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Milford-Orange Times

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Election 2026 Special Section: The Candidates Speak Pages 10-13



State Sen. James Maroney, District 14.



State Senate District 14 candidate Owen Weaver.



State Rep. Mary Welander, District 114.



State representative District 114 candidate Brooke Hopkins.



State Rep. MJ Shannon, District 117.



State representative District 117 candidate Ray Collins III.



State representative District 118 candidate Toni Lombardi.



State representative District 118 candidate Steve Visconti.



State Rep. Kathy Kennedy, District 119.



State representative District 119 candidate Alex Armstrong.

Orange Selectmen Adopt Communication Policy

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

After nine months of discussion, Orange's Board of Selectmen at their Oct. 14 meeting adopted their first formal communication policy that will govern how they interact with their constituents.

Among other things, the policy will pro-

vide all members of the board with a town email account, something that only the first selectman had previously.

The policy codifies restrictions on email

Continued on page 27

Referendum On School Rebuild Fails In Woodbridge

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Woodbridge voters overwhelmingly rejected a \$118.5 million replacement of the town's aging Beecher Road School at an Oct. 13 referendum.

The measure failed by a two-to-one margin, with 1,847 votes against and 919 in favor.

Had it passed, the referendum would have allowed the town to raze the existing school and construct a new, state-of-the-art building in its place, along with a new Board of Education central office. The school would also include dedicated prekindergarten classrooms.

The state was set to reimburse about half of the cost, leaving Woodbridge taxpayers on the hook for approximately \$55.5 million.

Immediately after the failed referendum, city officials began considering how to move forward.

All sides agree that the current structure can't meet the needs of Woodbridge students. The main portion of the building was constructed in 1960, with some additions added in later years. The building lacks enough classrooms and does

not meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Even without a rebuild, the infrastructure needs millions of dollars in investments to stay in operation.

Major renovations were considered during the multi-year process that the Beecher Road School Building Committee. That committee, however, ultimately decided a new building would be the best option.

Selectwoman Maria Madonick, who serves on the building committee, said during the Board of Selectmen's Oct. 14 meeting that voters had sent a clear message and that she respected the outcome. However, she added, the vote did not change the problems with the building or the significant costs associated with addressing them.

"Planning for Woodbridge's future is everyone's responsibility, even when the choices before us are difficult," she said.

Selectwoman Andrea Urbano suggested that the Beecher Road School Building Committee might have better en-

Continued on page 27

Milford Pauses More Flock Cameras

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

Milford's Board of Aldermen at its Oct. 5 meeting decided to temporarily turn off Flock Condor cameras while a review committee investigates the city's use of surveillance technology.

The latest move by the board came as members have faced months of withering criticism from residents over automated license plate readers and other cameras installed around Milford.

The city in late August suspended the use of automated traffic cameras, such as red light and speed cameras, and restricted

the use of all automated license plate readers with the exception of those at Milford's entry points.

Those moves came at the behest of Mayor Rich Smith, who called for a comprehensive review of the city's program.

The aldermen established a Public Safety Technology Review Committee in September, which was charged with reviewing the city's use of surveillance technology and make recommendations within 90 days that could include termination of some or

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The AMERICAN
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Youth Leadership Council In Milford Kicks Off



The New England Asian American Cultural Center launched its 2026-2027 Youth Leadership Council and elected council officers on Oct. 2. Photo courtesy of the NEAAC.

The New England Asian American Cultural Center has launched its 2026-2027 Youth Leadership Council, bringing together 19 young people from local communities on Oct. 2 to develop leadership skills, participate in community service and take an active role in creating positive change.

According to the NEAAC, the new council provides a platform for students to move beyond participating in community activities and become leaders who help develop ideas, organize projects and make decisions. Through teamwork, cultural engagement, volunteer service and youth-led initiatives, the cultural center aims to help young people build confidence, communication skills, responsibility and a stronger sense of community.

Seven student officers were elected to guide the council during the next year: President Yuhan Zhang, Vice Presidents William Li and Lulu Tang, Secretary Anabel Guo, Treasurer Elaine Guo, Communications and Outreach Officer Stephanie Zhu and Social Media Officer Elsie Guo.

The elected officers will help coordinate

meetings, organize activities, encourage member participation and work collaboratively with their peers. All council members will have opportunities to contribute ideas, lead projects and participate in community initiatives.

Newly elected officers participated in a youth leadership and gambling prevention training session at the center on Oct. 6.

The training was facilitated by Regional Gambling Awareness Team Coordinator Brailee Whan through the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness prevention network.

The session introduced youth leaders to issues affecting young people, including gambling-related risks, peer influence, healthy decision-making and the importance of positive social connections. It also emphasized the role young leaders can play in encouraging healthy choices and sharing prevention messages with their peers.

The council will continue meeting throughout the school year to plan projects, develop leadership skills and participate in community service.

Woodbridge To Mark Veterans Day

Woodbridge will hold its annual Veterans Day ceremony on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. in the Center Building gymnasium, 4 Meetinghouse Ln.

The program will be led by Dr. Barry Josephs, a US Army captain and Vietnam veteran. Ceremony highlights include patriotic music performed by Kathy Barkin, a memorial wreath presentation, an invoca-

tion, remarks by local elected officials and dignitaries and participation by the Police Honor Guard.

Following the ceremony, attendees are invited to the Woodbridge Community & Cultural Center at 4 Newton Rd. for light refreshments and an opportunity to gather with neighbors, veterans and their families. All are welcome to attend.

Milford Garden Club Leading Holiday Centerpiece Workshop

The Milford Garden Club will present a program on holiday centerpieces on Nov. 10 at the DAR Chapter House in Milford.

Members, B. Elmore and J. Kuryla will demonstrate festive, holiday table centerpieces using the elements and principles of design. This is a hands-on workshop.

The presentation begins at 1 p.m. The

guest fee is \$25. Plant material will be provided.

The DAR Chapter House is located at 55 Prospect St. To reserve a space, call 203-848-7459, email milfordgardenclubct@gmail.com or go to the Facebook page at facebook.com/MilfordCtGardenClub.

Beth-El Center Seeking Input From Milford, Woodbridge On Homeshare

The Beth-El Center in Milford is seeking homeowner input on the feasibility of piloting a homeshare program in Milford and Woodbridge.

The center is asking homeowners in both towns to complete a brief online survey to assess how they view homesharing to better understand the challenges of establishing a homesharing program in south-central Connecticut.

Homesharing is a housing strategy that helps both people with available living space and those seeking housing explore shared living arrangements: a homeowner offers a private bedroom and shared common area in exchange for an agreed-on benefit such as affordable rent, help around the house, trans-

portation to appointments, yard work, meal preparation or companionship. Homesharing allows homeowners to reduce the burden of maintaining their homes, including receiving rent to pay increased property taxes and housing maintenance costs, while providing affordable housing solutions for others.

There are over 55 homesharing programs across the country providing differing levels of support for homeowners and home-seekers, including screenings, compatibility reviews, written agreements and follow-ups.

Access the survey at surveyMonkey.com/r/Homesharing_survey. For more information, contact Beth-El Center Executive Director Jennifer Paradis at JParadis@bethelmilford.org.



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Case Memorial Library in Orange has announced that it will participate in Laptop ConneCT, a state initiative funded by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to help bridge the digital divide.

Through this program, qualifying Orange residents can borrow a laptop and bundled accessories for up to five years free of charge.

To qualify for a device, an applicant must be an Orange resident who is at least 18 years old and holds a valid Case Memorial Library card. Residents who need a library card can apply at the library by presenting a valid photo ID and proof of Orange residence.

Applicants must also participate in at least one of the following specific assistance programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Medicare, or HUSKY Health. Due to limited supply, devices are restricted to one per household.

Eligible residents must apply in person at Case Memorial Library between Nov. 2 and 20. When applying, individuals must present their valid library card as well as an official letter of program approval or renewal from the Department of Social Services displaying valid dates for one of the qualifying programs.

If the library receives more applicants than there are available devices, recipients will be selected at random through a lottery system. Library staff will begin notifying selected applicants on Monday, Nov. 30. Recipients will then schedule an appointment to pick up their laptop and complete a brief skills orientation with a librarian to help them get started using their device effectively.

The Laptop ConneCT Program is an effort to complements Connecticut's broadband investments by making laptops available through participating public libraries.

Woodbridge Community Center Opens



Gov. Ned Lamont joined Woodbridge First Selectman Mica Cardozo, state Rep. Mary Welander and other members of the community on Oct. 10 to celebrate the opening of the Woodbridge Community & Cultural Center. Photo by John Cattani.

Residents, families and special guests celebrated the opening of the Woodbridge Community & Cultural Center on Saturday, Oct. 10 at the newly renovated Old Firehouse at 4 Newton Rd.

Gov. Ned Lamont joined First Selectman Mica Cardozo and state Rep. Mary Welander for the community open house.

Lamont and Cardozo joined young residents for a friendly game of foosball in the game room. The informal competition offered a glimpse of what the town hopes the new space will become: a place where people of different ages and backgrounds can come together, interact and enjoy their community.

"This has been a long-awaited project, and it's exciting to finally see residents enjoying the building," Cardozo said. "We have taken a building that served Woodbridge for generations and given it a new purpose. Seeing families, young people and neighbors here together is what this investment was all about."

The center is officially open to the public following an extensive renovation of the former firehouse. Designed to complement existing town services and facilities, the building provides flexible spaces for meetings, programs, classes, cultural activities and informal gatherings.

The community center is located alongside the Woodbridge Library, The Woodbridge Center and The Grove. Residents are encouraged to stop in throughout the day, whether to meet a friend, work remotely, spend time with their children or play games.

"We can plan programs and events, but what really makes a place like this special is what happens in between," said Alison Valsamis, the town's community communications and program coordinator, who leads programming and community engagement for the center. "It's kids playing foosball, neighbors running into each other, or someone stopping in just because. We want this to become part of everyday life in Woodbridge, a place where people feel comfortable, connected, and welcome. Now that the doors are open, I am excited to see how residents make it their own."

Mantra's Café was expected to open later in October inside the community center. The café is run by Julian Brown, owner of Mantras Market in Woodbridge.

The café welcomed visitors during the open house with a preview of what will be on offer.

The center features six distinct spaces, including the Great Room, Game Room, The Commons, The Studio, The Loft and The Study. Initial programming includes yoga, tai chi, game nights and informal gatherings, with additional activities and community partnerships in development.

The center is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For upcoming programs, room reservations and opportunities to get involved, visit woodbridgedct.org/735/Community-Cultural-Center, email wccc@woodbridgedct.gov or call 203-389-3455.

Woodbridge Church Hosting Christmas Bazaar

Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Woodbridge will host a Christmas Bazaar & Craft Fair on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 81 Center Rd. in Woodbridge.

The bazaar will feature over 30 vendors and crafters, raffle baskets, a homemade bake sale, a white elephant sale, a Christmas train display and a free children's craft room.

The fair will include pictures with Santa from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., a children's choir performance at noon, and food and drinks available for purchase.

Attendees can also enter to win the "Golden Spatula Cookie Contest" by entering their best batch of homemade Anginetti cookies. Cookies will be judged on taste, texture and appearance. To register, contact oloaguild@gmail.com.

Admission is free.

Orange Community Women Running Craft Fair

Orange Community Women will hold its fourth annual craft fair at High Plains Community Center on Saturday, Nov. 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The fair will include more than 60 vendors, food trucks and a raffle.

High Plains Community Center is located at 525 Orange Center Rd. in Orange. For more information, contact orangecommunityw@gmail.com or visit facebook.com/orangecommunitywomen/.

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Orange Garden Club Members Recognized



The Garden Club of Orange and several of its members were honored on Oct. 22 at the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut's 97th Annual Awards Meeting at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. Membership Co-Chair Lisa Stackpole, Vice President Violet Nastri and Horticulture Chair Ginny Proestakes were acknowledged for their contributions at the event. Photo courtesy of the Garden Club of Orange.

Woodbridge Honors ‘Living Treasures’



The Woodbridge Center held its 8th annual Living Treasure event brought together over 100 community-minded locals on Sept. 24 to support the center and honor the contributions of three long-standing community volunteers. The three award recipients had a combined 100 years of community service within the town, and each was nominated by previous award winners. Left photo: recipient Tom Luciani with state Rep. Mary Welander. Center photo: recipient Sheila McCreven with Welander. Right photo: recipient Martha ‘Muffy’ German with state Sen. Jorge Cabrera. Photos by Sharon Presner.

Case Memorial Book Sale Coming Up

The Friends of the Case Memorial Library will hold a book sale on Saturday, Nov. 7 in the basement of the library in Orange.

The sale will include lots of fiction books, plus tables specific to historical fiction, science fiction and other subgenres. One table will showcase staff picks that the volunteers have enjoyed, with bookmarks explaining why they picked them. There will be children’s books and puzzles that families can do together. The “One of a Kind Finds” section is newly stocked with a variety of

interesting, fascinating or quirky topics. Another table will be devoted to banned books. Non-fiction will encompass history, science, self-care, sports, cooking, art and more.

Most adult softcovers are \$2 and hardcovers are \$3. Some books are priced a bit higher. Kids’ books are sometimes priced lower.

The sale runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Only cash or checks are accepted; no credit cards. The Case Memorial Library is located at 176 Tyler City Rd.

Halloween Dance Party Coming To MAC

The Milford Arts Council will host a Halloween Dance Party with DJ Sonja on Saturday, Oct. 31 at 8 pm.

Sonja Denyse, from Milford, brings years of experience as an on-air FM radio personality and DJ. She has entertained diverse crowds in different regions of the country. Denyse is a radio personality on an R&B and throwbacks station in Hartford, a top 40 station in the New London area, and she performs on an alternative rock station.

The party will include a costume contest, though costumes are not required. The MAC’s speakeasy will be open for people 21 and over.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. MAC members can attend for free.

The MAC is located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford. For tickets and information, go to milfordarts.org/event/halloween-dance-party-2/.

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Woodbridge Church Hosting Jazz Concert

The First Church of Christ in Woodbridge will host a traditional New Orleans–style jazz concert featuring Tenpenny Bounce on Saturday, Nov. 7 at 2 p.m. in Woodbridge.

Tenpenny Bounce is a high-energy traditional jazz ensemble bringing the authentic sounds of 1920s and 1930s New Orleans, Chicago and New York to life. Blending hot rhythms, spirited improvisation, and vintage flair, the band captures the excitement and joyful swing of America’s early jazz era.

The band features cornet/trumpet, clarinet/saxophone, trombone, piano, bass saxophone, drums, and banjo/guitar to recreate the sounds of the dance halls, speakeasies and riverboat bands of the past.

The event is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be collected. There will be a reception in the parish hall afterward. The church is located at 5 Meeting-house Ln.

Woodbridge Garden Club Makes Centerpieces For ‘Living Treasures’



Garden Club of Woodbridge members gathered at their president’s home on Sept. 23 to create floral arrangements for the Woodbridge “Living Treasures” event the following evening. Dahlias, allium, berry branches, along with other diverse flowers and branches, produced 17 different designs. The club’s own Martha “Muffy” German was one of the honorees recognized for her community service. The floral arrangements decorated the tables at the event. *Photo by Mary Leigh Sabshin.*

Milford-Orange Times

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Cathy Bradley, Running

Steve Cooper, Restaurant Reviews

Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews

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			114th District	117th District	119th District
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Secretary of the State	State Treasurer	State Comptroller	Attorney General	Judge of Probate (Milford-Orange)	Registrar of Voters
 Stephanie Thomas	 Erick Russell	 Sean Scanlon	 William Tong	 Ben Gettinger	 Margaret Novicki

Early Voting

Oct 19 - Nov 1 | Town Hall | 10am-6pm

8am-8pm on Oct 27 and 29

Election Day

Nov 3 | Community Center | 6am-8pm

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Opinion & Editorial

Woodbridge First Selectman

Charting A Sustainable Future

Serving as your first selectman has given me many privileges, but none more meaningful than hearing directly from residents across our neighborhoods. Whether at Town Hall, community gatherings, local shops and restaurants, or along the walking paths in our Town Center, I hear a consistent message: people value our beautiful surroundings, excellent schools and sense of community, but on the heels of the latest state-mandated revaluation, they are feeling the cumulative weight of property taxes.

That message came through clearly in our recent school building referendum. Residents turned out in significant numbers and voted to not move forward with the proposal by a 2-1 margin. Based on those I spoke with, the results demonstrate the concerns about long-term municipal debt and the impact on household budgets, even with more than \$60 million in anticipated state reimbursement grants covering over half the proposed project cost. But the vote did not eliminate the school's needs or the cost of addressing them.

Fiscal discipline cannot mean simply saying "no" to capital investments. It also requires a plan to pay for the services and infrastructure we all depend on. Over 90 percent of our tax base rests on residential property owners. If we are serious about controlling taxes, we must be equally serious about generating new revenue. That includes the opportunity before us at the former country club property.

If we want to safeguard resident budgets while investing in our town's physical requirements, we must generate new, sustainable revenue.

Unlocking Opportunity: The Former

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.

Maroney Helps Keep Kids Safe

To the Editor:

As a parent, one of my biggest concerns is keeping our children safe in a world that is becoming increasingly digital. The internet can be a wonderful tool for learning and connecting with others, but it also exposes children to cyberbullying, inappropriate content, privacy risks and social media platforms that can be difficult for young people to navigate safely.

That is why I appreciate the work state Sen. James Maroney has done to address online safety. He has led the charge on passing legislation aimed at protecting children's personal information and reducing the risks young people face online. In 2026, he helped spearhead Senate Bill 5, which addresses youth online safety and concerns surrounding artificial intelligence. This establishes strong regulations to protect children against potential harms from chatbots, such as requiring safeguards when users express suicidal ideations and requiring protections against leading children into inappropriate conversations with chatbots.

As parents, we cannot monitor every online interaction our children have. We need to know that the companies providing these platforms are taking their responsibility seriously and that our children's safety is being considered when technology is developed.

While these legislative efforts are an important step, there is still more work to do. I hope Maroney and his colleagues will continue strengthening protections for young people,

Country Club of Woodbridge

One of our most promising near-term opportunities is the town-owned property at the former Country Club of Woodbridge on Woodfield Road.

Woodbridge acquired this 155-acre parcel in 2009 to keep control of its future in the community's hands. Yet for years, the land has remained largely untouched, caught in debate. I understand that some residents have strong and differing views about development there. But continued inaction comes at a tangible cost. The town spends money each year on maintenance and oversight, and the property generates no new tax revenue to help our homeowners.

Preservation and thoughtful development are not mutually exclusive. Done well, they can reinforce one another. With funding from a state Department of Housing planning grant, we engaged Cooper Robertson to guide a yearlong, community-wide master planning process. Working closely with our boards, technical committees and hundreds of residents, the firm produced a balanced land use strategy – the CCW master plan.

The master plan is not simply about development. Conservation is a core principle. The plan would retain nearly three quarters of the property as natural parkland, open meadows, sensitive wetland habitats, and an extensive trail network connecting to regional paths. It also envisions a northwest park gateway highlighting the historic Roger Sherman homestead area, a modest outdoor nature pavilion and a small agricultural area celebrating our farming roots.



MICA
CARDOZO

Most critically, the plan identifies two distinct areas – one previously disturbed – totaling roughly 30 to 40 acres for carefully scaled development.

An independent fiscal analysis estimated that this balanced approach could generate between \$1.5 million and \$1.9 million in annual net tax revenue for Woodbridge. That recurring revenue could help offset infrastructure costs and reduce pressure on residential mill rates. To move from planning toward implementation, the town recently issued a request for expressions of interest. This will help us identify capable development partners, review conceptual proposals and continue a public, transparent discussion before entering any formal developer agreements.

Already in Motion: Progress across Our Business District

This approach is not just a concept for CCW. We are already seeing progress in our business district.

Our building officials recently issued the final certificate of occupancy for the Toll Brothers Regency at Woodbridge age-restricted community on Amity and Bradley roads. This development has broadened our tax base, generated permitting and close to \$1 million in property tax revenues, and added a housing option for older adults without placing significant new demands on town services.

Our administration worked with the Department of Housing, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and New Samaritan Corporation to restructure the ground lease

for The Warner elderly housing complex on Lucy Street. The result is expected to be more than \$2.5 million in direct state investment to modernize the buildings, and permanent affordable-housing deed restrictions for all 30 units in the complex. That provides greater stability for seniors and adds to Woodbridge's deed-restricted affordable housing number.

We are also moving ahead with engineering designs funded by our regional Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program grant. This approximately \$8 million initiative is intended to make our primary commercial corridor safer, more pedestrian-friendly and better positioned to attract local businesses. Together with recent zoning updates that support modern mixed-use development, these are practical steps toward sustainable growth.

The Path Forward

We must respect the financial pressures residents face while still planning for Woodbridge's future. We cannot protect taxpayers, or our futures, by repeatedly postponing necessary repairs, and we cannot meet our long-term needs by avoiding difficult decisions and delaying financial obligations.

Our approach is measured, transparent and focused on shared goals: preserving green space, providing housing options for different stages of life and building a stronger, broader tax base. The decisions we make in the months ahead will shape Woodbridge's financial health for years to come. We need to work together as we take those steps.

Mica Cardozo is the first selectman of Woodbridge.

Act expansion, which invites lawsuits and legal costs against towns and police, passed on near party-line votes with local Democrats voting yes. The \$55.8 billion budget weakened fiscal guardrails, diverting roughly \$600 million a year from the volatility cap and shifting spending into off-budget accounts. Local Democrats voted yes and rejected every Republican alternative.

Enough empty rhetoric. Restore common sense to Hartford. Vote red: vote for Ryan Fazio for governor, Owen T. Weaver for the 14th State Senate District, Brooke Hopkins for the 114th District, Ray Collins for the 117th District, Kathy Kennedy for the 119th District, Steven T. Visconti for the 118th District and Chris Lancia for Congress, Connecticut's 3rd District.

Connecticut, Orange, Milford, Woodbridge and West Haven deserve not to be fooled anymore.

**Craig Stahl
Orange**

Supporting Maroney on Childcare

To the Editor:

For many Connecticut families, the cost of childcare has become a significant financial burden. Parents work hard to support their families, yet quality childcare can be so expensive that it becomes difficult to afford other necessities. No parent should have to choose between keeping a job and affording safe, reliable care for their children.

Affordable childcare is not just a family issue; it is an economic issue. When parents cannot afford care, they may have to reduce their work hours, turn down job opportunities

Continued on page 7

Opinion & Editorial

Orange First Selectman

Welcome November

The Finance Department has sent out budget requests to all departments, and the budget process will begin in early winter. The town has completed many projects across the town, and work continues daily. Currently the area is being marked for clearing of land for future improvements at Fred Wolfe Park. New ideas cannot be considered until the space is available. This phase will be accomplished with Local Capital Improvement Program funds, not Orange taxpayer dollars.

Orange is always searching for, applying for, and being awarded grants. The town has received over \$6,958,000 in grants within the last three years. The town uses these

grants wisely and will continue to pursue any monies that we are able to.

The town is fortunate to have so many great organizations and committees that make life in Orange such a great place to live. Thank you to our Orange Youth Services department who sponsored the Funtober at the Fairgrounds on Oct. 25.

November events to look forward to include the Orange Community Women's Craft Fair on Nov. 7 at High Plains Community Center; the Orange Economic Development Corpo-



JAMES ZEOLI

ration's annual Holiday Farmer's Market on Thursday, Nov. 19 from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at High Plains Community Center; and the Orange Lion's Club Thanksgiving dinner on Sunday, Nov. 29 at the community center. Mark your calendars, because you won't want to miss the 10th Annual Lighted Tractor Parade on Saturday, Dec. 5; it promises to be the biggest yet.

The Community Services Department is looking to help our neighbors share the joy of the holidays by providing food baskets and family gift spon-

sors. If you would like to help you may donate nonperishable food items, donate gift cards to ShopRite, Trader Joe's or Big Y for fresh turkeys and groceries, or you can make a monetary donation to our Community Assistance Fund, which helps households all year long. To help with holiday gift giving you can adopt a child's wish list or visit the Orange Police Department's giving tree in the lobby of the police department.

I wish everyone a beautiful November and for those who celebrate a bountiful Thanksgiving.

James Zeoli is the first selectman of Orange.

Letters
(Continued From 6)

or leave the workforce altogether.

State Sen. James Maroney has supported efforts to address this challenge. In 2024, he voted for legislation intended to simplify enrollment in the Care 4 Kids program, which helps eligible families afford childcare. In 2025, he also voted for legislation establishing the Early Childhood Education Endowment to expand access to childcare and help reduce costs. In 2026, he supported a state budget adjustment that included a \$300 million transfer to the endowment.

Investing in childcare means investing in children, working parents, local businesses and Connecticut's future. Every child deserves a strong start, and every family deserves the opportunity to succeed.

This is why I already voted early in support of Sen. James Maroney in the general election that ends Nov. 3, to continue his crucial work on reducing childcare costs for his district.

Stu Zolty
Milford

Maroney a Partner on Schools

To the Editor:

As a Woodbridge resident, I am supporting state Sen. James Maroney for reelection because the challenges facing our schools, taxpayers and communities require a strong partnership with our state leadership.

Small towns like Woodbridge face difficult decisions about how to sustain excellent public schools, manage rising costs and keep property taxes affordable. Connecticut also needs more housing options so young adults, working families and older residents can find homes that meet their needs. We need state leaders who address these responsibilities collaboratively with municipal governments.

Maroney's record has continued to give me confidence in his commitment to our communities. A former local Board of Education member, he brings real experience to the decisions school communities face. This year, he supported a state budget that increased education funding with investments that help communities meet their obligations and ease pressure on local taxpayers. He has also supported legislation encouraging housing growth through local and regional planning, with additional school construction funding. He knows that schools are critical infrastructure and high-quality educational programs in our schools are a long-term economic driver.

He has also been proactive in addressing concerns about the rapid growth of artificial intelligence technology to protect data privacy for Connecticut residents. As the architect

behind Connecticut's consumer data privacy laws, he championed the C.A.R.T. Act. This type of comprehensive AI regulation is the leadership we need in Hartford in the coming years.

I want my town to be affordable and welcoming across generations. Meeting those goals requires thoughtful planning and a state government willing to share responsibility. James Maroney has shown that he is engaged and working to address the issues that matter most in the 14th Senate District, and I encourage my neighbors to vote for him on Election Day.

Lauren K. Francese
Woodbridge

Welander Invests in Woodbridge's Children

To the Editor:

As a member of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen, I want to say something often left unsaid in public service: thank you.

State Rep. Mary Welander has worked hard for Woodbridge, and nowhere has that been clearer than in her advocacy for our Beecher school construction project. Thanks to her efforts, Woodbridge secured 54 percent reimbursement on the state's priority list. That significant commitment eases the burden on our taxpayers and brings us closer to giving our students an appropriate learning environment, and our educators the infrastructure they need for our curriculum and programming. As part of the project, expanding our preschool program would extend services to more of our young families.

That alone would be reason to be grateful. But Welander didn't stop there. Because Beecher is the only elementary school building in Woodbridge, she advocated for special legislation for waivers and an additional 20 percent reimbursement, giving us the support we need to move forward with our elementary school project. Anyone who has watched the legislative process knows how much patience, persistence and relationship-building that takes. She has brought all three, and she has done it with determination and grace.

Beecher Road School is the heart of our community. Our children spend seven to eight years on the Beecher campus, learning to read, making their first friends and discovering their love of learning. Woodbridge families have made their commitment to education clear. Welander heard us, and she carried our voices to Hartford.

What I appreciate most is how she engages with residents. She listens. She follows through. She treats Woodbridge's priorities as her own, and she never loses sight of the people behind the numbers: our students, our teachers, and our taxpayers.

On behalf of my family and the many Woodbridge families who care deeply about our schools, thank you, Mary Welander. Our children will feel the difference your work makes for years to come.

Maria Federico Madonick
Member, Woodbridge Board of Selectmen

Shannon a Strong Advocate

To the Editor:

I write in support of MJ Shannon's bid for re-election for state representative of the 117th District.

As someone who is counting down the months to Medicare, I'm no spring chicken, and the population of our state is aging along with me. As Hearst data analyst Philip Bump observed in May, "there are currently more Connecticut residents of retirement age than at any prior point."

Same with seniors aged 75 and older – who also make up a larger percentage of the population than any time previously.

Meanwhile, soaring housing costs have made it harder for young people to stay in the communities where they were raised. According to the FRED all-transactions House Price Index for Connecticut, house prices have risen 91 percent in the last decade. Meanwhile, there's been a significant decline in the supply of rental units available to lower income households.

That's one of the many reasons why we need Shannon in the state legislature. He's brought much-needed youthful energy to the 117th, and proved himself an empathetic advocate for all of his constituents, whether they be recently graduated singles, young families with children or grey hairs like me. He has fought for more affordable housing, for long-term care reform and for quality education for our children and grandchildren.

What's more, Shannon is a strong advocate for protecting our state's natural resources, which make Connecticut such a wonderful place to live.

I urge voters in the 117th to reelect MJ Shannon, because having a state rep who works hard and is responsive to constituents makes all the difference.

Sarah E. Darer
Milford

Thomas Has Proven Record on Elections

To the Editor:

As the 2026 midterm elections approach, election integrity and security are top of mind for many of us. More than ever, we need a sec-

retary of the state who is committed to protecting the bedrock of our democracy: the right to vote and have our vote counted. That is why we need to reelect Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas.

Thomas has stood up to the Trump regime's claim of stolen elections with fact-based proof to the contrary. She also successfully resisted the Trump administration's overreaching Department of Justice lawsuit that attempted to force the state to hand over private voter registration data – a demand a federal judge rightfully dismissed.

What makes Thomas's response so effective is her reliance on facts over rhetoric. She reminds us of the three pillars that keep our local elections safe: people, paper and proof. Our votes are tabulated locally using physical paper records, which are strictly verified through independent post-election audits conducted at UConn. Thomas has stood firmly in support of our local registrars of voters, our neighbors, who have shown year after year that they are trusted guardians of democracy.

Thomas has a proven record of protecting and expanding our core democratic foundation: free and fair elections.

I hope you will join me in reelecting Stephanie Thomas as secretary of the state.

Ellen Scalettar
Woodbridge

Cabrera a Voice for Labor

To the Editor:

Voters in Woodbridge's portion of the 17th Senate District will have the chance to reelect state Sen. Jorge Cabrera, and I'm asking my neighbors to join me in supporting him.

Affordability is among the biggest issues facing our community today and having come to public service through the labor movement, Cabrera has a deep awareness of what the affordability issue looks like. Before he was first elected in 2020, Cabrera represented working people as a union organizer. He knows the challenges that individuals and families face, he knows what it means when folks have to stretch a paycheck to cover the costs of living, and he has carried that perspective to Hartford.

Over the course of his three terms in office, Cabrera has taken on serious responsibilities in the Senate. His 2025 committee assignments included vice chair of Finance, Revenue and Bonding, co-chair of Insurance and Real Estate, and vice chair of Labor and Public Employees. These are the committees that shape how our tax dollars are spent, what we pay for insurance and what protections workers have.

Cabrera shows up and listens. He knows that school funding and rising electricity costs

Continued on page 9

Orange Democratic Town Committee

In It To Win It For Orange

It all comes down to this. As we wait for the results to roll in, we as Orange Democrats did our part this election season. I've recently attended excellent candidate forums, exciting canvassing kick-offs and motivating campaign events. This is how democracy really works. Our candidates here in Orange were engaged, answered tough questions and explained their accomplishments and goals in their respective elected offices. I'm so proud to support an excellent slate of local Democratic candidates this year. They exemplify public service – showing up, listening to residents at their doors and talking about their platforms. Now it's our turn to make our voices heard by doing our duty as citizens: vote. Don't sit this one out – every election matters. The better the turnout, the more our elected leaders will reflect our values. Early voting is already well underway. You might ask, is it important to vote early? I think so. Because once you've voted,

then you can focus on making sure all your family, friends and neighbors, both here at home and across the country, have voted, too. Perhaps you can help your college student apply for an absentee ballot, arrange to drive someone to the polls or write a few postcards to voters in swing states. You can vote early through Nov. 1, or head to the polls on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3. Either way, it's important to have a plan to make sure your voice is heard. You might be following some national races across the country. I would argue that our state and local representation has the greatest impact on our everyday lives. That's one of many reasons why I've become so involved in our local Democratic town committee. Our state legislators do more than introduce bills and vote on legislation. They also



MELISSA JOHNSTON

advocate for our communities and work to bring state funding and resources back to us. That funding can support local projects, infrastructure and community needs, helping our town make needed improvements. We are so lucky to have representatives who are smart, hard-working and passionate about issues that matter. State Sen. James Maroney has worked to give Connecticut residents more control over their personal information, strengthen protections for children online and address both the dangers and opportunities of AI. State Rep. Mary Welanders has championed issues that matter to children and families. State Rep. MJ Shannon has focused on education, affordability and protecting our environment. And Alex Armstrong, running for state representative in the 119th District, is focused on making life more affordable, preparing for the impacts

of climate change and expanding access to cleaner, more affordable energy. While some of these are different areas of focus, they all connect to questions that affect our lives here in Orange. They are also reminders that the work of government is not abstract. These decisions directly impact each of us. We're in good hands with these candidates. If you ever feel as though one person's vote cannot make much of a difference, remember that right here locally it does. The Orange Democrats will keep showing up even after Nov. 3. One election ends and another important one begins. We will stay present in our community, advocating, communicating and connecting with everyone to keep our town as strong as possible. Let's all be in it to win it for Orange.

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

Dulcimer Festival Coming To Milford

The Nutmeg Dulcimer Festival returns on Nov. 6-7, celebrating 23 years and bringing together dulcimer players, teachers, performers and music enthusiasts from around the country for two days of workshops, concerts and musical discovery at Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church in Milford. The festival showcases two different musical instruments, hammered dulcimers and mountain dulcimers, that are usually associated with folk music. The hammered dulcimer is a non-mechanical cousin of the piano, with several dozen strings stretched across a wooden box, so the player can hit the strings with special pencil-sized drum-

sticks. The mountain dulcimer is an elongated box with a fretboard on its top and typically has three or four strings, placed across the player's lap, so the player can fret and strum it from above. "Dulcimers, of both kinds, are among the world's coolest musical instruments," says festival chair and co-founder Sam Edelston, who is known in the mountain dulcimer community for his renditions of classic rock and pop songs. "The general public deserves to know dulcimers the way it knows ukuleles, harmonicas and guitars. In fact, we deliberately keep our concert tickets inexpensive to encourage people to check it out. And for people who want to try a dulcimer

for the weekend, we'll have some on hand." A hallmark of the festival is its participatory, educational format. The daytime consists mostly of workshops for all levels of players, including beginners. Loaner mountain dulcimers are available, along with a limited number of rental hammered dulcimers. The festival's 50 workshops are taught by three featured artists and more than a dozen others who hail from around the Northeast. The 2026 featured artists are Karen Mueller on the mountain dulcimer, Karen Ashbrook on the hammered dulcimer and Sasha Bogdanowitsch on the mountain dulcimer. The festival will also present two public

concerts. Friday evening's concert at 7:30 p.m. features Bogdanowitsch alongside the workshop instructors, while Saturday evening's concert at 7 p.m. showcases Karen Mueller on mountain dulcimer and Karen Ashbrook on hammered dulcimer with Sophie Chang. Both concerts are open to the public, with tickets available through the festival website or at the door. Mary Taylor Memorial United Methodist Church is located at 168 South Broad St. Complete festival information and schedule, including full-festival and daily registration for workshops and concert tickets, is available at NutmegDulcimer.com.

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Orange Republican Town Committee

Needed Checks And Greater Accountability

November is nearly here, and with it comes our responsibility to vote.

Orange can only be as strong as the people we elect to represent us. Last edition I highlighted several legislative changes that concern me. This edition I want to explain why those issues matter.

Connecticut has lived under one-party Democratic control for years. When one party holds a supermajority in both the legislative and executive branches, there is little meaningful check on its power. Policies that reshape our communities, increase costs and expand government reach move forward with limited opposition. Most families would never run their household this way, yet that is how our state has been governed.

Public Act 26-14, titled “An Act Concerning Democracy and Government Accountability and the Use and Retention of Data Derived from Automated License Plate Reader Systems,” is one example. Among other provisions, it creates a private right of action for constitutional violations that applies to any person in Connecticut, regardless of legal status. It also places new restrictions on law enforcement, including limits on civil immigration enforcement in

certain “protected areas.” Supporters call this accountability. Critics see it as another layer of rules that complicate enforcement of existing law which may conflict with federal statutes. When we already have clear laws on the books, adding more often creates confusion rather than clarity. The costs of that confusion fall on taxpayers and law-abiding residents.

We are repeatedly told that more laws are needed to protect us. In practice, many of these measures expand government reach while failing to solve the problems they claim to address. Voters are left sorting through contradictory messaging designed more to manage public opinion than to solve problems.

While I normally try to focus on positive outcomes, fundamental changes have taken place slowly and deliberately in how issues are framed and presented to the public. When doubt is mixed with a measure of truth, it becomes easier for people to accept a narrative that may not fully reflect reality. Over time, that approach can reshape how we think about



JUDE
TOOHEY

our communities, our laws, and our responsibilities as citizens.

Consider the campaign claims from Alex Armstrong, the challenger in the 119th District (Milford, Orange, and surrounding areas). His flyer promises to fight rising costs for families, deliver property tax relief, stand up to mass surveillance, strengthen coastal resilience and defend women’s rights.

Let’s examine those points:

- Rising costs: Costs have climbed for years under Democratic majorities that control the legislature and the governor’s office. If relief were a priority, it could have been delivered already.
- Property tax relief: The same supermajority has overseen continued pressure on local budgets and taxes. Unfunded state mandates continue to put pressure on municipal budgets. Promises of relief ring hollow without a change in who holds power.
- Mass surveillance: Public Act 26-14 itself placed new rules on automated license plate readers. This was only after many cities

and towns who are run primarily by the same one-party rule had enormous pushback from residents. Thankfully Orange’s selectmen put our community first.

- Coastal resilience: Work on this issue has been underway since Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Supporting continued improvements is reasonable, but presenting it as a new priority overlooks years of existing effort.

- Women’s rights: Defending women’s rights is important. It is difficult to take seriously from a party that has struggled to define what a woman is and has supported policies allowing biological males to compete in women’s sports.

One-party rule has shaped Connecticut’s direction for too long. A more balanced legislature would restore needed checks and force greater accountability. That balance starts with the choices we make at the ballot box.

If you would like to join the Orange Republican Town Committee or help in any way, please contact our secretary at ortc.secretary@gmail.com or our chairman at ortc.chairman@gmail.com.

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

Letters

(Continued From 7)

are key concerns for our towns. Cabrera is committed to addressing the inequities in the Education Cost Sharing formula and increasing the per-pupil foundation amount, which has been frozen for over a decade. Cabrera has also fought to lower our electric bills. As a sponsor and supporter of the bipartisan Ratepayers First Act, he put ratepayers’ and customers’ interests over the quarterly profits and shareholder payouts from utility companies. The bill passed with overwhelming support

from both parties. There is more work to be done on these issues, and Cabrera has shown he’ll work across the aisle to bring relief to families in our community.

Connecticut faces real challenges, from the cost of housing, healthcare and everyday life. We need someone representing us at the state level who understands those pressures and is dedicated to working on them. Jorge Cabrera has proven his dedication and has earned another term.

Steven Munno
Woodbridge

Consider Traffic Circles

To the Editor:

I write to discuss two intersections on Rte. 114: from Rte. 313 and from Rte. 243. As every driver traveling Rte. 114 into and out of Woodbridge, these two intersections are safeguarded by stop signs on each corner. Stopping is essential to avoiding accidents between travelers heading in each of the four directions. At least during morning and evening commutes, these intersections are also the cause of back-ups and occasional accidents.

I have a solution. Traffic circles. Traffic circles, also referred to as rotaries, are evidence-based traffic modulators that result in fewer severe crashes, 90 percent fewer fatalities and 75 percent fewer injuries; less delay waiting at stops and signals; reduction in pollution, noise and fuel consumption; do not incur the costs of traffic signals and yearly maintenance. This is a workable solution to multiple challenges and can benefit all of our residents.

Mike Burns
Woodbridge

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Special Section: Election 2026

The *Milford-Orange Times* is continuing its election-year tradition of asking the candidates to respond to questions about what they would do for the residents of Milford, Orange and Woodbridge if voters elect them. This special section features the responses from the candidates. An asterisk next to a candidate's name indicates that they are the incumbent. Election Day is Nov. 3.

State Senate, District 14 (Milford, Orange, Parts of Woodbridge)

What will you do if elected to help make your district a more affordable place to live? Be as specific as possible.

James Maroney (D)*



Over the last eight years, Connecticut has paid down an additional \$11 billion in unfunded pension liabilities. That saves nearly \$1 billion a year in payments that came due because, for 30 years, governors and legislatures of both parties did not pay the appropriate amount. Combine that discipline with Treasurer Erick Russell's restructuring of state investments, and our pensions have gone from roughly 30 percent funded to near-

ly 70 percent. That is what made the 2023 income tax cut possible, and it is what will let us keep investing in our state and delivering some relief to make day-to-day life more affordable. If fortunate enough to be reelected, here is where I would focus that relief.

For many people, the largest tax burden is the property tax. These are local taxes, but the state needs to do more, both to fund our towns and to help them reduce costs, and schools make up the largest part of most town budgets. We increased the base Education Cost Sharing amount, which increased funding for every city and town, and added money to excess cost reimbursement for special education, but we still have more to do. The governor's blue ribbon commission on the ECS formula will be the basis for updating that formula. When we update how the money is allocated, we also need to increase the total, so there are no winners and losers and every town receives more. Special education and transportation costs are straining local school budgets, so we need to help districts provide in-district services and reduce transportation costs when an out-of-district placement is necessary.

For young families, the Early Childhood Trust Fund will soon provide free early child-

hood education to families earning less than \$100,000 a year and cap the cost for every family at 7 percent of income. Next, Connecticut should recognize families in our tax code with a child tax credit, especially as federal policies drive up costs for families who are already struggling.

For seniors, many of whom are on fixed incomes, we removed the income tax on retirement income for individuals earning less than \$75,000 and married couples earning less than \$100,000. In doing that, we inadvertently created a marriage penalty, because most federal brackets for couples are double the individual level. If reelected, I will work to eliminate that marriage penalty and to eliminate the income tax on Social Security entirely.

For most seniors, though, the property tax is the biggest burden. The income caps for the circuit breaker program, which provides property tax relief for seniors, have not been adjusted in years. We should raise them and increase funding to towns to match, so towns don't have to raise taxes on everyone else to make up the difference.

Finally, electricity. The energy legislation we passed last year made Connecticut one of the only states in the country to actually

reduce energy costs, but we still have more to do. We don't produce our own natural gas, so lowering generation costs means investing in more renewable energy together with grid-scale battery storage. Once a wind or solar project is built, the energy it generates costs nothing more. The catch is that the wind doesn't always blow and solar doesn't generate at night. Batteries store energy when it is cheap or plentiful and release it when demand is high, or renewables aren't generating. Nevada and Illinois have invested heavily and seen it lower costs. We have also started investing in grid-enhancing technologies, which help us get more out of the power lines we already have, and we should expand these investments as the pilot programs succeed.

Our country is in the middle of an affordability crisis, and we need to be innovative to deliver real savings for families. No party has a monopoly on good ideas, so we have to work together. Campaigning is easy, and governing is hard. Eliminating taxes and sending checks may sound good, but those promises often aren't achievable. If I'm fortunate enough to be reelected, I will keep working in a bipartisan way and put in the hard work necessary to deliver complicated solutions to difficult problems.

Owen T. Weaver (R)



On the campaign trail across the 14th State Senate District, I consistently hear from residents that for years they have been feeling the strain of high taxes and energy costs and increased costs for goods with no real hope of change in sight. The take-away message therefore is loud and clear – Connecticut's elected officials must change course and prioritize making Connecticut more affordable.

If elected to represent the 14th State Senate District, I will prioritize reforming our state tax scheme, lowering property taxes,

cutting energy costs and making sure the towns in the 14th State Senate District get their fair share of statewide municipal and education funding.

First, I will support reducing the income tax rates on our middle class. I will also support eliminating Connecticut's tax on Social Security benefits so seniors can keep more of the income they earned. I will also support a state-level child tax credit to help young working families meet rising household costs. Approximately 69 percent of families with children would benefit from that credit.

Second, as the Orange town attorney, I know from firsthand experience that our property taxes are too high because the state is imposing too many unfunded state mandates on our municipalities. The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities estimates that there are approximately 1,400 unfunded state mandates that force municipalities to raise spending without the state providing the resources to pay for them. Many of these unfunded state mandates are unnecessary and antiquated, such as publishing legal notices in printed newspapers, and should be immediately eliminated. Other unfunded state mandates are intrusive and should be repealed because they infringe upon areas that are inherently local – such as aspects

of 8-30g and House Bill 8002, which overrides local control of zoning in favor of a one-size-fits-all housing scheme that favors private developers. Each municipality is different, and local residents, not Hartford legislators and bureaucrats, should have the strongest voice and final say in deciding how their tax dollars are spent.

Third, I will support removing the public benefits charge from our electric bills. Programs authorized by the state should be debated and funded transparently through the state budget, not imposed as an additional charge on monthly utility bills – a hidden tax on ratepayers. I will also fight for an all-of-the-above approach to our energy crisis by expanding natural gas and nuclear energy in this state, while at the same pursuing solar and wind where the circumstances are right for that type of energy production.

Fourth, as a homeowner, partner of a law firm and a board member of several local nonprofits, including the Amity Chamber of Commerce, I know how important it is to budget and live within your fiscal means. Government, like every household and small business, must do the same. I will support strengthening the state's fiscal guardrails by tying the growth of state government to a benchmark, such as inflation. I will also support enacting a property tax cap that is tied

to greater of the prevailing rate of inflation or 2 percent. These measures will impose discipline on state and local spending and help protect taxpayers from costs that grow faster than their ability to pay.

Finally, I will fight to ensure that the four municipalities of the 14th State Senate District get their fair share of state funding. Unfortunately, the district ranks towards the bottom of Connecticut's 36 Senate districts for combined municipal and education aid. Our current return from Hartford is insufficient and shows why our communities are facing annual property tax increases. I will fight to increase these amounts in future budgets by advocating, in part, for an increase in the base amount of education cost sharing for our towns.

The 14th State Senate District deserves a state senator who will prioritize making the district more affordable for all. As a born and raised resident of Orange, the current Orange town attorney, a board member of several local nonprofits, and a father and husband who is raising three boys in the town that I grew up in, I care deeply about Orange and the surrounding communities. If elected your next state senator, I will be steadfast in making sure that this district is affordable for all its residents and businesses. That is my promise to you.

State House, District 114 (Parts of Orange, Woodbridge)

What will you do if elected to help make your district a more affordable place to live? Be as specific as possible.

Mary Welander (D)*



Affordability is the number one issue across the board in Connecticut. The state has already taken some steps to reduce costs, but the truth is that this is an incredibly complex situation and there are no magic phrases like “cut taxes” that will fix it, especially given the fact that much of it is the result of actions beyond state control. I don’t make promises I can’t keep, or broad statements not rooted in common sense, so let’s talk about what we have already started, the reality of where we are, and then I will offer some possible steps to take to make life more afford-

able in Connecticut. The legislature has delivered eight years of balanced budgets under Gov. Ned Lamont and has sent hundreds of millions of dollars back to towns for community projects and infrastructure work and hundreds of millions of dollars more in more education funding. In my three terms I’ve personally brought close to \$50 million back to the district and state based on policies I’ve written and projects I’ve championed in addition to the education and municipal aid received. We’ve made progress on systemic issues that will lower costs and improve quality of life for residents, such as upgrades to public transit like the Waterbury rail line, the Early Childhood Education Endowment (saving families thousands of dollars in childcare), and paying down billions in pension debt. We delivered the single largest tax cut for middle class families in state history and created additional tax breaks for caregivers, veterans and senior citizens. We created programs that help reduce the cost of college and trade programs, support small farms and small businesses of every kind. Yet, life is harder and all that work feels in vain because of actions by the federal administration. President Trump imposed tariffs on countries across the globe, thereby driving up the costs on goods such as building materials, farm fertilizers and computer chips – which means our homes, food and technology are all more expensive.

By starting a war in the Middle East, gas, home heating and crude oil prices have skyrocketed so much that the state has already made an additional \$12.7 million deposit into the fuel assistance program in anticipation of more residents needing help, and petroleum-based construction material costs have increased almost 60 percent since the war started. Additionally, Connecticut is losing more than \$2 billion in federal funding because of cuts to SNAP, Medicare and Medicaid, and other funding claw backs. I know we want to make sure our neighbors are warm, healthy and fed this winter, but we should have been able to return that money to taxpayers. There is a level of chaos and irresponsibility in this federal administration that is frustrating on so many levels, and beyond the control of a state representative. That being said, I do have some ideas on making life more affordable for all of us. Health insurance: We need to create easier access to our existing state-offered plans for small businesses and nonprofits. If the market has more options that are affordable to larger groups of people, then private industry will need to pivot to remain competitive. We don’t need to make this system more complicated by creating new plans when we can reduce costs for so many by working within an existing structure. Long term care insurance also needs to be more regulated to prevent the kind of premium increases many

have seen recently. Energy costs: I would like to examine the state-purchased power agreements that are attached to some energy generating projects (such as Millstone nuclear or offshore wind). In the past we have purchased that power at fixed rates for long-term agreements; in 2025 we allowed up to 20 percent of those costs to be adjusted for current market prices. But I think we should look at the ability to renegotiate a larger percentage and cap rate increase amounts. We should also evaluate what programs are included in the public benefits charge and see what may not be worth the cost. Programs, such as rebates for green energy options for residents, should be able to demonstrate their effectiveness to be continued. Other steps like increasing the ‘luxury vehicle’ tax threshold to be aligned with modern car prices, reducing certain filing fees for small businesses and LLCs, supporting Attorney General William Tong’s efforts to prevent price gouging across industries, and continuing to update the Educational Cost Sharing formula can add up to real savings for towns and residents. I know affordability at every level is a major issue. If I am reelected, I will continue to do whatever I can to reduce costs for all residents, but especially families and seniors, while still maintaining the level of support that taxpayers in Connecticut deserve.

Brooke Hopkins (R)



Affordability is one of the biggest reasons I am running for state representative. Our friends

and neighbors throughout Derby, Hamden, Orange and Woodbridge are feeling squeezed by the cost of everything from electricity, property taxes, housing, groceries, to simple everyday necessities. My focus in Hartford will be on the costs state government can actually do something about and in many cases, ones which our state government has exacerbated through bad legislation. First, I will make lowering energy costs a priority. Connecticut residents should not be used as a blank check for costs created by state policy. I support greater transparency on utility bills, stricter oversight of rate increases and removing state-mandated policy costs from electric bills wherever possible. The most direct example of this is the public benefit charge which supports our state’s green tax initiatives which the utilities are able to pass onto consumers. Our consumers deserve meaningful relief, not just Band-Aid solutions implemented in an election year.

Second, we need to address the relationship between state mandates and local property taxes. Hartford should not require towns to implement programs or policies and then leave local taxpayers to pick up the bill. I will oppose new unfunded mandates and work to eliminate or fully fund existing mandates that unnecessarily increase municipal costs. Every dollar Hartford forces a town to spend has to come from somewhere, and too often that means the taxpayer. Housing also has to be part of the affordability conversation, but I do not believe affordability is achieved by imposing one-size-fits-all development mandates on every community. I will work to change Public Act 25-1 which was voted on by my opponent and gave us mass housing proposals such as the ones in Woodbridge at Fountain Street and Beecher Road. I will also work to reform Connecticut’s 8-30g law. While I support responsible housing options, I believe they should be made through local com-

munities and account for a community’s roads, schools, water and sewer capacity, public safety and existing infrastructure. If development requires major new municipal expenses without sufficient resources to pay for them, those costs eventually reach taxpayers too. Finally, I will support meaningful tax relief and approach every new spending proposal with a simple question: What will this ultimately cost the people I represent? My nearly 30 years working with children and families, along with my experience in local government and as a small business owner, have shown me how government decisions affect people in their everyday lives. Making Connecticut affordable will not happen through one bill. It requires looking at taxes, energy, housing, state spending and municipal costs together. If elected, I will bring that perspective to Hartford and work to make sure families can afford to stay here and build their lives here.

State House, District 117 (Parts of Milford, Orange)

What will you do if elected to help make your district a more affordable place to live? Be as specific as possible.

MJ Shannon (D)*



Affordability is one of the biggest challenges facing families across Milford, Orange and West Haven. As I spend time canvassing neighborhoods and talking with constituents throughout our communities, affordability is

one of the issues that comes up most often. From childcare and school expenses to property taxes and electric bills, families are feeling the pressure of rising costs. If reelected, I will continue working to provide meaningful relief while making sure our communities remain places where people of all ages can afford to live, work and raise a family. During my first term, I have worked with my colleagues in the legislature to deliver real relief for Connecticut families. We fully funded the Early Childhood Endowment, which will help make childcare free for eligible families earning less than \$100,000 and ensure families earning more do not pay more than 7 percent of their income toward childcare. We also established a family caregiver tax credit, expanded property tax relief for disabled veterans, and made school supplies tax-free. These are meaningful steps toward helping families keep more of their hard-earned money. But there is more work ahead, particularly when it comes to electric bills and property taxes, two of the biggest expenses facing resi-

dents in our district. Lowering electric rates must be a priority. Connecticut families and small businesses should not have to choose between paying their utility bills and covering other necessities. We need to continue expanding electricity generation so we can reduce our dependence on expensive, volatile energy sources. I am proud to support offshore wind projects and continued incentives for residential solar, which can increase our energy supply and give residents more opportunities to lower their bills. I also want to build on our work to help residents access solar and battery storage and keep more of the energy they generate. High property taxes are another major challenge. I believe we need balanced solutions that provide meaningful relief to taxpayers without leaving our municipalities struggling to provide essential services. Property taxes fund our local schools, road maintenance, public safety and many of the everyday services residents depend on. Reducing the burden on taxpayers without addressing how those ser-

vices will be funded risks putting our schools, infrastructure and quality of life at risk. That is why I will continue working with the governor, legislative leaders and all three local delegations to bring more state investment to Milford, Orange and West Haven. Our communities need greater state funding for public education and special education so local taxpayers are not left carrying such a disproportionate share of those costs. By increasing state support and working in partnership with our municipalities, we can pursue meaningful property tax relief while ensuring our towns have the resources to deliver the services residents deserve. We also need to strengthen our local economies and broaden our tax base. Attracting more businesses, good-paying jobs and manufacturing opportunities to our district can create new opportunities for residents while helping distribute the cost of municipal services more broadly. I want to make it easier for businesses to invest in our communities, hire local work-

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Shannon

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ers and build a future here in Connecticut.



As someone who lives in the 117th District and pays the same rising property taxes and electric bills as my neighbors, I know firsthand how hard it has become to keep up. These costs are not numbers on a spreadsheet for me, they

Affordability cannot be solved with one tax credit or one piece of legislation. It requires sustained investment, responsible policymaking and a willingness to tackle the biggest

costs facing working families. I will continue fighting for policies that put money back in people’s pockets, strengthen our local economies and ensure Milford, Orange and West

Haven remain affordable places to call home without sacrificing the schools, infrastructure and services that make our communities strong.

Ray Collins III (R)

show up in my own household budget every month.

When I talk with residents and small business owners in West Haven, Orange and Milford, the pressure is unmistakable. Seniors fear they may not be able to remain in the homes they have maintained for decades. Young families question whether they can raise their children in the communities where they grew up. Local businesses describe overhead that keeps climbing while customers have less to spend.

Connecticut ranks among the highest-taxed states in the country, carries the third-highest electricity costs and maintains one of the most burdensome overall tax systems. Despite repeated promises of relief, the current representative voted against increasing the property tax credit that would have delivered tangible help to homeowners and our towns and supported establishing a new statewide property tax.

If elected, I will make affordability the central focus of my work in Hartford and fight for concrete steps that return money to the people who live and work here.

I will push to increase the state property tax credit so more relief flows directly to homeowners. At the same time, I will work to eliminate or fully fund the unfunded mandates that Hartford imposes on our municipalities. These requirements force towns to raise local taxes to cover state directives. Ending or properly financing them will ease the upward pressure on property tax bills and restore decision-making closer to the people who pay those bills.

Energy costs require equally urgent action. The public benefits charge, a collection of dozens of government programs hidden on electric bills, adds 15 to 20 percent to a typical statement and costs ratepayers roughly a billion dollars a year across the state. I will fight to eliminate the public benefits charge so that any essential programs are funded openly through the state budget rather than buried on monthly utility statements. I will oppose new fees that increase the cost of electricity, heating oil or gasoline. Expanding reliable, affordable energy supply and shielding consumers from unfavorable long-term contracts will be priorities.

I also support meaningful middle-class income tax relief that can deliver more than \$2,500 a year for the average family. I will work to repeal the highway use tax on trucks, a cost that is passed straight through to consumers in the form of higher prices on everyday goods. These measures can be achieved by cutting wasteful spending, reducing unnecessary borrowing and requiring state government to live within its means the same way every household and small business must.

The objective is straightforward: lower costs and more money remaining with the families and employers who earned it.

The 117th District needs a representative who experiences the same financial pressures as the people who live here and who will consistently fight for results instead of more of the same. I will be that voice, focused on higher property tax credits, lower energy bills, fewer unfunded mandates and real tax relief that helps residents stay in their homes and businesses keep their doors open. That is the commitment I make to the people of West Haven, Orange and Milford.

State House, District 118 (Parts of Milford)

What will you do if elected to help make your district a more affordable place to live? Be as specific as possible.

Toni Lombardi (D)



There was a time in my life when I worked three jobs as a single mother and still worried about how I was going to pay the bills. I remember stretching every paycheck, deciding which expenses could wait and wondering when working hard would finally mean getting ahead.

Years later, I’m raising two children, working in our public schools and serving on Milford’s Board of Aldermen, and I can tell you that making ends meet hasn’t gotten easier. Like many families in our community, we’re feeling the rising costs of groceries, utilities, childcare and everything else that comes with raising a family in Connecticut.

That’s why affordability isn’t just a campaign issue for me. I’m living it alongside the people I represent. I know how frustrating it is to work hard, do everything you’re supposed to do and feel like you’re falling behind. Families don’t need another elected official telling them they understand how expensive everything is. They need someone willing to do something about it.

If elected, I want to approach affordability from both sides of the household budget: reducing expenses while helping people keep more of what they earn. A fully refundable Connecticut child tax credit of up to \$600 per child would put money back into families’ pockets. But that relief only goes so far when childcare can consume an enormous portion of a paycheck. I’ll work to expand Early Start CT, support childcare providers and move us toward universal access to affordable childcare. Parents shouldn’t have to choose between working and being able to afford care for their children.

And when families manage those expenses, they’re still facing costs they have very little control over. Electricity is one of the clearest examples. I’ll fight to strengthen PURA’s independent oversight of Eversource and United Illuminating, demand greater transparency about the charges passed on to customers, and support tying utility earnings more closely to reliable service. Any changes to electric bills must produce savings, not shift costs elsewhere.

Healthcare deserves that same attention. I support developing a Connecticut public insurance option that uses the state’s purchasing

power to help lower costs while addressing the prescriptions, deductibles and other expenses families face even when they’re insured.

Some of the most important affordability decisions made in Hartford also show up in our local property taxes. As an alderman, I’ve seen how difficult it is to balance the services residents depend on with our responsibility to taxpayers. When the state doesn’t adequately fund education, those costs fall more heavily on municipalities. I’ll work to increase the state’s contribution so Milford can meet students’ needs without shifting more of the burden onto homeowners. I also support expanding our free breakfast program to include free lunch for all students, providing families with relief from another everyday expense while ensuring students are ready to learn.

Keeping Connecticut affordable means protecting the people who have spent decades building their lives here. Seniors shouldn’t have to leave their homes because property taxes and expenses have outpaced their retirement income. I’ll work to expand property tax relief and eliminate the remaining state income tax on Social Security benefits.

And in a coastal community, affordability also means protecting homes from flooding and the rising costs of flood insurance. As an alderman, I voted in support of Milford’s coastal resilience plan, which helps position our community to reduce flood risks and potentially lower flood insurance premiums for homeowners. In Hartford, I’ll build on that work by pursu-

ing state funding for drainage improvements, flood mitigation and need-based assistance for homeowners who cannot afford costly protective improvements on their own.

Of course, lowering expenses only gets us so far if wages aren’t keeping pace. As a union member and steward, I’ll defend collective bargaining, minimum-wage increases, prevailing wages, paid sick leave and CT Paid Leave. I’ll also support stronger enforcement against wage theft and expand opportunities for good-paying careers through community colleges, vocational education and apprenticeships. Working people deserve the chance to build financial security, not simply survive from paycheck to paycheck.

I know these proposals require responsible funding and the ability to get things done. I’ll evaluate existing programs, pursue available federal funding and be transparent about what proposals cost and how they’re paid for. Having worked as a legislative aide and committee clerk in Hartford, I understand the legislative process and the persistence it takes to turn ideas into laws that make a difference.

When I think about affordability, I think about my own family and the families across Milford who are working hard and still wondering how they’re going to make everything work. I want our children to be able to build their futures here, our working families to have some breathing room and our seniors to remain in the community they’ve built. That’s what I’ll fight for in Hartford.

Steve Visconti (R)



Affordability is my top priority because I know firsthand what it means to struggle financially. Born and raised in Milford, I grew up in a family living below the poverty line and began working as a teenager to help pay household bills. Today, as a husband and father of three, I understand the pressure that rising property taxes, utility bills, housing costs, groceries and healthcare expenses place on working families. These are not abstract issues – they are challenges I have experienced personally.

If elected to represent Milford’s 118th District, I will make affordability the foundation of my work in Hartford. I will pursue meaningful property tax relief for homeowners and renters, explore reasonable limits on property tax increases and protect seniors on fixed incomes from being priced out of their homes.

Connecticut families also deserve transpar-

ent, fair and affordable utility bills. I will advocate for a thorough review of utility charges to eliminate unnecessary fees, expand access to reliable and competitively priced energy and modernize our electrical infrastructure.

Assistance programs should help working families get ahead, not penalize them for earning more. I support expanding sliding-scale access to benefits so families can increase their earnings while maintaining support as they move toward greater financial stability. Hard work should create opportunity, not additional hardship.

Fully funding our public schools is another essential priority. As someone who attended Milford public schools and now has children attending those same schools, I understand the importance of providing every student with a quality education. Our teachers, staff and stu-

dents deserve safe classrooms, strong educational programs and the resources necessary to succeed. I will advocate for Milford to receive its fair share of state education funding, support fair compensation and retirement security for educators and work to ensure our schools are fully funded without placing an unreasonable burden on local property taxpayers.

Strong public schools are not only an investment in our children’s future; they are essential to maintaining strong neighborhoods, protecting property values and keeping Milford a community where families want to live and raise their children.

With nearly 20 years of business management experience, including work in the trades and service as a union shop steward, I understand the value of good-paying jobs and a

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Visconti

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strong local economy. I will support responsible business growth, expand career opportunities and help young people build their futures here in Connecticut while preserving Milford’s

neighborhoods and environment. Meaningful progress requires cooperation. I will work across party lines, evaluate the financial impact of legislation and pursue practical solutions that provide real relief without shifting costs onto other taxpayers. I believe we can support our schools, protect essential services

and make Connecticut more affordable through responsible budgeting and a commitment to putting residents first. Affordability is not a political talking point for me. It is personal. I have worked more than 70 hours a week to support my family, and I know many neighbors make those same sacri-

fices every day. My goal is simple: Milford should remain a community where young adults can afford their first homes, working families can get ahead, our children receive the quality education they deserve and seniors can retire with dignity without being priced out of the city they love.

State House, District 119 (Parts of Milford, Orange)

What will you do if elected to help make your district a more affordable place to live? Be as specific as possible.

Alex Armstrong (D)



As I have gone door to door in Milford and Orange over the past several months, I always ask people: “What’s keeping you up at night?” The answer is usually the same: everything costs too much: groceries, housing, electricity bills, health insurance. The cost of living in Connecticut has become a genuine burden for working families, and the people we send to Hartford have a responsibility to do something about it – not just to show up and vote no, but to fight for our communities every single day. Let me be specific about what I want to do. Number one: start with energy – because it touches everything else.

Connecticut ratepayers pay 53 percent above the national average for electricity. That raises costs for families directly, but it also hits every small business here. And when a small business owner in Orange or Milford is paying through the roof for electricity, that means less money for hiring, equipment or keeping prices down for customers. Part of the problem is structural: over half of New England’s electricity is generated by burning natural gas. Every time gas prices spike – and right now they are spiking because of the Trump administration’s conflict with Iran – our bills go up, too. A grid with more clean energy is not just better for the environment; it’s more resilient to exactly this kind of shock. That’s why I was troubled when my opponent voted to let Connecticut’s solar programs expire at the end of 2027 – right when families are looking for cheaper energy solutions. Number two: protect the healthcare people already have. President Trump’s “One Big Beautiful Bill” is about to make the affordability crisis significantly worse. HUSKY covers around 939,000 Connecticut residents – roughly a quarter of the state’s population – and an estimated 110,000 stand to lose coverage when new federal eligibility requirements take effect Jan. 1. Many will lose coverage not because they are ineligible, but because they cannot navigate the intentionally confusing paperwork. People who clean houses and do not get a pay stub will

be cut off even if they are working. When people lose coverage, they delay care, end up in emergency rooms and go into debt. The whole community pays the price. Connecticut needs legislators who will fight to protect HUSKY and push back against a federal government treating health coverage as a budget line item. I will be one of those legislators. Number three: fight for our fair share of education funding. Property taxes are one of the biggest affordability challenges facing homeowners and businesses in our community. One of the most direct things a state legislator can do is fight to bring more state education funding back. Every dollar of state education funding is a dollar that does not have to come from local property taxes. I will make this a priority from day one. As a parent of two daughters in Milford public schools, I have a personal stake in getting this right for our children. But good schools are also a smart investment in the future workforce that our businesses need. And they attract the families and employers that make our state thrive. Number four: build more housing, thoughtfully. Connecticut is short roughly 98,000 affordable housing units. When there is not enough housing, costs go up for renters, prospective homebuyers and employers struggling to recruit workers who cannot afford to live nearby. I support increasing supply through

adaptive reuse of commercial properties, accessory dwelling units and transit-oriented development, while preserving the character that makes Milford and Orange such desirable places to live. Number five: invest in the industries of tomorrow. Affordability is also about opportunity. QuantumCT, a public-private partnership bringing together UConn, Yale and state government, is positioning Connecticut at the forefront of quantum technology, with over \$1 billion in committed investment and a recently awarded National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines grant. This is the kind of bet on the future that generates good-paying jobs here for decades. I want to be a legislator who understands that kind of work and helps clear the path for it. I have spent my career in charitable organizations, where every dollar was donated by someone who trusted us to spend it wisely. I know what fiscal discipline looks like, and I am not looking to spend money we do not have. But I will fight every day for the money and policies that should already be working for Milford and Orange. Affordability is not one problem. It is a system of connected pressures. Our community deserves a representative with the background, the drive and the commitment to address all of them. I hope to earn your support and humbly ask for your vote.

Kathy Kennedy (R)*



It’s a very frustrating question to answer because almost all of my common-sense proposals have been debated for a few years. First things first, any actual relief the majority party has given you in recent years has been the crumbs at the table, as they continue to spend, spend, spend, the state’s multi-billion-dollar surplus on new programs while giving you a few bucks that evaporate quicker

than boiling water. It’s not just one bill. It’s the electric bill, the grocery bill, the property tax bill, the cost of filling up the car, and the price of just about everything in between. Families are working hard, seniors are stretching their retirement dollars, and small businesses are trying to keep their doors open while costs continue to climb. I believe state government needs to start looking at affordability from the perspective of the people paying the bills. That means I will continue to push for real, lasting relief. One of the most immediate things we can do is provide relief at the gas pump. Connecticut drivers pay a 25-cents-per-gallon gasoline tax, while diesel tax is nearly 50 cents per gallon. Republicans are calling for a suspension of those taxes, and I believe Connecticut should seriously consider putting that money back in the pockets of drivers and small businesses. With the Special Transportation Fund carrying substantial reserves, we should be looking for ways to provide relief when families need it – now. But affordability is about much more than gasoline. I will continue fighting to eliminate the pub-

lic benefits charge from electric bills. Families should not have to wonder why their electric bills keep climbing when they are already struggling to keep up with the cost of groceries, housing and everything else. I also believe we need to do more to address property taxes. I have heard from countless homeowners who are being squeezed by rising municipal costs. The state needs to provide meaningful support to our towns and address the underlying costs that drive property taxes higher. That includes fixing our education funding system. When the state doesn’t adequately fund its responsibilities, the bill eventually finds its way to local property taxpayers. Providing predictable state support to our communities can help take some of the pressure off local taxpayers. I also support lowering income taxes, eliminating taxes that unfairly burden working families, and looking for ways to reduce the cost of health insurance. Our affordability agenda should also include eliminating the sales tax on meals purchased at grocery stores and continuing to look for ways to reduce the everyday costs families face. And we need to remember our small busi-

nesses. The local restaurants, shops, contractors, manufacturers and family-owned businesses in Milford and Orange employ our neighbors and keep our communities strong. When the state piles on another tax, fee or regulation, those costs don’t simply disappear. They eventually get passed along to customers or make it harder for a business to hire and grow. My goal is straightforward: let people keep more of what they earn. I’ve been proud to fight for affordability during my time in Hartford, and I am not finished. Whether it is lowering electric bills, reducing property tax pressure, cutting taxes and fees, making healthcare more affordable, or providing relief at the gas pump, I will continue pushing for policies that make a difference in the household budgets of Milford and Orange families. Connecticut doesn’t need another slogan about affordability. We need action. Families know that they are paying each month. They know what their grocery bill costs. They know what it costs to heat their home and fill their gas tank. They deserve a state government that knows it, too, and is willing to do something about it.

Voters Head To Polls On Nov. 3

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

In addition to state legislators, voters in Milford, Orange and Woodbridge will go to the polls on Election Day to make their choices for a number of state offices, including governor, secretary of the state, attorney general, treasurer and comptroller. They will also vote for US representative. All of the state’s constitutional officers are Democrats, and they are all running for reelection.

The highest-profile race will, of course, be that for governor. Democrat Ned Lamont is seeking a historic third term for that office. He is being challenged by Republican state Sen. Ryan Fazio. Democratic Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas is facing off against Republican attorney Peter Lumaj. In the state attorney general race, Democrat William Tong is facing off against

Republican John Bolton. Tong has also been endorsed by the Working Families Party. State Treasurer Erick Russell is running on the Democratic ticket. His challenger is Republican Fred Wilms. Democrat Sean Scanlon is running to keep his role as state comptroller. His challenger is Republican Jen Tooker. Milford, Orange and Woodbridge sit in the Third Congressional District, represented

in Congress by veteran Democrat Rosa DeLauro. She has held the seat since 1991. She is opposed by Republican Milford resident Chris Lancia, a Coast Guard veteran and former federal law enforcement officer. Early voting is underway through Nov. 1. Polls on Election Day are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. To find your polling place on Election Day, visit <https://portaldir.ct.gov/sots/LookUp.aspx>.

Tags Tell History Of Milford’s Orchard Hills

By Marilyn May

Lots of people who enjoy the hobby of metal detecting like to spend a few hours on weekends going over the beaches and public lands waiting to hear signals that alert them to metals buried underground. Ed Abbazia is one such enthusiast, but a recent discovery of his was not found underground. It was found in a wooden box at an estate sale.

Recently, Abbazia’s friend and one-time schoolmate at Orchard Hills Grammar School, John Stewart, was selling the contents of his father’s house on Baxter Lane within Milford’s Orchard Hills neighborhood. The land in that area once grew hundreds of fruit trees and flowers.

“I saw a large box with old locks, keys and dozens of copper tags,” Abbazia said, and he decided to buy it.

The tags were what interested him most, so he decided to research how they were used. The rectangular strips of copper were between 3 to 6 inches long and about half an inch wide with a single hole punched at one end where a wire was doubled through it to form a loop.

Copper was used because it naturally resists corrosion and survives decades outdoors.

Tags also had names either pin-punched or scratched on them. Originally, the copper wires were placed on stakes or loosely attached to tree limbs to allow for plant growth.

Such tags were used in the late 1800s up to 1940s on land that was used for permanent agricultural plantings. It wasn’t until the 1950s that the land was subdivided and sold for house lots.

These tags are authentic identification markers from the original fruit orchard and gardens that predated the residential development on Baxter Lane and the area.

Those clues match with the history of the Orchard Hills part of Milford that was once covered with fruit trees, especially peach and apple trees. Streets in that area today include Macintosh Road, Snow Apple Lane and Applejack Lane.

By analyzing the hand-stamped impressions, we can glean clues that tie the tags directly to historic fruit varieties. Abbazia supplied the information below.

Mrs. WARNER: It was common for an orchardist to rename a cultivar after a prominent local resident. (A cultivar is a variety of plants that have been created and maintained through cultivation.)

MORROW: This could be a person’s last

name, a nursery or grower’s name, or a plant name.

CARMEN: This is documented as a rose name and is also a peony cultivar registered in 1898.

BEACON: This is a documented apple variety introduced in 1936 by the University of Minnesota’s fruit-breeding program.

OMAR: Omar’s giant sweet is an heirloom tomato known for its massive size.

COMMANDER KOHEL: While stamped Kohel, there was a documented heritage variety of gladiolus or dahlias named Commander Kohl.

There were many more tags: PAPP, YANKEE.Q., FARNCOT, AMBAS, MRS. SEAL, CHAMPOEG.

Abbazia added that a close friend’s family once owned a peach orchard on land now known as Clark Hill, and a city census record shows that the Clark family owned this property from 1868 until 1950. Fruit production took off in the 1880s, and by 1890s the hill was covered with thousands of peach trees. This golden era matches the stamped variety of names found on some of the copper tags.

Connecticut orchards were hit with sub-zero freezes in 1917-1918 that decimated peach orchards across the state. In the Post World



A set of copper tree tags sold at an estate sale harkens to the origins of Milford's Orchard Hills neighborhood's namesake. Photo by Ed Abbazia.

War II years, many of the state’s orchard lands were sold, historic trees were

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

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Greetings from Woodbridge

What Amity History Can Tell Us About Beecher

Well, the voters certainly had their say in Woodbridge.

Residents rejected the Beecher Road School proposal by more than two to one on Oct. 13. Of the 2,766 ballots cast, 1,847 were against and 919 were in favor.

That’s quite a message. The question now is whether town officials are listening.

In the days that followed, four public bodies considered what comes next: the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Woodbridge Board of Education and Beecher Road School Building Committee.

There were encouraging signs. Some officials called for greater financial oversight, more public involvement and a fresh examination of alternatives. The school board announced that it would begin reconsidering maintenance and improvements that were deferred while a new building was anticipated.

But there were troubling signs, too.

The selectmen left the building committee’s charge unchanged. Some officials suggested the project’s financing simply hadn’t been adequately explained. The building committee discussed seeking another proposal from their architect, designing a smaller building and eventually returning to voters.

But perhaps the question isn’t how to better explain the rejected project, make minor adjustments and try again. Maybe the project itself – and, more importantly, the process that produced it – needs fundamental reconsideration.

The turnout on Oct. 13 was extraordinary.

Looking through 25 years of Woodbridge referendum results, I found only one with more voters: the December 2001 emergency bailout of the Amity School District, which drew 3,112 Woodbridge voters.

Two others stand out. One was the 2011 vote on selling 17 acres of the Woodbridge Country Club property for senior housing, with 1,778 votes. The other was a September 2002 Amity budget referendum, with 1,715 turning out in the midst of a string of 17 failed budget votes that school year.

The Amity connection is worth revisiting. The crisis a quarter century ago followed a legal fight over an earlier building project. Anticipated proceeds from legal claims failed to arrive, and by September 2001 Amity faced serious financial problems. Public confidence in its leadership was collapsing.

Voters in Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge were asked that December to approve emergency funding to keep the district afloat. People resented the mismanagement but wanted to protect our schools.

A group of residents formed a political action committee and polled voters, finding widespread anger. They offered an unusual solution: vote yes to fund the schools but also sign a petition calling for the resignation of board members responsible for the mess. This “steam valve” allowed voters to express no confidence in school leaders



SHEILA MCCREVEN

without withholding funding.

Nearly 6,000 voters approved the funding. More than 2,800 signed the petition.

In Woodbridge, we received hot-pink property tax bills informing us of our share of the one-time payment to rescue the district.

But several board members hung on, and the anger didn’t disappear.

As the next school year approached, voters began rejecting successive Amity budgets – 17 in total.

The standoff made headlines well beyond our three towns.

The problem wasn’t simply the amount requested. Voters had lost confidence in the people managing Amity.

Eventually something important changed.

The district established the Amity Finance Committee with voting representatives from the boards of finance in Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge, alongside three school board members. It brought the towns paying the bills directly into district financial deliberations, restoring trust.

In April 2004, Amity voters approved \$68 million for school construction. In May 2005, they approved another \$6.8 million to finish the work.

After 17 rejected budgets, voters supported nearly \$75 million in school construction.

Woodbridge isn’t facing an Amity-sized crisis today. One failed building referendum isn’t the same as a year of operating budget failures.

But this history offers a lesson.

Public confidence isn’t restored simply by explaining why officials favored their original proposal. Sometimes the decision-makers themselves must change.

For Beecher, that means taking a fresh look at the existing building, identifying essential repairs and improvements, evaluating renovations and additions, and establishing what taxpayers can reasonably afford – and then staying within those limits.

That work calls for a newly constituted building committee, with a fresh mandate, new leadership and broader representation – from the community as well as the boards that have been involved. Those who developed and championed the rejected proposal should make room for others to bring forward different ideas.

Before another referendum, officials should demonstrate that the last one mattered.

As we approach November’s midterm elections, the Beecher vote offers a timely reminder: people have the power. Their votes carry a message.

The question is whether those entrusted with governing are willing to listen.

Sheila McCreven is a Woodbridge resident and publisher of the Woodbridge Town Chronicle, an independent hyper-local news publication covering government, schools, and community life. She’s also the founder of TownHistory.org, a website dedicated to preserving local history through research and storytelling. Read more about her at <https://about.me/sheilamccreven>.

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

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Time Management

The Delegation Dilemma

We all have 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week. Subtract eight hours each night for sleep, and we have approximately 112 waking hours to accomplish everything we need and want to do.

That is our limit – unless we learn to delegate.

If we insist on doing everything ourselves, we limit our potential. But when we enlist others to manage certain tasks, we tap into their time, skills and expertise. The result? We can accomplish more without adding hours to our day.

Delegation is the process of using someone else's time and abilities to increase our own results.

Some people tell me they cannot delegate because they have no staff. "I am the staff!" they insist. Yet we all delegate, often without realizing it.

Consider your mail. You could drive to

the post office every day to collect it, but you choose to let a letter carrier deliver it. Why? Because you recognize that your time can be better spent elsewhere.

Think about a simple restaurant meal. Producing hamburgers, fries and drinks requires the combined efforts of farmers, manufacturers, drivers, distributors and restaurant employees. No one person did it all. Each contributed a particular skill to produce a result that would have been difficult or impossible to achieve alone.

That is the power of delegation.

Yet many people resist applying this principle to their own work. We take pride in doing things ourselves and often repeat the familiar expression, "If you want a job done right, you have to do it yourself."



DON
WETMORE

That may sound reasonable, but it ignores one important fact: We do not have unlimited time.

The real obstacle to delegation is rarely finding something to hand off. It is letting go. We may worry that someone else will not do the job as well as we would. But if we insist on doing everything ourselves, we become the bottleneck in our own success.

Here is a straightforward way to begin.

Each evening, during your daily planning, review tomorrow's to-do list. Examine each task and ask yourself one question: "Is this the best use of my time?"

If the answer is yes, schedule it for yourself. If the answer is no, consider who

else could manage it, what instructions they would need and what outcome you expect.

Delegation does not mean abandoning responsibility. It means assigning the task, communicating expectations and allowing others to do the work.

The next time your workload seems overwhelming, do not immediately ask how you can work harder or longer. Ask how you can work smarter.

You cannot create more hours in your day, but you can multiply what you accomplish by learning to delegate.

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.

Book Reviews

The Correspondent By Virginia Evans

With failing eyesight, Sybil resorts to all methods of correspondence (letters, emails, texts, etc.) to stay in contact with her children, friends, family (particularly her daughter Fiona with whom she has a strained relationship) and acquaintances.

Sybil learns of the death of a former colleague and is asked to speak at his funeral service. After the service, her son gives her a DNA test for Christmas. This is how she learns of a possible genetic match in Scotland. She becomes a caretaker of sorts to a teenage boy and his father who was at a loss about how to help his son following a suicide

attempt. She learns of her daughter Fiona's pregnancy through an email. She also finds herself in the throws of two men she met online and is quite surprised that at her advanced age (77) she still inspires interest with the opposite sex.

While the majority of Sybil's emails have been appropriate, she receives some from a poster that are foreboding and threatening. Through some internet investigation, she learns the identity of the poster and the issue is resolved to Sybil's satisfaction.



CARMELA
DEVITO

Sybil's letters and emails have far-reaching results. She encourages an employee at the genetics company to search for a better job. She makes amends with her best friend who, in Sybil's mind, committed an egregious error in judgement. She establishes a relationship with her Scotland genetic match. She reconciles with Fiona and explains why she was so resistant in developing a closer relationship with her. She gracefully turns down one suitor while

continuing to engage with the other.

There is so much to savor in this novel. Relationships in all their presentations, loss, grief, growth and changes are all intertwined in this marvelous book. I particularly enjoyed all the literary references strewn throughout Sybil's correspondence. This is easily one of my favorite books of 2026.

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

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College Admissions

When And Why To Take The SAT

When should your student take the SAT? Connecticut is an SAT school day state. All public high school junior students are required to take the free exam during an assigned week-day date between March 1 and April 30 each year.

The SAT is now a fully digital exam and has two main sections: reading/writing and math. Most students will take this exam for the first time on this assigned test date. Should your student take the exam earlier?

The SAT exam covers material learned in 9th and 10th grade for most students. If your student is more advanced, it may be a good idea to consider taking the SAT earlier. I recommend preparing for the exam the summer before junior year and registering for the October or December exam in junior year.

Taking the exam early helps in college list building. The combination of having an SAT

score with a GPA will help determine where a student may fall academically in an applicant pool. This early score also allows for time to target areas of improvement. I recommend planning to take the exam two to three times, but you can take the exam as many times as you would like.

Is it worth it to work with a test prep tutor? Yes – and it depends. For students who are average to above average test takers, they should absolutely consider seeking support in preparing for the exam. Working with a test prep tutor is an investment that will not only help students practice studying the content of the material on the exam, but will also help students understand the format and strategy of how to take the



NICOLE KELMAN

exam.

Improving test-taking strategies will also be beneficial in college. Many tutors will offer a free diagnostic exam at the start of the relationship to determine if the student would be more successful taking the SAT versus the ACT exam. Colleges view both exams equally and do not have a preference. Test prep tutors can help you determine which exam is best suited to your strengths.

However, if your student is not a strong test taker, it may not be worthwhile to invest in a tutor. Since 85 percent of colleges in the country are test-optional, the extra investment in test prep may be unnecessary if taking the exam produces test anxiety for your student.

Remember, SATs are only part of the application. Students are evaluated based on a com-

bination of their grades, strength of curriculum, where they go to high school, extracurricular activities, essays and recommendations, including other factors. Consider taking the SAT early to alleviate pressure in senior year.

Nicole Kelman is a college admissions expert and has been working in the field for almost 20 years. She served as a director of undergraduate admissions for 10 years at four top selective universities in the Northeast. She holds a master of science in higher education administration and is a member of the Independent Educational Consultants Association. Leading college admissions committees has given her much insight into the decision-making process of admissions offices. She is also a native of Orange and an Amity High School graduate. She can be reached at nicole@needucation-consultants.com.

Walk For Long-Term Care Reform Comes To Orange



State Reps. Mary Welander, MJ Shannon and Kathy Kennedy were among the speakers at the first National Walk for Long-Term Care Reform on Sept. 27 at High Plains Community Center in Orange. The walk was organized nationally by ROAR 4 LTC, a national nonprofit movement dedicated to long-term care reform. Local Girl Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance and “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” at the event. Photos courtesy of Irma Rappaport.

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Travel Matters

48 Hours In Ghent

Ghent, Belgium is written up by many travel writers as one of the European “gems” to visit that are not crowded yet. So I hesitate to tell you how fantastic Ghent is. But I’m going to anyway.

We had the privilege of spending two days in Ghent after our canal barge cruise through Belgium (last issue), and it was easily one of the top highlights of our trip.

When we arrived in Ghent, we were intrigued by the lime green color in the Lys River and the canals. We learned it was duckweed that proliferated due to the summer’s extreme heat and lack of rainwater. The contrast of the lime green with the earthy tones of a medieval city made for exceptional photos.

Top sights visited include the Gravensteen Castle, an incredibly restored 12th-century fortress only two blocks from our hotel. It was once the residence of the Count of Flan-

ders, and became a high-security prison, a coin mint and an industrial cotton mill.

St. Bavo’s Cathedral houses the most stolen painting of all time – what is known as the Ghent Altarpiece. Two panels of this triptych were stolen from the high altar in 1934 and ultimately replaced by a copy. One of the world’s greatest cold cases, our guide told us a movie is being made and should be out next year.

Ghent is such a fun place to explore because it balances the old with the new in an unexpected way. For example, there is a place called Werregaren Street (more of an alley) where artists are able to legally express themselves through graffiti. The rest of the old city is free of random graffiti, and this alley becomes a fascinating



KAREN QUINN-PANZER

street art gallery.

A favorite activity was learning to make Belgian waffles from scratch. Called waffles ‘n beer, it turned out to be a lot of fun as we taste-tested three beers and were given the opportunity to use one of them in our waffle batter. Belgium is known for its over 1,500 beers, which is even more amazing when you discover that each beer is served in its own specific glass.

We chose a beer called gulden draak, a beer from the 18th century featuring a golden dragon on the bottle, the symbol of Ghent. Legend has it that the dragon originated on the ship’s prow of a Norweg.

After stays in Constantinople and Bruges, the Norwegian dragon ended up in Ghent, where the city’s people put it on top of their

belfry tower – symbol of the might of the city. Apparently, it’s a sore spot for the people of Bruges since there’s an age-old rivalry between the two cities. We left the activity with the recipe for Belgium waffles, an apron and a certificate for being a master Belgium waffle maker.

Beautiful chocolate shops and boutiques are housed in medieval buildings restored in beautiful ways throughout Ghent. I believe that Lonely Planet is right when they comment “Ghent might just be the best European city you’ve never thought of visiting.”

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

Wine Talk

Bringing Prosecco To The Holiday Season

One of the most wonderful ways to enjoy the coming holidays is with a bottle of sparkling wine. Given the price of French Champagnes, Americans have been searching for an alternative sparkling wine.

One that has become very popular recently is a wine called Prosecco. This is an Italian sparkling wine that has been around for many years. Its popularity has just started to increase in the US.

The first known mention of the name Prosecco visiting was attributed to the Englishman Fryes Moyon in the north of Italy in 1593. It was developed in the northern Italian areas of Valdobbiadene and Asolo. Although this wine was very popular on a local basis, it had not been exported to the

US until around 2000. The Italians used the wine and drank it themselves for many years.

This wine is a bubbly sparkling type of wine that lends itself very well to holiday dinners and family events. It is very easy to drink, and goes down well. Prosecco is a relatively inexpensive wine that generally runs between \$15 and \$35. There is even one that is sold by Costco in Milford for about \$8 that will surprise you with its quality.

It is popular in many bars to take Prosecco and mix it with different fruit juices or other liquors to make an interesting drink.



RAYMOND SPAZIANI

Unlike Champagne and Franciacorta DOCG, Prosecco is usually produced using the Charmat method. In this method, the secondary fermentation takes place in large stainless steel tanks rather than in each individual bottle. This makes the wine much less expensive, and it cuts the production time to 30 days. There are some producers that make the wine using the traditional method, however.

Prosecco began to be imported into the US in the year 2000. It has grown quite markedly, with imports doubling by 2008 and then doubling again by

2016. It is made from the Glera grape and Valdobbiadene is a demarcated region. So try some Prosecco. You will be glad you did.

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

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Orange Recycling Committee

Before You Buy, Think About The Packaging

As the holidays approach, you may be shopping for gifts, stocking up on food and preparing for gatherings with family and friends. Along with the celebrations comes a familiar byproduct: trash. Cardboard boxes, plastic wrap, gift bags, shipping materials and disposable dishes and utensils can quickly pile up.

I encourage you to consider packaging before you buy, and look for ways to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Start with less. A great way to manage waste is to prevent it in the first place. Consider how much packaging comes with a product, and when possible, choose items with minimal packaging and those sold in bulk or refillable containers. When ordering online, consider combining purchases into one shipment.

Hosting a celebration doesn't have to mean filling the trash with single-use items. Use everyday dishes, glasses and silverware instead of disposable versions. Borrow extra supplies from friends or buy them for little

cost at thrift or consignment shops. Keep reusable containers handy for sending leftovers home with guests, rather than using plastic baggies.

Give packaging a second life. Before tossing gift bags, boxes, tissue paper, ribbons or packing materials, consider whether you can use them again. Save sturdy gift bags and boxes for next year, reuse shipping boxes for mailing gifts and keep clean packing paper for wrapping fragile items. I suggest designating a shelf or storage bin for gift bags and boxes, making it easy to check your stash before buying more.

Recycle correctly when reuse isn't possible. In Orange, clean cardboard boxes and non-coated paper belong in your curbside recycling bin. Gift wrap or bags with shiny coating or glitter go in the trash if they're not reusable.

Plastic bags, bubble wrap and other flex-



ILENE MOYHER

ible plastic film must not go in your curbside bin. These soft plastics must be recycled separately by putting them in the designated shed at the Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center or in bins at local stores.

Companies have a role in reducing waste, too. Policies requiring manufacturers and distributors to help pay for managing the packaging waste they generate create an incentive for companies to use less packaging and shift to materials that are easier to recycle. As such practices become more widespread, or face hurdles to implementation, you can encourage change by choosing products with less packaging and letting businesses know you value sustainable options.

My goal is to help you make thoughtful choices that reduce the amount of waste generated. Adopting a mindset of putting the environment ahead of convenience will also

help your wallet. This holiday season, buy only what you need, choose products with less packaging, bring reusables to gatherings and give bags and boxes another life. You can also rethink gift-giving. Instead of "stuff," consider giving experiences – a concert, cooking class or special outing together. These gifts create memories without adding to the pile of packaging and possessions.

Less waste is a gift you can give to future generations by conserving resources and helping create a cleaner, more sustainable community.

Remember, not every item that's labeled "recyclable" is accepted. To know what goes in your recycling bin or is recyclable at the transfer station or other local places, visit OrangeRecycles.com or RecycleCT.com. Follow us on facebook.com/ORCinCT for tips and updates.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Flooring & Decor

The Art Of Living: 'The Art Of Gathering'

There was a time when having people over didn't require a perfectly styled home, a complicated menu or a table that looked like it belonged in a magazine. Someone would simply say, "Come over," and that was enough.

Somehow, over the years, entertaining has become something we feel like we have to prepare for. We worry about whether the house is clean enough, whether we have enough food, whether the table looks nice enough or whether everything will come together exactly the way we imagined it.

But when you really think about it, the best gatherings usually have very little to do with perfect decor. They're about people.

They're about a crowded kitchen where everyone ends up standing even though there are plenty of chairs. They're about hearing someone laughing from the other room, passing a dish around the table, telling stories and laughing about the same things you've probably heard a dozen times before.

It's the kids running through the house. It's someone staying later than they planned. It's the friend who says, "I'll only stay for an hour" and ends up sitting at the table three hours later.

Those are the moments we remember.

Your home doesn't have to look finished to be welcoming. It doesn't have to be enormous,

and your dinner certainly doesn't need to come from a recipe with 20 ingredients. Sometimes dinner is takeout on the kitchen counter. Sometimes it's a simple pasta dish.

Sometimes everyone brings something. Those can be some of the best nights.

There's something special about creating a space where people feel comfortable enough to take their shoes off, pull up a chair, pour themselves another cup of coffee and stay awhile. That's one of the most important things a home can do.

Our homes are where life happens. They're where we celebrate birthdays, have difficult conversations, share good news, eat Sunday dinners, wrap presents, drink coffee in the morning, and catch up with the people we love. They're not just spaces we decorate. They're the backdrop to our everyday lives. And that's where design comes into the picture.

We've always believed that design should be about more than simply making a room look beautiful. It should also be about how that room is going to be lived in. The flooring you choose, for example, becomes part of everyday life. It's where your children play, where



CAROLINA & ANNAMARIE AMORE

your pets run around, where friends gather, and where countless ordinary moments happen.

A beautiful floor can completely change the feeling of a room, but it also has to work for the people who live there. The same goes for everything else that makes a house feel like home. A dining table can encourage everyone to sit down together. A comfortable living room can make people want to stay and talk. A warm, comfortable kitchen can naturally become the place where everyone gathers, even when there are other rooms with nicer furniture or higher-end flooring in the house.

That's one of the things we love about what we do. From flooring and tile to cabinetry, countertops, window treatments, lighting and home décor, we get to help people bring different pieces of their home together. It's not about creating a space that looks like everyone else's. It's about creating one that feels like yours.

Good design isn't just about how a space looks. It's about how it lives.

As we head into fall, there's something especially inviting about gathering at home. The days get shorter, the weather cools down, and

we naturally start spending more time inside. It's the perfect time to light a candle, make something warm, set the table and invite people over.

Don't wait until everything is perfect. Don't wait until the house is spotless. Don't wait until you have the perfect dining set or the kitchen is completely finished. Don't wait for a holiday or a special occasion. Make the occasion.

Invite someone over for dinner. Have friends over for coffee. Set out some appetizers and let the evening unfold. Use the dishes you already have. Put flowers in a vase. Turn on some music. Let your home be lived in.

People probably won't remember whether your table was perfectly set or whether every detail of your home looked picture-perfect. They'll remember how they felt sitting around that table. They'll remember the conversations, the laughter, the comfort and the feeling of being welcomed.

The art of gathering is really the art of making people feel at home.

Carolina and Annamarie Amore run Amore Flooring Design Center in West Haven. The center can be reached at 203-553-9595.

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The Amity Chamber of Commerce announces will return with "Amity EATS Week!" from Friday, Nov. 6th, through Saturday, Nov. 14.

With 20 Amity Chamber Members participating, the public can enjoy a wide variety of food and beverages for free or at a significant discount.

To redeem offers from each participating business, visitors and patrons display the Amity EATS Week! Webpage, advertisement or

social media post on their mobile device. A comprehensive list of specials, discounts and the time period for each promotion is published on the site. A printout of the Amity EATS Week! promotion is also acceptable to redeem all offers.

"Breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner, snack or dessert, it's a delicious way to meet our fabulous food and beverage members while indulging in some incredible eats," said Amity Cahmber of Commerce CEO Barry Lee Cohen.

The Amity EATS Week! webpage will show days, times and specific details on specials, freebies and deep discounts.

For more information, go to amityct-chamber.com/events/.

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The Garden Spot

Managing In A Changing Environment

I was recently speaking to someone who was quite concerned about climate change. Based on the change in our planting zones, we know that our climate in southern Connecticut has gotten warmer over time. But they felt there was nothing they could personally do about it. I was a bit surprised by this, so I thought some tips on how we can reduce waste and use fewer natural resources would be helpful.

The first thing every gardener should remember is “right plant in the right place.” If you see a plant you love, research it and learn if it can thrive in your landscape. Remember that as the landscape matures, trees may provide more shade than they did when initially planted, so track the hours of direct sunlight again. Plant as many native plants as possible since they evolved in our climate and will attract our native pollinators.

A new term you may have heard is xeroscaping, which is designing water-efficient landscapes that reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation. Start by looking at water drainage patterns to determine where you have wet versus dry zones. Reduce the amount of turf you have in dry zones by replacing it with plants that have lower water requirements.

If you do use an irrigation system, avoid watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. to reduce water loss from evaporation. Change your system by installing a rain sensor to shut off the system and avoid overwatering plants. I can’t say how often I see turf being watered while it’s raining out. Turf needs about 1 inch of water a week, so if we have



PAT DRAY

a rainy day, you may not need to run the sprinklers at all. That’s the beauty of water sensors rather than timers.

Another area where individuals can make a significant difference is in reusing and recycling. According to RecycleNation, the typical family uses 500 Ziploc-type bags a year. If you can reuse even a quarter of those, you can save money and reduce your carbon footprint. Just don’t reuse bags that contain raw meat or anything moldy.

Your newspapers can be saved and used as weed barriers. They will decompose over the winter, and you’ll have a new area to xeroscape next year. Check with your town’s recycling resources to learn more about what you can recycle.

You can also avoid what is called “fast fashion.” The trend to thrift items is a great way to save money and the planet. Even the US General Accounting Office calls fast fashion “great for your wallet and bad for the planet” due to the amount of waste associated with it.

Finally, turn down the heat. The US Department of Energy states that the optimal temperature for keeping a home comfortable is 68 degrees Fahrenheit and can be lower at bedtime. Of course, this is a matter of personal preference (and many family disagreements). But with the price of heating oil this winter, I expect that we will all be wearing extra sweaters in the house.

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

Flock Cameras
(Continued From 1)

all the programs.

The aldermen had at earlier meetings held off from suspending all the cameras, citing their value for public safety and the desire to allow the committee time to do its work.

But the efforts thus far hadn’t quelled tensions. Public comments continued to pour in against the surveillance tech, including at the October meeting.

Most of the ire was initially directed against Flock Safety’s automated license plate readers. Flock uses a networked approach that allows information sharing between cameras, law enforcement departments and other entities.

The controversy has also swelled to encompass other surveillance methods used by the city, including red light cameras, speed cameras and camera-equipped drones.

Aldermen expressed particular concern over Flock’s Condor cameras at the October meeting. Unlike fixed license plate readers, Condor cameras employ pan-tilt-zoom features that can follow individuals and focus on different details within their range.

“They’re not designed for cars. They’re designed to track you and me,” said Alderman Win Smith Jr. “These cameras are frankly more intrusive, more objectionable, more violative of our rights and our privacy than the red light cameras or the license plate readers.”

Alderwoman Toni Lombardi shared an

anecdote about stopping for lunch at the Cracker Barrel in Milford and realizing that she was parked next to one of the Condor cameras.

“I have a 12-year-old daughter and a 4-year-old son myself. I’m not comfortable depending on a private company to manage our data and to manage these images of my children and my family,” she said.

A resolution to permanently terminate the Condor cameras failed by a 9-5 margin. Alderman Robert Pacelli, despite being cut off by hecklers from the audience, said he did not think it wise to permanently end the program until the committee had been able to complete its review.

“We have a committee that has been tasked with providing us with information that will help us determine whether or not a permanent termination is appropriate or

not. It’s premature to vote on this today,” he said. “It does not indicate what a future vote may be related to this matter. We have to let that committee do its job.”

Pacelli was one of several members who voted against the permanent ban but in favor of a temporary ban. That vote passed, also by a 9-5 margin.

Alderman Paul Healy, who voted against both measures, asked for Police Chief Kieth Mello to lay out all the various camera systems employed in the city. Mello mentioned that various cameras have been deployed since after the Sept. 11, 2011 terrorist attacks. He said the department doesn’t use some of the older camera systems that are still up.

“I don’t know if those cameras even work,” he said.



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Woodbridge Center

An Antidote To The Loneliness Epidemic

Ah, November. The month of reflection, gratitude, and at the Woodbridge Center a time to focus on community connection.

While the upcoming holiday season can be a source of great joy, it can also trigger feelings of loneliness, sadness and overwhelm. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 60 percent of Americans report that their mental health declines during the holiday season. For some of us, the loss of loved ones, distance from close family and challenges with mobility can contribute to feelings of isolation and sadness.

Former US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared loneliness a public health epidemic in 2023 and penned a landmark advisory titled, "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation." Chronic isolation increases risk of premature death by 30 percent, according to Murthy's advisory. Loneliness has also been attributed to increased risk of heart disease by 29 percent, strokes by 32 percent, and dementia by an astounding 50 percent.

This is not limited to retirees, as stress-related absenteeism costs US employers approximately \$154 billion dollars a year as reported by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

The good news is you are not alone and help is available. If you or someone you know is suffering from persistent sadness, loss of interest in regular social activities, lack of energy, lack of desire to participate in things that were once enjoyable, excessive worry about health or finances, frequent tearfulness, feelings of helplessness or worthlessness, weight changes, pacing/fidgeting, changes in sleep patterns (inability to sleep or sleeping all the time) or inability to concentrate, please talk to your physician or advise your loved one to.

The above symptoms are all signs of depression and are treatable. These symptoms may be magnified during the holiday season. Support is just a phone call away. Services like 988 or 211 offer 24-hour support and assistance with local resources.

There are many ways to improve mental health, from exercise and talk therapy to medication. Yet one of the most important – and often overlooked – is the power of community connection.

According to the Center for Healthy Ag-



KIMBERLY
RIHEL

ing, "Interpersonal connections are the social and emotional bonds we form with other people through interaction, communication, and shared experiences. They can range from deep, long-term relationships like family and romantic partnerships to more casual, context-specific connections such as friendships, workplace relationships, or even brief encounters with neighbors or volunteers."

The benefits of social connection are far-reaching and include reduction in anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, lower dementia risk and a longer lifespan.

During the holidays, social commitments can seem overwhelming or nonexistent. Both experiences can cause stress and anxiety. The holidays are a great time to establish boundaries and choose the activities that bring you joy while letting go of the guilt for declining things that you don't want to do.

This month at The Woodbridge Center there are numerous ways to connect with the community. Join us for a Tuesday lunch (\$5 for residents, \$6 for nonresidents, RSVP required at 203-389-3451), try an aerobics,

Tai Chi, line dancing or yoga class, visit a local restaurant with our lunch bunch, celebrate the November birthdays with pizza and root beer in our café, honor our veterans by enjoying a special Veteran's Day concert in our café courtesy of the Woodbridge Center Choir, collaborate on an art project with Beecher Road School students, or just come down for a cup of coffee and a conversation.

As we head into this holiday season, remember that it is okay to slow down, to pace yourself, and to say "no" to things that drain your energy. Your well-being is the most important gift you can give yourself. If you ever need a quiet place to sit, a friendly face to chat with, or a warm cup of coffee, the center's doors are always open to you.

Kimberly Rihel, PT, MPH is the director of the Woodbridge Center and holds degrees in physical therapy and public health. The Woodbridge Center is a community space dedicated to promoting independence, creating community, supporting physical and emotional health, and lifelong learning for residents over the age of 55. For more information on programs and services, call the center at 203-389-3451 or email krihel@woodbridgect.gov.

Water Authority Offers Pipe Protection For Businesses

The Regional Water Authority on Oct. 13 announced the launch of a new PipeSafe Commercial protection program, which it says is designed to help qualifying businesses avoid the expense and disruption of unexpected water and sewer line emergencies.

The RWA has offered PipeSafe to residential customers for 25 years, and is now expanding that protection to businesses in its service area.

The plans help cover the cost of repairs to

customer-owned water service and sewer lines. The program includes 24/7 support, access to qualified contractors and project management from emergency response through site restoration.

"PipeSafe has been immensely popular with our residential customers, and approximately 55 percent of RWA customers are enrolled in one or more of our protection plans," said Dan Timmeny, assistant director of commer-

cial business protection programs at the RWA. "Businesses face many of the same risks that homeowners do when underground water or sewer lines fail, often with even greater operational and financial consequences."

The plans protect the customer-owned portion of the underground water service and/or sewer lines that connect a property to the utility system. Coverage includes common issues such as leaks, breaks and clogs, as well

as the excavation and restoration associated with covered repairs. The RWA says customers receive priority response for covered service events.

Coverage options vary based on service connection size and customer needs. The sewer plans include two camera inspections and two hydro-jetting services per year.

For more information, visit rwatransolutions.com/pipesafe-commercial.

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Here’s To Your Health

Eating With The Seasons

As the warm days of summer begin to fade and the crisp air of fall arrives, nature gives us a gentle reminder that change is both natural and necessary. Our schedules change, the days become shorter and even the foods available to us begin to shift. Fall is the perfect time to consider something people have practiced for generations: eating with the seasons.

Seasonal eating simply means choosing foods that are naturally harvested and readily available during a particular time of year. Before modern transportation and year-round grocery availability, this was simply how people ate. Today, making an intentional effort to eat seasonally can bring more variety, freshness and enjoyment to our meals.

One of the greatest advantages of seasonal foods is freshness. Produce harvested closer to its natural growing season can often spend less time traveling and sitting in storage before reaching our tables. That can mean better flavor, texture and overall quality.

Seasonal eating also encourages us to diversify our diets, which is important to get more nutrients in our bodies. It’s easy to fall

into the habit of purchasing the same fruits and vegetables every week. Following the seasons introduces different foods throughout the year, giving us a wider variety of vitamins, minerals, fiber and beneficial plant compounds.

There is also something wonderfully grounding about eating foods that reflect the time of year. Summer brings us lighter foods such as berries, tomatoes, cucumbers, peaches and watermelon. As temperatures begin to drop, fall offers heartier foods that can create warm, satisfying meals.

Fall produce gives us plenty of delicious options. Apples and pears are perfect for snacking, baking or adding to oatmeal and salads. Pumpkins and winter squash can become soups, roasted side dishes or nourishing additions to grain bowls. Sweet potatoes provide fiber and important nutrients and can be roasted, mashed or added to soups and stews. Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage are also wonderful choices



MICHELE TENNEY

as we move into cooler weather.

I love one-pot wonders on a chilly day. And don’t forget kale and Swiss chard. They can be sauteed with garlic and olive oil, added to soups or combined with some roasted vegetables for a hearty fall salad.

Seasonal eating doesn’t have to be complicated. Start by just noticing what is abundant at your grocery store, farm stand or farmers market. Choose two or three seasonal foods each week and build meals around them.

Fall often feels like a second new year to me. Summer vacations wind down, routines become more structured and we can use this time to turn our attention back toward our health and daily habits. Staying healthy and fit is way harder for me in the summer with all the celebrations, travel and cookouts.

Consider using fall as a time to add nourishment. Add an extra vegetable to dinner.

But don’t just limit fall time to adding nutrients. Choose one thing that doesn’t serve

you to have “fall off”: impatience, anger, jealousy, insecurity. Humility is a choice – a daily, sometimes minute-by-minute choice. But humility is also a gift you give to yourself. It frees you and allows you to be in control of choosing peace above the noise and above the chaos of this world we see so much of in our everyday lives. As the leaves change and nature prepares for the new season, we can do the same.

This fall, let your plate change with the season. Let something that doesn’t benefit you, fall to the ground. Make choices that will benefit you and reconnect you to a new season of nourishment, physically and emotionally. You’ve got this. I believe in you, but it’s more important for you to believe in yourself. Here’s to your health.

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

Orange Board of Finance

A Challenging Year For Municipal Budgets

If you are a mayor or first selectmen in Connecticut you better be dialed into the current state of the US economy and the inflationary factors that will play a major role in defining this year’s budgetary process.

There is a lot of volatility within economic markets, with the 10-year Treasury yield now over 5 percent for the first time since 2007. There are a lot of city and town CEOs around Connecticut considering holding off on any future bond issuance for capital projects so as not to increase their debt service for the upcoming year.

There are several key drivers that will certainly contribute to increased budgetary pressure. The cost of diesel, gasoline, heating oil and electricity all up well over 20 percent in the last year. Other major cost drivers include salaries/wages, with increases for city employees in the 3 to 3.5 percent range in Connecticut. Healthcare and pension benefits are up on average around 10 percent statewide. Salaries and benefits account for 70 percent of most municipal budgets.

The budget processes for state and local governments are one of the largest commitments each year for those organizations. That’s why town and department leaders need to establish goals and objectives to drive a citywide strategic growth plan. Each municipality should also have a defined financial plan that outlines and includes certain essential policies:

Reserve and fund balance policy: The

ability to maintain healthy reserves is essential to long term fiscal stability. Moodys and S&P ratings agencies recommend a benchmark of 15 to 18 percent of the total budget, providing a buffer for economic downturns and emergencies.

Revenue policy: Cities and towns rely on a mix of revenues, including state aid, fees and investment income. Property taxes on real estate and motor vehicles account for 60 percent to 90 percent of revenues.

Structurally balanced budget: A sustainable budget aligns ongoing revenues with ongoing expenditures. Reserves can provide short-term balance; however, relying on them in the long term is frowned upon by the ratings agencies. Clear policies should define and reinforce the importance of maintaining the structural balance of a budget.

Debt service policy: The policy regarding debt should establish parameters and guidance for a municipality to ensure that borrowing and repayment of debt be met for capital requirements and are carried out with timely repayment of long-term principal and interest. The ratings agencies recommend debt not exceed 8 to 9 percent of the total operating budget.

A 5-year capital improvement plan: The capital improvement plan should align with



KEVIN MCNABOLA

the city’s or town’s strategic growth plan. Long-term planning is critical to ensure that cities and towns can responsibly operate and maintain infrastructure. A solid plan accounts for the short-term upfront capital cost along with the long-term cost of debt service.

Long-term strategic planning is a growth plan formulated by city leaders within the municipality and works best when both parties have a seat at the table.

By promoting a culture of shared responsibility, resources are managed collectively and departments are engaged in the process. These principles strengthen decision making, promote transparency and ensure that resources are used wisely with the result of having a city or town that is prepared to meet the needs of the future.

Orange has adopted some elements of strategic planning by recently engaging an architect to conduct a building assessment of all the elementary schools to determine which schools need future capital investment. The Amity school district is also taking a similar approach, looking to do a \$39.3 million bond issuance for school renovations and upgrades sometime in the summer or fall of 2027.

Orange has one of the lowest debt service burdens, currently at 3 percent of the total

operating budget. It is low because over the past decade Orange has paid for capital infrastructure on a pay-as-you-go basis, using money from the capital fund rather than issuing bonds. This has saved millions of dollars on interest. The last time Orange issued bonds was back in 2021, when interest rates were at 1.25 percent.

Interest rates are much higher today, and there will likely be a rate hike by the Federal Reserve in December as well as more expected in 2027. Inflation will remain high for the foreseeable future. Orange is unlikely to issue bonds anytime soon.

The number one factor for this year’s budget will be affordability. All indications point to the fact that taxpayers are stretched thin. A true indication of that is what just happened in Woodbridge, with the residents voting 2-1 against constructing a new school in a referendum.

As the Board of Finance moves forward with budget deliberations, we certainly understand the challenging economic environment ahead and all the drivers that are putting pressure on budgets. However, as a board we have a fiduciary responsibility to balance priorities and mitigate the impact on taxpayers.

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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Wisdom, Warmth and Wit

The Girl With The Tiny Shoes

Shoes were strewn all over the locker room floor. Sandals, flats and custom-designed dressy sneakers had been hastily abandoned in the rush to get to the gym. Standing out among the stylish shoes of the teenage girls was a tiny pair of lavender sneakers with Mickey Mouse decals and Velcro fasteners.

Years ago, as cells divided and multiplied on their way to creating another miracle, a microscopic accident occurred, permanently changing the dreams and plans of a happily expectant couple.

At 13, the girl with the tiny shoes stood about four feet tall. She was wide of stature, with feet that seemed too small to offer support. Perhaps that was the reason for her broad and clumsy gait. Dark, unruly hair easily came loose from rubber bands and clips. Dull black eyes provided a glimpse of the profound disabilities that lived within.

The girl with the tiny shoes trusted me. It took months of attention, care and consistency – but trust followed.

On a pewter grey morning, as icy rain fell and buses delivered hundreds of students, she stood alone on the front steps of the school. Her affect was blank. She seemed sad and lost as she looked into the moving crowd – and then she saw me approaching. Suddenly illuminated, those jet-black eyes came to life. A guttural laugh exploded and the sun broke through her lopsided smile.

It was a gift to be trusted by that child. She relaxed within that trust. When she was calm, she was able to learn. Her classroom for much of the day housed children with various learning challenges. Joy regularly



BONNIE FEUER

erupted in that room. The students wildly cheered for their friends when a goal was met or the smallest task was accomplished.

Those sweet children, somehow old beyond their years, expressed deep feelings of concern for the well-being of one another. They were not stifled by the boundaries imposed by teenage self-consciousness. They lacked the mean thought process that other teenagers often used to destroy the self-esteem of their peers.

Back then, during holiday time, I accompanied my girl and her classmates to the music room, where they practiced singing songs of the season. It was loud and monotone, but bursting with such innate happiness that the

four adults present were moved to tears. The rhythm inspired most of the students to bounce with enthusiasm, as they sang so endearingly off key.

My girl, within her limitations, rocked and hummed with joyous abandon and tapped one tiny foot. One must watch when a child with special needs sings. The gift of boundless delight and infinite wonder would be missed by those who merely listen.

Bonnie Feuer is a published author and former columnist (thrilled to be back). Her happy place is the middle of an essay, where she creates stories and shares anecdotes pertaining to empathy, humor and her favorite emotion - gratitude. She can be reached at bon53@yahoo.com.

Turkish Food, Culture Celebrated In Orange



Organizers said more than 500 people gathered at High Plains Community Center in Orange on Oct. 4 for the second annual Turkish Food & Culture Day, organized by Wellspring Community Center. The event celebrated Turkish food, traditions, art and community. Photo courtesy of Wellspring.



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Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce

Homelessness Is Everyone's Concern

Recent developments surrounding homelessness in our community have generated considerable discussion, concern and, understandably, strong opinions.

The conversation for some centers on public safety, property rights and the appropriate use of public spaces. For others, it's about the growing number of people struggling to find shelter, stability and a place to call home.

Both conversations matter. But I worry that somewhere between the headlines, the frustration and the debate, we're losing sight of something far more important.

We're talking about people. I've written about homelessness before, and I've shared how my experiences volunteering at the Beth-El Center have changed my perspective on the challenges facing so many of our neighbors. But given the recent developments surrounding the encampment, I don't believe this conversation has ever been more important.

Not because I have all the answers. I certainly don't. But because moments like this reveal something fundamental about who we are as a community, what we value and how we treat those who are struggling.

And while the circumstances surrounding the encampment may be complicated, one thing shouldn't be: our willingness to recognize the humanity of the people at the center of it.

People who have families, histories, talents and dreams. People who, in many cases, once had jobs, homes and lives that looked remarkably similar to our own. People whose circumstances changed because of illness, job loss, family breakdown, rising housing costs or any number of challenges that can turn stability into uncertainty.

It's easy to have an opinion about homelessness when we see it from a distance. It's something else entirely when we take the time to know the people experiencing it.

Over the past several years, I've had the privilege of serving on the board of the Beth-El Center and volunteering overnight at its emergency shelter. Those experiences have profoundly changed my understanding of homelessness.

I've spent much of my professional life working with businesses, employees and community leaders. I've been fortunate to have a career that has allowed me to meet thousands of people and contribute to communities in meaningful ways.

But I can say without hesitation that some of the most rewarding hours of my life have been spent volunteering at that shelter.

Not because I believe I'm doing anything extraordinary. Quite the opposite. It's because I've discovered how much we have in common with the people who come through those doors.

I've met individuals who work but cannot afford housing. People who have experienced medical emergencies or personal tragedies. People who are doing everything they can to regain their footing in a world that has become increasingly expensive and unforgiving.

And yes, I've met people struggling with addiction, mental health challenges and other complicated circumstances. Those realities shouldn't be ignored. But neither should they define every person experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness is not a single story, and it certainly isn't a character flaw.

I understand the concerns of residents and business owners who want safe, welcoming neighborhoods. Those concerns are legitimate. Our downtowns, commercial districts, parks and public spaces should be places where people feel comfortable living, working, shopping and visiting.

But I also believe that how we treat those who are less fortunate is a reflection of the heart of our region.

At the Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce, our mission is to support a thriving business community and a strong regional economy. We work every day to help local businesses succeed, create opportunities, attract visitors and make Milford, West Haven and our surrounding communities great places to live, work and play.

But a healthy economy isn't measured solely by the number of ribbon cuttings, new businesses or crowded restaurants.

It's also measured by whether the people who make those businesses successful can afford to live

here. Think about the employees who keep our restaurants operating, care for our aging parents, staff our retail stores, teach our children and provide the services we rely on every day. Can they afford an apartment in the communities where they work? Can a young person beginning a career establish a life here? Can a single parent working full-time keep up with rent, utilities, groceries and childcare? Can a senior on a fixed income remain in the community they've called home for decades? Those are increasingly difficult questions.

Housing affordability and workforce housing aren't abstract policy discussions. They're economic development issues, workforce retention issues and community stability issues. When employees can't afford to live near their jobs, businesses struggle to recruit and retain talent. When housing consumes an overwhelming share of a family's income, there's less money available to spend at local businesses. And when people are living one unexpected expense away from losing their homes, the entire community becomes more vulnerable. A region cannot reach its full economic potential if the people who sustain it are being priced out. That's why I believe organizations like the chamber have a responsibility to be part of this conversation.

We're not a housing agency, and we don't pretend to have all the answers. Our role is not to replace the professionals and nonprofit organizations doing this difficult work every day. But we can help connect the dots. We can bring business leaders, nonprofit organizations, municipal officials, housing advocates and community members together. We can encourage thoughtful conversations about workforce housing and affordability. We can help employers understand the challenges their employees face and identify opportunities to support organizations providing shelter, housing assistance, job training and other essential services.

Most importantly, we can use our voice to remind people that economic prosperity and community compassion are not competing priorities. They depend on one another.

The encampment situation presents tough questions, and I don't believe there are easy answers. Municipal leaders have responsibilities to protect public health and safety. Residents and businesses deserve to have their concerns heard. And individuals experiencing homelessness deserve to be treated with dignity and humanity.

We should be capable of holding all three of those truths at once.

Moving people from one location to another may address an immediate concern, but it doesn't necessarily address the circumstances that left them without housing in the first place.

Lasting progress requires cooperation, appropriate resources and a willingness to look beyond the immediate



MICHAEL MOSES

controversy.

I've always believed that our region is strongest when we recognize that we're connected to one another. The success of a local business supports jobs and families. Strong families support vibrant neighborhoods. Vibrant neighborhoods attract investment and opportunity. And a community that cares for its most vulnerable residents creates a stronger foundation for everyone.

None of this means we should ignore the legitimate challenges surrounding homelessness. It means we should approach those challenges with both practical judgment and compassion.

As business leaders, residents, neighbors and community partners, we have an opportunity to help shape what kind of region we want to be: one that measures success only by economic growth, or one that understands that growth means more

when the benefits extend throughout our community?

I believe we can pursue both. We can support local businesses, encourage investment, strengthen our downtowns and build a more competitive regional economy while also recognizing that affordable housing, human dignity and economic opportunity are essential parts of that mission.

At the end of the day, the strength of our community can't be measured only by how well our most successful businesses are doing. It's also reflected in how we respond when our neighbors are struggling.

We are all better together, and that has to mean all of us.

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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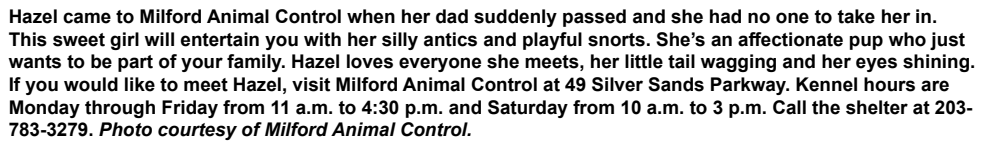
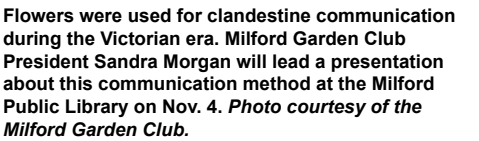
Contact Woodbridge Human Services at 203-389-3429 or humanservices@woodbridgect.gov for more information and to enroll in the program.

The deadline to sign up is Nov. 9.

Gilbertie has continued to give back through coaching, community service and her ongoing support of Lauralton Hall.

Milford Garden Club To Reveal 'Secret Language Of Flowers'

The presentation begins at 6:30 p.m. in the library's program room. The event is free and open to the public. The Milford Public Library is located at 57 New Haven Ave. For more information, call 203-848-7459, email milfordgardenclubct@gmail.com or visit facebook.com/MilfordCtGardenClub.



Free-Throw Contest Coming To Milford

trophies are awarded in each age group, and first-place winners advance to the regional competition, with the chance to move on to state and national finals.

The event is free and open to all boys and girls ages 8-13 (as of April 1, 2027). Each child shoots for about 5-10 minutes;

Walk-ins are welcome.
The Hoop Shoot is a national Elks program running for over 50 years. Learn more at fb.me/c/26ZQU8zFEy.

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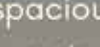
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Case Memorial Library Events

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

The library will be closed for Veterans Day on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

The library has an app where you can manage your account, search the catalog and place holds, register for events, access e-books and use your digital library card. Find the app by searching Libraries Online in your app store. Visit casememoriallibrary.org for the weekly email newsletter and for updates on events at the library.

Music & Movement with Joy Blooms
Mondays, 10:30 a.m., for children ages 0-5.

Get ready to pop some bubbles and boogie at this popular children’s music and story time event. Joy Blooms will encourage music and movement with her catchy and interactive songs. Registration is required and space is limited. This program is designed for children and accompanying adults. Please plan to attend and be engaged with your child for this program. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Lapsit Storytime
Tuesday, Nov. 3 and 24, 10:30 a.m.; for babies and toddlers up to 2 years old.

Join the library every other Tuesday for an age-appropriate story time featuring songs, rhymes, and books. Themes will be adopted from the research-based Very Ready Reading Program. Registration is requested and space is limited. This program is designed for children and accompanying adults. Please plan to attend and be engaged with your child for this program. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Toddler Storytime
Wednesday, Nov. 18, 10:30 a.m.; for children ages 2-3 years old.

Join the library every other Wednesday for an age-appropriate story time featuring songs, rhymes, and books. Themes will be adopted from the research-based Very Ready Reading Program. Registration is requested and space is limited. This program is designed for children and accompanying adults. Please plan to attend and be engaged with your child for this program. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Halloween in the Library
Saturday, Oct. 31, 10 a.m.-noon; for children of all ages.

Visit the children’s department to collect treats, including some non-food options. Costumes are highly encouraged, but optional. No registration is required. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Drop-offs will not be permitted.

Take & Make: Fall Spice-Scented Play Dough
Monday, Nov. 2; for children of all ages.

Spend an afternoon with your little one making scented play dough at home. First come, first served. Kits are available while supplies last.

STEAM Club
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 4 p.m.-4:45 p.m.; for children in grades 3-6.

Try engineering challenges, building projects, technology, and more activities based on the theme of the month: Thanksgiving. Registration is required.

All About Axolotls
Saturday, Nov. 14, 3 p.m.-4 p.m.; for children in grades K-6.

Meet a live axolotl. Learn about caring for an axolotl as well as fun facts, ancient history, science and much more with Ashley from the Amphibian and Reptile Center. Registration is required.

Tween Book Bedazzling
Saturday, Nov. 21, noon-1 p.m.; for children in grades 4-6

Bring your own hardcover or paperback book and use diamond art gems to bedazzle the cover and make it sparkle. All bedazzling materials will be provided. Registration is required.

Be a Game Master
Monday, Nov. 23, 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.; for tweens in grades 3-6.

Curious about tabletop role-playing games? Learn how to be a game master – the person setting up the story for the other players to explore. This session will include tips, techniques and hands-on exercises. The only requirement is a good imagination. The session is presented by Rob Sanderson.

High School Volunteer Club
Saturday, Oct. 31, 10 a.m.-noon; Thursday, Nov. 19, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; for teens in grades 9-12.

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

Teen Book Boxes
For teens in grades 7-12

October pickup dates: Oct. 26-31

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

Teen Book Bedazzling
Saturday, Nov. 21, 2 p.m.-4 p.m.; for teens in grades 7-12.

Bring your own hardcover or paperback book

and use diamond art gems to bedazzle the cover and make it sparkle. All bedazzling materials will be provided. Registration required.

American Mah Jongg Club
Fridays, 10:30 a.m. and Thursday, Nov. 19, 5:30 p.m. (no meeting on Friday, Nov. 27)

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

Adult Book Boxes
October pickup dates: Oct. 26-31

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

Crash Course Cooking: Ravioli
Monday, Nov. 2, 6 p.m.

Learn the basics of ravioli making, from making a fresh pasta dough from scratch, rolling, filling and sealing the ravioli, making up sauces, then finally boiling and enjoying this filled pasta. Space is limited. Registration is recommended; drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Crochet Club
Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.

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

supplies. This is a drop-in event.

Beading Workshop
Monday, Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Learn foundational techniques of beadwork and create two custom bracelets – including one made with semi-precious stones – to take home. Led by instructor Peter Lerman. Space is limited. Registration is recommended. Drop-ins are welcome if space permits.

Mystery Book Discussion
Thursday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m.

The Only One Left by Riley Sager. The discussion will be led by Librarian Rebecca Harlow.

Fall Film: Black Bag
Wednesday, Nov. 18, 1 p.m.

When intelligence agent Kathryn Woodhouse is suspected of betraying the nation, her husband – also a legendary agent – faces the ultimate test of whether to be loyal to his marriage or his country. 1 hour 33 minutes.

Virtual Author Talks
Enjoy a range of live virtual talks from bestselling authors and thought leaders. Register by visiting library.org/casememoriallibrary for any of the following virtual talks:

- Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2 p.m.: Reclaiming Your Inner Wisdom: Sacred Indigenous Teachings with Asha Frost

- Thursday, Nov. 5, 7 p.m.: Secrets, Lies, and Unforgettable Twists: A Conversation with E. Lockhart

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2 p.m.: A City on Mars: The Science and Absurdities of Space Settlement with Kelly and Zach Weinersmith

- Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2 p.m.: How Money Became God: Rethinking Wealth and Greed in Modern Society with Paul Vigna

- Thursday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m.: Fire, Passion, and Heritage: Native American and Mexican Cooking with Chef Pyet DeSpain

- Thursday, Nov. 19, 7 p.m.: Epic Worlds and Celestial Prophecies: Exploring the Between Earth and Sky Trilogy with Rebecca Roanhorse





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Orange Selectmen (Continued From 1)

exchanges between a quorum of board members, which are already governed by freedom of information laws meant to prevent officials on elected boards from holding “private” meetings outside the public view. Board members are allowed to share information and documents through emails to each other, but not hold substantive discussions.

It also provides a series of instructions for different scenarios in which board members might be contacted individually or as

a group regarding matters coming before the town. In most cases, board members are advised not to express opinions about items that might come to the board for a decision.

However, the policy also allows board members to talk about their opinions on town issues in public and with individual constituents as long as they identify that they are doing so as individuals and not reflecting the entire Board of Selectmen’s position.

The policy grew out of a discussion that began in February, with some members of the board arguing that selectmen responding to emails could be seen as speaking for

the entire board and not just from their individual perspectives.

That concern bumped up against the need for town leaders to be able to speak freely and honestly with the people of the town who they represent.

The board formed an ad hoc committee that had been meeting since April to develop a policy that balanced those competing interests.

“We had some very good discussions, some of them spirited,” Selectman William Kraut said of the committee meetings. “We did have a fair amount of public participation and people coming to the meetings,

which was nice to see.”

“Why we were doing what we were doing was not to limit communications with the public at all,” Selectman John Carangelo said. “The idea is to actually help us to communicate with the public more, but in a fashion that is legally appropriate and has a way to do it so that we’re all on the same page.”

Town Attorney Owen Weaver noted that there are no legal or financial penalties for violations of the policy. However, he also pointed out that board emails are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and must be retained.

Beecher School (Continued From 1)

gaged with the Board of Finance to more effectively incorporate the plan into the town’s overall capital needs.

Selectwoman Lauren Francese said that she understands concerns about the economic well-being of the town, but that Woodbridge’s long-term financial health is closely tied to the health of the schools.

She noted that educators “are working really hard in increasing complicated jobs with increasingly complex needs

in a school that is not designed to meet those complex needs at the moment.”

The building committee met on Oct. 20 to try to identify next steps. At that meeting, Woodbridge Board of Education Chair Steven Lawrence pointed out that education officials would need to think about what could be done to shore up the school building in the short term, since the long-term future was again in doubt.

“We want to allow the time for this renewed process to unfold, to have the time it needs so that the community and the building committee are in sync in terms of learning and understanding what our

options are and helping to understand what would ultimately be the best option for our community. That said, at the board level we’ll be working with the administration on the new [education] budget and really thinking about what are critical elements that will have to be addressed that we’ve held off on,” he said.

One of the ideas committee members put forward was to increase the number of people sitting on the committee to bring in more perspectives, including adding another person from the Board of Finance and from the Board of Selectmen.

The committee also resolved to reactivate its website and to send a survey out to residents in the near future to garner more public input.

Input was already forthcoming from some audience members, whose suggestions included such ideas as eliminating the plan for prekindergarten spaces, providing comparisons with other local districts to residents so they could understand the context behind decisions, and having the committee take more of the lead in presenting the plans.

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 17 at 7 p.m.

Milford To Honor Veterans With Parade, Ceremony

Milford will hold its annual Veterans Day parade downtown on Sunday, Nov. 8 at noon.

The parade will feature veterans, military organizations, marching bands, community groups, first responders and displays celebrating both local heroes and America’s

250th anniversary.

The city will also hold its annual wreath-laying event on Nov. 11 at 10:45 a.m. at City Hall.

Those interested in marching in the parade can contact milfordveteransdayparade@gmail.com.

NEW Presentation To Cover Joining A Nonprofit Board

The Network of Executive Women’s Nov. 3 luncheon at Stonebridge Restaurant in Milford will feature a discussion on how to join a nonprofit board.

The discussion will be led by Jackie Downing, senior director of grantmaking and nonprofit support for the Community

Foundation for Greater New Haven.

The luncheon runs from noon to 1:30 p.m. Stonebridge is located at 50 Daniels St.

Guests are welcome to attend. Registration is \$35 and ends on Oct. 30. Walk-ins may not be available and will incur an additional \$5 fee.



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Milford Resident Gets Medal For America 250 Parade



Milford resident Robert Townes was honored with the DAR Distinguished Citizen Medal on Oct. 8 in recognition of his leadership in the city's America 250 celebrations. Photo courtesy of the DAR.

The Freeloze Baldwin Stow Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution on Oct. 8 presented the DAR Distinguished Citizen Medal to Robert

Townes in recognition of his civic leadership, community service and dedication to celebrating Milford's rich American heritage during America's 250th anniversary.

The presentation took place during the chapter's monthly meeting, hosted at the home of the McLaughlin's, recipients of the chapter's Patriotic Home Display Award, located at 144 West River Rd. in Milford.

As the committee advisor for Milford's America 250 commemoration, Townes played an instrumental leadership role in organizing the city's June 20 America 250 celebration parade.

The medal recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional qualities of leadership, service and patriotism while making meaningful contributions to their communities.

"Robert Townes represents the very best of community leadership and civic responsibility," said Elizabeth White-Peters, Regent of the Freeloze Baldwin Stow Chapter. "His dedication to bringing our community together for America's 250th anniversary, particularly through the organization of Milford's commemorative parade, reflects the spirit of service and patriotism that this medal honors."

Mixed-Use Walnut Beach Property Sold

Orange-based Colonial Properties recently represented the buyer in the sale of 54 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford a two-story, 4,720-square-foot mixed-use investment property in the Walnut Beach neighborhood. The property sold for \$910,000.

Realtor Nicholas Richetelli represented buyer Christopher Moran in the acquisition from Naugatuck Ave Real Estate LLC, who was represented by Jeremy Rosner of Levey Miller Maretz.

The property features a mixed-use layout, with the ground floor leased to The Nauti-

lus restaurant and the upper floor containing studio and one-bedroom apartments. The combination of restaurant space and residential units offers a mix of commercial and residential uses in the established Walnut Beach neighborhood.

"Mixed-use properties like 54 Naugatuck Avenue offer an attractive combination of commercial and residential components. Its location in Milford's Walnut Beach neighborhood and the mix of uses made this a sought-after investment opportunity," said Colonial President Michael Richetelli.

Woodbridge Doctor Inaugurated As State Medical Society President

The Connecticut State Medical Society named Woodbridge resident Dr. Robert M. McLean as its 188 president during the society's annual meeting on Oct. 1.

McLean is a New Haven internal medicine and rheumatology specialist with Northeast Medical Group who has practiced since 1994.

In his inaugural address, McLean outlined several priorities for the year ahead, saying, "As CSMS president, I want to represent the physicians of Connecticut and continue our advocacy on public health, reducing administrative burdens on our practices, and addressing payment structures that threaten the viability of medical practices."

He also reflected on CSMS' long histo-

ry. Founded in 1792, CSMS was created in part to establish standards for the practice of medicine and protect the public.

"Our role is to help patients have access to the care they need, as well as to avoid the care they don't need. At the heart of that work is the sacrosanct patient-physician relationship, which we must respect and protect," he said.

McLean also spoke about the importance of physicians remaining a trusted source of information and guidance for patients at a time of information overload and widespread misinformation. He encouraged physicians to become more engaged in advocacy, particularly at the state level, where their voices can have a direct impact on health policy.

Bank Branch Celebrates Anniversary



Staff at the Milford Bank branch on Roses Mill Road in Milford celebrated their third anniversary at that location in October. From left: Brady Anderson, Pooja Gangadhar, Aileen Saba, Tina Mason, Debbie Gagliardi, Natalya Pozdnyakova, Gerianne Kohut, Gray Peckham and Vishakha Thakur. Photo by Steve Cooper.



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VOTE EARLY OCTOBER 19 -
NOVEMBER 1**

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, Orange and Woodbridge.

Frances "Cissy" Armstrong, 68, of Milford, Connecticut, passed away peacefully at home on the morning of September 26, 2026 after a two-year battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Sarah Sosenko Beaulieu, age 69, of Cheshire, CT. (Wakelee Funeral Home)



David W. Bennett, age 77, of Milford, beloved husband of Karen (Lakatos) Bennett, passed away peacefully, on Monday, September 28, 2026. (Abriola Parkview Funeral Home)



George O. Berendt Jr., 80, of Milford, passed away peacefully at home on October 2, 2026, following a one-year battle with cancer. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Karl Edmund Bilek, 74, of Milford, CT, passed away on September 24, 2026. Born on February 1, 1952 in Key West, Florida. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Marilyn "Lyn" Boudreau, 84, of Milford, passed away on September 29, 2026. Born on July 13, 1942, in Bridgeport. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



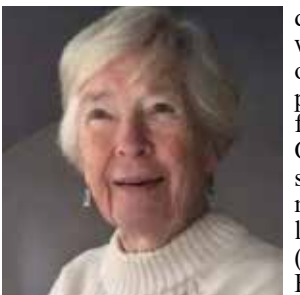
Lucille A. Bozelko, age 85, of Orange passed away peacefully at CT Hospice on August 28, 2023. (West Haven Funeral Home)



Jeffrey David Burns was born on Christmas Day by the ocean in Milford, Connecticut. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Ann Close Donohue devoted wife of predeceased Edward Donohue of Milford, CT., passed peacefully Tuesday October 6, 2026 surrounded by members of her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Elaine Clare Douglass, age 89, of Milford, died Sunday, October 18, 2026, at Milford Hospital surrounded by her loving family. (Redgate-Hennessey Funeral Home)



David Gerard Dzialo, 59, of Milford, beloved husband of 21 years of Laura (La-Barca) Dzialo, passed away on September 30, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Dr. Gerald Forman, 89, of Woodbridge, died on September, 29th. (Robert E. Shure Funeral Home)



William F. Foster, age 89, a longtime resident of Woodbridge, Connecticut, passed away at home on October 14, 2026, surrounded by the love and memories of a life well lived. (Swan Funeral Home)



Roy C. Francis, 86, of Milford, passed away on October 1, 2026, leaving behind a life distinguished by education, military service, adventure, and a genuine desire to help others succeed. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Shirley Goldstein Frumento, 82, of West Haven, beloved wife of the late Frank R. Frumento Sr., passed away on October 15, 2026. (Porto Funeral Home)



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CITY OF MILFORD
NOTICE OF LIMITED REGISTRATION
SESSION (Sec. 9-17)

Milford Registrars of Voters will conduct a Limited Voter Registration Session on Monday, November 2, 2026, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the Registrars of Voters office, Parsons Municipal Complex, 70 West River Street, Milford, CT.

This Limited Registration Session is ONLY for those seeking to vote in the November 3, 2026, election who have met the qualifications by turning 18 years old, becoming a United States citizen, or becoming a Milford resident after October 16, 2026.

Registrars of Voters
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Obituaries

Rachael Harvey of Woodbridge, formerly of Bridgeport, passed away after a brief illness at Yale-New Haven Hospital on Thursday, October 1, 2026. (W. S. Clancy Funeral Home)

Steven Charles Hayden, age 73, entered into eternal rest on October 8, 2026. He was the devoted husband of Deborah (Cybart) Hayden. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Mr. William R. Lemke, age 81, of West Haven, CT, passed away peacefully at his home on October 17, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. (Spinellicciuti Funeral Home)

Michael Limauro, 89, of West Haven died on September 29, 2026 after a very brief illness. He was the beloved husband of the late Beverly Gardner Limauro. (West Haven Funeral Home)

Eleanor M. Lips, age 87 of Milford, passed away peacefully at home on October 13, 2026. She was born in Bridgeport, September 13, 1939, daughter of the late Joseph and Edna Boucher.

Josephine D. Lupica of Milford passed away peacefully on Sunday, October 11, 2026 in her home with her beloved husband, John of 71 years, by her side. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

David Felicella, age 70, of Milford, beloved husband of Jacqueline Bargo Felicella, peacefully passed away October 7, 2026, in his home. (Adzima Funeral Home)

Diane G. Manning, age 72, of Milford, entered into peaceful rest on October 9, 2026, at CT Hospice in Branford. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

James M. McHale, 91, of Orange, Connecticut, passed away peacefully on October 9, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

James F. McNulty, age 100, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Margaret (Kerekonish) McNulty, entered into peaceful rest on October 5, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Raymond R. Miller Sr., 83, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Judith Miller, passed away on October 4, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Waltraud Miller, of Milford, beloved wife of the late William Miller, entered peaceful rest on October 15, 2026, at Hamden Healthcare. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Donald Clark Morris, Sr., 92, of Milford, beloved husband of the late Barbara Martin Morris, passed away on October 21, 2026 surrounded by his loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Suzanne "Sue" Niglio, 77, of Milford, CT, passed away peacefully on October 17, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Joseph Vincent Novara, 92, of Milford, CT, beloved husband of Grace Novara, passed away on October 7, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Silvio Palmieri, 85, beloved husband of 56 years to Pasqualina Salvatore Palmieri of West Haven passed away peacefully October 2, 2026. (Porto Funeral Home)



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Obituaries

John Paolini Jr., 88, of Orange, beloved husband of 68 years to Margaret Suscietto Paolini, passed away on October 20, 2026 surrounded by his family. (Porto Funeral Home)

AnneMarie C. Paone-Mullin, 72, of Woodbridge, passed away peacefully on Saturday, October 3rd, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

John Pizzi, 82, of Orange, beloved husband of Rosemarie Pizzi, passed away on September 22, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

John P. Rafferty, Jr., 64 of Orange, passed away on October 7, 2026. Known to all as "Jack", he was born on August 17, 1962 in New Haven. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Samuel Randolph, 91, of Milford, passed away on October 12, 2026, leaving behind a lifetime of love, laughter, cherished memories, and a family who adored him. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Elizabeth "Liz" Rivera, 71, of Milford, passed away on Sunday, September 27, 2026, after a brief illness. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Patricia Ann Ryan, "Pat", 94 of Milford, passed away peacefully on October 14, 2026, while surrounded by her loving family. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Amber Nicole (Friedman) Schulte, age 40, of Milford, entered peaceful rest surrounded by her family on September 28, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Robert Edward Smith, 71, of Milford, CT, passed away on October 10, 2026. Born on July 11, 1955 in Bridgeport. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

On Friday, September 25, 2026, **Carol Casey Stack** entered into eternal rest. She was preceded in death by her husband, James Rodman Stack. (Cody-White Funeral Home)

Joan LaBanca Schuckie, 86, of Orange, beloved wife of Albert J. Schuckie Jr., passed away on October 4, 2026 surrounded by her family at her home. (Porto Funeral Home)

Elizabeth (Betsey) Stevens passed away on October 8, 2026. Betsey was born on January 10, 1932, to Newton and Edna Borgereson, in Woodbridge, CT.

Gil Edward Suchezyk, age 71, of Milford, beloved husband of Bridget Improta Suchezyk for 50 years, died on Wednesday, September 30, 2026 after a long battle with cancer. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Judith M. Ulrich of Jefferson, New York passed away Thursday October 15, 2026, while visiting her family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Lola Jane Wakeley, age 86, of Milford, passed away on Monday, October 19, 2026 peacefully with family by her side. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)

Honorine Agnes Kendrick Wallack of Woodbridge, Connecticut, passed away on October 12 after a long and fulfilling life. She was 100 years old. (Sisk Brothers Funeral Home)



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The Remarkable Deeds of Aristides de Sousa Mendes

“...Starting today, I will obey only my conscience: I simply do not have the right to let these people die.”

In May of 1940, German forces attacked France, quickly overwhelming the French army. Within a month, France fell to the Nazi regime and a swastika flag was raised over the Eiffel Tower.

At the time, many world leaders chose to declare neutrality regarding the war, in order to avoid confrontation with Germany. Similarly, the Prime Minister of Portugal declared neutrality, even forbidding refugees from Nazism to escape to Portugal.

Meanwhile, myriads of panic-stricken Jews, along with many who had publicly opposed Nazism, began to flee to southwestern France in hopes of finding a way to cross over into neutral Spain or Portugal.

In the midst of this maelstrom, a diplomat by the name of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux, France, watched in deep dismay. Torn between his conscience and his government’s orders, he soon suffered an emotional breakdown, refusing food and human contact. After three days, however, Sousa Mendes emerged from his bedroom

and tremblingly informed his wife: *“Starting today, I will obey only my conscience; I simply do not have the right to let these people die.”*



“I could not have acted differently; I accept all that has befallen me with love.”
—Aristides de Sousa Mendes, (before his death)

Immediately, Aristides de Sousa Mendes began issuing illegal visas to as many refugees as possible. The exact number of people he saved from certain death is unknown — 10,000 is a conservative estimate! Among those he saved were Hans & Margaret Rey, the Jewish creators of the Curious George series of children’s books, and Salvador Dali, the Spanish artist, and his wife Gala. Historians characterize the life-saving work of Aristides de Sousa Mendes as “the largest rescue operation ever undertaken by a single person during the Holocaust.” Prime Minister Mário Soares, the “Father of Portuguese Democracy,” called him “Portugal’s greatest hero of the 20th century.”

What penalty did Sousa Mendes suffer for his deeds? How did he become a national hero after his death? COME & LEARN!

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- Dr. Olivia Mattis, President & CEO of the Sousa-Mendes Foundation, will recall how her family was rescued by Aristides de Sousa Mendes.
- Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus will relate the remarkable story of the rescue of Hans & Margaret Rey, creators of the Curious George series of children’s books.
- Mrs. Gracinda Lavado, President of the Parish Council at Our Lady of Fatima Portuguese Parish, Hartford, will bring a message from Fr. António J. Tchingui and the Portuguese American community.
- U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal will present a Certificate of Special Recognition to Sousa Mendes’ great-grandson, Jason Abranches, who will receive the posthumous honor on behalf of his family.



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