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Milford-Orange Times

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Region Marks Veterans Day With Memorials, Parade



Milford held a parade in honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 8, as well as a wreath-laying ceremony on Nov. 11. Additional photos on page 21. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*



Orange held a ceremony honoring veterans on Nov. 11 at the War Remembrance Memorial at High Plains Community Center. Additional photos on page 21. *Photo by Lexi Crocco.*

Orange Terminates Flock Contract

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Orange Board of Selectmen unanimously voted at its Nov. 4 meeting not to renew its contract with Flock Safety for automatic license plate readers.

The selectmen had already paused use of the cameras in August following concerns raised by residents about the cameras' potential to violate privacy and Fourth Amendment rights.

Even with the pause, though, the board needed to act this month to provide Flock 30 days' notice so that the contract wasn't

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Milford Surveillance Tech Gets Oversight, Disclosure

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

The Milford Board of Aldermen unanimously passed a resolution at their Nov. 5 meeting that will require more disclosure of surveillance technology the city acquires for public safety and give the board greater oversight over some of those acquisitions.

The resolution will require the police commission and Police Chief Keith Mello to provide a detailed list of the technology

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Region Reelects Incumbents In A Changed Landscape

By Brandon T. Bisceglia

While election night on Nov. 3 brought sweeping changes in much of the country, residents in Milford, Orange and Woodbridge will see little change in the elected officials representing them.

The region's two incumbent state senators, James Maroney and Jorge Cabrera, both Democrats, cruised to victory. Likewise, the three incumbent state representatives – Kathy Kennedy (R-119), Mary Welander (D-114) and MJ Shannon (D-117) – all won reelection.

The 118th was the only district that was guaranteed to see some change, as state Rep.

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Cafe To Open At Woodbridge Community Center



Woodbridge First Selectman Mica Cardozo, left, with Mantras Café owner Julian Brown and his family. The cafe will open in the town's new community center on Nov. 23. *Photo courtesy of Alison Valsamis.*

Mantras Café will officially open its doors on Monday, Nov. 23 in the Woodbridge Community & Cultural Center, located at 4 Newton Rd. in Woodbridge.

The café, operated by Julian Brown of Mantras Market, is the latest addition to the newly opened Community & Cultural Center, located in the renovated Old Firehouse.

"What makes the opening of Mantras Café so exciting is seeing a local Woodbridge business grow right alongside the Community & Cultural Center," said Woodbridge Community Communications & Program Coordinator Alison Valsamis. "Julian has already built something special with Mantras Market, and I'm thrilled that this new venture gives him an opportunity to expand while bringing something new to our community. It's exactly the kind of opportunity we hoped this building would create."

Since opening in October, the center has welcomed residents for workshops, classes, cultural programs and community events.

The café will operate under holiday hours during its first week. Its regular operating hours will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

A ribbon-cutting celebration will be planned in coordination with local chambers of commerce. A date hasn't been confirmed.



Holocaust Hero's Family Honored At Or Shalom Kristallnacht Remembrance



Jason Abranches, left, accepted a certificate of special recognition on behalf of his family from Sen. Richard Blumenthal, right, during the annual Kristallnacht remembrance event on Nov. 8 at Congregation Or Shalom in Orange. Abranches is the great-grandson of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who was the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux, France during the Holocaust. Sousa Mendes issued illegal visas to thousands of people fleeing the Nazis despite his government's forbidding refugees from coming to neutral Portugal. *Photo by Steve Cooper.*

Suzuki Music School Performing Throughout Region

The Suzuki Music School of Orange is hosting several free events in the area in early December.

Expectant parents and families with infants are invited to a "Tummy Concert" featuring violinist Claire D'Souza on Dec. 6 at St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church in Orange. Discover simple ways to listen, move and share music with a baby – and learn how to continue the experience at home through Suzuki's Prenatal/Infant Listening Program. The program runs from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tickets are free but must be reserved in advance.

The school's strings will play at the Milford Public Library for a holiday performance on Wednesday, Dec. 9. The performance starts at 6 p.m. and will feature holiday favorites and more. There will be a cookie and hot cocoa reception after the performance.

The piano department will perform another holiday concert at the Woodbridge Town Library on Saturday, Dec. 12. The performance starts at 2 p.m. and will feature holiday favorites and more.

For more information and reservations, visit https://suzukischools.org/events.

Milford Church Hosting Christmas Fair

St. Raphael Parish will host a Christmas fair at St. Ann Church, 501 Naugatuck Ave. in Milford, on Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The fair features 34 vendors, raffle baskets and silent auction items as well as Christmas trees to be raffled off. There will be an array of home-baked goods and a white elephant sale. There will be hot food and drinks at the snack bar for purchase. Santa will visit, and a local high school choir will perform.

The fair will feature a room decorated with creches and nativity scenes for quiet contemplation or purchase, and there will be the opportunity to sign a Christmas card that will be delivered to a military service member.

Admission and parking are free.

Orange Students Get Arts Awards



Six students from Orange Public Schools were honored by the Connecticut Association of Schools at an awards ceremony in Plantsville on Nov. 9 recognizing excellence in the visual and performing arts. Music teachers, art teachers and principals joined the honorees at the reception. The CAS Art Award program celebrates elementary students who demonstrate outstanding citizenship, strong cooperative skills and exceptional artistic talent. Each elementary school was invited to select two sixth-grade students to receive the honor. Top row, from left: Kyle Ryan, Marie Olden, Ahlam Jahlil, Ken Trapp and Erin Garney. Bottom row, from left: Turkey Hill School visual arts recipient Carolynn Banyay; Turkey Hill School performing arts recipient Sam Ewen; Peck Place School visual arts recipient Giuliana Zerella; Peck Place School performing arts recipient Colin Paille; Racebrook School visual arts recipient Reema Shah; and Racebrook School performing arts recipient Leeya Lonh. *Photo by Boret Lonh.*

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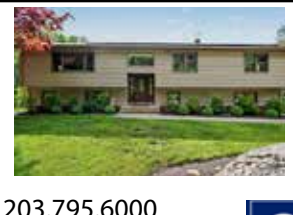


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Woodbridge Garden Club Provides Arrangements For Library Anniversary



Garden Club of Woodbridge members provided flower arrangements for the Woodbridge Library's 100th anniversary gala on Oct. 17. The day before the gala, club members gathered to create arrangements featuring gold candlesticks and trays filled with white flowers, including mums, carnations, Asiatic lilies, campanula, baptisia and clematis. They placed the flowers in water-soaked, eco-friendly fiber floral foam and added cascading ilex, ivy, boxwood and yew. Black-and-white feathers and strands of pearls contributed to the "roaring twenties" theme of the gala. From left: Mary Ann Tyma, Amy Marrella, Debbie Schlegel Ekata Karanth, Cindy Marien and Jane Gelernter, seated. ***Photo courtesy of Angela Bradley.***

Holiday Concert Coming To MAC

Neo-soul, R&B and jazz collective Stout & Nu Renssnce will perform a holiday concert at the Milford Arts Council's downtown venue on Saturday, Nov. 28.

The group's lineup includes singer Lady Stout, pianist/musical director Axel Tosca, bass player/musical director Daniel Winshall and drummer Tyson D. Jackson, along with various guest collaborators.

The group held their official live debut and live recording performance on Sept. 11 in New York City.

There is a matinee performance at 3 p.m. and an evening performance at 7:30 p.m. Doors open 30 minutes prior. The MAC is located at 40 Railroad Ave. South in Milford.

Tickets are $40 in advance and $50 at the door. For tickets and more information, go to milfordarts.org/event/stout-nurenssnce-holiday-concert/2026-11-28/.

Pantochino's Christmas Carol Returns To Milford

Pantochino Productions, a professional not-for-profit theater company in Milford, has announced the return of its holiday musical, "Christmas Carol" playing Dec. 4-20 at the Milford Arts Council on Railroad Avenue in downtown Milford.

"Christmas Carol" is a funny, family-friendly musical featuring book by Bert Bernardi and original music by Justin Rugg. Based on the Charles Dickens story, Ebenezer Scrooge is given a transformative lesson on charity, forgiveness and love on Christmas Eve. Pantochino's adaptation features comedy, sight gags, songs and over-the-top holiday spirit.

"We're thrilled to bring this show back to our audiences," said Bernardi. "When we debuted the show four years ago, we saw sold-out audiences at every performance."

"There's a laugh every minute – this is the kind of show we do best," said co-producer Jimmy Johansmeyer.

Reprising the role of Ebenezer Scrooge is Pantochino's resident composer and actor, Justin Rugg. The cast also includes company members Johansmeyer, Mary Mannix, Shelley Marsh Poggio, Maria Berte, Don Poggio, Killian Meehan, Chad Cellini, Rhianna Solli and a special appearance by Broadway World Award winner Victoria Sautee. Three young actors are also featured in the cast, including Aurora Hidden of Milford, Davis Burke of Milford and Kyle James Mieczakowski of Shelton.

"Christmas Carol" features setting by Von Del Mar, costumes by Johansmeyer, lighting by Jeff Carr and sound by Richard Ives. Christina Ronquillo is stage manager.

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

Woodbridge Library Event To Share Untold History Of American Music

The Woodbridge Town Library will host musician Joe Flood for a presentation titled "Songs from the Bend in the River: An Untold Story of American Music on Thursday, Dec. 3.

Flood will take audiences on a musical journey through the 19th century, exploring the development and blending of American folk songs and dances and the emergence of professional popular songwriting. The presentation will also address the history of blackface minstrelsy and its place within the development of American music.

Flood will perform on fiddle, banjo, mandolin and guitar as he demonstrates what distinguished developing American musical traditions from those that preceded them and as he connects that evolution with the nation's broader history.

Joe Flood is a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist based in New Haven. He comes from a long line of prominent Connecticut musicians.

The event runs from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The library is located at 10 Newton Rd.

There is no cost to attend, but seating is limited so registration is required. Sign up at woodbridgetownlibrary.libcal.com/ or call the reference department at 203-389-3434.

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Wisdom, Warmth and Wit

Don't Look At Me!



BONNIE FEUER

For years I thought the command "Don't look at me" was funny.

My best friend and I used it regularly, just before an impromptu visit. One of us would cook something, purchase a new item or discover a frozen food product and want to share it with the other. Sometimes, it would just be a short visit to drop off a surprise or point to a new facial imperfection and ask, "What do you make of this?"

A quick phone call saying, "Stop what you're doing – I'm approaching your driveway," would always elicit the response, "Come on in – but don't look at me."

What is it with us? How do we spend so much of our lives feeling unpresentable?

The words "don't look at me" are not funny at all. I feel confident that the request is indigenous to the female of the species. Imagine a man making a fast run to Home Depot, bumping into a male neighbor and saying, "Whoa, buddy – don't even look at me today. My bangs are atrocious." Never happening.

Just yesterday, another friend told me she stepped out of the shower and accidentally glimpsed herself in the mirror.

"It made me sick. I try so hard to avoid that, but it was okay – I had a large towel nearby," she said.

We are so mean to ourselves over changes that are out of our control. The things we say in our minds become what we believe. If the mental script we allow to run amok in our brain is berating, we are actually bullying ourselves. Consider that. Over time, the constant negativity can cause sadness and even depression.

Some of us are well over 50 and still haven't given up the commercial image of perfection. The reality is that tight skin relaxes. Eventually it wrinkles. We have had surgeries. We have been stretched with pregnancies. Life might have knocked us around with serious illness, devastating loss or years of worry and endless coping.

The script needs editing. The message needs to become one of self-kindness for what we have endured and for all of our hard-won victories.

Our scars tell the stories of our lives. Our wrinkles tell the stories of our hearts.

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.

Woodbridge Students Get First Place In LEGO Competition



Five sixth graders from Woodbridge came in first place out of over 18 teams in the first LEGO league qualifier event on Nov. 14 in New Haven. In addition to winning Best Robot Performance for their highest scoring run, they also won Best Robot Design from the judges for their use of color sensors integrated into their code. They were given a golden ticket to next compete at the state tournament held in Glastonbury on December 12, 2026. *Photo courtesy of Jessica D. Hoffmann.*

Orange Firefighters Give Safety Tips At Turkey Hill



Members of the Orange Volunteer Fire Department visited the Turkey Hill School in October to teach first-grade students about fire safety during Fire Safety Month. Students sit in front of a fire engine as Orange firefighters Peter Goodwin, Bert Gallant and Lisa Kaplan offer safety tips. *Photo by Doug Fenichel.*

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Orange To Light Tree And Tractors

Orange will hold its annual lighted tractor parade and tree lighting festival on Saturday, Dec. 5.

At the Case Memorial Library at 3 p.m., children can write a letter to Santa and make crafts while Al Decant performs. The Orange Congregational Church at 3 p.m. will provide hot cocoa and cookies for purchase.

At the Stone Otis House from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. visitors can see a Victorian Christmas and toy shop. During the same hours, the Academy Building will host the Orange Historical Society's antique collections, as well as the Emily Prudden New Haven to Derby line model railroad on the lower level.

At the High Plains Community Center fairgrounds, food trucks will be available starting from 3:30 p.m. while a DJ performs at the gazebo.

The lighted tractors will leave from Fred Wolfe Park at approximately 4:30 p.m. and drive down past the Town Green. Santa will arrive at the parade's conclusion. approx. Finally, the tree will be lit at 5:30 p.m.

For more information on the tractor parade or to join, go to orangetractorparade.com.

Milford-Orange Times

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Ellen Russell Beatty, Ponder This
Cathy Bradley, Running
Steve Cooper, Restaurant Reviews
Carmela DeVito, Book Reviews
Pat Dray, Gardening
Bonnie Feuer, Wit and Wisdom
Ben Gettinger, Probate
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Woodbridge Principal Honored By Library Association



Beecher Road School Principal Analisa Sherman, left, received the Connecticut Association of School Librarians Administrator's Award on Nov. 1. Pictured right is CASL President Valerie DiLorenzo. *Photo courtesy of Larissa Crocco.*

The Connecticut Association of School Librarians honored Beecher Road School Principal Analisa Sherman with the group's Administrator's Award at its awards dinner on Nov. 1.

The award recognizes administrators who have demonstrated exceptional support for improving media services within their school or district. The award acknowledges the recipient's dedication in providing encouragement and adequate funding for program success and advancement.

"The CASL Administrator's Award is a testament to the outstanding leadership and unwavering support this administrator has provided to their school library program," said Valerie DiLorenzo, president of CASL. "Their commitment to fostering a dynamic and impactful personalized learning environment for students and providing the necessary resources has made a significant impact on the educational journey of countless students. We are delighted to honor them for their exceptional dedication."

Teacher Librarian Larissa Crocco, who nominated Sherman, said, "Over the years, I have witnessed Lisa's genuine passion for fostering a vibrant learning community and a nurturing library space that goes far beyond the ordinary. What makes Lisa exceptional is not only her visionary leadership but also the thoughtful way she supports the initiatives that uplift our educational experiences."

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Opinion & Editorial

Woodbridge First Selectman

Making Woodbridge Work Better For You



Mica Cardozo

In the nearly three years I have served as first selectman, you have heard me talk often about our need for growth, and in recent months about the Beecher Road School building project. Those conversations will continue. This month, I want to tell you about another change, one that will shape how you experience the services our town provides every day.

Beginning with the 2027-28 fiscal year, we will bring our Recreation Department and our Human Services Department together into a single, new Department of Community Services.

This is not a new idea. We have been considering it for a couple of years. Over the past several months we have taken a hard look at our staff and budgets, our programs and fee structures, how the work actually gets done and how we use our buildings and spaces. What we found convinced me it is time to act.

Here is the simple version. Demand for services in some areas keeps growing, while in other areas we have capacity that is not being fully used. Because those resources sit in separate departments, it is harder than it should be to move them to where residents need them most.

Bringing them together lets us put our existing staff, dollars and facilities to work where they will do the most good. Our goal is to sustain and strengthen the programs you rely on now, and to add new ones without increasing the budget or headcount.

Our new Community & Cultural Center makes this even more important. The WCCC is a tremendous opportunity, and it comes with a responsibility: a building like this is only as valuable as the programs and gatherings that fill it. A unified department will plan for the WCCC together with our recreation, senior and human services programs, so it becomes a true hub for the whole community and not just one more space to schedule.

The new department will be organized around four areas:

- Recreation and wellness: youth and adult sports and fitness, summer camp and after-school programs, seasonal programs and special events, and our athletic fields, courts and trails.

- Senior services: meals and transportation, social and educational activities, trips and outings, and support such as Medicare counseling and our friendly visitor program.

Human services: resource referrals, energy and basic needs assistance, tax relief for elderly and disabled residents, veterans' services, and youth programs such as the Youth Job Bank.

- Community & Cultural Center: arts, crafts, and cultural programs; community events, discussions and performances; fitness and wellness classes; and space for town programs and community organizations.

Behind the scenes, these four areas will share the work every program depends on: registration and scheduling, budgeting, purchasing, facility use, communications and program evaluation. For residents, that should mean a single coordinated calendar, an easier way to find and sign up for programs and less duplication. For taxpayers, it means staff time saved and a stronger hand when we negotiate with vendors.

A director of community services will lead the department, giving all four areas one clear point of leadership and accountability.

If this approach sounds familiar, it should. When we recently reorganized Town Hall, we substantially strengthened our operational, financial and communications capabilities at the leadership level with minimal impact on the budget. Community services is the next step in that same effort: taking an honest look at how we are organized and making changes that deliver more for residents from the resources we already have.

You will hear more about this as we build the next budget. In the meantime, I welcome your questions and ideas, especially about programs you would like to see at the WCCC.

Woodbridge is moving forward, and the progress is real. Every day, my focus is on getting things done: a stronger Town Hall, a more coordinated Community Services Department, and a Community & Cultural Center that will bring residents together. I am excited about where we are headed.

Woodbridge is a community where people care, show up and get involved, and that is what makes this progress possible. I am proud of what we are accomplishing together and excited for what comes next. Happy holidays to you and those you love.

Mica Cardozo is the first selectman of Woodbridge.

Orange First Selectman

Flock Cameras Out, Speed Cameras In



James Zeoli

I would first like to wish everyone a bountiful season upon us and to prepare for the winter to come. This is the time to mark the edge of your yard with sturdy markers that the public works drivers can see – not those little whips, but something a bit more substantial. Your mailbox needs protection also from the snow being plowed. The town does not replace boxes or posts unless it is directly hit by the truck.

The town has installed a vehicle charging station at High Plains Community Center and at the Town Hall. The station at High Plains is operating and available 24/7 by access with an app on your phone. The station at Town Hall will be operational in the next few weeks. The demand has not been overwhelming, but the availability to residents or travelers fills a need and offers the town a previously untapped source of revenue.

The Board of Selectmen, after listening to many about the concerns with the Flock vehicle tracking system, have decided to terminate the contract with Flock that ends on Dec. 22 by providing a 30 day notice of intention not to renew. The board also offered that the first selectman, town counsel and chief of police consider some options Flock may offer to address the concerns of many. The selectmen are still actively pursuing the red light camera system. I believe this system is absolutely needed on the intersections of Route 34, where we have seen so many accidents with high speed and people who go through red lights time and time again. I do not see these cameras on our general town roads as some of our neighbors have employed. Stay tuned for more on that.

I have been following our senior tax stabilization program and the Board of Selectmen will be considering the income requirements and raising the threshold to participate. This program is directly tied to the town budget, with half of one percent being the amount of money that is available for those who qualify. This program and several other programs are overseen by the assessor's office in Town Hall. The number if you have questions is 203-891-4723.

I must commend the Orange Community Services team for all the hard work they perform. They are busy all year, but especially this time of year with food pantry, fuel assistance, Thanksgiving needs, transportation and the lunch program – a few tasks beyond the daily norm. Thank you and congratulations.

Let's not forget the holiday festival and parade that will happen the first Saturday in December. The bell choir in the church will not disappoint, and the Orange Historical Society is open for all to enjoy. But the biggest parade of tractors and floats in Connecticut should not be missed. The parade leaves Fred Wolfe Park at 4:40 p.m. and proceeds up Meetinghouse Lane to Orange Center Road, then on to the fairgrounds where they sit for all to look at all the hard work and effort that so many have done. There will also be several food trucks onsite at the fairgrounds, weather permitting.

James Zeoli is the first selectman of Orange.

This Christmas, Give Your Family Peace Of Mind

By Mary Elizabeth Weiss

Christmas brings families together to share meals, catch up and carry on traditions.

Time together can also offer an opportunity to discuss something families often put off: wishes for funeral and burial arrangements.

It may seem like an unlikely subject for the holidays, but a conversation now can spare loved ones difficult questions later. What did mom want for her funeral service? Did dad ever purchase burial space? Where is the paperwork? Even in close families, the answers may be unclear.

Planning ahead gives people time to consider their choices and explain what matters to them. That discussion may include preferences for a funeral service, burial or cremation, and a final resting place.

Someone may assume their family already understands these wishes. Saying them aloud, and explaining why they matter, helps avoid misunderstandings. For relatives who will someday make those arrangements, knowing their loved one's wishes can be a comfort.

Funeral directors can answer questions about funeral services and preparations. Families do not need to have every decision made before seeking guidance. Asking questions can help them understand what needs to be considered.

The conversation does not have to take place at Christmas dinner, and there is no need to settle everything at once. A quiet visit may offer a comfortable opening. Simply saying, "There are a few things I would like you to know about my wishes," can be enough to begin.

If the timing feels wrong, families can agree to talk after the holidays. It is understandable that relatives may hesitate to discuss losing someone they love. Taking the conversation slowly can help, as can explaining the reason for it: to make sure families are not left guessing.

Writing down those wishes is equally helpful. Keep them with any relevant paperwork and tell a trusted family member where to find it. If arrangements have already been made, include whom to contact.

Among the preparations families make this Christmas, this one may take only a little time to begin. Knowing what a loved one wants can bring reassurance long after the holiday season has passed.

Mea Elizabeth Weiss is brand development manager for the Catholic Cemeteries Association of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Inc.

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.

Accountability After Sweep

To the Editor:

The recent election results in Connecticut make clear that voters have handed Democrats an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly and returned Gov. Ned Lamont for a third term. Republicans suffered significant losses, leaving them with only a handful of seats in the Senate and a sharply reduced presence in the House. I accept the outcome. The voters have spoken.

That said, the newly strengthened Democratic majorities should remember that their party has held effective control of state government for a very long time. Democrats have controlled the House since the mid-1980s and the Senate for roughly three decades, enjoying a full trifecta for about 15 years. During that period of one-party dominance, Connecticut has developed some of the nation's highest costs of living: elevated taxes, high energy prices and a severe housing shortage that makes it increasingly difficult for young families, middle-income workers and seniors to remain here.

One particularly concerning pattern has been the steady expansion of state authority over local zoning decisions. While the goal of increasing housing supply is understandable, repeated efforts to override municipal land-use authority raise legitimate questions about local self-determination. Compounding the housing shortage and rising costs is the state's sanctuary policies, which limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement and have added population pressures on an already constrained market, further driving up rents and home prices.

Campaign promises about affordability, responsible budgeting and respect for com-

Continued on page 7

Opinion & Editorial

Fighting For Affordability



State Rep. (R-119)
Kathy Kennedy

First, I want to thank the voters of Milford and Orange residing in the 119th District. It is truly an honor to return to Hartford to work for you. I am humbled and do not take my responsibility lightly.

Connecticut families are working hard, playing by the rules and doing everything they can to make ends meet. Yet too many are finding it difficult to afford the basics. From rising electric bills and grocery prices to housing costs, taxes and everyday expenses, the financial pressures facing our residents are real. Addressing affordability must be one of the legislature's top priorities.

I will bring a voice of reason and common sense while keeping in mind what I heard as I knocked on doors in the district: an affordable Connecticut. I will continue fighting for meaningful tax relief, lower energy costs, responsible state spending and policies that allow families, seniors and small businesses to keep more of what they earn. We need to make Connecticut a place where young families can afford to put down roots, seniors can retire with dignity and businesses can grow without being burdened by excessive taxes and regulations.

I also believe we need to take a serious look at how Connecticut administers its welfare and social service programs. These programs serve an important purpose, and we must ensure that individuals and families who need assistance can access it. But taxpayers also deserve accountability. We need to make sure benefits are reaching eligible recipients, programs are administered efficiently and there are clear expectations and pathways toward self-sufficiency whenever possible.

Just as importantly, Hartford needs more accountability. When one political party controls the governor's office and both chambers of the legislature, there is a responsibility to listen to all voices, consider opposing ideas and answer to the people who pay the bills. Although we apparently found an additional $1 billion in state revenue, my hope is the majority party does not take that as a license to spend, spend, spend.

Too often we see important decisions made behind closed doors, costly legislation pushed through without sufficient scrutiny and reasonable concerns from taxpayers and local communities dismissed.

Being in the minority does not mean being silent. My responsibility is to ask tough questions, challenge wasteful spending, scrutinize legislation and hold the majority party accountable for the decisions it makes. Connecticut residents deserve to know where their tax dollars are going, what results they are getting and who is responsible when policies fall short.

I will not stand for policies that increase your taxes or fees, whether it is tolls or any added tax burdens. I want to find savings and return those dollars to the taxpayers. I will continue standing up for local communities, protecting taxpayers, advocating for responsible government and pushing back when Hartford gets it wrong. We may not control the agenda, but we can demand better.

Connecticut doesn't need more excuses or more government spending without results. It needs practical solutions, responsible leadership and a government that puts people ahead of politics. That is what I will continue fighting for on your behalf.

As we look ahead to Thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to wish everyone and their families a happy and healthy holiday. Thanksgiving is an opportunity to pause, reflect on what matters most, and be grateful for the blessings in our lives. I hope you have the chance to enjoy time with family and friends, share a meal and appreciate the people who make our communities such special places to live.

Giving Thanks, Looking Ahead



State Rep. (D-114)
Mary Welander

As we all head into the Thanksgiving season, I wanted to start off by sharing my heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming support I received in this last election. The 114th District is made up of three unique towns and one small but special city, all having very distinct needs and priorities. Winning all four towns is not something I take lightly. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the district in Hartford for another term; I am grateful for the chance to do the work to make our communities better and stronger for all of us.

The next term officially starts in January, but I have been meeting with advocates and organizations since the last session ended in May, preparing for the work ahead.

This election brought about a few major changes in the structure of the General Assembly that will create some unique challenges, including the creation of new committees. At the beginning of each two-year term, it is common for changes in committee membership and committee leadership to happen. Who leads a committee can have a big impact on how we advocate for our potential legislation and the policies brought forward as priorities for each committee and chamber. Thankfully, in the first year of each term legislators are able to propose bills independently.

Affordability was one of the most consistent concerns brought up this election cycle. I plan to propose bills that reduce costs for individuals and municipalities. In addition to the ideas I shared in last month's column, I have also been working on ways to reign in the costs of long-term care insurance.

Unfortunately, it seems like every time there are new regulations to try and keep premiums from increasing astronomically from year to year, insurance companies find a way around it. One proposal is to cap the amount that premiums can increase based on a multi-year aggregate; this could prevent single-year spikes and slow down the rate of cost increases. It would allow individuals to keep their policies and protect themselves later in life, while also maintaining a budget (often within a fixed income), all of which leads to greater personal security overall. I know this is a major concern for many of my constituents, and I am hopeful we can make meaningful change on this matter this year.

I have also been discussing with colleagues ways to send more money back to our towns. The Community Investment Fund has been successful in providing grants for large municipal projects, but there are many mid-level infrastructure needs that fall outside of CIF and Small Town Economic Assistance Program funding. Providing additional grants for those projects could relieve pressure on local budgets, prevent the need for municipal bonding (borrowing) that can hinder a town's long-term financial success, or prevent increases in already too high property taxes.

What are some ideas you have that could help reduce costs for residents? Let me know at mary.welander@cga.ct.gov.

A Tech Policy Leader



State Sen. (D-14)
James Maroney

In June 2025, former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman was shot and killed by Vance Boelter. When he was apprehended, he had a list of 45 state and federal lawmakers he was targeting, as well as a list of 11 data broker websites he had used to obtain information about those lawmakers, including their addresses and family members' names. He used that information to conduct detailed surveillance of his intended targets. His notes also indicated which of the websites he searched were free and which charged a fee.

While we know our data is tracked and collected by many sources, we often don't realize how this information can be aggregated and made public for others to easily search. In our 2022 data privacy law, we established the right of deletion for Connecticut residents, giving you the right to see what data a website has collected about you and the right to delete that data.

However, many people-finder websites aggregate publicly available information and have been able to use an exemption in our existing data privacy laws. In addition, this information resides on hundreds of different websites, making it time-consuming and difficult to delete your information if you choose to.

This past session, I worked with state Sen. Bob Duff on legislation to make it easier for you to delete your information from data brokers. We are starting by requiring all data brokers that do business in Connecticut to register with the state beginning in January 2027. This registry will be open to the public and will include information on how to delete your data from each data broker.

Then, beginning in July 2028, the state will create a portal where you can request that your data be deleted, and all registered data brokers will be required to delete your information.

When a similar portal launched in California this past January, hundreds of thousands of people used the site in the first two weeks to request that their data be deleted.

I have been working on data privacy issues in Connecticut since 2020. With the passage of Senate Bills 4 and 5 this past year, we created many new protections for Connecticut residents and made it much easier for you to control how your data is used online. Because technology is evolving rapidly, we will need to keep updating our laws, but over the last five years Connecticut has established itself as one of the leading states on tech policy.

MOT
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Letters (Continued From 6)

munities must now be matched by results. With such large majorities, Democrats have both the power and the responsibility to deliver measurable progress on the problems that have grown under their long stewardship. Rhetoric alone will not suffice.

I, like many other citizens, will be paying careful attention to the policies that emerge in the coming sessions. Voters granted this level of control; they also retain the right – and the duty – to hold those in power accountable. Connecticut deserves governance that prioritizes practical solutions, preserves local voice and makes the state more livable and affordable for the people who call it home.

Craig Stahl
Orange

Orange Thanksgiving Needs One More Welcome

To the Editor:

A free Thanksgiving dinner does not help the neighbor who never hears about it, or the person who wants to attend but cannot get there.

That is why Orange residents should pay attention to the Lions Club's 40th annual community dinner at High Plains Community Center on Sunday, Nov. 29. The meal is free and open to everyone, with special thought for older residents, homebound neighbors and people who need good food and company. Doors open at noon, and dinner begins at 12:30 p.m. Those planning to attend are asked to call Orange Community Services at 203-891-4788 by Nov. 20. That same number can help arrange transportation.

I am a Christian, and I hear Jesus' teaching in Luke 14 in this invitation. He told his listeners to welcome people who could not repay them. Hospitality, in his telling, is not a transaction. It is an acknowledgment that every person matters.

Orange has kept this tradition alive for four decades. The next challenge is making sure the invitation reaches beyond the people who already attend. A relative might help an older neighbor make the registration call. Someone who knows a person living alone might share the details without making assumptions about that person's finances. And anyone who offers a ride should make sure it is wanted and safe.

A person should not have to prove hardship to enjoy fellowship. Nor should those who need a meal feel like they are on display.

I live in Fort Collins, Colorado, and learned about the dinner from this newspaper, not by participating in it. But I hope the town recognizes what a faithful welcome can mean.

Jesus Christ never taught us to wait for lonely people to make themselves visible. He taught us to make room at the table.

Douglas Vandergraph
Fort Collins, Colorado

People the Best Part of Campaigning

To the Editor:

At the Orange Board of Selectmen meeting on Nov. 4, I did not expect to speak pub-

Continued on page 8

Orange Democratic Town Committee

Reflections, Gratitude And Engagement



MELISSA JOHNSTON

Election night was a great night for Orange, Connecticut and communities across our nation. Voters overwhelmingly placed their confidence in Democrats to help move our country in a better direction. The message was clear: people want leaders who will listen, get to work and deliver results. Now it's time to deliver.

Here in Orange, state Sen. James Maroney and state Reps. Mary Welander and MJ Shannon were all reelected to represent us in Hartford. I'm immensely grateful to the volunteers who gave up evenings and weekends knocking on doors, making calls and supporting these campaigns, and to everyone who spread the message, encouraged a friend to vote or cast a ballot. I'm also thankful to Alex Armstrong for stepping up to run in the 119th District. Running for office takes courage and commitment, and that willingness to serve deserves our appreciation.

But let's be clear: Election Day is the starting line, not the finish line.

Every person elected to represent Orange needs our ideas, engagement and support to do their job well. That includes our elected Democrats and state Rep. Kathy Kennedy, who also represents part of town. Party affiliation shouldn't matter when it comes to working for Orange. We deserve our fair share of state funding, thoughtful policies and real solutions to the challenges families are facing.

Our legislators work for all of us. So call them. Write to them. Share your ideas and hold them accountable. We should expect our elected officials to keep us informed, explain how their decisions affect us and show up ready to do the hard work of governing. Public service is a responsibility, not a lifetime appointment. When excuses replace solutions, or complacency replaces commitment, it's our responsibility to demand better.

Those same expectations apply to our elected leaders right here in Orange, where decisions often affect our daily lives most directly. But accountability doesn't happen on its own. It takes residents who are willing to stay informed, speak up and be part of the process.

Our town's budget process is already underway. Maybe you could share an idea with the Board of Finance, attend a Board of Education meeting in Orange or at Amity, or reach out to an elected official about an issue that matters to you. Voting is essential, but it's only one part of civic participation. The more of us who take part, the more our government reflects our values, priorities and needs.

Of course, I'm the first to say you shouldn't have to attend every meeting to know what's going on. I'm a working parent with two active kids. I get the time crunch. Government has a responsibility to keep residents informed, invite participation and make it easier for people to have a voice. Civic engagement is a two-way street. We should feel that our voices matter because our leaders are actively listening to us.

And here's one more idea: have you ever considered running for office?

Our next municipal elections are already on the horizon, and we're getting ready. We need people who care about Orange to raise their hands, share their talents, volunteer their time and perhaps even put their names on the ballot. We've built tremendous momentum through 2025 and 2026, and there's so much more we can accomplish together.

The strength of Orange has always been its people. We don't have to agree on every issue to agree that our community is worth showing up for. Elections give us a voice. What we do between elections gives that voice its power. Let's use it to keep making Orange a community we're proud to call home. You can find out more about the Orange Democrats and how to get involved on our website at OrangeCTDems.org.

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

Letters (Continued From 7)

licly about my campaign for state senate. The first selectman, however, gave a group of students in attendance from Amity High School critical issues class the opportunity to ask the board questions about the town and to my surprise, one student took that opportunity to ask me what the best part was of running for office. Without hesitation, I answered the people that I had met throughout the campaign.

Running for office is an honor but it is not easy. It demands a tremendous amount of time and resources, as well as subjects you to public scrutiny. But the people I met and the friends I made along the way made it all worthwhile.

For the better part of the past year, I had the opportunity to work with and meet people in Milford, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge whom I would never have met had I not run for office. I was blessed to work with a campaign team and other candidates that put their heart and soul into this effort, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

To everyone in the community who placed their trust and faith in me, I will always be grateful for your support. I regret that I could not deliver the results you hoped for.

I am and will be forever humbled by the countless people who opened their doors to a complete stranger and shared their hopes, dreams, fears and concerns. I will carry those conversations with me forever. Those conversations reinforced my decision to run and my belief that politics is about helping people.

I once again would like to congratulate Sen. James Maroney and the others elected to represent the towns in the 14th Senate District. I wish them the best of luck.

My deepest thanks go to my wonderful wife and my three boys, who were my greatest supporters and sacrificed so much throughout this campaign. Thank you for your love and making this journey possible.

Owen Weaver
Orange Town Attorney

Don't Repeat Beecher Road School Mistakes

To the Editor:

The referendum on the proposed Beecher Road School replacement project has been

Continued on page 9

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Orange Republican Town Committee

A Time To Reflect And Be Grateful



JUDE TOOHEY

It's amazing how quickly time has flown by. We are approaching the winter months, Thanksgiving, Christmas and so many other holidays. When your children and grandchildren start saying that time is passing them by, you know something needs to change. I would ask every person reading this column to step back, enjoy the cool weather and embrace this entire season, whether you believe in it or not.

I always try to look, even on the hard days, for the one thing I'm most grateful for. Do you realize that simply getting up, walking or just being here – whatever your health condition – is something to be grateful for? If we are writing, reading or simply being ourselves, we get to see the sunshine and enjoy another day. That, too, is a blessing. For all of us, those rushing to doctors' appointments, those ferrying children and grandchildren here and there, and even those who are homebound, look at the simple things that make each day exceptional. We have them. We still have them.

This election cycle did not turn out the way many of us had hoped. At times like these, finding the positive can feel difficult. Yet there is still a bright side. We now get to look ahead at what the coming year and beyond will bring.

The people of Orange have spoken. You cast your votes and chose the path forward. We know that the few remaining Republicans in the state legislature will face a steeper climb, but I am confident they will continue to fight for us as best they can. We are fortunate to live in a free state and a free nation, and I know they will never turn their backs on the people who put their trust in them.

In the months ahead, once everyone is settled into their roles, we will begin to see what this election means for our town and our state. I want to congratulate all those elected to serve. I especially want to thank everyone who worked tirelessly to bring positive change. You did a wonderful job. While I would have preferred a different outcome, I remain respectful of our process. Thank you, all of you.

I want to return for a moment to that earlier call for a simpler way of life. Recently I read about a movie in which the main characters gave up their cell phones, computers and televisions. Can you even imagine what that would look like? I'm not sure I could do it myself, but maybe – just maybe – it would be worth a try.

November is a time for Thanksgiving. I thank everyone who has entered my life, changed my life and helped me become who I am today. God bless you all. And as we move forward together, may we continue to find reasons for hope, kindness and gratitude in the days ahead.

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 8)

held, and the proposal was defeated overwhelmingly, by a 2-1 margin. The message to the Board of Education, the building committee and the Board of Selectmen should be loud and clear. Unfortunately, it appears that this may not be the case.

In a recent online article, it was reported that "Committee members initially focused their discussion on revisiting the rejected proposal, although some members also advocated reassessing the school's facilities needs and evaluating potentially less expensive alternatives."

As a long-time Woodbridge resident and taxpayer, this is distressing to me. The connotation is that the building committee simply is not paying attention. There is nothing to be gained by "revisiting" a proposal that was defeated by a 2-1 margin. The fact that only "some" members of the committee advocated reassessing the school's needs and looking at less expensive alternates suggests that the building committee needs to be replaced.

The proposal that was offered at the referendum was the most expensive of four alternates that were investigated. The fact that the Board of Education had the hubris to advocate for the most expensive option after a study in June had already revealed significant opposition to unnecessary expenditures reminds me of two decades ago. For those who are new to Woodbridge, in 2002 and 2003 the Amity Regional Board of Education proposed an annual budget that was overwhelmingly rejected by all three towns in a referendum. The Amity Board of Education then submitted a revised budget that was higher than the one already rejected. That, too, was defeated. In total, that train-wreck of a budget was defeated in 17 referendums – an all-time state record that is not a record to be proud of.

I hope the Woodbridge Board of Education won't repeat history and come back with a new proposal that is unresponsive to the mandate from the citizens to offer a more fiscally responsible solution for Beecher Road School. Multiple referendums cost money and waste time. The Board of Education needs to listen to the people they represent.

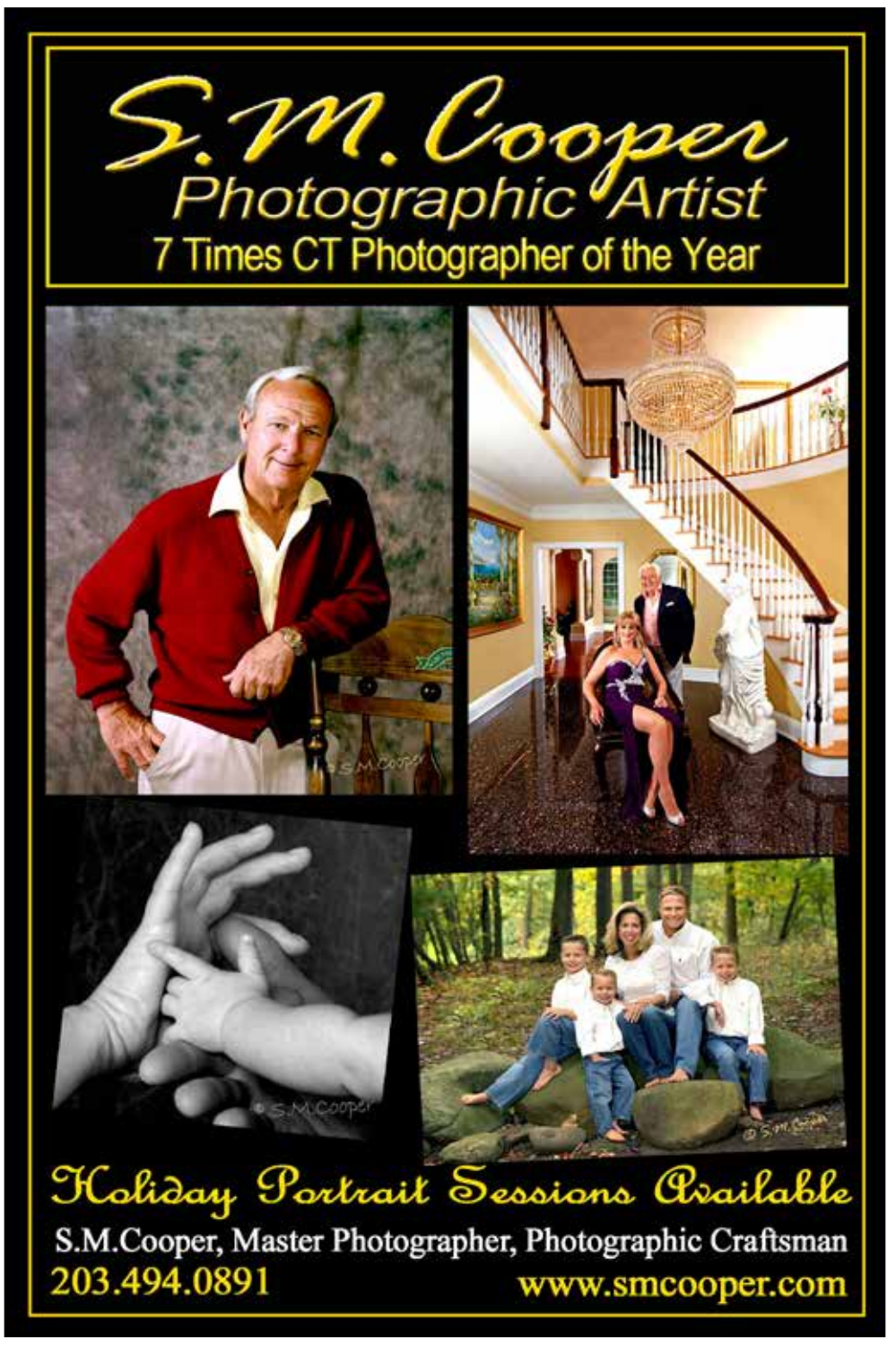
Harwood W. Loomis
Woodbridge

Not Sold on Vaccines

To the Editor:

A recent column by Kimberly Rihel extolling the virtues and efficacy of all vaccines including the mRNA created during COVID completely ignored the growing evidence of its lack of efficacy and the documented harm it did to thousands of people who lined up to take the shot and booster upon booster. I can't believe this push for every and all vaccines for shingles, flu, COVID and RSV while ignoring practicing common sense, effective supplements and healthy diet and lifestyles. Do your own research and understand that the medical profession is pushing these vaccines big time along with your corner drug stores and big government. A better heading for those pushing these vaccines should be "The Power Of Big Pharma" and those who believe them.

Bonnie Pelaccia
Orange





Milford Senior Center

Your Health Is Your Wealth: Invest In It All Year Round



LEONORA RODRIGUEZ

Senior centers across the country are welcoming spaces that support the social well-being of older adults in their communities with programs and activities designed to help people age well.

But did you know many of these centers also partner with agencies and organizations working to improve health at every age, often through community education that helps prevent issues before they start?

One of those concerns is dementia. Dementia is an umbrella term for conditions that affect memory, thinking and daily functioning. Research suggests dementia may be delayed or prevented through lifestyle changes. Many of these changes are small, but their effects can last. High blood pressure, hearing loss, vision loss, diabetes, high cholesterol, head injury due to falls, social isolation, physical inactivity, smoking and excessive alcohol use are among the 14 modifiable risk factors identified in the 2024 Lancet Commission report.

So why bring this up during the holidays? Many of us start the new year with a resolution. We look to change, improve, learn something new. Typically, that resolution has usually melted into a puddle with the season's snow by April.

This holiday season, consider giving yourself a gift that lasts all year: a practical plan for staying healthy. Instead of one big resolution, try one small change each month.

January is known as "dry January," a time when many people cut back on alcohol, which is good for both body and brain.

February is American Heart Month, and what's good for your heart is good for your brain. Have your blood pressure checked.

March is National Nutrition Month. Consider trying the MIND diet, an eating plan built around brain-friendly foods that follow the Mediterranean diet.

April is Stress Awareness Month. Try a meditation, yoga or breathwork class at the Milford Senior Center.

May is Older Americans Month and Better Hearing Month. Consider having your hearing checked. Hearing loss is one of the biggest dementia risk factors you can change.

June is Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Learn the early warning signs of dementia and when to talk with your doctor.

July is a reminder to stay connected. Social isolation raises dementia risk. Join a class, a club or a lunch at your local senior center. Our friends at the West Haven Senior Center recently reopened. They're located in the new all-ages "hub" at the West Haven Community Center at 255 Meloy Rd.

In August, start planning for fall flu and COVID-19 vaccines, and book your annual checkup.

September is National Senior Center Month and includes Falls Prevention Awareness Week. Falls can lead to head injuries, another dementia risk factor. Keep yourself upright and balanced with classes like tai chi and strength and balance, offered to members of the Milford Senior Center.

October is a good time to schedule an eye exam and review your medications with your pharmacist, since untreated vision loss is also linked to dementia risk.

Know your numbers in November, which is National Diabetes Month. Diabetes raises dementia risk, and you can have your A1C (a measure of average blood sugar) checked for free at the Bridges Healthcare Wellness on Wheels van, often parked at the Milford Senior Center.

Last but not least, December is the month we celebrate with family and friends, and there's no better way to end the year than by planning one that gives you the best gift: your health. As they say, your health is your wealth. Spend it wisely.

The Milford Senior Center is a nonprofit organization supported by donations, grants and membership fees. If you wish to support the work of the center, consider donating to our holiday appeal until the end of December. Your gift of as little of $10 goes toward ensuring the wonderful programs, services and activities of the center can continue uninterrupted. For more information on donating, please contact us at 203-877-5131 or via email at LCRmilforseniorcenter@yahoo.com.

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

Orange Board of Finance

Will Congress Ever Address The National Debt?



KEVIN MCNABOLA

The 2026 midterm elections delivered sweeping wins for Democrats, who regained control of both the House and the Senate. The big question is how Democrats can capitalize and take a page out of the Clinton playbook by setting economic policies that work for America: reducing the deficit, lowering interest rates and creating investment and growth within our economy.

Can Democrats build on what worked well for the country in the 1990s when President Bill Clinton instituted a new era of fiscal discipline and was able to deliver on common ground solutions that resulted in four straight years of surpluses from 1998 to 2001? Since then, a quarter of a century has passed and the US credit continues to deteriorate because of increased government debt and interest payments. Mandatory government spending, which includes Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and interest payments on debt, has doubled and now accounts for 75 percent of overall government spending.

Over those 25 years, we have seen successive Republican and Democratic administrations fail to agree on measures to reverse the trend of large annual fiscal deficits and growing interest costs. Neither side has addressed the elephant in the room: our national debt, which currently stands at $40 trillion.

There has been a total lack of leadership in Washington, which has not delivered for the American people. It certainly seems that Congress really doesn't have the appetite nor the ability to compromise or deliver on workable solutions that would benefit the American taxpayer. There are many legislators in the current Congress, including here in Connecticut, who have been in power for decades and have not been able to address the fiscal crisis that has been growing during that time.

My biggest concern isn't simply the national debt: it's the fact that the federal government must continually finance its existing debt while also continuing to pay interest costs.

Here are some of the major impacts I see on the horizon:

- Interest payments will consume an increasing share of the federal budget. Interest costs are projected to rise from 3.6 percent of gross domestic product to 4.6 percent in 2036.

- Government spending more dollars on servicing debt makes it less able to invest in roads, bridges, airports, education, research and energy infrastructure.

- Increased government borrowing will outpace revenues, causing increases in income taxes, corporate taxes and reduced benefits to Social Security and Medicare.

- Slower economic growth with inflation will weaken the US dollar.

Why has Congress failed to address the decline in US creditworthiness over the past quarter century? I believe the following steps should be taken now to confront the problem.

- Fiscal reform within Social Security and Medicare, gradually increasing the Social Security retirement age to reflect longer life expectancy.

- Control federal spending. Review federal programs, eliminate ineffective spending, reduce waste and improve accountability. Examine major spending categories, including healthcare, defense and entitlement programs.

- Reform the tax system. Simplify the tax code, close unjustified loopholes, improve tax compliance and evaluate whether the existing tax structure generates sufficient revenue to support federal obligations.

- Continue to strengthen the US dollar and build liquidity into the market.

The last time Congress attempted to take any action on addressing the national debt was a bipartisan initiative lead by Utah Sen. Mitt Romney and West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin. The Fiscal Stability Act was passed in 2023 by both the House and Senate. However, Connecticut's 3rd District Congresswoman, Rosa DeLauro, voted against the bill. The act established a statutory debt commission whose main objective was to find legislative solutions to stabilize and decrease the national debt and deficit spending.

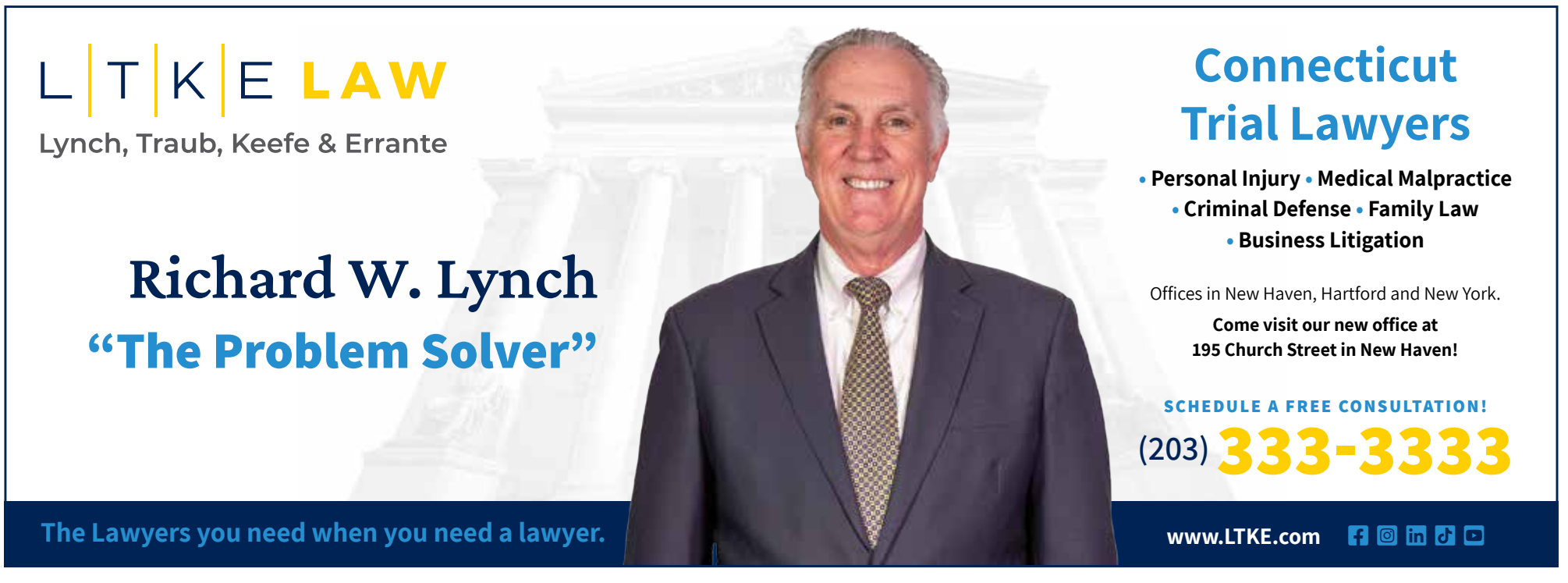
This was a great start to get Congress moving in the right direction. However, both senators have since left office and there has been no action taken to address deficit spending. If nothing changes, the next generation of Americans will be left holding the bag and paying the price for decades of inaction.

We need to end the politics of who is to blame and work to build common ground. Congress needs to roll up their sleeves and work together to address our national debt. Time is running out to act. It is important to bring fiscal reform to the forefront in the coming months and work to reverse course.

The path forward is not easy, but it is achievable by limiting future spending and borrowing. It wasn't that long ago when working together in Congress meant taking on a real leadership role. We need the next generation of leaders within the 120th Congress to step up.

Putting some of the "tenured" Congressional leaders who have been in leadership roles for decades back into power would be a missed opportunity for the Democratic Party. It's time for some new centrist, common-sense Democrats to step up and deliver results for the American people.

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



Greetings from Woodbridge

When Voters Say No, What Happens Next?



SHEILA MCCREVEN

In a democracy, the word "no" can be just as consequential as "yes." But when voters reject a proposal to build a school, renovate a public building or approve a regional school budget, what exactly have they decided?

That question is now confronting Woodbridge following the October rejection of a proposal to replace Beecher Road School. While the vote settled the fate of that particular project, it did not eliminate the need to maintain and improve the existing school.

The Woodbridge Board of Education must now distinguish immediate maintenance needs and operating expenses from longer-term capital improvements, determining which belong in the annual operating budget and which require funding through the town's capital budget process.

The challenge is to prioritize necessary maintenance and capital improvements rather than the more ambitious features of the rejected proposal, making decisions that reflect both the needs of students and staff and voters' concerns about affordability.

And Woodbridge is hardly alone.

Connecticut voters delivered mixed verdicts on school construction and other public investments on Nov. 3.

Voters in Enfield narrowly approved a $511 million school construction and conversion program. Middletown residents supported a $30.4 million school infrastructure project, while Southington voters rejected an $86.7 million school facilities proposal.

Perhaps the most instructive example comes from Regional School District 10, which serves Burlington and Harwinton. Voters there approved roof replacements and HVAC improvements but rejected separate proposals for synthetic turf and engineered natural grass athletic fields.

The results show how separate referendum questions allow voters to distinguish between public investments, a consideration that may soon matter in Woodbridge, Orange and Bethany.

Amity Regional School District 5 is considering approximately $35 million in capital improvements, including roof work, HVAC upgrades, library media center renovations and artificial turf athletic fields at its middle schools. Officials are considering whether to present the projects together or as separate referendum questions.

Woodbridge voters have already rejected one ambitious and expensive school construction proposal. Could they do the same with Amity's proposed capital improvements, particularly if they view some projects as unnecessary or unaffordable? And if those projects appear on the same ballot as Amity's annual operating budget, could voter dissatisfaction affect that vote as well?

The lesson from Regional School District 10 is that voters may support essential improvements while rejecting projects they consider less necessary. Presenting Amity's capital projects as separate questions would respect taxpayers' ability to make those distinctions, potentially reducing the risk that opposition to particular projects spills over into a rejection of the district's overall operating budget.

Considering voter sentiment requires more than counting ballots. Officials must examine concerns raised during deliberation and public comment, explain the financial consequences of different alternatives and be willing to reconsider their assumptions throughout the planning process. Residents, in turn, deserve enough information to evaluate the choices presented to them.

This process can be frustrating, especially after years of studies, committee meetings and professional recommendations. But a no vote need not mean the end of planning efforts. Instead, it can become the starting point for a better proposal.

Beyond how Amity structures its capital referendum, the financial pressures facing its member towns could also influence voters' decisions. And a significant shift in how the district's operating budget will be apportioned next year, based on Oct. 1 enrollment figures, may heighten those concerns.

Orange now accounts for 49.08 percent of Amity's enrollment, up from 47.79 percent, while Woodbridge's share has declined to 34.99 percent from 35.76 percent. Bethany's share has fallen to 15.93 percent from 16.46 percent.

Assuming no increase in the overall district budget, these changes alone would reduce Woodbridge's contribution by approximately $441,500 and Bethany's by $300,600, while increasing Orange's by $742,100.

These figures illustrate how, even before considering the proposed bonding referendum, Orange faces additional financial pressure while Woodbridge could see some relief.

This shifting landscape means that for Amity officials the challenge heading into budget planning is to present its proposed investments in a way that best allows voters to make informed choices – and to listen carefully to input from town officials who may be best positioned to understand the sentiment of voters in their community.

For Woodbridge and Orange, whose students share a regional school system but whose financial circumstances are moving in opposite directions, greater collaboration may be more important than ever.

A referendum is not simply about securing permission to proceed. It's about obtaining the consent of the governed. When that consent is withheld, officials should seek to understand why, and work together to find a better way forward.

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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The Garden Spot

Managing In A Changing Environment



Pat Dray

Its amaryllis time again. You'll see the bulbs in "kits" that include the bulb, pot and potting medium, bare bulbs and even waxed bulbs. They may even be in your garage if you stored last year's spent bulbs in a dry, cool place and are waking them up with some water and sunlight.

Amaryllis are native to Africa and were brought to Europe in the 1700s. Some of these original bulbs bloomed for as long as 75 years, so having mine bloom a second year shouldn't be a surprise. However, most of the bulbs we purchase now are native to Central and South America. They're hybrids without that long a history.

Your first step for long-lasting flowers is to purchase healthy bulbs. Bulb kits are convenient, but without expiration dates, a bulb's age and quality are hard to judge. Stored bulbs can remain dormant for a few weeks to three months. Buy kits from reputable growers and vendors with high turnover. Plant them promptly rather than waiting until the end of that storage period. A bulb that feels mushy is already rotting and will not bloom.

When planting the bulb, choose a pot that's no more than one inch wider than the bulb and about twice as tall. You'll have plenty of room for root growth while still leaving the bulb a bit rootbound. Make sure that the pot has good drainage so that your bulb does not rot. Fill the pot about halfway with sterile soil medium, bury the bulb roots if there are any, and gently pack the soil around the bulb, leaving about the top third of the bulb uncovered. Water well and put it in a sunny location.

Keep watering the bulb when the top several inches of soil feel dry. You should also feed with half-strength plant food and leave it in full sun until buds appear. Once the buds appear, move it to indirect light and enjoy the beautiful flowers.

If like me you like to get your bulb to rebloom, last year you had cut the flower off, leaving the stem until it turned yellow. This allows the green stalk to promote photosynthesis and store the energy in the bulb for a new bloom. Once the stem turns yellow, cut that off and let the bulb go dormant (like mine in the basement). Leave it in the dark for eight to 12 weeks and don't water it. After the dormant period, move the pot to a sunny location. Start to water and fertilize it, and you will have a rebloom to enjoy in four to six weeks.

Happy winter gardening.

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

Travel Matters

New Ship Review: Star Of The Seas



Karen Quinn-Panzer

We had the opportunity to sail on Royal Caribbean's megaship, Star of the Seas, for our annual travel conference last week. At capacity of 7,400 guests and over 2,500 crew members, it is one of the largest ships in the world and voted on Conde Nast Traveler Hot List as the Best New Ship for 2026. I'm usually not a fan of the larger ships, but was surprised by how Royal engineers the ship design to maximize space. You have no idea that there are this many people on board.

There are forward and aft elevator banks with 12 elevators each in a large space with multiple keypads stationed by the elevators. Walk up to the keypad, enter the deck you want, and you are immediately directed to elevator A-L. The most we ever waited for an elevator was 90 seconds, and usually closer to 10 seconds.

What helps give you that sense of space and lack of crowds is the number of popular public spaces available. There are over 40 dining and beverage venues, seven pools and 10 whirlpools. There are eight neighborhoods: Central Park, Surfside and Chill and Thrill Island, Hideaway (adults only), AquaDome, Royal Promenade and the Suite Neighborhood. Star of the Seas also boasts the largest pool at sea: Royal Bay.

Even the buffets are scattered throughout the ship so that you are not overwhelmed by one huge buffet. There are small buffets in the Central Park and Surfside neighborhoods, for example, where you may see 20-30 people maximum for breakfast. There are grab-and-go cafes in other locations, including the AquaDome, the Chill and Thrill and the Royal Promenade.

This is an amazing opportunity for a multigenerational family trip, since there is everything from kids clubs for every age, babysitting, a category 6 waterpark onboard, two adults-only pools, Broadway show, AquaShow, ice skating show, seven venues for live music, and adults-only venues such as Lincoln Park Supper Club, Lou's Jazz in Central Park plus six adults-only comedy shows. The Broadway show on our ship was "Back to the Future" and was truly amazing with a flying car and plenty of pyrotechnics. The cast, staging and technology was Broadway level at its finest.

My biggest surprise was the Lincoln Park Supper Club, which recreates 1930s Chicago supper clubs, complete with a jazz combo in an art deco intimate setting for only 42 guests. The menu consists of seven courses with craft cocktail pairings. Preceding the actual menu is an amuse-bouche and gourmet bread and sauces with free-flowing Moet and Chandon champagne. There is a $179-$199 per-person upcharge depending on whether you pre-purchase or book onboard. On our sailing, you could enjoy it for $130 if available on the first night of the cruise.

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

C

Important Notice for ConnectiCare, CarePartners and SilverScript Members

Your current plan ends December 31, 2026

If you're enrolled in ConnectiCare, CarePartners or SilverScript your plan won't continue into 2027. You'll need to choose a new Medicare plan ASAP so you're covered without a gap in January 2027.

The good news is that you have options, and you don't have to sort through them alone. I'll walk you through the plans available to you, answer your questions, and help you find one that fits your doctors, prescriptions and budget.

Appointments fill up quickly. Call today to reserve your time and make sure your new coverage starts January 1, 2027



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Orange Recycling Committee

Recycling Challenges, Successes, And Your Role



ILENE MOYHER

Recycling helps conserve natural resources and reduce waste, working most effectively when we do it correctly. A few simple habits can make a big difference in how much we recycle and how efficiently programs operate.

Orange residents can put paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, plastic containers and bottles, and metal cans and foil in their blue curbside recycling bins. No sorting is needed, but items should be empty and reasonably clean. The Orange Transfer Station & Recycling Center also accepts these materials, along with textiles, metal tanks, compost materials, leaves and brush, paint, electronics, lightbulbs, batteries and building materials.

Thin, malleable plastic bags, films and wraps can be recycled and turned into other products. To do so, they must be separated from all other recyclables. Therefore, do not put these types of soft plastics in your blue bin or the mixed recyclables bin at the transfer station.

Instead, Orange residents can recycle clean, empty plastic bags and wraps in the specially designated red shed at the transfer station. The shed is for thin, malleable plastic bags, films and wraps only (this goes for other plastic bag collection bins around town, such as those at stores).

Please check the clearly posted signs at the shed for lists of acceptable and non-acceptable materials. Don't put these non-accepted bags in the shed: black plastic, bags used for landscaping products (mulch, fertilizer, soil, ice melt, etc.), pet supplies (food, litter, etc.), and frozen foods.

Unfortunately, despite clear signage, people sometimes put non-accepted bags in the shed. Even more astonishing, some leave trash, cardboard, cans, bottles, Styrofoam and other items that clearly don't belong there. This creates extra work for Orange Recycling Committee volunteers, who regularly collect the full bags of plastic and transport them to Home Depot for recycling. When unacceptable materials are mixed in, volunteers must remove them by hand – a dirty and unpleasant job that could easily be avoided.

If you collect cans, bottles, paper or other items in a plastic bag, empty those items into the recycling bin, then recycle the bag separately (except for black plastic bags, which go in the trash).

When non-recyclables end up in recycling bins, the entire contents may have to be thrown away. Common mistakes include putting trash or food in recycling bins at community events; tossing polystyrene and plastic wrap in with cardboard at the transfer station; and including caps, lids and corks in the special glass recycling container at the transfer station.

A little extra care helps ensure recyclable materials actually get recycled. Please check signage and make sure everything goes in the right place. When in doubt, use the trash rather than risk contaminating recycling streams.

Many materials collected through established programs are turned into new products. Since no system is perfect and recycling markets vary, not everything placed in a bin gets recycled. That's why recycling correctly matters. Keeping trash and unacceptable materials out helps protect the quality of collected materials and makes successful recycling more likely.

For local recycling info, visit orangerecycles.com or facebook.com/ORCinCT.

Ilene Moyher is a member of the Orange Recycling Committee.

Your Health

A Plan For Rural Health



DR. AMIR MOHAMMAD

In late October, I attended the semiannual meeting hosted by Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Manisha Juthani. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for local health directors to connect with one another, exchange ideas, share best practices and learn about the department's current priorities and initiatives. I particularly enjoy these gatherings because they foster collaboration and strengthen professional relationships among colleagues working to improve public health across the state.

During the meeting, Juthani and her team provided an update on the Rural Health Transformation Program and discussed its goals, funding priorities and potential impact on healthcare delivery in rural communities.

This is a five-year initiative led by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the US Department of Health and Human Services to strengthen rural healthcare systems and improve health outcomes for rural residents. With $154.2 million allocated for the first budget period, the program represents a substantial investment in addressing longstanding challenges in rural healthcare, including access to care, workforce shortages, technology limitations and the financial sustainability of rural healthcare facilities.

There are several towns and jurisdictions that are classified as rural. The RHTP program is organized around four primary areas.

The first, population health outcomes, focuses on expanding preventive services, strengthening chronic disease management and integrating behavioral health services to address the underlying health needs of rural communities.

The second, workforce development, aims to recruit, train and retain healthcare professionals through rural residency development, provider incentives and initiatives that facilitate interstate licensure.

An important component of workforce development is rural residency development. Funding will be distributed to medical schools to support the expansion of existing rural residency programs or the development of new programs. This funding includes two years of administrative support to help institutions plan and implement program expansion or development. Rural provider incentives will offer upfront annual awards to individual healthcare providers who commit to working in a rural area or providing care to rural residents within the state for at least five years. These incentives are intended to encourage clinicians to practice in communities where access to healthcare professionals is limited.

The third priority, data and technology modernization, seeks to improve rural health information exchange and interoperability, expand telehealth capacity and strengthen the use of predictive analytics to support clinical care and population health planning.

The fourth, care transformation and stability, focuses on helping rural hospitals, healthcare facilities and local providers develop sustainable operational and financial models to maintain access to essential services over the long term.

The state Department of Public Health will also support implementation through the Interstate License Compact initiative. Funding will provide dedicated staffing to reduce licensing processing times and streamline license reciprocity for qualified clinicians from other states. By making it easier for eligible healthcare professionals to obtain authorization to practice across state lines, this effort may help address workforce shortages and improve access to care in rural communities.

These initiatives also align with DPH's broader strategic planning priorities, which provide a framework for strengthening the department's capacity to protect and promote health across Connecticut.

The work has five priorities:

- Data: Facilitating the use of data to inform public health decision-making at all levels across the state.

- Communication: Serving as a trusted source of public health information for residents, organizations, decision-makers and community partners.

- Regulatory capabilities: Promoting public health through policies and regulations that are safe, effective, equitable and accountable.

- Partnerships: Serving as a trusted and effective convener of partners to address public health issues requiring coordinated action.

- Workforce: Ensuring that Connecticut's public health workforce has the foundational competencies, resources and support needed to protect and promote the health of all residents.

We learned that the implementation of the strategic plan will be an ongoing process leading to a specific implementation plans rather than a one-time exercise. Each strategic priority area will meet twice annually – once midway through the plan year and again at the end of the year – to assess whether implementation plans remain relevant, monitor ongoing activities, evaluate progress and identify additional priorities or activities that should be incorporated.

At the end of each year, key performance indicators will be submitted to the Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for inclusion in an annual progress report. Many of these indicators will reflect collaborative work with public health partners, making their participation important in identifying accomplishments, measuring progress and addressing gaps.

Juthani said that performance management is also an integral part of this strategic planning process. By linking strategic priorities to implementation activities and measurable indicators, DPH can monitor progress, assess whether initiatives are achieving their intended outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. This approach reinforces accountability while supporting data-informed decisions and continuous quality improvement.

DPH's strategic planning priorities reflect a coordinated approach to strengthening public health and healthcare delivery. Ultimately, the success of these initiatives will be measured not only by the funding invested and programs established, but also by the meaningful, measurable improvements they bring to the communities they serve. I believe through sustained collaboration, effective implementation and ongoing performance measurement, DPH and local partners can turn strategic priorities into meaningful action.

As local public health leaders, we have an important role in supporting these initiatives and ensuring that investments translate into lasting improvements in healthcare access, population health and the well-being of our residents.

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

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Time Management

Three Ways To Solve Every Problem



DON WETMORE

Everyone has problems. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some are minor annoyances that consume a few minutes of our day. Others are major challenges that can occupy our thoughts for weeks, months or years.

Regardless of their size, unresolved problems have something in common: they consume our time, energy and attention. They become a drag on our personal productivity. Even when we aren't actively dealing with a problem, it can occupy valuable space in our minds, distracting us from the things we want and need to accomplish.

Over the years, I have come to believe there are only three basic solutions to every problem.

1. Fix it.

If something is wrong and you have the ability, authority and resources to correct it, take action. Don't let a manageable problem become a bigger one simply because you keep putting it off.

Perhaps you have a difficult conversation you've been avoiding, a financial matter that needs attention, a broken relationship that needs repairing, or a project that has gotten off track. Identify what needs to be done, determine the next step, and do it.

The longer you postpone dealing with a fixable problem, the more time and energy it is likely to consume. Action brings relief and restores control.

2. Accept it.

Some problems cannot be fixed, at least not by us. They may involve other people's behavior, circumstances beyond our control or events that have already happened.

You cannot change yesterday. You cannot control what someone else thinks or does. You cannot always change the circumstances in which you find yourself.

But you can change how you respond.

Acceptance doesn't mean you like the situation or agree with it. It means you stop wasting energy fighting a reality you cannot change. Instead, redirect that energy toward the things you can influence.

Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is stop trying to change what cannot be changed.

3. Leave it.

Sometimes the best solution is to walk away.

There may be a relationship that is consistently destructive, a commitment that no longer makes sense, a business arrangement that isn't working, or an activity that takes more from you than it gives back.

We sometimes stay with things simply because we've invested so much time, money or emotion in them. But yesterday's investment should not dictate tomorrow's decisions.

Leaving isn't necessarily quitting. Sometimes it's making a wise decision to move on.

Here is a simple exercise. Think about the three problems that are currently taking up the most space in your mind. Write each one down. Then make a decision: fix it, accept it, or leave it.

Don't let unresolved problems become permanent residents in your mind.

You have a limited amount of time and energy each day. Spend them on the people, activities, and opportunities that move your life forward.

Remember, you don't have to solve every problem the same way. But you do have to decide what you're going to do about it.

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.

AMSO Students Get Taste Of Local Government



Amity Middle School Orange students visited local government offices on Oct. 28. Top, from left: Evan Hartley, Logan Kyer, Ictus Matozzo, Amber Vannalath, Arianna Xie, Hannah Anderson, Matilda Roberts, Zoe Zanvettor, Elise Johnson and Skylar Royster. Bottom, from left: Zain Jarad, Paul Gettinger, Franco Martone, Dylan Fitzpatrick, Max McCutchen, Madeline Cheng and Priscilla Asiama. *Photo by Matt Williams.*

Seventeen seventh- and eighth-grade students from Amity Middle School Orange participated in a hands-on learning experience exploring local government during Government Day on Oct. 28.

Students were selected to shadow town officials through an essay-writing process. With support from Orange Youth Services, town officials and the AMSO community, students shadowed municipal employees and gained firsthand insight into the daily operations of town government.

The day began with a presentation by former Town Clerk Pat O'Sullivan, who discussed the importance of public service and democracy. He described the role of government as accomplishing collectively what individuals cannot accomplish alone.

Students shadowed in various town departments, including police, fire, parks and recreation, the tax assessor's office, and the first selectman's office. They learned about the roles and responsibilities of each department and gained a better understanding of the importance of collaboration and coordination of services in keeping the town running smoothly.





Real Talk: You Ask, A Pro Answers

Home Inspections: Know Before You Buy (Or Sell)



BARBARA LEHRER

Understanding the inspection process and keeping an open mind can help buyers and sellers navigate one of the most important stages of a real estate transaction.

Before the keys change hands, there's an important step that can sometimes test the patience and expectations of everyone involved: the home inspection.

A home inspection is designed to provide buyers with a clearer understanding of a property's condition. From the foundation to the roof, inspectors evaluate the home's major systems, structural components and visible conditions.

While the process is invaluable, it can also uncover issues that neither the buyer nor the seller anticipated.

Understand that no home is perfect, and a willingness to work together can make all the difference. Every home has a history. Over the years, repairs are made, improvements are completed and systems age. Even a well-maintained property may have conditions that require attention.

Recalling the details of every repair or renovation may be challenging for sellers who have lived in their homes for decades. For buyers, receiving a lengthy inspection report can feel overwhelming, particularly when they are still familiarizing themselves with the property.

An inspection report is not necessarily a list of demands. Rather, it is a tool to help buyers better understand their investment and determine which issues warrant further evaluation or discussion.

An experienced real estate professional can help both parties distinguish between routine maintenance, recommended improvements and more significant concerns that may affect the transaction.

Some homeowners choose to conduct a home inspection before placing their property on the market. This proactive approach can identify potential concerns early, allowing sellers to address repairs, obtain estimates or prepare for questions from prospective buyers.

While a pre-listing inspection can be beneficial, a buyer's inspector might identify additional issues. Each inspection may vary depending on the professional conducting it, the property's accessibility and other conditions.

Whether sellers choose to inspect in advance or wait until they are under contract, preparation and transparency can help create a smoother transaction.

Certain property features, particularly private wells and septic systems, often require specialized inspections and can introduce questions. A qualified well specialist can evaluate water quality, equipment and system performance while educating buyers about proper maintenance. Similarly, a septic inspection may uncover issues that are not visible during an ordinary home inspection.

Even relatively newer systems can develop problems. For example, improper soil compaction during installation may contribute to settling that affects septic components over time.

Discovering an issue does not automatically mean the transaction must come to an end. Understanding the nature of the problem, consulting the appropriate professionals and obtaining reliable repair estimates can help both parties evaluate their options.

A problem discovered is not always a deal lost. Often, it is simply an opportunity to find a reasonable solution.

Once the inspection results are available, buyers and sellers may need to revisit certain aspects of their agreement.

Depending on the circumstances and contract terms, a seller may agree to complete specific repairs, offer a negotiated credit or make another mutually acceptable arrangement. In other situations, the buyer may choose to assume responsibility for certain improvements after closing.

The goal should not be to deliver a home in flawless condition. Instead, both parties should focus on material concerns, reasonable expectations and solutions that reflect the property's condition and the terms of the sale.

Sellers should recognize that buyers are making a substantial financial commitment and want confidence in their purchase. Buyers should understand that normal wear and tear is part of homeownership, particularly when purchasing an older property.

A knowledgeable real estate agent plays an important role throughout the inspection and negotiation process.

From helping clients understand the next steps to coordinating discussions with inspectors and qualified contractors, an experienced agent can provide perspective when emotions run high.

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

Survey Asks Woodbridge Residents For Views On School Referendum

The Beecher Road School Building Committee is looking for feedback from Woodbridge residents after an Oct. 13 referendum about constructing a new school at the site failed.

Committee members are seeking insights from people in town as they decide on the next steps for the school.

To take the survey, visit surveymonkey.com/r/BRSBC_communitysurvey.

Orange Resident Hosting Party, Toy Drive

Drummer and Orange resident Arti Dixson will lead the 37th Annual Holiday Party on Sunday, Dec. 20, a toy drive for Connecticut children in need.

The event runs from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Woodwinds, located at 29 School Ground Rd. in Branford. Admission is $50 along with the donation of a new, unwrapped toy. The entry fee includes an all-you-can-eat buffet, hors d'oeuvres, dessert and live music from three different bands.

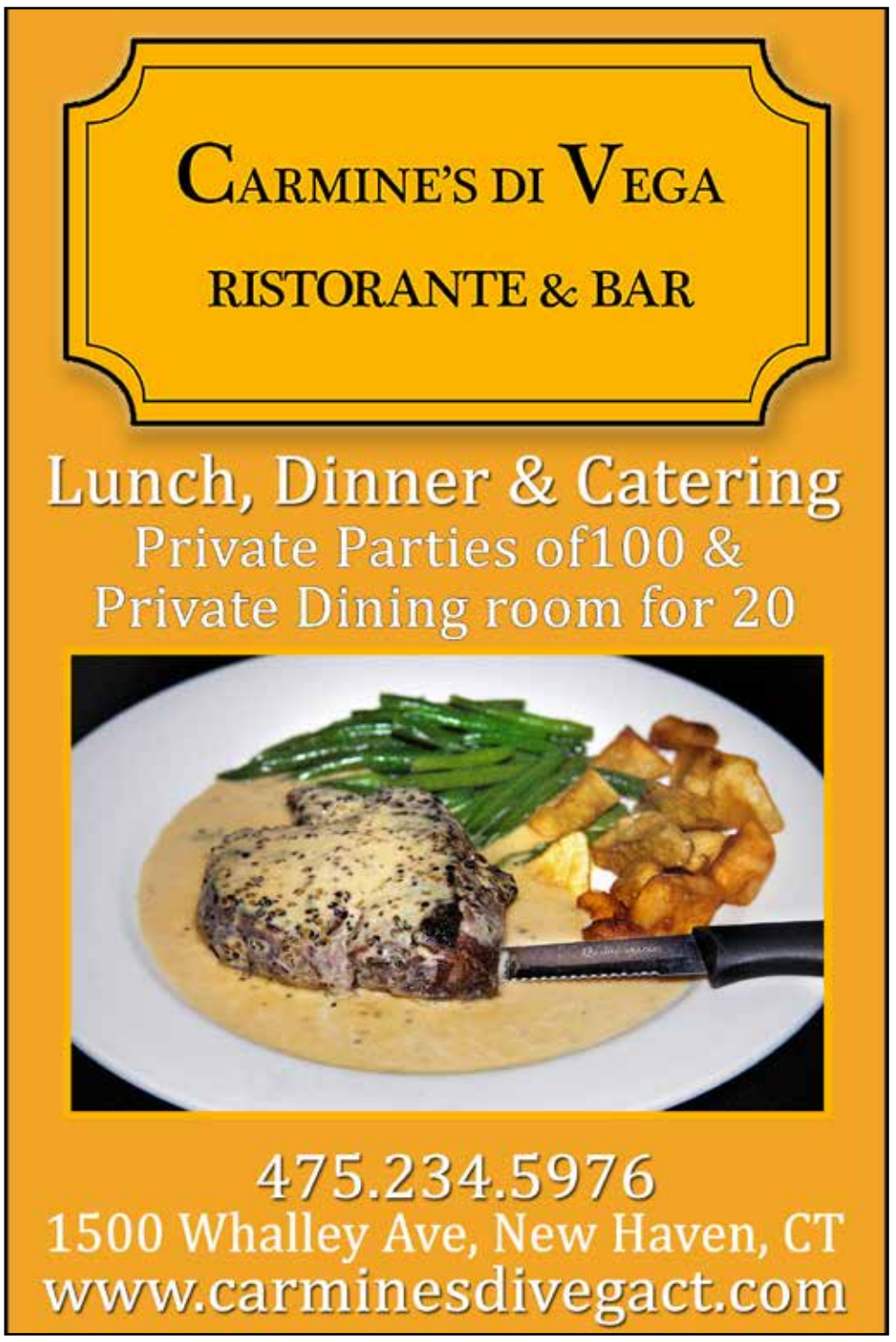
The event is part of a 30-year partnership with the Orange Community Services Holiday Program. When Dixson and his wife Joanne moved to Orange in 1996 with their daughter Joelle, they immediately added the town's holiday program to their distribution, turning a statewide mission into a personal commitment to their new home.

"For 30 years, our partnership with Arti Dixson has been a lifeline for families in Orange during the holiday season," said Stacey Johnson, director of Orange Community Services. "The incredible generosity of this event reminds us of the power of community, and we are deeply grateful to Arti, Joanne, and everyone who keeps this heartwarming tradition alive."

Beyond the food and music, the party also features an assortment of door prizes and gifts, including two $250 gift certificates from Orange Fence Company, gift certificates from China Pavilion and complimentary guitar lessons from Joe Tinari. The grand prize is an evening limousine experience by Anthony Yagovane's limousine service.

"The success of the evening is never measured by headcounts or prize values," Dixson said. "It is measured solely by the number of children who will wake up to a holiday gift they might not have otherwise received."

For tickets and more information, call 203-215-1441 or visit helpourpeople.me.





College Admissions

Taking Advantage Of Winter Break



NICOLE KELMAN

For high school juniors, winter break is about more than enjoying some well-deserved downtime. It's also a wonderful opportunity to get a head start on the college admissions process.

As a former admissions director, I encourage students to think of this time as a strategic reset. Spending time on college planning now can make the year ahead feel more manageable.

One of the first things junior families should do is have a practical college conversation and establish a realistic college budget. This helps students identify where they may be strong candidates for merit scholarships and where need-based financial aid is available. Understanding these pieces now can help students build a college list that is not only academically appropriate and socially exciting, but financially realistic for the entire family.

Winter break is an ideal time to begin exploring colleges online, before planning visits. I encourage students to investigate beyond college websites, brand names, beautiful photographs and impressive statistics. They should research academic departments, course offerings, internship opportunities, faculty, campus resources and return on investment. What makes each school distinctive? Does it offer an academic and social environment where they can thrive? Will this school help them achieve their goals? Beginning to develop a balanced college list is a great way to turn general interest into a more focused search.

Academics should remain the top priority. While all grades matter, junior year grades carry significant weight in college admissions. Using this break time to get ahead on January projects or reading assignments allows students to return to school organized and prepared to start the second semester with confidence.

Students should also take an honest look at their extracurricular activities. Rather than adding more clubs simply to fill a résumé, think about ways to deepen existing commitments, pursue leadership opportunities or develop a passion project. Colleges evaluate a student's genuine engagement and initiative. This is a good time to start creating an activities résumé document to list activities, volunteer experiences, employment, awards and leadership roles. This is not the time to be modest; feel free to boast about accomplishments.

While it's much too early to worry about writing a college essay, juniors can begin thinking about the stories that make them who they are. What experiences have shaped their perspective? What challenges have they overcome? What are they genuinely passionate about?

I encourage students to identify a few meaningful stories that reveal their personalities and passions. Sometimes the essay topics that stand out the most are the most mundane stories.

Most students are undecided about a college major, but they should use this time to explore their talents and interests. Browse course catalogs, speak with professionals in a variety of fields or investigate potential career paths. There is no need to plan out a future, but being curious is a great place to start.

Most importantly, winter break is a time to recharge and have some fun. The goal is to return to school feeling confident, organized and ready for the exciting journey ahead.

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.

Woodbridge Center

A Season Of Many Celebrations



KIMBERLY RIHEL

This week marks what may count as the beginning of the holiday season. The Indiana University School of Medicine lists eight different holidays between Dec. 1 and Jan. 1. That is a lot of celebrating. As I get older, I find myself reflecting more deeply on the true meaning of this season – not just what it means to me personally, but also the significance it holds for those around me.

The first night of Hanukkah begins on Dec. 4 and kicks off the holiday season. Hanukkah lasts for eight nights and centers on religious freedom, resilience and the power of light overcoming darkness.

Bodhi Day is next, occurring on Dec. 8. Bodhi Day honors the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, considered the historical Buddha, who discovered what he believed to be the root of suffering and the path to liberation while meditating under a bodhi tree.

The Hindu celebration of Pancha Ganapati begins Dec. 21 and honors Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed lord of culture and new beginnings. Also celebrated on Dec. 21 is the Pagan holiday of Yule. Occurring during the winter solstice, which is the shortest day of the year, Yule serves to give thanks for the return of light, hope and promise.

The Christmas holiday begins on Dec. 24 and focuses on the spirit of generosity, goodwill, kindness and love toward others. Kwanza falls on Dec. 26 and is rooted in the celebration of family, community, African heritage and shared values.

The season's celebrations end on Dec. 31 with both New Year's Eve and Omisoka, the Japanese New Year's Eve, each emphasizing letting go and starting fresh.

As I thought about all these holidays, what struck me is how they may originate in different cultures and parts of the world and be celebrated in various ways, but the themes of new beginnings, kindness, community, lightness and hope were emphasized in all.

It also encouraged me to think about all the different cultures, nationalities and traditions represented in the small town of Woodbridge and how that is represented at the center. The center will host cookies and cocoa while we decorate the Christmas tree and light the first candle on the menorah for Hannukah on Dec. 4.

While this event commemorates two major December celebrations, we would also like to recognize all holidays observed by our members. Even if you do not celebrate Christmas or Hannukah, please join us and share your traditions and customs with us. It will only add to the joy and holiday spirit.

I wrote last issue about loneliness and challenges that some may experience during the holidays. While we cannot erase all, the center strives to support the mental health of our members in as many ways as we can. This season, our focus is on community. And what an amazing community we have at the center. By the time this article is published, center members would have already enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving luncheon courtesy of Coachman Square of Woodbridge, The Woodbridge Police Union, Autumn Lake Healthcare and Opal Stork Home Care.

The center doesn't slow down in December. We have planned trips to the Lobster Shack, Mohegan Sun Casino, the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion, the Blackbird's Nest, and the Connecticut Post Mall. The holiday luncheon sponsored by Woodbridge Rotary is on Dec. 17 and will feature a special meal prepared by our in-house chef, Colin Douglas. Additionally, all regular center programming will run through Dec. 23. There is a bit of something for everyone to foster gathering and enjoying the company of those around you, which is really what this season is about.

As the holiday season unfolds, remember that it can be anything you want it to be. Perhaps consider scheduling a baking day with friends or family. Take a drive to look at holiday lights; bonus points if a grandchild drives you. Share your amazing life by hosting a storytelling evening. Separated by distance? Video calls are always an option, but my personal favorite is composing a beautiful hand-written card. That is something that is not common anymore and would be a wonderful surprise to the recipient.

Celebrate the quiet moments as well. There is much to be said for enjoying a cup of hot coffee, relishing a tranquil moment with a pet, enjoying a restful afternoon at home with a good book or a favorite holiday movie. Regardless of how you celebrate, my wish for you is a season of wonder, light, community, joy, love, and hope. As you navigate this holiday season, may you enjoy all the season has to offer.

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.

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Here's To Your Health

Enjoy The Holidays Without The Extra Pounds

The holiday season is a wonderful time filled with family, friends, celebrations and, of course, delicious food and drinks. From Thanksgiving dinner to Christmas cookies and holiday parties, temptation seems to be everywhere.

But here's something to consider: you don't have to choose between enjoying the holidays and maintaining your health. You absolutely can do both.

With a little planning, mindfulness and consistency, you may even find yourself entering the new year a few pounds lighter than heavier.

Here are some helpful tips.

1. Change your mindset: One of the biggest mistakes people make during the holidays is adopting the "I'll start again in January" mentality. This all-or-nothing approach can turn a few indulgent meals into weeks of unhealthy habits. The focus should be balance. One holiday meal will not undo months of progress, just as one healthy meal won't magically produce results.

2. Consistency, not perfection: Give yourself permission to enjoy your favorite holiday foods without guilt. The key is making thoughtful choices most of the time.

3. Don't arrive hungry: Skipping meals to "save calories" is a boomerang. Arriving hungry makes it easier to overeat and harder to recognize when you're satisfied. Start your day with a protein-rich breakfast and go from there with healthy food choices.



MICHELE TENNEY

4. Build a smarter holiday plate: You don't have to eliminate mashed potatoes (I sure don't). Just fill half your plate with vegetables and reserve one-quarter for lean protein such as turkey or chicken. Use the remaining quarter for your favorite starches, and choose foods you really enjoy rather than sampling everything just because it's available.

5. Eat slowly, enjoy every bite and give your body time to recognize fullness: Remember you can enjoy the food without feeling uncomfortable afterward.

6. Keep moving: even a 20 or 30-minute brisk walk after dinner can make a big difference. Definitely add in some additional cardio workouts during the holiday season.

7. Watch your liquid calories: Holiday beverages can add significant calories without providing much fullness. Alternating with water helps you stay hydrated and drink less.

Don't forget to protect your sleep and manage stress. Holiday stress and insufficient sleep can affect appetite, cravings and food choices. Aim for seven to nine hours of sleep each night and establish realistic expectations. Remember that saying "no" occasionally is part of taking care of yourself. Your health deserves a place on your calendar, too.

As we celebrate this season, let's also remember that the holidays aren't joyful for everyone. For some, this time of year brings grief, loneliness, financial hardship or the painful absence of someone they love. While we focus on our own health and happiness, let's be mindful of those who may be quietly struggling. A kind word, a simple invitation, a phone call or a thoughtful gesture can mean more than we realize.

Sometimes the greatest gift we can give someone costs us nothing at all – just our love, time and compassion. And the greatest gift you can give yourself this holiday season is entering the new year feeling stronger, healthier and proud of the choices you've made.

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.

Eastbound Theatre Opens Call For Directors

The Milford Arts Council's Eastbound Theatre in Milford is currently accepting submissions of proposals to direct plays for the 2027/2028 main stage season.

Eastbound is a community theater with no professional affiliations. Members of professional theatrical unions should consult their guidelines regarding restrictions.

Eastbound produces three main stage productions each season, each running for three weekends. Eastbound performs at the Milford Center for the Arts in downtown Milford, with a proscenium stage, computerized lightboard and audience seating capacity of approximately 85.

Eastbound welcomes all genres of shows: classic and contemporary comedies, mysteries, thrillers, dramas and (with careful planning) the occasional small-scale musical.

Play proposals should include a resume and a list of the plays you wish to direct and your order of preference for the top three you'd be interested in with number one being your first choice.

For each play listed, include a cast size, a brief play synopsis and technical requirements that would work in Eastbound's space. Additionally, include a brief summary of your vision for the show which addresses any potential production difficulties and your suggestions for addressing them.

Submit a pdf of each of the proposed scripts. For musicals, indicate a potential musical director, choreographer, number of musicians and your best estimated costs, if possible.

Finally, include your performance time slot preferences. The performance time slots are: September-October 2027; February 2028; and June 2028.

The deadline for submissions is Jan. 15.

Submissions can be made via email to nahshell33@aol.com or by regular mail to Eastbound Theatre, EBT Directors, Milford Arts Council, 40 Railroad Avenue South, Milford, CT 06460.

Directors who are selected for the season will receive a small stipend upon completion of their production.

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- Michael Crane

Insuring Your Future

ANOC, ANOC Who's There? Not Some Providers.

By now everyone should have received their annual notice of change either in the mail or by email. If you have ConnectiCare, Care Partners Medicare Advantage plans or a Silverscript prescription drug plan, your ANOC letter said "goodbye" as of Dec. 31. The remaining companies (Anthem, Aetna, Humana and United Health Care) will offer plans in 2027.

Devoted Insurance is a new carrier that will offer three plans in New Haven, New London and Middlesex counties. Some plans in the dual eligible special needs plan area are being discontinued and will be replaced by different plans. It is important to read the notices as they contain information about any changes in coverage or plans that are ending.

The Dec. 7 annual enrollment deadline does not apply to people whose plans are ending. The enrollment period is extended to Dec. 31 for Jan. 1 coverage.

What's in the ANOC notice? Changes in copays, premium and deductibles; general information about drug coverages and formularies; and changes to provider networks.

Having reviewed most of the plans, here are some general observations:

- Many plans now have premiums that range from $6 per month to $99.

- Most plans have deductibles that apply to out-of-network providers, in-patient hospital stays and outpatient procedures. Deductibles range from $50 to $2,000.

- Specialist copays have increased and range from $45-$75 as well as physical therapy and diagnostic radiology (such as MRIs and CAT scans).



TRISH PEARSON

Prescription drug formularies have been adjusted. Insurance companies are required to include a specific number of medications for each medical condition, but not all. For example, they might include two or three of the GLP1 medications, but not all.

It is important to check for any changes in your current medications. If a prescription you are currently taken is no longer covered, they will provide a one-month refill so you have time to find a substitute. Your provider can alternatively request a "formulary exception."

The Silverscript prescription drug plan is also being discontinued. There are other plans available that are very similar to this plan, but you must enroll before Dec. 31.

Open enrollment for individual coverage through the exchange (Access Health CT) is going on through Dec. 15 for a Jan. 1 effective date. Rates have increased an average of 10-15 percent, but the advanced premium tax credits have also increased. As a result, for those who qualify, the net premium may be the same or slightly lower than 2026. Gov. Ned Lamont's temporary premium assistance will also be available for 2027, which will provide some relief for people who are over the income limit for an advanced premium subsidy.

This is the time of year to be thankful. I am thankful for all my faithful readers who find the information in this column helpful. During this Thanksgiving holiday let's take a moment to appreciate the good things and good people in our lives, and enjoy that turkey.

Trish Pearson is a licensed independent insurance agent and certified long term care specialist. Contact her at 203-605-4851 or trishpearson281@gmail.com.

Students Collect Bear Sighting Information In Orange



Students from the University of New Haven working with the Orange Conservation Committee created a Black Bear awareness booth at the Orange Country Fair in September. The booth was designed to educate the public about black bears and to help map approximate bear sighting locations. A map highlighted areas of Orange, Woodbridge, New Haven, Shelton, Ansonia and other towns in the region where sightings have occurred. The students received about 60 sighting locations, many in Orange. The students worked under Dr. Sharon Kahara, who is a professor at UNH and a member of the Orange Conservation Commission. *Photo courtesy of Justin Bleickardt.*

Woodbridge Garden Club Learns Japanese Flower Techniques



The Garden Club of Woodbridge hosted Shizue Pleasanton on Oct. 6, who demonstrated the art of Sogetsu Ikebana, a free-form school of Japanese flower arrangement founded in 1927 in Japan. Pleasanton is an artist and holds the Eighth Level Degree International Sogetsu, Riji – the highest level of certification in the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. She produced four arrangements, and members were given the opportunity of owning an arrangement through a raffle. From left: Mary Leigh Sabshin and Pleasanton.*Photo courtesy of Angela Bradley.*

Pumpkin-Eating Bear Visits Orange Neighborhood



A pumpkin-eating bear was seen on Surrey Drive in Orange on Oct. 27. The bear had come to the neighborhood from Orange Land Trust open space. *Photo courtesy of Dr. Lawrence Messina.*



Orange Flock (Continued From 1)

automatically renewed.

Many automatic license plate readers passively capture images of every car that passes, regardless of whether that car has any connection to a crime. They also capture images of the environment toward which they're pointed, which sometimes includes people's homes.

Because Flock cameras are networked, critics say that the data could be used to develop a sophisticated picture of an innocent person's daily movements and activities.

Police, meanwhile, have credited the cameras with helping to catch criminals and solve a variety of cases.

First Selectman Jim Zeoli recounted an instance that had occurred several days prior in which a Pennsylvania man experiencing dementia had driven into Connecticut and had been captured on Flock cameras.

"They were able to corral him and get him help, and get his family here. So that's a positive," Zeoli said. "His family was very grateful."

License plate readers are not the only automated traffic cameras on the road. Speed and red light cameras also capture images of people's license plates.

Even as the Board of Selectmen faced criticism about the Flock cameras, members in July authorized the town to enter into a three-year contract with automated traffic enforcement camera provider Altumint to operate new red light and speed cameras.

In its presentation to the board, Altumint tried to distinguish itself from companies like Flock, pointing out that its devices only activate when someone takes a triggering action, such as driving a certain speed over the speed limit or running a red light.

In the same meeting that the board terminated the Flock contract, they also approved the purchase of a Skydio X10 Patrol-LED drone for use in first responder situations. The drone touts thermal imaging and night vision capabilities.

Zeoli said that the drone would not be deployed for routine surveillance, but could be used to help in searches for missing people or to catch burglars who flee the scene.

The drone funding comes through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant Grant administered by the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Milford Oversight (Continued From 1)

currently in use. It will require any future acquisition, expansion, renewal or extension of the technology to be presented as a separate agenda item to the board, rather than buried within other matters. For any technology not requiring board approval, the ordinance requests the Police Commission notify the aldermen 30 days in advance.

Finally, the resolution calls for the board's Ordinance Committee to consider creating an ordinance to govern the acquisition, use and public reporting of surveillance technology in the city. The committee will have until February to develop a recommendation.

"I believe that the spirit of this resolution is for transparency and responsive government," Republican alderman Any Fowler said. "I'm in favor of the eventual taking down of the cameras, but this is a good move forward."

Alderwoman Jennifer Federico, a Democrat, also supported the resolution but gave a lengthy speech defending the use of technology for public safety.

"I know that we need to balance the concerns of those who want privacy with the concerns of police officers' families who want their family member to be protected by knowing if they're dealing with a dangerous felon," she said.

She went on to list several Milford cases in which license plate readers had assisted police, including a robbery in progress, an attempted kidnapping and a domestic violence incident.

This resolution is just the latest in a series of measures the Board of Aldermen has taken in recent months to get a handle on the growing use of surveillance technology in 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.

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 all the programs.

Then the board in October decided to temporarily turn off Flock Condor cameras while the review committee does its work.

Public backlash has been vehement in Milford. 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.

As controversy over ALPRs grew, scrutiny also turned to other systems, including other types of mounted cameras and drones. Some aldermen have expressed surprise as they've come to understand the scope of surveillance deployed around the city.

Progress And Potential

By Mary Welander

Editor's note: State Rep. Mary Welander's Oct. 1 column did not run due to a layout error. An abbreviated version of that column is published here. The original column is available online at theorangetimes.com/progress-and-potential.

Most of my work is centered on legislative policy, so seeing tangible results of a successful community focused project is especially exciting. Here are some updates on some of the projects I have secured money for, along with a request at the end.

In Orange, progress continues on the Fred Wolfe Park expansion. I was able to secure roughly $200,000 for the American with Disabilities Act-accessible playground in 2021/2022. The bipartisan, community-led Fred Wolfe Park Committee worked with the planning company to engage the community to come up with a master plan that is safe, sustainable and best meets the needs of all residents. You can read more about that at fredwolfeparkmasterplan.com.

Another exciting development in Orange is the repair and rebuilding of the ADA-accessible boardwalk at Racebrook Tract, which has been unusable for too long. A lovely, winding boardwalk trail that allows everyone to experience the beautiful woods and streams that are part of the preserve will be rebuilt in partnership with the Orange Conservation Commission with $185,000 of funding I obtained this last budget cycle.

In Woodbridge, we are seeing years of hard work with the Community and Cultural Center come to fruition. This is an incredibly exciting project that is a result of local investment and over $2 million in state funding that I was proud to help procure in partnership with Gov. Ned Lamont.

Now the request: what projects do you think would improve our communities that I can fight for next session if I have the honor of being reelected? Let me know at mary.welander@cga.ct.gov.



Holiday Craft Fair Coming To Milford

The Irish Heritage Society of Milford will hold its annual holiday craft fair on Saturday, Dec. 5 at the society's clubhouse at 131 Bridgeport Ave. in Milford.

The event will include an open bar, a bake sale and raffles, as well as several vendors.

The event is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Woodbridge Tattoo Parlor Celebrates Move



Lucky Soul Tattoo held a ribbon-cutting on Nov. 2 to celebrate its move to the historic Captain Thunderbolt House at 88 Bradley Rd. in Woodbridge. The tattoo parlor has been in Woodbridge for 16 years. Included in the photo are owners Joe LoPresti and Tracey Rose, Woodbridge First Selectman Mica Cardozo, Economic Development Commission Chair Cliff Lynch, and commission members Teri Schatz and Bob Hill. *Photo courtesy of Alison Valsamis.*

Opticians Celebrate Move To Milford



The Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting on Nov. 4 to celebrate the opening of a new location in Milford for Kennedy & Perkins Opticians at 977 Boston Post Rd. The eyeglasses company previously operated a storefront in Orange before moving to Milford. Included in the photo are owner Richard L. Kennedy Jr., Milford Mayor Rich Smith, Michael Moses and Simon McDonald of the MRCC and Economic and Community Development Director Robert Townes. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*

Delegation (Continued From 1)

Frank Smith, a Democrat, decided not to run for reelection. That seat, which covers parts of Milford, was won by fellow Democrat Toni Lombardi.

State and Congressional offices also remained the same for residents in the region. Democrat Rosa DeLauro easily won another term in the Third Congressional District. All of the state's incumbent constitutional officers won another term, including Gov. Ned Lamont. All are Democrats.

Even if the faces of the region's representatives won't change much come January, though, the political dynamics they'll be working in will be dramatically different.

Maroney and Cabrera will come back to a state Senate where they went from a 25-11 majority to a 33-3 majority, effectively relegating Republicans in that chamber to the sidelines.

In the state House, Democrats also increased their majority. That body is currently tilted 102-49 in their favor; next year it will 116-35.

The gains for Democrats in the legislature could be a double-edged sword for Lamont. On one hand, he may have an easier time getting some of his priorities passed by negotiating in his own party without needing Republicans. On the other hand, his moderate tendencies may be challenged by progressives who believe he hasn't gone far enough on some issues, such as raising taxes on the wealthy. Both chambers will have a veto-proof majority, possibly giving the legislative branch more leverage than usual with the executive branch.

Lamont will find himself on friendlier footing with his fellow governors; 30 states will have Democrats in the top office next year, up from 24. Relations between governors tend to be more collaborative and less partisan, but having more governors from his own party may provide more common ground for Lamont to pursue interstate initiatives.

Other constitutional officers could see similar opportunities with other states. For instance, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong will have five more Democratic attorneys general to work with. Attorneys general often share resources on investigations and team up on litigation.

DeLauro is returning to a US House of Representatives where her party was in a narrow minority to one where she'll be in a commanding majority. She's running unopposed to become the next chair of the Appropriations Committee – one of the most powerful positions responsible for deciding how taxpayer dollars will be spent.

Milford, Orange and Woodbridge may have kept the status quo among their individual representatives. But those representatives were elected to serve in an environment that isn't status quo at all.

Daycare Opens New Location In Orange



The Amity Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting Oct. 28 to celebrate the opening of Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Program's newest center at 449 Boston Post Rd. in Orange. The opening marks the fifth location for BBECP co-owners Ridhita and Raj Gupta. BBECP provides early education for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years old. The program is specifically designed for each stage of child development, from infant care and toddler learning to preschool and kindergarten readiness. The Guptas were joined by BBECP-Orange Director Jennifer Kelly, Amity Chamber of Commerce CEO Barry Lee Cohen, Orange Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Annemarie Sliby, and BBECP team members, parents and friends. *Photo by Robert Creigh.*

Advertise in the Milford-Orange Times: 799-7500



Region Marks Veterans Day With Memorials, Parade







Milford held a parade in honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 8, as well as a wreath-laying ceremony on Nov. 11. *Photos by Robert Creigh.*



Orange held a ceremony honoring veterans on Nov. 11 at the War Remembrance Memorial at High Plains Community Center. *Photos by Lexi Crocco.*

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Obituaries

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

Myrna "Micki" Beningo, 91, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Howard "George" Beningo, passed away surrounded by her loving family on November 8, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



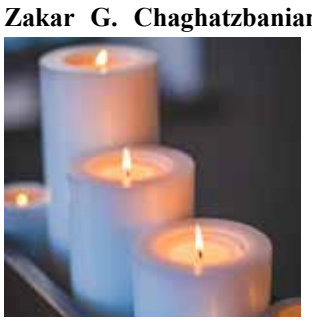
James Edward Boone, Jr. of Milford passed away unexpectedly on Nov. 1, 2026. He was the beloved husband of Jennifer Boone whom he loved so very dearly. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Ralph Dominick Buccitti of Milford passed away peacefully at his home on October 24, 2026 surrounded in the love of his family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Zakar G. Chaghatzbanian, age 91, of Orange, CT, passed away Oct. 28, 2026. He was born in Lebanon to the late Ghevont and Nevart Chaghatzbanian. (Cyril F. Mullins Funeral Home)



Sharon Elizabeth Cooke, 92, of Indian Shores, FL and formerly of Milford, CT, beloved wife of the late Robert N Cooke, passed away on Nov. 12, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Peggy Daken, age 86, of Milford, beloved wife of the late James "Jim" Daken, entered peaceful rest on November 15, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Harlan J. Denny, 68, a lifelong resident of Orange, entered into eternal rest surrounded by his loving family on November 7, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



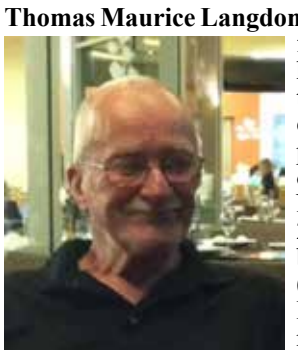
Margaret "Marge" Dirgo, 91, of Milford, beloved wife of the late Edward Dirgo, passed away peacefully at her home on November 10, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Charles Frederick Erff, known to many as Charlie, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Sunday, November 8, 2026, at the age of 94. (Guilford Funeral Home)



Thomas Maurice Langdon, age 82, of Milford, beloved husband of Patricia A. MacKenzie Langdon, passed away on Monday, November 16, 2026 after a brief illness. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Robert Stephen Leskovsky, age 86, of Milford, beloved husband of 63 years to Linda Gillotti Leskovsky, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, November 10, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



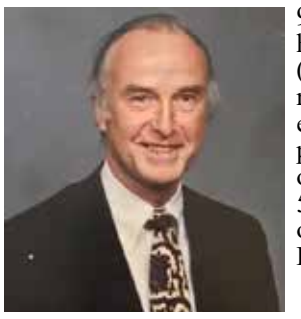
Janet Ann Michlewski, age 68, of Milford, beloved wife of Richard Michlewski, passed away peacefully at home on Friday October 23, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Manfred Gerd-Ewald Mohring, age 84, beloved husband of Mary Ellen Mohring entered peaceful rest on November 5, 2026 surrounded by his family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



The Reverend Dr. David A. Norris, age 90, beloved husband of Enid (Schester) Norris of Orange, entered into peaceful rest on November 5, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Stephen A. Parana, age 54, of Milford, passed away peacefully on October 24, 2026, in Yale Hospital, with his loving family by his side. (Galello-Luchansky Funeral Home)



CODY-WHITE INC. MILFORD

Amanda Veccharelli – Managing Partner

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Obituaries

Judith "Judy" Pocevic passed away peacefully in her sleep on Friday, Nov. 13, 2026, at home, surrounded by the love of a family who meant everything to her. (Porto Funeral Homes)



Janet M. Powers, age 69, of Milford, passed away on Thursday, November 12, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Maria "Claire" Q. Recto, 88, of Milford, CT, passed away on November 5, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Lynne Romaniello, 91 of Milford, passed away peacefully on November 7th, 2026 at Autumn Lake Healthcare at Glen Hill in Danbury, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Kenneth Albert Ruff, a devoted husband, loving father and grandfather, cherished son, brother, uncle, and loyal friend, passed away Nov. 3rd, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Judith "Judy" (Scianna) Sharpe, age 81, of Milford, beloved wife of the late John M. Sharpe, Sr. entered into peaceful rest on Nov. 10, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Susan Mary Simmat, 69, of Milford, passed away peacefully on Oct. 26, 2026, surrounded by the spirit and presence of those who loved her at her home in Milford. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



Barbara (Amendola) Simone, 85, of Orange, CT, died Friday, Nov. 13, 2026, at Yale New Haven Hospital, surrounded by her loving family following complications from a fall. (Porto Funeral Homes)



Kathleen O. Smith, age 77 of Milford, entered peaceful rest on Sunday October 25, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Ronald Patrick Snee, 84, of Milford, passed away on November 5, 2026. (Cody-White Funeral Home)



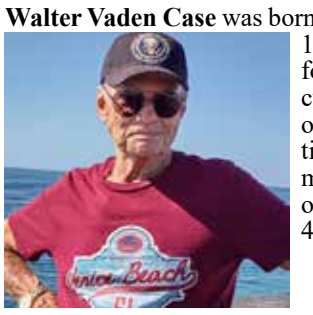
David Tovar, age 59, of Milford, beloved husband of Sandra Jimenez for 25 years, passed away peacefully on Monday, October 26, 2026 surrounded by his loving family. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Janice Uhrynowski left this world on Nov. 2, and entered into the loving arms of her Lord, Jesus. In her final days, Janice was surrounded by those she loved. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Walter Vaden Case was born December 30, 1939, in Milford, Connecticut. Walter died of complications of Alzheimer's disease on November 4, 2026, age 86.



Dolores "Lori" Vastarelli, 64, passed away October 29, 2026 in the Midstate Medical Center in Meriden after a brief illness. (Porto Funeral Homes)



Elaine C. Viola, age 84, beloved wife of Ronald F. Viola of Milford, entered into peaceful rest surrounded by her family on November 12, 2026. (Gregory F. Doyle Funeral Home)



Patricia "Pat" Ann Walters, 88 of Milford, passed away peacefully on November 14, 2026 at her home in Milford, CT. (Cody-White Funeral Home)





Connecticut Ice Cream Chain Opens Store In Orange

Connecticut-based ice cream company Frisbie's Dairy Barn opened its first New Haven County location at 88 Marsh Hill Rd. in Orange on Nov. 19.

The company is known for handcrafted, small-batch, premium ice cream. Frisbie's opened its first store in New Britain in 2015 and now has seven locations in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

"We are most excited to be bringing our ice cream making classes to the area. Friends and family can book a class to learn how to make ice cream and create their own unique flavor," said Frisbie's owner Paul Parks III.

Art Auction In Milford Nets $2.7 Million



Milford-based Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers' annual Fall Fine Art Auction on Oct. 29 totaled $2.7 million in sales that sold most of 207 paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture. The leading lot was painter Willard Leroy Metcalf's Spring at Leete's Island, 1908, pictured above, which sold for $187,500 to a private collection. Metcalf is considered one of the best of the New England impressionists. The painting found a new home in a private collection. ***Photo courtesy of Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers.***

Orange Farmers Market

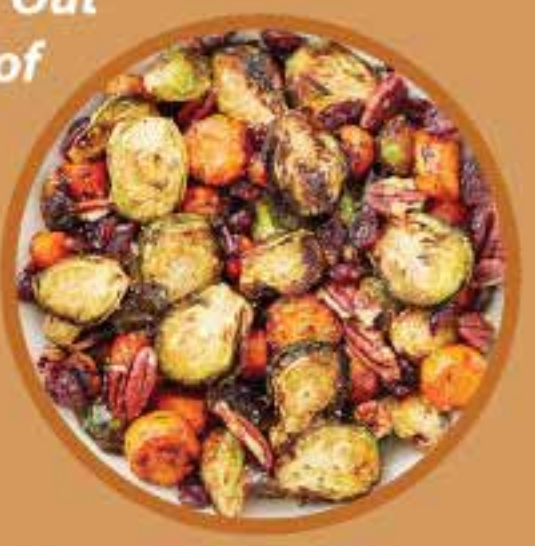
Orange Farmer's Market

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