the program starts. The best place to begin is with your primary care provider. They should be informed about the new "bridge program," which provides increased availability and affordability. As details become available, we will share them in this column.

This is great news for people who are fighting obesity for whom traditional methods alone don't work. However, it does not replace the need for healthy diets and exercise. It just makes the results much more achievable.

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

Wine Talk

Wine And Cheese: An Inseparable Pair

The old adage goes, "When selling wine, always serve cheese. When buying wine, always eat bread."

These were the words of California winemaker August Sebastiani when he was asked to describe the relationship between wine and cheese. He believed that cheese always makes wine taste better and should be served whenever wine is poured. While Sebastiani died in 1980, his words have certainly proven prophetic.

The similarities between cheese and wine are amazing. According to an ancient legend, cheese was made accidentally by an Arabian merchant more than 4,000 years ago. A supply of the merchant's purchased milk was put into a pouch made of a sheep's stomach when he set out on a long day's journey across the desert. The natural rennet in the lining of the pouch, combined with the heat of the sun, caused the milk to separate into curd and whey. He found at nightfall that the curd satisfied his hunger and had a nice flavor.

Throughout the world cheese is made wherever animals are milked. Cow's milk is used more than any other milk in mak-

ing cheese because this animal is milked more than any other. Some cheeses are made from the milk of goats and ewes, as well as other animals such as camels, asses, mares, buffalo and reindeer.

Cheese has proven to be highly nutritious and palatable. It usually contains almost all of the protein and most of the fat of milk, as well as essential minerals, vitamins and other nutrients. And it keeps longer than milk.

Travelers from Asia are believed to have brought the art of cheesemaking to Europe, where it was made throughout the Roman Empire. Both wine and cheese were common foods in the Middle East during the time of Christ and in much of the civilized world since then.

Many people don't realize that many similarities exist between wine and cheese. Consider the following:

Cheese: Cheese is produced by microorganisms through natural fermentations. Cheese is an ancient discovery, several thousand years old, which became a widely used



RAYMOND
SPAZIANI

human food whose production enabled people to store perishable milk for many months. It was a common food in biblical times.

Traditionally, cheesemaking was a local farm industry. Accidental modifications in the cheesemaking process over the centuries were largely responsible for the development of different kinds of cheese. It was long considered an art form before becoming a science.

About 2 billion pounds of cheese is produced in the US. Annual per capita consumption in the US has doubled in the last 20 years to about 14 pounds.

Wine: Wine is produced by microorganisms through natural fermentations. Wine is an ancient discovery, several thousand years old, which became a widely used human food whose production enabled people to store perishable grapes for many months. It was a common food in biblical times.

Traditionally, winemaking was a local farm industry. Accidental modifications in

the winemaking process over the centuries were largely responsible for the developments of different kinds of wines. It was long considered an art form before becoming a science.

About 400 million gallons of wine is produced in the US. Annual per capita consumption in the US has doubled in the last 20 years to about 3 gallons.

Why not have a wine and cheese tasting? Get some of your favorite cheeses and match them with your favorite wines. See who likes what with what. Remember: a day without wine is like a day without sunshine.

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.

Book Reviews

The Magic Of Bookstores

Books are magical things. They transport us to faraway places, inform us, educate us, make us laugh, cry and experience all the feelings in between. There's a certain feeling I get when I walk into a bookstore and see all the books beautifully placed and categorized.

Chain bookstores often get a bad rap, but they serve a purpose. The best ones integrate into the community. Milford has a good one in Barnes and Noble. They've hosted many fundraising events, including one for the Milford Public Library. They work hard to make the store a welcoming environment, with a cozy cafe and plenty of places to sit and read. I wish they'd bring back the big comfy chairs, though – I miss those.

One of the saddest days in my book loving life was when Borders closed. With great anticipation on Friday morning, I would scan my email to see the latest 25 or 50 percent off coupon. They also had a lovely cafe with an assortment of soups, sandwiches and other goodies. I wish they would come back, along with their coupons.

I visited Books A Million on one of my trips to North Carolina. It was lovely, with bright lights, helpful staff and books as far as the eye could see.

A benefit of the chains, as well as most of the independents, is that they offer shipping, some free with a certain purchase threshold and others with a nominal charge. It's a great way to develop a relationship with a bookstore that's not easily accessible.

The Strand in the Chelsea section of Manhattan is amazing. There are books everywhere, including outside shelving. It's a large building which fortunately has an elevator. My only issue with the Strand is that it's not user-friendly. There are no tables or chairs. On the other hand, the store is just several blocks away from Union Square Park, which is an experience in itself.

The Book Mark Shoppe in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn is small but mighty. Like most bookstores, they hold book clubs and offer shipping, which is a great service. I usually visit Book Mark the day after the Brooklyn Book Festival, where I find treasures I missed. The store also has a huge selection of yarns and other crafts, with regularly scheduled knitting classes. Book Mark brings in many authors, including two of the Real Housewives. The



CARMELA
DEVITO

store really shines during the 3rd Avenue summer festival, which attracts many.

RJ Julia in Madison is a true delight. Beautifully appointed with cherry wood bookcases, the store has a cafe and a loyalty rewards program that comes in handy when the need to add to my burgeoning to-be-read pile comes over me. I'm particularly excited to attend their annual Books by the Sea weekend in early June. What could be more exciting than spending a weekend in a beautiful location surrounded by books, authors and fellow bibliophiles?

Mermaid Books in Milford has been a welcome addition to the community. Also small and mighty, the bookstore offers a variety of book clubs and shipping. They have also hosted readings by local authors. Owner Kristin Mascia and her staff have made Mermaid a warm, welcoming place. Everyone is quite helpful in getting the right book in the right hands.

Northshire Books in Manchester, Vermont is perhaps my favorite of all the bookstores. Like all the others they offer shipping and a

rewards program. They highlight Vermont authors but also bring in authors covering all genres. The store has a cafe and a variety of Vermont products: t-shirts, sweatshirts, posters, magnets, Lake Champlain chocolate (which is indescribably delicious) and an entire floor dedicated to children's books, clothes and toys.

One of the highlights for Northshire is the annual Book Festival. Spread over three days, the festival is full of author talks, book signings, a trivia contest and the opportunity to speak with the authors one on one. There is so much I love about Northshire and the festival. The staff is simply amazing, helpful, caring, knowledgeable and love what they do.

The other thing I love about the festival is reconnecting with old friends, making new ones and learning about books and authors I would not have heard about otherwise. This year the festival occurred during the first weekend of May, and I miss it already.

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.

The Influence Factor

Why Consistency Builds Trust Better Than Words

Over the past few months, this column has followed a simple progression. First impressions shape perception. Clear communication helps people understand. Reducing friction makes it easier for people to act. This issue, the next step is consistency, because trust is rarely built by one strong moment alone. It grows when people see the same message, the same standards and the same follow-through over time.

Most people have had this experience. Someone makes a strong first impression. They sound capable. They seem thoughtful. Their message is clear. But as time goes on, the experience no longer matches the promise. Calls are not returned. Expectations change. Details slip. The tone feels different from one interaction to the next. Confidence starts to weaken.

The opposite is also true. Trust often grows quietly when a person, business or organization keeps showing the same standards in ways people can see and feel.

That is true in business, leadership and everyday community life. A local leader communicates clearly, shows up and stays steady. A business follows through the same way each time. A nonprofit keeps its mission visible not only in its words, but in how it treats people.

Those repeated signals build credibility because people are not only listening to what is said. They are also watching for patterns.

Behavioral science helps explain why. People do not decide what to trust from one statement or one impression alone. They

look for alignment between what is said, what is done and what happens next. When those things match, trust tends to increase. When they do not, doubt tends to grow.

Inconsistency creates questions. If the message changes too often, people wonder what is really true. If the quality of the experience depends on the day, people become cautious. If a business says it values service but makes customers work hard for help, people notice that too.

Credibility is not built only by what you claim. It is built by what people repeatedly experience.

You can see this in practical places. A business owner says relationships matter, then disappears after the sale. A community event is promoted with energy, but the details are disorganized every time. A team leader asks for accountability but does not apply the same standard consistently. A website promises simplicity, but the actual process feels frustrating. None of these problems may look dramatic on their own, but over time they create a pattern, and people trust patterns.

That is one reason consistency matters more than many people realize. It reduces uncertainty. When people know what to expect from you, they feel more at ease. They do not have to keep reassessing whether your message, your standards or your behavior



EZIO SABATINO

will shift. That steadiness makes decisions easier. It strengthens relationships. It also makes your reputation more resilient, because trust is no longer resting on one good impression. It is being reinforced again and again.

For business owners and professionals, this matters well beyond branding. It affects whether referrals happen, whether customers return, whether employees stay engaged and whether people feel comfortable recommending you to others. A clear message may get attention, but consistency is often what makes trust durable. For community organizations, schools, nonprofits and local leaders, people watch whether communication is steady, whether expectations are clear and whether actions match public statements. When they do, confidence builds. When they do not, credibility weakens.

That does not mean every interaction has to be perfect. People are usually more understanding than we think. What matters is whether the overall pattern feels reliable.

A useful question to ask is this: if someone dealt with me, my organization or my team three times in a row, would the experience feel consistent? That question can reveal gaps between marketing and service, between leadership language and day-to-day behavior, and between what we promise and what people actually encounter.

The good news is that consistency usually

does not require dramatic change. More often, it comes from smaller disciplines practiced repeatedly. Return calls when you say you will. Keep your message aligned across conversations, email and your online presence. Make the next step clear every time. Treat people with the same level of respect, whether the interaction is large or small. Do not let convenience decide when your standards apply.

These may sound basic, but that is exactly the point. Trust is often built through ordinary moments handled well, not through occasional impressive ones.

People remember whether they can count on you. They remember whether the experience matched the promise. They remember whether your behavior made your words believable. That is why consistency builds trust faster than words alone. Words may open the door, but consistency is what makes people comfortable walking through it.

That is a useful continuation of this series. First impressions matter. Clarity matters. Friction matters. But over time, trust depends on something more enduring. It depends on whether people see alignment often enough to believe they can rely on it.

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.

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

MILFORD, CT | WOMEN'S LONGEVITY & HORMONE HEALTH

Menopause Doesn't Have to Steal Your Life.

Reclaim Your Energy, Confidence & Vitality—With a Smarter Approach to Women's Health.

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- ▶ Hot flashes, night sweats & disrupted sleep
- ▶ Unexplained weight gain
- ▶ Mood swings, anxiety & emotional exhaustion
- ▶ Brain fog, low energy & zero motivation
- ▶ Decreased libido & sexual discomfort
- ▶ Bone loss, muscle weakness & joint pain
- ▶ Accelerated heart disease

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Orange Recycling Committee

Is It Recyclable? What To Do If You're Not Sure

What should you do if you're unsure if an item is recyclable? Is it better to put it in with your recyclables or throw it in the trash?

Many people choose the first option, hoping the item can be recycled. Unfortunately, that well-intentioned practice – known as “wishcycling” – can increase costs and harm recycling efforts.

Wishcycling is when people put items in recycling, thinking or hoping those materials will get recycled. But if those items aren't accepted in the local recycling system, the result can be the opposite of what was intended. When too many unaccepted items are put in with recyclables, the entire load may be considered contaminated and therefore sent to the trash.

This has happened multiple times in Orange, causing increased costs since disposing of trash is more expensive than processing recyclables. And of course adding to the trash is detrimental to the environment.

Luckily, you can avoid wishcycling by checking if an item is recyclable before putting it in the bin. People in Connecticut can use the recycling wizard at RecycleCT.

com. Users type in an item and quickly learn whether it belongs in curbside recycling or should be brought to a special collection location, reused, donated or thrown away.

In addition, Orange residents can refer to ct-orange.civicplus.com/180/Recycling and orangerecycles.com/transfer-station for details on what can be recycled at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center and in residential recycling bins.

A common misconception is that a recycling symbol or number automatically means an item goes in a recycling bin. Recycling rules vary by state and facility; some materials accepted elsewhere are not recyclable in Connecticut. Residents should not rely on the arrows symbol or the plastic number on an item.

Plastic bags and wraps are a major recycling contaminant because they can jam equipment and damage otherwise recyclable materials like paper and cardboard. Residents should never put plastic bags (or



ILENE
MOYHER

wraps) in with other recyclables. If you're using a plastic bag to gather recyclables, empty the contents into the appropriate recycling container, then put the plastic bag in the red shed at the transfer station, a designated bin at local stores or the trash.

Black plastic bags and containers are another common problem. Black takeout containers, gardening trays and bags are not recyclable. You can reuse these items when possible, then put them in the trash.

Orange offers specific programs with designated bins or trailers at the transfer station for glass, textiles (clothing, shoes, linens), electronics, lightbulbs, batteries, paint and cardboard. Bins for textile collection are also in the parking lots of High Plains Community Center, Case Memorial Library and Public Works. Residents should use these places to ensure items are properly recycled. These options often generate revenue for Orange and reduce disposal costs, as many tons of materials get recycled through these programs. It's a win for the town, people and

the environment.

State Sen. James Maroney recently talked with Milford's Associate Public Works Director Rob Harrigan at the Milford Transfer Station about what's recyclable. Watch their conversation at orangerecycles.com/post/recycling-videos.

By correctly recycling and avoiding wishcycling, Orange residents can help reduce costs and ensure more materials are truly recycled instead of thrown away. The Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center is open to Orange residents on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Orangerecycles.com provides information about accepted items and other recycling options. Follow the Orange Recycling Committee on facebook.com/ORCinCT for updates and tips. Thank you for your efforts to recycle properly.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Your Health

Tick Talk: Small Bite, Serious Business

This month, we are pleased to welcome an Amity High School senior through the school's Unpaid Experiential Learning Program. As part of this required internship experience, the student works under the supervision of Public Health Nurse Lynn Peckham and supported by Chief Sanitarian Brian Slugoski, gaining firsthand exposure to environmental health services and community health initiatives.

Given the increase in tick activity observed during this season, intern Kruthinimilya Nandam researched and compiled the information for this column as part of her public health learning experience at Orange Health Department.

As the weather warms and Orange residents head outdoors to enjoy our parks, trails, gardens and backyards, another seasonal visitor is becoming increasingly active: ticks. These tiny parasites may be easy to overlook, but they can carry serious diseases that pose significant health risks to Connecticut residents.

Connecticut remains one of the most tick-dense states in the nation. Surveillance conducted by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station continues to show high populations of disease-carrying ticks and the

expanding presence of newer tick species throughout the state.

The most common tick found in Connecticut is the black-legged tick, also known as the deer tick. This species is of greatest public health concern because it can transmit several illnesses, including Lyme disease and babesiosis.

Other ticks found in our region include the American dog tick, which is active primarily during the spring and summer and can spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia. Less commonly encountered species, such as the lone star tick, Asian longhorned tick, and Gulf Coast tick, have also been identified in Connecticut and are expanding their geographic range.

Most residents are familiar with Lyme disease, which is caused by a bacterium transmitted through the bite of an infected black-legged tick. Early symptoms may include fever, fatigue, headache and the characteristic “bull's-eye” rash, although not everyone develops a rash. Fortunately, Lyme disease can usually be treated successfully with antibiotics when diagnosed early.

A lesser known but equally important



DR. AMIR
MOHAMMAD

disease is babesiosis, which has become increasingly common in Connecticut, particularly in shoreline communities. Babesiosis is caused by a microscopic parasite that infects red blood cells, like the parasite responsible for malaria. Unlike Lyme disease, babesiosis typically does not cause a rash. Instead, symptoms often resemble the flu and may include fever, chills, fatigue, sweats and body aches. Severe infections can lead to anemia, jaundice, dark urine, breathing difficulties and in some cases hospitalization. Individuals over age 50, those without a spleen and people with weakened immune systems are at greatest risk for serious complications.

The good news is that tick-borne illnesses are largely preventable. When spending time outdoors, use an EPA-approved insect repellent containing DEET, wear long sleeves and long pants when possible and tuck pant legs into socks when hiking through wooded or grassy areas. Clothing and gear can also be treated with permethrin for added protection.

After spending time outdoors, perform a thorough tick check on yourself, your children and your pets. Showering within two

hours of coming indoors can help remove unattached ticks, and placing clothing in a hot dryer for at least 10 minutes can kill ticks that may be hiding in fabric.

If you discover an attached tick, remove it promptly using fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upward with steady pressure. Avoid twisting or crushing the tick. After removal, clean the bite area with soap and water or rubbing alcohol and monitor it for symptoms over the following several weeks.

Residents who wish to have a tick identified or tested may submit specimens to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Information about specimen submission is available through the Orange Environmental Health Department at Town Hall or directly through CAES.

By taking simple preventive measures and recognizing early symptoms of tick-borne illnesses, we can continue to enjoy the outdoors while protecting ourselves and our families from these tiny but potentially dangerous creatures. Feel free to give us a call for any questions at 203-974-8500.

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

Travel Matters

Island-Hopping Through Croatia

While many people ask for the Greek Islands, there is another alternative: Croatia, with over 1,000 islands, 50 of which are inhabited.

There are fleets of large yachts that take 30-36 guests all over the Adriatic throughout the best of these islands. You can book these yachts as individuals or families or go with a chartered group.

Our chartered group just enjoyed this fabulous experience, leaving from Split, Croatia. The old town is a living museum located within the walls of the 3rd century Diocletian palace. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, this is one of the most impressive Roman ruins in the world. Staying a day or two in Split is a must.

What is this cruise like, and how is it different from a regular cruise ship like Royal Caribbean or even a smaller ship like Sea-

bourne?

First, the captain and the crew of seven sailors, chef, cruise manager and bar staff are an integral part of your daily experience onboard the ship. With a ship this size, they know your first name by the second day, if not the first. On a deluxe premium ship like the MS Rhapsody, you have 14 VIP balcony cabins and four cabins below deck with portholes.

The ship sails only during the day from around 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., depending on the next destination. Typically, you have your breakfast and lunch onboard the ship – which is excellent – and tour the islands in the afternoon and evening. This gave us opportunity to experience the local restaurants, shops and cafes on the island



KAREN
QUINN-
PANZER

three different nights on this particular sailing. On two days we had a swim stop in the morning or afternoon, where we could swim off the back platform with paddleboards and noodles. It was a great way to enjoy the turquoise waters of the Adriatic right from the ship.

Our itinerary included Korcula (where Marco Polo was born), Mljet National Park, Hvar, Bol (famous for the Golden Unicorn Beach), Milna (part of Brac), Ston and Mali Ston and the coastal gem of Dubrovnik – where we were docked for two nights, giving us the best time to experience that city when the rest of the cruise ships have departed.

My favorite highlights include Hvar, the

island made popular by the Austrian Empress Elizabeth (“Sisi”) who was the patron of the first curative spa hotel in 1899, and is today known as Palace Elizabeth. Hvar is the largest of all the islands and a great place to explore with its 13th century fortress, lively beach clubs and artisan shopping.

My other “can't miss” experience is in Mali Ston, where we took a small skiff over to an island with oysters and mussels with Croatian white wine – perfectly prepared and fresh from the sea in an exclusive setting just for our guests. If you love authentic experiences, it just doesn't get better than this.

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

Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Buyers And Sellers Are Getting Mixed Signals

Inventory is rising, but this is not a buyer's market, as most would think it would be. This is a market based on proper pricing, a new discipline for the prospective seller.

Proper pricing recognizes that the potential buyer is tired of paying high and worried about interest rates, along with more efficient selections to choose from.

Most sellers are also going to be buyers at some point. Everyone is therefore more careful about their selections. Higher inventory gives buyers more choices, but the current monthly payments now mean buyers are more selective. Prices have not fallen because inventory is up, but conservative sellers realize that at the right price their homes will not sit on the market.

Home values and affordability are import-

ant. Buyers may negotiate harder on a deal, hesitate longer and walk away faster with inspection issues. Listings that sit get flagged as having something wrong in this market.

It's a great market when choices and prices align, so use your real estate agent. These professionals know the properties that sold, inside and out. The right price can get strong attention right away. Overpricing can be an expensive mistake, not only taking up valuable time but resulting in less profit in the end.

I would call this a seasoned market, one in which prospects are reasonable, and buyers and sellers respect each other and their po-



BARBARA LEHRER

sitions in a transaction. No one can chase yesterday's prices. There needs to be a balance in the market, which happens when all the homes are priced in order of their amenities – location, topography, square footage and condition – with statistics of the most recent closed sales.

Buyers can expect the prices to stay level. With guidance on the price point where their offers should come in or how they qualify to purchase, the community keeps the cycle going. We were low and slow, with minimal inventory. Now it is to everyone's advantage to have more homes to choose from in order to offer out their prized possession – their

home – to the best bidder.

Change up your living style now. The current situation is a great opportunity. If you have been keen on moving, now is definitely the time to shop around. Sellers are rewarded with opportunities to close on their properties when they make the right decision on price.

The frenzied rush to do deals has subsided. Those times are gone, and we can all breathe easier. Understand the current trends and join in on this healthy market. I am always available for further clarity.

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

Scouts Join Officials For Memorial Day Ceremonies In Orange



Cub Scout Pack 922 of Orange and Boy Scout Troop 12 of Milford joined Gov. Ned Lamont, Orange First Selectman Jim Zeoli, US Sen. Richard Blumenthal, state Sen. James Maroney and state Rep. MJ Shannon during the town's Memorial Day ceremonies on May 24 to honor the men and women who have served the country. *Photo by Lauren Gray.*

Scouts Clear Trails In Orange



Scout Troop 41 was instrumental in clearing fallen trees and debris from the trails of the Whitney Tract along Mapledale Road in Orange on May 9. *Photo by Lawrence Messina.*

Orange Congregational Church

Strawberry Festival

SATURDAY
June 13, 2026
RAIN DATE: JUNE 14

Come enjoy a day of strawberry treats and family fun at the Orange fairgrounds!

- Food and Drinks
- Strawberry Treats
- Red Car Show
- Family Games
- Local Vendors
- Live Music

9AM - 5PM
HIGH PLAINS FAIRGROUNDS

📍 ORANGE, CONNECTICUT
🌐 OrangeCongregationalChurch.org

FREE ADMISSION

REGISTER FOR FREE!

AMITY

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BREAKFAST & BRIEFS

THIS MONTH'S BRIEFING: BUSINESS LIABILITY

Presented by

ZS Zabel Schellenberg
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Hosted by

CHARTER SENIOR LIVING
OF WOODBRIDGE

330 Amity Rd., Woodbridge
Tuesday, June 16, 8:30 - 9:30 am.
Doors Open 8:15 am

This briefing will examine business liability, using case studies to illustrate key issues, risks, and responsibilities.

- Product Liability
- Unfair Trade Practices
- Contractor Exposure
- Premises Liability

Zabel Schellenberg, Presenters

Owen Weaver
Partner

Courtney George
Partner

Jeremy A. Gustafson
Associate

REGISTER FOR FREE!

Here's To Your Health

Vaccines And The Amish Community

The conversation about vaccines has become one of the most divided topics in our country today. One group that often gets brought into conversation is the Amish community.

Unfortunately, a lot of what people hear is based on assumptions instead of facts. The Amish are not all against vaccines, and there is much more to the story when you really look at how they live and the overall health of their communities.

The Amish live a much simpler lifestyle than most Americans today. Their lives are centered around faith, hard work and community. They spend less time behind screens and more time outdoors working with their hands, farming, walking, cooking meals from scratch and living off the land as much as possible.

Because of this lifestyle, many researchers and health care professionals have noticed that Amish communities often experience lower rates of obesity, smoking, alcohol use and some chronic illnesses that are common

in today's society.

Many Amish families believe strongly in taking care of the body naturally whenever possible. Home remedies, natural foods, herbal treatments, chiropractic care and preventative living are all common within their communities. That does not mean they completely reject modern medicine, nor should they be slapped with the "anti-vaxxer" label because of their lifestyle. There is no official Amish religious law that forbids vaccinations, and many Amish people do use vaccines. It's a lifestyle they choose to live.

One of the biggest arguments happening in Connecticut right now centers around whether health care decisions should remain personal choices made by families and individuals. This debate has become especially emotional when it comes to vaccines, medical freedom and parental rights.



MICHELE TENNEY

My personal belief is that decisions about our bodies and our health care should never come from government mandates, but informed individual choice. Whether someone chooses to smoke, drink, eat unhealthy foods or live a healthier lifestyle, that remains their personal prerogative. While I write to encourage healthier choices and greater awareness for overall wellness, I also believe strongly in personal responsibility and the freedom for individuals to make their own decisions regarding their bodies and their health.

I say this having, two clients, my dermatologist's grandson, a man in my mother's church and an immediate family member who have suffered a vaccination injury. Some chose to be vaccinated; however, my family member did not want the vaccination but was forced to in order to keep his job.

The Amish lifestyle often enters this con-

versation because their communities are seen by many as an excellent example of living healthier, simpler lives with fewer chronic health issues despite relying less heavily on government systems and modern medical interventions. Their emphasis on nutrition, physical labor, close family ties, lower stress, faith and natural living has caused many to question whether overall wellness involves more than just medical mandates alone.

This has been my message from the very first column I ever wrote in this paper, and it will continue to be so until my very last breath. 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.

Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

We're All Better Together

There's no question that many people and businesses throughout our region are feeling increased economic pressure right now.

Costs continue to rise. Small businesses are navigating staffing challenges, higher operating expenses, shifting consumer habits and uncertainty about what comes next. Families are feeling it. Nonprofits are feeling it. Community organizations are feeling it. In many ways, everyone is being asked to do more with less.

That reality makes it even more important that we come together as a community.

One of the things that has always made Milford and West Haven special is our willingness to support one another. We rally around local businesses. We volunteer. We donate. We show up for community events. We recognize that healthy businesses, strong nonprofits, vibrant arts organizations and engaged residents are all connected.

None of us succeeds alone.

As community leaders, business owners, elected officials, nonprofit organizations and residents, we have a responsibility to continue broadcasting positive messaging and supporting the people working every day to strengthen our communities. That doesn't mean ignoring challenges or avoiding difficult conversations. It simply means recognizing that constant negativity helps no one.

Social media has become an incredibly valuable and cost-effective tool for small businesses and organizations. It allows local entrepreneurs to market themselves, tell their stories and connect with customers in ways that were never previously possible without enormous advertising budgets. It has leveled the playing field in many positive ways.

But too often, those same platforms become



MICHAEL MOSES

overwhelmed by criticism, outrage and personal attacks. The vitriol can be exhausting, and sometimes deeply discouraging for the people putting themselves out there trying to build something meaningful.

Behind every local business is a person. A family. Employees. Bills. Risk. Sacrifice. The same is true for many nonprofits and community organizations trying to solve difficult problems with limited resources and small staffs.

A little kindness matters.
A supportive comment matters.
Sharing a local business post matters.
Showing up matters.
Choosing grace instead of anger matters.
Communities do not become stronger by tearing each other down. They grow stronger when people work together, support one another and choose collaboration over division.

We are fortunate to live in a region filled with passionate business owners, dedicated volunteers, caring nonprofits, arts organizations, educators, health care workers, first responders and residents who deeply care about their community.

Now is the time to lean into that spirit even more.

Support local businesses whenever you can. Attend community events. Volunteer. Donate if you're able. Promote positive stories. Encourage one another. Extend patience and understanding where you can.

Because at the end of the day, we really are all better together.

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

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Help Wanted: Volunteer Guest Chef for American Legion Post #127

Do you love the sound of a bustling kitchen and the sight of empty plates? American Legion Post #127 in Orange, CT, is looking for a few passionate volunteer cooks to join our Wednesday Night Social Dinner rotation!

Our weekly dinners are a beloved tradition, bringing together 15-25 post members and friends for a "home-cooked" meal and great conversation. We currently have two wonderful cooks and are looking to add 2-3 more to create a manageable 4-5 week rotation.

What You'll Be Doing:

- Create the Menu: Prepare a delicious, "home-style" meal for 15-25 people.
- Your Choice of Kitchen: Cook in our Post kitchen at 630 Grassy Hill Road or prepare it at home and bring it in!
- Lead the Team: You'll have student volunteers on hand to help—you just need to show them the ropes.
- Manage the Basics: Work within a set budget, ensure dinner is served on time, and oversee the cleanup of the kitchen and dining area.

Who You Are:

- A talented "home chef" or experienced cook who finds joy in feeding others.
- A community-minded neighbor who wants to support our veterans.
- Organized, reliable, and able to keep a kitchen running smoothly.

The Vibe:
Relaxed, friendly, and consistent. This isn't a high-pressure restaurant line—it's about good food and even better company.

Interested in joining the rotation? Help us keep this tradition alive! For more information or to volunteer, please contact Bett DeSantis at romagirl@yahoo.com, or stop by the Post on Wednesday evenings between 4:30-6:30pm.

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No market 7/30 & 9/17

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<p>June 18 Gunn Street Revival <i>(at Artisan Fest)</i></p> <p>June 25 Stereo Bomb</p> <p>July 9 JP Trio</p> <p>July 23 Ace & Friends</p> <p>August 6 Sun Kings</p> <p>August 13 Sabb's Brothers</p>	<p>July 2 Joe Proc-Off the Hook</p> <p>Aug. 27 Sal Grillo</p> <p>Sept. 3 Zach Andersen</p> <p>Sept. 10 Joe Proc-Off the Hook</p>

Orange Board of Finance

Orange 2030: The Future Starts Today

Having spent the last 34 years within both corporate and public finance, I can attest that there are two key drivers for success for any CEO – of a business or a government.

The first is realizing competitive advantage. The second is multi-year financial planning.

Economic uncertainty and federal budget cuts are creating a gathering storm for both corporate CEOs, state and local governments. Leaders need to understand the value of multi-year financial planning, not only as a budgeting tool. It leads to good government, but also good politics. Elected leaders need to address the growing demands for more funding, whether it be within education or public safety.

Why is long-range planning so critical now in Connecticut? The reason is affordable housing. For the past three decades, Connecticut and the broader Northeast have had a structural deficit between housing supply, housing demand and economic realities. All Northeast states have had to endure restrictive zoning, insufficient construction, rising construction costs and stagnant wages.

These factors have created a severe shortage of affordable homes, pushing residents into cost burdens, displacement and long commutes.

Connecticut for many years has had the most exclusionary zoning laws in the country, with 90 percent of the state zoned for single family homes. Multi-family and affordable housing therefore become extreme-

ly difficult to build. Connecticut has built far fewer homes than the US average since the 1990s. The limited supply drives up rents and home prices, pushing lower and middle class residents out of the market.

Connecticut's legislature recently passed a housing bill that replaces the old requirement for each town to create its own affordable housing plan and includes new language which gives power to the regional councils of government, or COGs. The new housing bill requires Orange to join the regional plan in the 15-member COG or create its own municipal housing growth plan that meets strict state standards with a deadline of June 1, 2028.

As a result, Orange will no longer plan for housing in isolation on its own. Regional housing goals will influence how much housing Orange is expected to support, and the town will need to participate actively or risk losing certain protections.

Why does this matter? Existing law already allows developers to bypass local zoning if a town has too little affordable housing. A moratorium protects towns from these applications. Losing eligibility means Orange would have less control over development, and instead the regional COG would decide where housing growth should occur.

This means Orange will no longer plan for



KEVIN MCNABOLA

housing in isolation. Regional expectations will shape whether Orange should allow more multifamily housing; whether commercial corridors (e.g., Route 1) should support mixed use development; whether Orange should expand accessory dwelling units or smaller lot housing; and state funding for infrastructure including sewer and water infrastructure will depend on compliance.

Orange will still control its zoning, but the state will evaluate whether the town is contributing to regional housing goals. The town will not be forced to build specific numbers of units, but it will face strong incentives to support more diverse housing options.

Orange needs to plan now for what the development landscape could look like in just a few years. Orange is known as a small, historic and community oriented farm town with rural charm, strong schools and deep agricultural roots. It currently has a nice mix of open space and farmland with a solid tax base and easy access to New Haven and Milford.

The expansion of townhouses and multifamily developments would most certainly put a significant financial burden on education, contributing to a growing student enrollment which would require more teachers and other staff. School renovations or new construction of elementary schools would

require spending tens of millions of dollars. The existing buildings were built in the 1960s.

Additional multifamily housing could also require increased funding for public safety, potentially requiring a new paid fire department that would cost the town \$5 million more to fund salaries, employee benefits, pension and retiree expenses, apparatus and equipment and firehouse operations to match the demand based on the size Orange.

Sewer and water expansion would lead to new water treatment facilities and require additional capital funding, leading to increased debt service funding. The state would provide some funding for public utility expansion.

Allowing more diverse housing options means total taxable property values could grow faster than under the current large-lot model. Over time this could broaden the tax base and reduce pressure on the mill rate. However, gradual growth in the grand list could be offset by parallel increases in service and infrastructure demands.

Orange could have a more robust tax base and better alignment of growth. In the final analysis, though, we also need to consider how we maintain our great school system and preserve the rural character of our town, which is the reason why many who currently live here came to Orange in the first place.

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

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TOWN OF ORANGE
AMERICA 250
CELEBRATION

Friday, July 3rd, at 6 PM
250TH Anniversary of the Signing of the United States Declaration of Independence

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a generation of Americans stepped forward and chose courage. Now in our time, we have the privilege of remembering and the responsibility of carrying that torch forward. In Orange, we will meet that moment.

This is a once-in-a-generation moment, 250 years since our nation began, and Orange is going to ensure this monumental moment is given the attention it so rightly deserves! Various events are planned during the Concert & Fireworks Celebration on Friday, July 3rd, at 6 PM and more throughout the year!

JULY 3RD EVENTS

- ★ Concert Featuring All-American Music
- ★ Unique Fireworks Display Show with 250 Volleys and a Special USA Display
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- ★ The National Anthem Sung by a Special Guest
- ★ Patriotic Photo Booth for Family Selfies
- ★ Powerful Flag Display Across Orange Center Road
- ★ An Official Proclamation from First Selectman James Zeoli & the 250 Committee

HONORING HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- ★ A Reading of the Names of Orange's Revolutionary War veterans at the Memorial Day Parade
- ★ Town-wide Church Bells Ringing on July 4th at 2 PM (to mark the official signing of the Declaration of Independence)
- ★ America 250 exhibits at the Orange Country Fair in September

For more information or to become a sponsor, visit www.orange-ct.gov/2215/America-250
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Milford Budget (Continued From 1)

“doing what is best for the people of Milford.” However, accusations of political bias quickly became notable throughout the night.

Smith defended the budget by describing Milford’s difficult financial situation. He said that taxpayers in Milford had already experienced taxes increasing by over 9.5 percent over the prior two years. According to the mayor, the city faced rising costs from health care costs, salary obligations and inflation which had been affecting nearly every department.

“Our job here is to find the balance between taxes and services,” he said. “The city of Milford faces unprecedented cost pressures as we see the price of goods and services skyrocketing. The affordability issue is indeed real.”

The alderman discussed Milford’s state-mandated property revaluation – a five-year long plan to assess the value of properties in Milford – and how the reassessment could significantly shift the financial burden from commercial to residential properties, which would mean that homeowners could pay a larger share of city taxes than in previous years.

Republican Alderman Kal M. Ali criticized the choice to increase the budget.

“It seems pretty clear to me that what the average homeowner in Milford is going to have if this budget passes is a tax increase. Not a small tax increase, but a fairly substantial tax increase,” he said.

Ali noted that the decreased mill rate was insufficient, telling his colleagues, “It’s not playing games with monikers like mill rates and things like that. It means dollars out of pocket. How much more are people going to have to pay?”

Fellow Republican Alderman Andy Follower said that he had “never voted yes for tax increases” and argued that residents of Connecticut were already struggling with affordability tied to rising taxes and government overspending.

Democratic Alderman Paul J. Healy countered the two Republicans by mentioning how the mayor has found efficiencies throughout multiple departments.

“Departments just as worthy as the finance department such as the health department, the MIS department and others that have operational needs; I’m trusting that the mayor will address these issues going forward as the financial plan looks better,” Healy said. “Other operational needs will be addressed when this budget goes forward and our financial picture stays looking good, and that’s why I will vote yes for this budget.”

Supporters of the budget noted some of the efforts being made to reduce financial strain. Smith explained how his administration implemented both a hiring freeze and a spending freeze in April to contain costs. He also mentioned that Milford would receive approximately \$1.1 million in additional state aid as part of a multi-million-dollar package passed at the end of the legislative session to support towns and cities across Connecticut. The additional money could potentially reduce the mill rate slightly.

Finance Director Peter A. Erodici Jr. also explained how the city received updated state grant information that helped offset some costs.

The board unanimously approved several amendments eliminating vacant positions in multiple departments, reducing spending by more than \$100,000.

Still, Alderman Win Smith III accused the board of political bias throughout the night. Smith proposed an amendment increasing wages for several finance department positions by about \$66,000, arguing that the jobs were at risk of being lost. It failed along party lines.

“\$66,000 on a \$278,000,000 budget, and it gets voted down on party lines? That’s not transcending politics,” Smith said. “That’s playing politics. So that saddens me.”

Smith also criticized the city’s decision to use \$12 million from its rainy day fund to balance the budget.

“Last year, people were appalled when we were taking \$5 million, and voted down on party lines taking an additional \$1 million to make it \$6 million, and now we’re taking \$12 million,” he said, warning that the move could affect Milford’s long-term financial stability and bond rating.

The board approved the final budget in a 9-6 vote along party lines.

UNH Campus (Continued From 1)

Attorney Joseph Williams of Shipman & Goodwin, who is representing Aspire, introduced their plan to the commission with a suggestion that no new permit was needed, since the nonprofit planned to continue an educational use and was not going to be constructing any new buildings.

But TPZC Chair Oscar Parente said that UNH’s special permit was for the operation of a “professional school,” and Aspire’s proposal falls outside of that type of use.

“Professional schools is a defined term in the regs,” Parente said, reading off the definition that stipulated the school offer advanced degrees such as MBAs and PhDs.

“Obviously that doesn’t carry the day, but I could imagine an amendment to the regulations that would accomplish what you’re trying to do,” he said.

Williams argued that, given Aspire’s work with people who fall under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the commission could interpret the regulation more broadly.

“You can interpret this use as coming

within the existing special permit for educational use based on me asking you to incorporate a reasonable accommodation standard,” he said.

“It’s probably an issue that we’ll have to overcome in some way,” Parente responded. “I haven’t done enough of the legwork on it to know exactly what the resolution would be.”

Several commissioners agreed in theory that the facility would be a similar enough use, and that amending the text of the regulation would be simple. But they weren’t sure offhand whether Aspire would need to apply for a new special permit or not.

The situation was made murkier by the fact that the town is currently without a zoning enforcement officer, who would normally weigh in.

“I don’t want something just assumed by all the parties. That’s not fair to the contract purchaser, or UNH, or this board,” said Town Attorney Owen Weaver. “Some sort of mechanism would be appropriate.”

Weaver and Williams agreed that they would meet to discuss the best path forward over the coming days.

Milford Garden Club Lays Wreath At Gold Star Memorial



The Milford Garden Club recently laid a wreath at the Gold Star Memorial on the Milford Green in honor of Memorial Day. The marker is dedicated to Gold Star mothers and families whose loved ones died in active-duty military service while defending America. When the club installed the memorial in 2022, it was the first of its kind in Connecticut. The wording on the marker is: “Gold Star Memorial By-Way; A tribute to all Gold Star Families; Honor – Hope – Healing; Milford Garden Club, National Garden Clubs, Inc.” Photo courtesy of the Milford Garden Club.

Orange Employees Celebrate Birthday



Orange Town Hall employees celebrated Assistant Finance Director Karin Lewis’s birthday in May with a display outside the building. Photo by John Cifarelli.

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Teachers

(Continued From 1)

make it difficult to teach another language,” she said. “Students have a hard time even reading English and comprehending what they’re reading. In high school, I studied French for my 7th to 12th grades, and I came out totally fluent in French. Completely fluent.”

Her concerns regarding students’ behavior are similar to those of national researchers. A major assessment of national education trends that came out in May showed reading and math scores have been steadily declining across the country since 2013.

The Education Scorecard, conducted by researchers from Harvard, Stanford and Dartmouth, pointed to several possible causes for the widespread declines, including the rise of smartphones, social media and widespread digital learning.

The annual Education Scorecard noted that test scores had been increasing since 1990 before abruptly reversing in the mid-2010s, right when smart mobile technologies started to proliferate.

This was also when the No Child Left Behind Act was replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which the researchers also point to as a possible factor in changing learning outcomes. They describe the last decade as a “learning recession” affecting students across different income levels and regions of the country.

Chelsea Green, a sixth-year English teacher who began teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, says that modern technology upended teaching completely in only a short period of time.

“The biggest changes I’ve seen are from technology. How it’s grown and become more consuming in teaching in general,” Green said. “PowerSchool, Google Classroom, smartphones, Chromebooks, it’s

all become much more developed and easier to access.”

However, Green said that the most dramatic change has been the rapid growth of artificial intelligence.

“In my last year of college, I actually wrote my thesis on AI. But I didn’t expect it to get this crazy this fast,” she said.

Unlike some teachers who may disapprove of AI in the classroom, Green believes it can have productive uses when it’s carefully implemented.

“I’m very pro-AI,” she said. “I teach AI classes, I’m involved with the district AI committee and I think it absolutely has a place in the classroom. But there has to be a balance between technology and more traditional styles of learning.”

Megan Hosking, a second-year health and physical education teacher, agreed that AI has been reshaping classrooms, but is more concerned about how students rely on it academically.

“The ease in which we can get information limits the amount of work your brain has to do,” she said. “Especially with AI introduction, if I don’t want to think, I don’t have to.”

Hosking said that the rise of AI has also increased how dishonest students are, as students can now create a simple prompt and get a chatbot to generate an assignment for them.

“Once students realize they can have ChatGPT do their assignment and they don’t want to do it, why try?” she asked.

Some teachers have integrated AI into their own assignments in controlled ways. An article in EducationWeek notes that in 2023, a little more than 34 percent said they used AI “at one time or another.” By 2025 there was a huge increase, with 61 percent saying they used the technology in their work in some capacity.

Waymond Jackson, president of the

nonprofit Ed Farm, which is focused on expanding digital skills through tech-focused learning programs across the Southeast, also said in the EducationWeek article that “Another factor that likely explains the increase is that AI is now embedded in common tools – teachers don’t have to go looking for it.”

Although some teachers implement AI into their workload, Hosking remains skeptical.

“I personally don’t think there are many responsible ways to use AI if you’re trying to further your education,” she said. “At the same time, as a teacher, I sit there and think you should be able to write an email.”

Both Green and Hosking acknowledged that technology itself isn’t totally negative. Hosking noted that classrooms today are often more interactive than the learn-heavy environments she experienced as a student.

“A lot of lectures when I was in high school. Now there’s more interactive learning, getting up to the boards, walking around classes, turn-and-talk activities. I think that’s a plus,” she said.

Michael DeGrego, a longtime substitute teacher across both New York and Connecticut and previous three-term Milford Board of Education member, praised how schools have been implementing Chromebooks and digital learning resources into everyday use.

“I marvel at the Chromebook,” he said. “Everybody’s on the same page now. You don’t have to worry about forgetting your book at school.”

Nevertheless, Green and Hosking warned that phones and social media continue to negatively impact students’ focus and mental health.

“I’ve seen students go from really happy and social to suddenly withdrawn because of something they saw online,” Green said. “We have so much research on cell phones with adolescents, and none of it says it’s

good for them.”

Connecticut has been attempting to find ways to get students off the screens. The state legislature debated a statewide bell-to-bell cellphone ban in schools earlier this year. The proposed bill received bipartisan support and was backed by Gov. Ned Lamont, but failed to pass before the legislative session ended on May 6. Lawmakers have said that they may bring this bill back up next year, but in the meantime, many districts have introduced different restrictions on cellphone use in schools.

Green has experimented with limiting phone use in her classrooms with “tech-free days,” where students must put their phones in a basket and interact with others.

“At first, students were really agitated,” she said. “But after a while, they actually started asking for more tech-free days.”

Valleau agreed with Green, explaining that the state of New York has banned the use of cell phones entirely in public schools. Her son, a teacher in Brooklyn, has noticed significant improvements in student engagement since the ban.

“They pushed back a little bit in the beginning. The kids were hostile and angry about it. But the change in their attention spans, in their focus, in their scores has been tremendous,” she said. “We’re actually doing a tremendous service. And it actually makes people happy when they can master a certain body of knowledge. Then you feel empowered, and you feel like, oh, that was a good day. I learned something. So, yeah, I think they’re happier.”

The transition into a more tech-heavy classroom – giving each student a Chromebook and charger – has put financial pressures on Milford. Milford’s Board of Alderman approved a 4.3 percent increase in the education budget for the 2026-2027

Continued on page 19



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Teachers

(Continued From 18)

fiscal year this May. Budget documents show that Milford's schools have deferred or reduced spending on numerous programs and initiatives over recent years in order to control the costs of technology, curriculum changes and staffing.

Other changes have also affected the school system in recent years. Green mentioned how districts have become significantly better at identifying and supporting students with disabilities as one positive step.

"The district is much better about identifying learning disabilities and giving students the accommodations they need to succeed," she said.

DeGrego said that the inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms is one of the most important educational changes he's witnessed.

"Back in the early 1990s, special education students were mostly separated," he said. "Now they're included in classrooms with everybody else, and I think that's much better."

At the same time, Milford schools are also adapting to the Right or Read Act, adopted by the state legislature in 2021. This law requires districts to shift toward reading instruction based on the "science of reading," which

emphasizes phonics, structures in literacy and evidence-based teaching methods.

Multiple states have shifted to the science of reading in recent years in an attempt to improve reading scores, having seen success among early adopters like Mississippi and Louisiana. In what has been dubbed the "Mississippi miracle," that state's reading scores rose from 49th in the country to on par or above the national average after it switched to the science of reading in 2013.

Still, adjusting to this updated curriculum has required the district to spend more money on new materials and training for the teachers.

Valleau strongly supports that transition, arguing that older forms of direct instruction, methods she experienced as a schoolgirl, are more effective than constantly changing how students learn.

"When we learned to read, we learned phonics," she said. "We understood grammar. We knew how to take a sentence apart and put it back together."

Green, meanwhile, said she would love to see more improvements in the curriculum.

"Continuing to adjust it, making sure it's focused on the skills we really want to teach students, and ensure that it's only things that are beneficial rather than doing something because we've always done it," she said.

Teachers also reflected on how

dramatically school safety has changed over the past couple of decades, particularly after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012 which killed 20 children and six adults in Newtown.

According to Valleau, lockdown drills and increased security measures became common after the tragedy. Hosking agreed, noting how schools now have far more visible security compared to when she attended high school not too long ago.

"We constantly have teachers in the hallways, security guards serving. The increase in security, at least here, is apparent," she said.

DeGrego served on Milford's Board of Education shortly after Sandy Hook. He said that the tragedy directly influenced district decisions regarding school security and safety.

"One of the first things we voted for was the greeter system," he said. "The greeter is at the door to get buzzed in. She has to see your ID, this and that, and then they'll buzz you in. It's like an extra set of eyes on the door. Before it was the secretary who let you in, besides their many other duties."

DeGrego, who also served as a Ground Zero rescue worker following the September 11 terrorist attacks, said that modern schools are now designed with far more attention toward safety.

"These schools are some of the safest buildings in the world," he said.

Safety measures may be important, but they also increase costs. One of the largest increases in the most recent Milford school budget was for about \$576,000 to add armed security officers to the eight elementary schools and The Academy, plus a lead officer. The middle and high schools already have security officers.

One thing many of the teachers agreed on was that improvements could be made in their teaching conditions.

"I like to collaborate with other teachers," Hosking said, "Funny enough, I really like working within the history department and kind of finding those cross-curricular things. So more opportunities for that across the building."

For Valleau, the abundant distractions in class are the biggest problem.

"Cell phone use. If we could get a really strong policy where there would be no use of cell phones in the classroom. I don't think they need them for instruction...there's a lot of research that students learn better with older technology (books, papers, pencils)," she said.

DeGrego believes no improvements need to be made right now.

"It's hard to do better than perfect," he said.

'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' Coming To MAC

Eastbound Theatre, a division of the Milford Arts Council, will present the play, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" by Simon Stephens, adapted from the award-winning novel of the same name by Mark Haddon.

The play will be performed June 12-27 at the MAC, located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. Friday and Saturday performances are at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m.

Directed by Kevin Pelkey of Prospect, the play focuses on Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old math whiz on the autism spectrum who lives in Swindon, England. When he discovers that his neighbor's dog has been killed with a garden fork, he sets out to solve the mystery of the crime. Inspired by his love of logic and detective stories, Christopher interviews neighbors and gathers clues which uncover secrets that go far beyond the dog's death – secrets that

send him on a journey alone to London.

The play earned industry awards for both the London and New York productions, including five Tony Awards on Broadway.

The cast includes four principal players: Cait Farrell and Matt Simmons, both of Milford who portray Christopher's parents; Savannah Hall of Darien as Christopher and Alicia James of Guilford as Christopher's teacher.

The ensemble cast who play multiple roles

throughout the show include Nyya Bak of Milford, Tamara Buchanan of Bloomfield, India Chudnow of New Haven, Jonathan Hall of Darien and Barry Libowitz of Stratford.

For more information and tickets, contact the Milford Arts Council/Eastbound Theatre at 203-878-6647 or visit <https://milfordarts.org/event/eastbound-theatre-the-curious-incident-of-the-dog-in-the-night-time-2/2026-06-12/>.



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Milford Chamber Announces New Home

The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce will relocate to a new office at 764 Boston Post Rd. in July. The chamber has been housed in the CT Post Mall for the last five years.

The chamber's new home is a freestanding building along one of Milford's busiest corridors. The chamber said in a release that the prominent location on the Boston Post Road, combined with close proximity to I-95, the Merritt Parkway and downtown Milford will provide convenient and accessible access for member businesses, residents and visitors.

"This move positions the chamber in a way that allows us to be more visible, more accessible and more engaged with the community we serve," said Michael Moses, president of the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce. "It's not just about a new office; it's about creating a space that reflects who we are and what we're working to build across Milford and West Haven."

The new location will also serve as a visitor and community resource center that will showcase Milford's local businesses, arts organizations, nonprofits and destination-oriented attractions. The chamber said it envisions the space as a centralized hub where residents and visitors can connect with everything the region has to offer, from dining and shopping to arts, culture, events and community resources.

The chamber also plans to work more closely with regional and state tourism organizations to elevate awareness of Milford and West Haven as vibrant coastal destinations and to shine a brighter spotlight on the many organizations throughout the region.

"This is an opportunity to create a true front door for Milford," Moses said. "A place where people can come to learn, explore and engage with the businesses, organizations and experiences that make

this community so special."

Director of Membership & Marketing Simon McDonald noted that the move will significantly expand the organization's visibility and outreach capabilities.

"The visibility of this location is a tremendous opportunity not only for the chamber, but for our members and the region as a whole," he said. "We're excited to create a more public-facing presence that helps connect visitors with everything happening across Milford and West Haven. Whether it's local restaurants, arts organizations, nonprofits, community events or shoreline attractions, this space will help us tell the story of our region in a much bigger way."

"This relocation represents an exciting step forward for the Chamber and the broader community we serve," said Kevin Weirsmann, chair of the chamber's board of directors. "The visibility, accessibility and long-term potential of this location position the organization to deepen its impact and continue building strong connections throughout the region."

Milford Director of Economic & Community Development Robert Townes praised the chamber's relocation.

"The chamber's move to a prominent gateway into downtown Milford strengthens our business community and reinforces our historic downtown as the center of economic activity and community engagement," he said.

"Congratulations to the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce on their new location," US Sen. Richard Blumenthal said of the move. "The chamber has been a beacon for businesses in the region, providing support and resources, and connecting visitors and residents with all that Milford has to offer. This new location reflects their steadfast commitment to the community, and I look forward to visiting soon."



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce will move to a new location at 764 Boston Post Rd. in July. Photo by Brandon T. Bisceglia.

AMSO Student Receive Awards



Several Amity Middle School Orange eighth grade students were recognized in May for their achievements. Top photo: Jacob Dooley and Milania DeCrosta were selected to receive this year's Superintendent's Award sponsored by the South Central Area Superintendent's Association. The award is based on community service and service to others, and academic prowess and leadership to the school community. From left: Principal Kathy Burke, Dooley, DeCrosta and Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Byars. Bottom photo: Katerina Ballas and Arianna Rocco were selected to receive this year's Connecticut Association of Boards of Education Award. This award is presented each year to young men and women attending schools within CABE's membership who exhibit exemplary leadership qualities. Burke presented the award at a ceremony held at the Amity Board of Education meeting on May 11. Photos courtesy of the Amity Regional District.

Emergency Pet Clinic Coming To Orange

An emergency veterinary clinic will soon be coming to Orange.

The new clinic will occupy a freestanding 5,250-square-foot building at 507 Boston Post Rd. which formerly housed Metro Mattress. The new tenant will be VEG for Pets, which aims to supplement existing veterinary services throughout the region, particularly those providing standard care during regular business hours. VEG for Pets

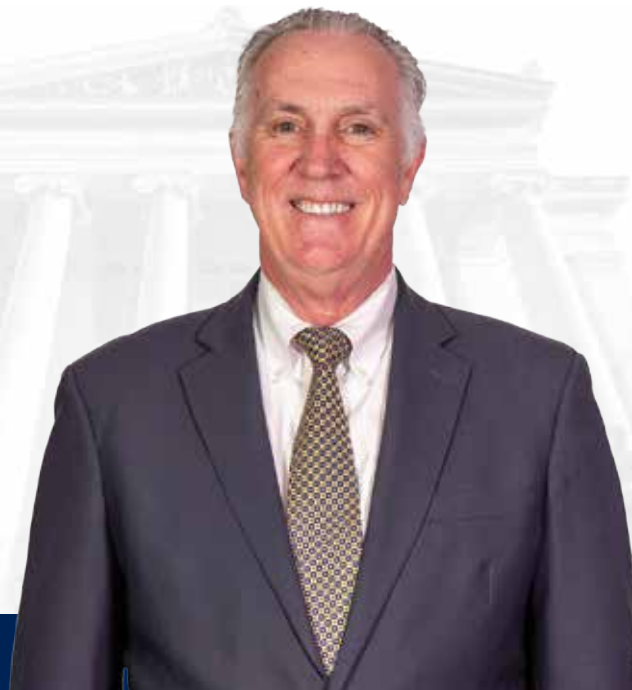
offers 24/7 emergency care for all types of pets.

The long-term lease was secured by Carl Russell of Pearce Real Estate. The tenant was represented by James Panzarella of Newmark in Manhattan.

The new Orange location, due to open sometime this summer, will add to VEG for Pets' more than 120 locations throughout the US and Canada.

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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.

Martin "Marty" Burke, 67, passed away Tuesday, May 5, 2026, after a courageous battle with prostate cancer. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Jeanne Cancellieri passed away peacefully on May 17th after relentlessly and courageously battling multiple illnesses for many years. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Eileen Cassola, beloved wife, sister, aunt, great-aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully surrounded by the love and prayers of family and friends. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Eileen Bridget Cohen, 75, passed away on May 8, 2026, in Milford, Connecticut. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Sheila Anne Del Monte, 74, of Milford, CT, beloved wife of Walter Del Monte of 47 years, passed away on May 14, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



It is with heavy hearts, yet in peaceful faith, that we announce the passing of **Patricia M. DiSiero** on May 18, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Joan L. Dowd, 81 of Milford, passed away peacefully on May 5, 2026, while surrounded by her loving family at her home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Louis Abrams Eagle, 86, of Orange, Connecticut, passed away on April 5th, 2026, surrounded by his family. (Robert E. Shure & Son Funeral Home)



The family of **Theodore Hamilton Goodwin** sadly announces his passing on May 25, 2026, at the age of 86. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Lorraine Julia Hauck, age 78, of Milford, beloved wife of Warrell Hauck for 35 years, passed away at home on Monday May 11, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Frederick Jacob Hopkins, age 91, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Florence Lily (Banta) Hopkins, entered into peaceful rest on May 1, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



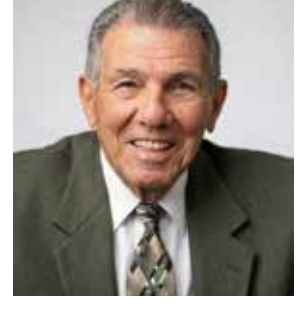
Beth-Ann Lepley Knobloch, of Milford, passed away Sunday, May 10, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Natalie Johnson Lang, 102 of Milford, passed away peacefully on May 10, 2026, in the presence of her beloved daughter. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Louis John Paolillo, 93, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. (Abriola Parkview Funeral Home)



Gloria R. Renner, age 98, of Milford, CT (formerly from Glenview and Rock Island, IL) passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her family on Monday, May 18th, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

Anthony Salzillo, 94, of Milford, Connecticut, beloved husband of the late Teresa Salzillo, passed away on May 2, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



James B. Stewart, 86 of Milford, passed away on May 2, 2026. Jim worked at the Southern CT Gas Company for 35 years. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



George Seresin, 97, passed away peacefully after a brief illness on Saturday, May 23, 2026, with his family by his side. (Adzima Funeral Home)



Stephen Thompson, age 73, beloved husband of 39 years to Drue (Lewis) Thompson, of Milford entered peaceful rest on Sunday, May 17, 2026 surrounded by his family at home. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Michael D. Shepard, 65, of Orange, died on May 11, 2026. Born in New Haven on February 8, 1961, a son of the late Duane and Elizabeth (Zabawar) Shepard. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Michael N. Tutino, Sr., 79, of Orange, passed away peacefully on May 5, 2026, while surrounded by his loving family at his home. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Duane Bradford Peter "Zeke" Solimeno passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at his winter home in Boynton Beach, FL on May 10, 2026. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Jim Weaver, age 87, beloved husband of 63 years to Louise Weaver, of Brooklyn, NY, entered into eternal rest on April 21, 2026, surrounded by his family at his home in Orange, CT.



TOWN OF ORANGE Tax Collector's Legal Notice

Per CGS 12-145, the first installment of the town tax on the 2025 Grand List of 1 October 2025 is due and payable on 1 July 2026. Payments received after 3 August 2026 are considered delinquent and are subject to the rate of 18% per annum, 1.5% per month, \$2.00 minimum, dating back to the original due date [CGS 12-146]. Motor Vehicle bills are payable in one installment. Real Estate and Personal Property taxes are payable in two installments with 1/2 due on 1 July 2026 and the second installment due on 1 Jan 2027. All taxes may be paid in one installment. Bills will be mailed on or about 12 June 2026. We DO NOT rebill for second installments. Your split tax bill has a January tax bill attached.

As owners of property, taxpayers are responsible to see that taxes are paid when due. FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF ALL INTEREST CHARGES AND COLLECTION COSTS, per Connecticut General Statutes 12-130, 12-148. Payments may be processed in person at the Town Tax Window in Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Rd, Orange, CT, Monday-Friday except holidays from 8:30 a.m. -12 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring your entire three-part tax bill if you wish a receipt. A payment coupon or duplicate bill must accompany each payment. There is a \$0.50 per page copy fee charged for each duplicate bill requested within the grace period, \$5.00 thereafter. Payments by check or money order may be made by mail or at the tax window. The payment receipt date posted is the USPS cancellation date on the envelope. Only USPS cancellation dates or IRS approved Private Carrier Delivery Services dates are considered valid. All other payments will be posted with our bill received date. If a receipt is desired a self-addressed stamped envelope and your three-part bill must be included with your payment. We do not accept CASH payments through the mail, only at the tax window! Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express branded Credit and Debit Card payments are accepted on-line or at the tax window or by telephone (Interactive Voice Response) 203-902-0387 or E-check (On-line only). Convenience fees apply. See the Town of Orange payment website for details. Town of Orange - CT - Tax (orange-ctmybill.com) <https://orange-ctmybill.com/#/> Payment in minor coinage [pennies or nickels] is limited to 25 cents or as acceptable to the Tax Collector.

Thomas P. Hurley, Tax Collector

TOWN OF ORANGE: Legal Notice Neighborhood Assistance Program

Pursuant to Section 12-632 of the Connecticut General Statutes the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Orange will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 7:00 p.m. in the Lower-Level Meeting Room at the Town Hall, 617 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT, to receive comments on an application received for the 2026 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program which will be submitted to the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Service for funding consideration. The application is on file in the First Selectman's Office and may be reviewed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Written comments will be received at the First Selectman's Office until 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 10, 2025. Thereafter comments should be presented at the public hearing. The following application has been submitted to the Board of Selectmen:

New Haven Hebrew Day School - \$150,000
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Board of Selectmen, Town of Orange

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