newington LIFE

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Holding court

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Mortensens marks 110 years

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Silent Suffering

How Peripheral Neuropathy Can Steal the Joy from Life—and What You Can Do About It

Peripheral neuropathy, often a hidden consequence of cancer treatments, can leave survivors battling constant pain and discomfort. Discover how Connecticut's Best Acupuncture offers a path to reclaiming comfort and mobility, even from the privacy of your own home.

Miriam B. remembers the days she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015 like it was yesterday. The whirlwind of treatments and nonstop doctors' visits - radiation, chemotherapy, oncologists - all of it a harrowing experience, but she was blessed to emerge on the other side, now in remission. "Surviving cancer was a blessing, but I never expected the lasting effects,"Miriam shares. "Chemo saved my life, but it also left me with this lingering nerve damage. I'm thankful to be alive, but I wished I could just feel normal again."

Chemotherapy, for all its life-saving prowess, isn't picky about the cells and tissues it attacks. While it's effective in targeting cancer cells, it can also cause significant damage to the nervous system, resulting in a condition known as Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy (CIPN).

For those unfamiliar, CIPN is like a bad connection in a wire. Imagine your nerves as electrical wires that carry signals between your brain and the rest of your body. In a healthy body, these wires are well-insulated and allow messages to travel quickly and smoothly. But with peripheral neuropathy, the insulation on these wires (called myelin) starts to wear away or get damaged, leading to a lot of problems.

Think of it like a frayed phone charger. When the cord is in good shape, it charges your phone quickly and efficiently. But if the cord is damaged, it might still work, but not as well. Sometimes the connection is spotty, sometimes it doesn't work at all, and sometimes it even sends the wrong signal. That's what happens with your nerves in peripheral neuropathy. The signals they send—whether it's to move your muscles or feel sensations like temperature or pain—get mixed up or don't get through at all.

The nerves in your hands and feet are the most delicate and are usually the first to be affected. This can lead to symptoms like tingling, burning, numbness, or even sharp, stabbing pains. It's like your foot or hand has fallen asleep, but instead of that tingling going away, it sticks around and gets worse, making it difficult to walk, hold things, or even just feel comfortable.

"It was like my were feet were constantly asleep, but it was painful," Miriam describes. "Walking on anything, even carpet, felt like stepping on shards of glass. And don't even get me started on buttoning up a shirt - my fingers just couldn't work the way they used to."

For cancer survivors like Miriam, this nerve damage isn't just an inconvenience - it's a daily struggle that makes even the simplest tasks feel overwhelming. Buttoning a shirt, picking up a paperclip,walking around the grocery store, wearing socks - all things you once took for granted, suddenly become painful and difficult.

That's where Connecticut's Best Acupuncture (CBA) comes in. Using their Outpatient Optimization Program™ they specialize in the treatment of peripheral neuropathy - whether it stems from chemo, diabetes, or its origins are unknown.

Makayla Gongas, Patient Care Coordinator at CT's Best Acupuncture, explains, "We understand that cancer survivors have already spent too much time in doctors' offices and undergoing treatments. Our goal is to offer a solution that allows them to heal from the privacy of their own home, their cruise ship, or wherever life takes them."

One of the groundbreaking treatments offered at CBA is ATP Resonance Bio-Therapy®, a non-invasive therapy that helps to reverse the effects of neuropathy. By promoting cellular repair and restoring nerve function, this treatment offers real hope to those suffering from CIPN and other forms of peripheral neuropathy.

"We've seen incredible results," Makayla says. "Patients who couldn't walk without pain are now able to get back to the activities they love. It's been truly life-changing for people all over the country."

Miriam, too, found relief through CBA's approach. "After everything I've been through, it's such a relief to have a treatment that actually works," she says. "I've spent enough time in hospitals and clinics. Being able to heal at home with this Outpatient Optimization Program™, - it's a second chance I'm not going to waste."

For cancer survivors, life after treatment is about more than just surviving - it's about thriving. The team at CBA is dedicated to helping patients do just that "You've been given a second chance," Makayla encourages. "Don't let neuropathy hold you back from making the most of it."

If you or a loved one is struggling with peripheral neuropathy, be it from CIPN or another root cause, CBA is here to help. With personalized treatment plans and a commitment to patient care, they offer hope, healing, and the chance to truly live again.

Schedule a $30 consultation today by calling Connectictut's Best Acupuncture at **(860)578-9865**. Or visit **ConnecticutsBestAcupuncture.com** to learn more about their innovative treatments and patient success stories.

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"A lot of fads have come and gone with ice cream. We stay with the tried and true."

– Rodney Mortensen

See story page 14

ON THE COVER

Ariana DiDomenico is the fourth generation of Mortensens to work for the family's dairy business.

Photo by Mark Jahne
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LIFE *in the classroom*

Rodriguez is a first grade teacher at Anna Reynolds, a school she attended as a child.
Courtesy photos

Jennifer Rodriguez is honored by the CEA

by Sarah Barr
Staff Writer

Jennifer Rodriguez is once again in the winner's circle. The first grade teacher at Anna Reynolds School is this year's recipient of the John McCormack Award for Teaching Excellence, the highest teaching award bestowed by the Connecticut Education Association.

"It's another really nice recognition," the Newington resident and former Anna Reynolds student said.

But this isn't her first honor. She was named Newington teacher of the year for the 2022-2023 academic year and was a Connecticut teacher of the Year finalist in 2023.

For the 15-year education veteran, it's not about winning as much as it's about leadership opportunities. Rodriguez scores high in this category. She is the chairperson of the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board, the first time an active teacher has held this role.

The task is to modernize regulations to recruit and retain more teachers, a challenge both locally and nationally. While busy doing all of this, she paused to smell the roses, as accolades provide a moment of reflection, especially over the span of one's career.

"Jennifer's deep commitment to her students, school, community and fellow educators shines through in everything she does."

– Kate Dias

Jennifer Rodriguez is an award-winning educator

"Others saw something in me, to become a leader and advocate for my colleagues and my students," said the union member and proud Newington parent.

"An award speaks to a career and I'm close to retirement. It's not just what you've done, it's about those who helped you along the way to flourish. This is not an award for myself but for everyone who planted that seed of leadership."

It's a message that resonates to others and for others.

"The outward message is to encourage one another, seek out opportunities. Encourage yourself. This reflects the community we've built here in Newington as educators," she said.

The CEA spotlighted this sense of community in the public awareness advertising campaign entitled "Teachers Go the Extra Mile for Their Students Every Day." It featured Rodriguez and the entry won a Telly Award, a national industry standard for creativity and excellence.

"The CEA does a great job of cultivating leadership – seminars, conferences. I'm not the lucky charm, Newington is the lucky charm," she added.

If there is a secret to her success perhaps it is the fact that Rodriguez wears many diverse hats. She moved to town at the age of 6, so one could say that she can view the town and Anna Reynolds School through a child's eyes.

She has two children of her own. The eldest graduated from Newington High School in 2013 and the other is a rising senior. That's another level of understanding.

Then there is her teacher's point of view, her union goggles, legislative testimony lens, and now her board and mentor work. Put it all together and the CEA wanted to salute her as a champion for education.

"Jennifer is a compassionate, innovative, and kind teacher and leader," CEA President Kate Dias said

"She is a strong advocate for her colleagues and chairs the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board creating

Rodriguez is an active union member, seen here speaking at a CEA press conference at the State Capitol.

meaningful, positive change in the classroom and influencing educational policy changes at the state level that improve working conditions and resources for teachers and educational outcomes for students across the state," she added.

"Jennifer's deep commitment to her students, school, community and fellow educators shines through in everything she does. Her passion, dedication and unwavering support make a lasting impact on everyone around her."

It's a culmination of her years of service, applauded for instructional expertise, leadership and dedication to student success. It's being committed to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion in education and having extensive experience with curriculum development, professional development facilitation and community engagement.

This is what a career looks like after investing years of hard work into building strong relationships with students and families through what has been described as "high expectations and nurturing support."

But despite pending retirement, she is not done yet. She will compete for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence in Washington, D.C., but another award is not on her mind.

"I've got two more years of the certification board. I need to cultivate these little learners. I'm going to continue to do what I'm doing," Rodriguez said.

A firm believer that education extends beyond the classroom, this future empty nester was staying late at work so that she could watch her students play in a baseball game. **NL**

Holding court with 300-plus wins

Coach Don Lukowski achieves a milestone

by Sarah Barr
Staff Writer

Name the sport and the number 300 is seen as significant. A .300 batting average, or 300 strikeout season or 300 lifetime wins for a pitcher in baseball are all benchmarks for excellence.

Bowl 300 and it's considered a lifetime achievement. Probably because that's a perfect game of all strikes.

For an NFL coach, 300 wins is more than impressive, it is legendary. Think Bill Belichick, Don Shula and George Halas.

For Newington High School boys' tennis Coach Don Lukowski, reaching this mark is a milestone, but 300 career wins pales in comparison to his life's greatest achievement, using tennis to turn boys into men.

"It's great. The kids were more excited than I was. To me, it's just numbers on a paper," Lukowski, a New Britain resident, said.

"I enjoy teaching and coaching the game. Those 300 wins came from my players over decades, They earned the 300 wins. They are the ones who are the champions who got me this. They did all the work that got me to where I am."

Those who know the 73-year-old coach well are not surprised by his deflection.

Chris Meyers, the high school's director of athletics and student activities, is totally not surprised by Lukowski's almost ho-hum response. He almost agrees with it.

"That's the story. Coach Don has won 300 games. And you know what? It doesn't matter because it's not his biggest achievement. His achievement is more focused on the character building, the relationship building, the experiences with the hundreds, even thousands of students. That's what he prides himself on and what makes him so successful," Meyers said.

"So, in my mind, it's what a high school education-based program and coach should look like."

To the coach, the 300th victory was a blip on the career calendar. He couldn't recall exactly when and where it all happened, he just knew "his kids," as he calls them, were ready to embrace the moment.

Sean Hussey, the NHS girls' tennis coach, can practically recite the moment chapter and verse.

"He started the season with 297 [wins]," he said.

The goal was within reach the prior season but the boys couldn't quite close it out.

Then on April 24 against Enfield the magic happened. No high drama like winning on an ace or anything that exciting. But for his players, it was almost like winning a tennis major.

This interview took place during the French Open, which just so happens to be his favorite professional tennis tournament.

"When I played as a young man, I played on red clay courts [just like at Roland Garros]. That's the surface I grew up on," Lukowski recalled.

He didn't play on organized teams in high school or college. He played with his high school buddies and it just grew from there.

"I just loved the game," said the man who has coached for more than 40 years.

His career clock started ticking at St. Thomas Aquinas High School in New Britain until 1999 when the school closed. But as one door shut, another opened. He's been at NHS ever since.

Coach Don Lukowski has been running his own tournament for 46 years. His students and former students pitch in to assist. Courtesy photo

Coaching tennis is a part-time job. Lukowski runs his own business as a municipal land records auditor.

"The state requires an outside firm to make sure all the documents are recorded properly," he said of his track record with the towns of Newington, West Hartford, Bristol, Suffield and New Britain.

"I've been doing this 30-plus years. I have my own business, my own schedule. That's how I can coach. It works out perfectly," he added.

Relationships drive Lukowski more than serve and volley ever could.

"Everything I've done, I put everything I got into it. I instill that same drive and desire into my players. I want them to enjoy the game and have fun," he said.

"I want to win, obviously, but play your best, even if you don't win, is what I say. The sun comes up tomorrow and you try again. That philosophy seems to be successful."

He added that learning is a two-way street.

"They teach me," is what he said of all the students who ever stepped on his court. "Every year is a different group of kids. Different experience. Different memory or

A signed congrats for the milestone moment.

accomplishment."

With no children of his own, they are all his children, and he loves them all.

"The number-one player gets the same treatment as the JV player who has played two matches all year," Meyers said.

Lukowski loves these teenagers so much that he gives back to them through tennis in yet another way – the Children's Charities Tennis Classic. It's now in its 47th year. It benefits the pediatrics unit at the Hospital of Special Care in New Britain.

"Coach Don is adamant about raising money for the hospital. He gets a lot of the boys, now men who he taught tennis, to come back, play and donate to the cause," Hussey said. "It speaks volumes to him as a mentor, a coach, and a man to support these endeavors the way he does."

The two coaches have been colleagues for eight years. But Hussey always calls him "Coach Don" out of respect.

His former students keep coming and giving back just like Lukowski taught them. Hubert Bis, a mechanical engineer at MTU Aero Engines North America in Rocky Hill and also a former assistant coach, is an example.

He's known the coach for 15 years, ever since he was a freshman member of the tennis team that he described as family. Providing a sense of belonging and motivation were key.

"He ignites the fire inside of you to play the game with your heart, win or lose. He asks you personal questions, how your day is going, and wants to get to know you. He tells his players they can call him day or night and he will pick up the phone. I never met a coach or a person who cares so much," Bis said.

"Coach Don taught me to embrace being different. I learned to give it my all and be happy with myself, even if I lose. I learned the importance of giving back to the community," he added.

"I learned many life lessons

throughout the 15 years I have known him and I am sure I will learn many more. People like Coach Don don't come around too often and this is why whenever he needs help with anything, whether it is putting the AC units in his windows or helping him run a charity tennis tournament that he started 46 year ago, I'm always happy and eager to help."

Meyers agreed that this classic bond isn't formed over a racket or a memorable match. It's secured in the heart.

"He makes sure the team takes care of each other. He leads them to get better as players, but that's not his goal or idea of what success should be," Meyers said.

"Yes, wins are amazing. It's tremendous to accumulate them. But 300 wins is secondary to all the other success. That's more important when you talk about high school athletics. And you gauge that success by the number of prior players who come back to support. It's the continued caring that he shows."

Lukowski is simply grateful for his magic number but more so for the magical men his players have become.

"I'm enjoying the journey so far. And no, I guess I'm not done yet," he said. **NL**

An end of the season trip for the boys' and girls' tennis teams, Lukowski is front and center in tennis white. Hubert Bis is next to him in green. Courtesy photo

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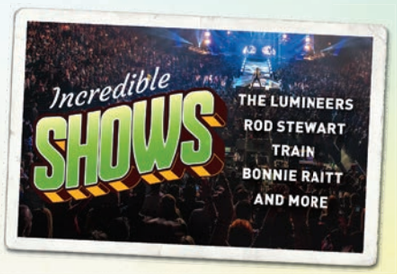

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Library calendar

The following activities will be held during the month of July at the Lucy Robbins Welles Library. To learn more call 860-665-8700 or go to newingtonct.gov/library. Registration is required for all programs.

1 Teen Board Game Afternoon, 3 p.m.

Pokémon Kids, 6 p.m., for children entering grades 2-5

2 A Night at Hogwarts, 6 p.m., for grades 4-8

7 Summer Diamond Art, 6 p.m.

8 Virtual Author Talks: Raúl the Third, 2 p.m., for preschool to grade 2, this program will be conducted in Spanish

Teen Lego Tournament, 6 p.m.

9 Li'l Chefs, 6:15 p.m., for ages 3-4 with a caregiver

10 Brown Bag It with a Book, noon

Teen Decoupage Oyster Shells, 3 p.m.

11 Baby Rave, 10:30 a.m., for ages 5 and younger

14 Drumming About You, 6:30 p.m., for children entering grades 1-5, neurodiverse friendly

15 Paint Party, 4 p.m., for children entering grades 2-5

Teen Air Dry Clay Creations, 6 p.m.

16 Teen Nintendo Switch Game Day, 3 p.m.

Virtual Author Talk: Discerning the Truth with Marie Lu, 4 p.m., for grades 9-12

22 Pet Boredom Busters Pt. 1, 4 p.m.

Pet Boredom Busters Pt. 2, 5 p.m.

Poop Museum: Their Butts Do What?!, 6:30 p.m., for children entering grades 1-5

23 Virtual Author Talk: Illuminating Hope and Grace in the Face of Hardship with Rex Ogle, 4 p.m., for grades 5-8

Junior Cookbook Club, 6:15 p.m., for children entering kindergarten through grade 2

24 Teen DIY: Suncatchers, 3 p.m.

25 Harry Potter Trivia Night, 7 p.m., virtual, register for the Zoom link

28 Let's Make Something in Canva, 6 p.m.

29 Teen Junk Journaling, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

31 On the Strangeness and Wonder of Our Brains, 2 p.m.

Food Fear Factor, 6 p.m., for children and teenagers entering grades 4-9

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Let there be music

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It's one thing for young musicians to perform in front of their teacher. It's another thing altogether for them to perform in front of a room full of music teachers.

The John Wallace Middle School Jazz Band performed at the National Federation of Music Educators Convention, Eastern Division. The gathering took place at the Hartford Convention Center. JWMS jazz band director and music teacher Brian Kelly was among those in attendance.

"It was a conference for music educators to become better music teachers," he said.

Ensembles were selected from various schools to represent top-quality musicianship. The JWMS musicians accompanied a presenter who addressed the topic of jazz bands, the common pitfalls they face, and the opportunities for success.

A total of 31 student musicians participated. Kelly was not surprised that their performance earned rave reviews. The judges awarded a top rating.

"This jazz band is phenomenal. They play at a high school level," he said. "They were well received by the audience."

Kelly added that these young people worked hard and earned the praise.

The John Wallace Middle School Jazz Band performed at the National Federation of Music Educators Convention, Eastern Division. Courtesy photo

"Playing in the JWMS Jazz Band and performing at the Eastern Division Conference has been an amazing experience. I have absolutely loved playing all this music and learning from Mr. Kelly. He is the best and I am really grateful for the opportunity to experience all of this," Gabriella Cultrera said.

The eighth grade student is the president of the band.

"When I first joined the jazz band the music was hard and I was scared. Mr. Kelly helped me with the music and now it seems like nothing to play in front of a crowd," fifth grade band member Greta AveLallemant added. **NL**

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Changing and adapting

Mortensens Ice Cream marks 110 years as a family business

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Things have changed a lot since Elmer Mortensen started a dairy business in town in 1915. It has changed and adapted over the decades and the Mortensen name remains part of the Newington landscape.

Former mayor Rodney Mortensen is 74 years old and now remains active in what has evolved into Mortensens Ice Cream. The family is now into its fourth generation with the business. He recalled the founder with fondness.

"He started delivering milk in Hartford with a horse and wagon in 1915," Rodney said.

The business spent many years located at the intersection of Main Street and the Berlin Turnpike on land now occupied by Casadoro restaurant. Elmer also had a dairy operation in Bloomfield and a farm in Simsbury.

Those were long before the days when milk in cartons could be purchased at supermarkets. Home delivery was required to make sure the product was fresh and that providing that service became a staple of the dairy farm business.

The horse and wagon are long gone but the family's commitment to quality dairy products remains. Mortensens creates homemade ice cream 12 months a year in a wide variety of flavors and Rodney's son Todd is the master chef who is always willing to test a new flavor idea.

Those flavors can range from Georgia peach, fresh blueberry and native strawberry in the summer to old-fashion apple and native pumpkin in the fall and rum raisin, egg nog and peppermint stick in the winter.

"There are 50 flavors at any given time," Todd said.

He uses fresh native fruit rather than flavored syrup whenever possible. On one recent day he was whipping up a batch of banana-flavored ice cream using freshly cut bananas among the ingredients.

Recipes have evolved over the course of five decades. Customers are encouraged to taste a small sample before making a purchase.

"We have rotating seasonal flavors. We don't cut corners. We do premium stuff," Todd said. "We're always trying to innovate."

"We pride ourselves on using only the freshest ingredients," Erika Mortensen Haelen added. "We have

Former mayor Rodney Mortensen, who started in the business while still a child by milking cows, remains involved along with his children Todd and Erika.

The homemade flavor library is posted on the wall. Photos by Mark Jahne

This homemade cinnamon churro ice cream sundae is topped with caramel.

The walls of the shop are lined with photographs depicting the 110-year history of the Mortensen family and its dairy business.

something for everybody."

There are vegan, non-dairy, nut-free and gluten-free options on the extensive menu. The latest concept is ice cream nachos. It uses waffle cone chips as opposed to corn chips. Another innovation is an ice cream sandwich with one of Neil's Donuts from Middletown serving as the sandwich layers.

"Ice cream pies have become super popular," Rodney said.

They can custom design them as desired. He sat back and recalled the old days.

"There were 21 dairies in Newington at one time. We had a farm and I worked in the dairy helping my dad bottle milk," Rodney said.

His father came up with the idea to open a dairy store and that was successful for many years. He also developed the concept of an ice cream bar.

"I've been making ice cream for 48 years. Sometimes customers help us in creating new flavors. A lot of fads have come and gone with ice cream. We stay with the tried and true. We always try to be the best."

There are even a few varieties of what he called "adult" ice cream that include a touch of an alcoholic beverage.

"We've come a long way from milking cows," he said.

The business moved to its current location at 3145 Berlin Turnpike many years ago and used to own and operate a family restaurant in another part of the building that is now leased

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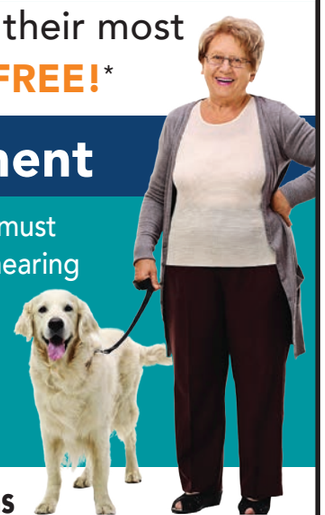

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Todd Mortensen pours freshly made banana ice cream.

"A lot of fads have come and gone with ice cream. We stay with the tried and true. We always try to be the best."

– Rodney Mortensen

to Moe's Southwest Grill. The decision was made to downsize and focus exclusively on ice cream.

It seems that all of the family members have worked there at some point in their lives and many started when they were young. Todd, who is 32, was asked when he first rolled up his sleeves.

"Officially, when I was 16. I started washing dishes when I was 12," he said with a smile.

Erika smiled and said she washed dishes as well before taking on a job as a table server at 16. She's 29 now and handles the scheduling of workers and other business details. The number of staff varies by season.

They all describe the family as closely knit and all of them live in town. Extended family has been part of the fabric at Mortensens for many years.

"Everybody had a piece in making us successful," Rodney said. "We've had more than 1,000 kids work for us" over the years while they were attending high school or college.

That contributes to why the public has always supported the business.

"We get a lot of people who say when they were younger, they would come in after a [school] concert" for ice cream or something to eat, Todd said.

"Newington is a great community," he added.

That tradition continues and they make sure to have an extra person at the counter on any night when there is a concert at one of the local schools. The shop has been honored with numerous "best of" awards for its locally produced frozen treats. **NL**

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The future is now

TRUMPF celebrates opening of its new 'smart factory'

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Computer-controlled machinery, robotics and other state-of-the art manufacturing equipment and processes were the focus of a celebration at the TRUMPF industrial complex in Farmington.

The May 20 event that attracted politicians, other dignitaries, numerous TRUMPF customers and others included the announcement of new initiatives to increase local manufacturing, expand the company's training facility and grow its apprenticeship program.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were Gov. Ned Lamont; Daniel O'Keefe, commissioner of the state Department of Economic Development; Jean P. Froehly, minister and head of economic and financial affairs at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Sonja Kreibich, consul general of the German Foreign Ministry's consulate in Boston.

Farmington is the headquarters of the German company's North American subsidiary, TRUMPF, Inc., which is a $1 billion wholly owned subsidiary of the TRUMPF Group. Its other North American facilities are in Illinois, California, Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Washington, as well as various sites in Canada and Mexico.

The new smart factory uses high-tech fabricating equipment to produce sheet metal parts for its U.S.-manufactured TRUMPF machinery. Manufacturers can visit the facility to investigate applications of the automation, connectivity and data-driven production.

"The new facility is a clear reflection of our commitment to our U.S. customers and our deep appreciation for their business," said Nicola Leibinger-Kammüller, CEO and owner of the TRUMPF Group.

"I am pleased to see this $40 million investment in Connecticut come to fruition, but this is just the beginning. TRUMPF will continue to stand for such dedication to innovation, technology and growth in North America in the years to come."

"Now is the time for manufacturers to elevate their production methods and further develop their workforce. The smart factory reaffirms our partnerships with manufacturers to meet their growing needs to streamline and accelerate production while enhancing process adaptability and product quality," TRUMPF, Inc., President & CEO Lutz Labisch said.

"The Farmington smart factory provides a blueprint that enables manufacturers to 'reshore' production and remain cost competitive while adapting to changing needs, overcoming skilled labor shortages and meeting strict safety standards," Burke Doar said.

He is the executive vice president for TRUMPF, Inc.

The new smart factory increases by a multiple of four the production capacity of key components compared to traditional manufacturing processes. Thirteen material flow stations are integrated throughout the system.

There is also a green element to this new facility because 97 percent of the powder used in the coating process is recycled and used again. Three major new initiatives are scheduled take place over the next 12 months.

Jean P. Froehly, minister and head of economic and financial affairs at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., was among the many dignitaries in attendance.

TRUMPF employee Michelle Burkler speaks to a group of journalists on a tour of the Farmington plant. Photos by Mark Jahne

TRUMPF, Inc., in Farmington held a grand celebration to showcase its new smart factory that employs the latest technology to cut, bend and fabricate sheet metal. TRUMPF, Inc., photo

Further expanding local manufacturing in Connecticut, TRUMPF is adding a new press brake production line starting in the summer of 2026. This will increase and round out the plant's production output to cover all its major sheet metal fabrication product lines and is expected to create additional jobs.

TRUMPF will expand its training center by incorporating the latest equipment, automated systems and real-world setups to train the next generation of technicians and operators. This will add training capabilities and increase capacity beyond its current nationwide draw of 4,000 students annually.

A new apprenticeship consortium, founded by TRUMPF, includes several other Connecticut manufacturers and is supported by AdvanceCT and the German American Chamber of

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This TruBend 5230 machine is operated by robotic technology.

Commerce. The consortium leverages TRUMPF's apprenticeship and training programs and widens access to its high-tech equipment, software and personnel to raise the workforce's advanced manufacturing skill levels.

Partners in this consortium include the University of Connecticut School of Engineering, Central Connecticut State University, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology and four community colleges. Gov. Ned Lamont praised the new smart factory as the most advanced of its kind.

"This cutting-edge facility is ushering in the next generation of manufacturing. TRUMPF's investments in local manufacturing and skilled worker training are forward-thinking efforts that bolster the reputation of Connecticut and TRUMPF as a leader in innovation and technology while strengthening the ability of our manufacturing industry to compete globally," Lamont said.

"I am pleased to announce that the state is providing $2.5 million in financial assistance to support the company's growth and that TRUMPF is the first recipient of funding under our Strategic Supply Chain Initiative," he added.

Lutz Labisch, president and CEO of TRUMPF operations in North America, addresses the audience.

Lamont told the audience that the state awarded $2.5 million to TRUMPF, Inc., as part of this new supply chain initiative to enhance its production capacity and bring manufacturing operations from outside the United States to Connecticut.

"We are investing in projects and companies that will strengthen the economic foundations essential for our long-term prosperity," Commissioner O'Keefe said.

He added that TRUMPF, Inc.,

Sweet Sixteen.

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was also approved to benefit from the JobsCT program. The. company can earn as much as $373,000 in tax rebates if it creates 63 new full-time equivalent jobs in the coming years.

The smart factory adds 55,800 square feet of production space to cut, bend and weld thousands of different parts for its state-of-the art machines that are used by manufacturers to make metal components for automobiles, aircraft, agricultural machinery, data center cabinets, fitness equipment and a wide variety of other products.

This is all part of an ongoing "local-for-local" strategy for production in Connecticut where the company has operated since 1974. TRUMPF produces all its sheet metal laser cutting machines and connected automation devices for the North American market in Farmington and recently added a new production line to make tube laser cutting machines.

The Smart Factory is equipped with cutting-edge TRUMPF sheet metal fabrication equipment, connected to storage and material handling systems and a fully automated paint line. **NL**

Lutz Labisch, TRUMPF, Inc., President & CEO, chats with Gov. Ned Lamont during a tour of the company's new smart factory. To the right is company owner and CEO Nicola Leibinger-Kammüller and her husband, Dr. Mathias Kammüller, chief digital officer. TRUMPF, Inc., photo

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Born for radio

Steve Parker reflects upon a long career in broadcasting

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Steve Parker was not born with a microphone in his hand. But he probably found one shortly after.

The longtime Newington resident and son of a Connecticut radio legend, he entered the radio business at an early age and never looked back. He's still going at 69 years of age and doesn't plan to retire anytime soon.

Although he spent much of his career selling advertising time, Parker has always enjoyed being on the air. He joked that all you need to do is put a microphone or camera in front of him and he's in his comfort zone.

"I have always loved to perform," he said while flashing his trademark smile. "I've always enjoyed the anonymity of radio."

He hosts a live show called "Saturdays with Steve Parker" from 5:30-8:30 a.m. every Saturday on WTIC-AM 1080. That began 12 years ago.

The program features news, sports, traffic, weather, and interviews with a wide variety of people. He likes to feature military veterans' causes, nonprofit organizations and community groups.

"I have been in radio my whole life. As soon as I started making noises he put a microphone in front of me," he said of his father, the late Charlie Parker.

Charlie spent his career at WDRC AM & FM in Bloomfield. He held a variety of titles and did a lot of voice work for commercials. His time there included engineering, promotions, sales, production and program manager.

"He had a tremendous voice," his son recalled. "He came up with the concept for the Feed a Friend Foodathon" to support the Greater Hartford Emergency Food Bank.

That was in the days before most cities and towns had their own food pantries.

"He always put community first. But he also knew you had to keep the lights on. I saw the enjoyment he got out of going to work."

Charlie is credited with being the promotional genius behind WDRC's switch from a CBS affiliate to an independent music station in 1960. It positioned the station to take advantage of the rapidly growing popularity of rock 'n' roll music. He was inducted into the Connecticut Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2018.

"I went into radio full time in 1979" at WDRC, Steve Parker said.

He did a lot of commercials and was asked to do sales. He didn't have the "pipes of his father" but still enjoyed voicing commercials and decided to take on the job for that reason.

"I was never motivated by money," he said. "But it was the only way I could be in Hartford and write and record my own commercials. It's always been who has the idea first" that makes for a successful advertising campaign.

Parker also had a mid-day slot on WPOP Talk Radio back when the studio was located along Cedar Street in town. He also worked for Radio 104.1 when it became the location on the dial offering alternative rock. He developed a nice following with a younger audience but eventually decided to move on.

This is not a man who does one thing at a time. Parker likes to have multiple irons in the fire. He was a volunteer firefighter in town from 1973-1977 and belongs to the Newington Veteran Firefighters Association.

"I was the firefighter with the longest hair," he recalled.

He did some television work including a couple of shows called "Connecticut Business Today" and Connecticut Style." Then there was a part-time job back in 1995 as the booth announcer for WTNH-TV 8.

He is a longtime volunteer with Newington Community Television. He hosts a show entitled "Radio Friends Again" that recalls past experiences with other broadcast veterans. The show is recorded and then posted to YouTube.

He is also the host of the long-running "Talk to the Mayor" program on NCTV. Parker has volunteered for the Connecticut Radio Information Service for the blind for more than 40 years.

He serves on the board of directors of the Connecticut Humane Society and the board of Alicia's Angels, a nonprofit agency that supports hospital neonatal intensive care unit nurseries.

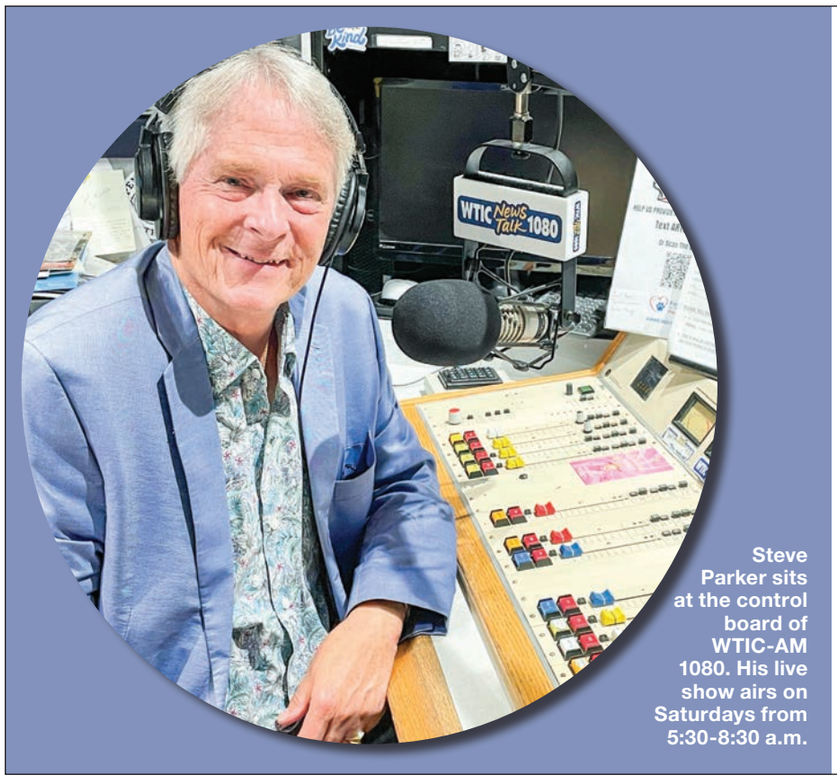
Parker also enjoys attending the monthly gathering of BOOBS (Band of Old Broadcasters). He and his longtime girlfriend Angela were high school sweethearts and reconnected after they were each married and divorced twice.

He spends Friday afternoon preparing for his Saturday morning program. There are many time slots that need to be filled and it's important to be organized.

"In the beginning we were putting on way too many people," he said.

Steve Parker has spent his entire career in the radio industry.
Photos by Mark Jahne

"I have always loved to perform. I've always enjoyed the anonymity of radio."
– Steve Parker



Steve Parker sits at the control board of WTIC-AM 1080. His live show airs on Saturdays from 5:30-8:30 a.m.

He came upon this job in an unusual manner. It was at the wake for another legendary Connecticut broadcaster, Arnold Dean, when a WTIC official approached him regarding the Saturday time slot.

"Arnold Dean is responsible for me sitting here," Parker said.

He reflected on those bygone days while opining that the radio industry has changed significantly over the years. WTIC legend Bob Steele dominated the Greater Hartford airwaves for decades, something not likely to happen again.

"Bob was a perfectionist. At one point he was number one in the country as far as the percentage of the [listening] market," Parker said.

He is pleased that WTIC-AM 1080 is 100 years old and still enjoys an excellent reputation and strong heritage. The world is different now with radio stations being frequently bought and sold.

The key to success, as he sees it, is for stations to remain relevant. Radio is not dead, but it needs personality and personalities to keep going.

Parker described himself as semi-retired but continues to do his Saturday show because he still enjoys the experience and it remains in his blood. The one thing that would make him leave if is they insisted that he host a political talk show. He's not interested in that line of work.

"There have been opportunities to go other places and do political [radio]. I'm not into that," he said. **NL**

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Thumbs up in Newington

Chamber continues to thrive and welcome new members

by Sarah Barr
Staff Writer

Newington LIFE likes to check the pulse of the business community with the Newington Chamber of Commerce. The chamber's vital signs are strong, showing growth, progress and increasing membership.

On this exam are curiosities regarding perceptions, trends, laying the groundwork to attract business, as well as steps to ensure success, and, of course, what's next.

Paul Muska, the board of directors president and a financial advisor with Edward Jones and chamber Executive Director Leslie Civitello provided perspective.

As far as perceptions, the chamber's e-newsletter blasts good news and hip happenings to members and the general public.

Shake Shack held one of numerous ribbon cuttings with the chamber of commerce this past year. Courtesy

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Yet it is the organization's social presence that sets the tone.

"Our social media posts and the frequency of the posts has given the chamber a greater exposure," Muska said.

But personal connections are still key and he gave gratitude to those who volunteer on the membership committee.

"There is [a] monthly communication with the town offices when a business application is submitted. We expanded our scholarship program to include students who are going into the world of trades. We have seen an increase in business participation in the events we sponsor," Muska said.

Civitello said entrepreneurship is up accordingly. Professionals have a passion, residents have a need. In Newington, the two easily find each other.

"Recently, Just 2 Gals Mobile Bartending, M.S. Vendrillo (men's custom outfitters), Blaze Pickle Ball, Wagging Tails and Roba Physical Therapy have all recognized a need, started their business, and joined the chamber," she said.

"The next trend would have to be the franchisee owner/operation," she added, listing Shake Shack, Dave's Hot Chicken, Playa Bowls, Haven Hot Chicken and PJ's. "They've all expanded into Newington recently."

Growth in the chamber is described as a consistent ebb and flow. Stores just don't magically open their doors here. There's a lot of leg work that goes on behind the scenes to attract like-minded partners.

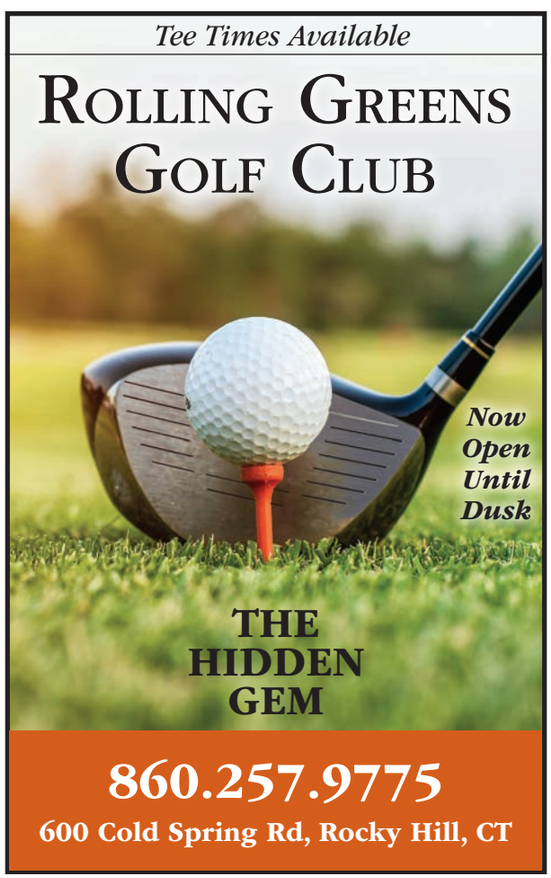
"We are partnering with the EDC [Economic Development Commission] and the town leadership to provide some insight to what we are hearing from business owners and citizens of Newington," Muska said.

"There is a lot of discussion about the types of businesses in each area of town, whether it is the Berlin Turnpike, Downtown Newington, Fenn Road, or New Britain Avenue. We feel it is important not to have multiples of the same businesses in the same location. We realize that we have no control over that, but when we see niche businesses coming into an area, we are thrilled."

Once the grand opening ribbon is cut and the cameras go quiet, they remain hard at work to help ensure a new business succeeds. Joining the chamber has its perks.

"We start with how they choose to become a member. Was it a referral, event, or social media post? Second,

Playa Bowls is one of the many franchises that expanded to Newington.



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It's the personal touch that matters at the chamber, such as congratulating Wagging Tails owner Krista Cugno Lofquist.

there is a phone call from one of the executive board members to welcome them," Muska said.

Next is an in-person visit, the aforementioned ribbon cutting and social media engagement.

"We encourage them to submit what is happening with their business on our social media sites. It is part of the membership dues," he added, noting that networking is key.

"We invite them to attend one of our events such as the car show or golf tournament for them to get exposure to other members and get in front of the citizens of Newington," Muska said.

Advertising opportunities are free on the chamber's website.

Since the pulse-check during the pandemic there has been an increased push on social media to raise the chamber's profile. That will continue.

Another "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" strategy is to keep doing what they're doing because the positive results are the proof in the pudding.

"Our approach to growth is a three-prong approach," Muska said.

That personal touch in promoting membership benefits, engagement through events, and capitalizing on referrals makes a difference.

If this were a medical report, the state of the Newington Chamber of Commerce would be that it's in excellent health. Between a steady diet of personal interaction, social engagement and disciplined investments, there's always something "new" in Newington. **NL**

For more information call 860-666-2089 or email office@newingtonchamber.com. Its office is located at 171 Market Square, Suite 101.

"We invite them to attend one of our events such as the car show or golf tournament for them to get exposure to other members and get in front of the citizens of Newington."

– Paul Muska

The benefits of spaying and neutering

Each year millions of dogs and cats are euthanized in shelters because of overpopulation. Just a few years ago, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, shelters were emptied out as pet adoptions reached all-time highs. Now that offices have reopened and people have returned to work and other activities, pets increasingly are being surrendered to shelters again, once more leading to overtaxed shelters and other facilities.

Overburdened shelters also are made worse by litters of animals born to unsterilized parents. The American Veterinary Medical Association says spaying and neutering are important tools for preventing unplanned or unwanted litters, and reducing pet overpopulation. Most experts agree there is little benefit to leaving pets' reproductive systems intact. Even family pets can get loose and mate unintentionally. The following are six notable benefits to spaying or neutering a pet.

1. Prevent the conception and birth of unwanted animals.

2. The ASPCA says spaying prevents uterine infections and decreases the incidence of breast tumors, which are malignant or cancerous in about 50 percent of dogs and 90 percent of cats. Spaying a pet before the first heat offers the best measure of protection.

3. Neutering male animals prevents testicular cancer if done before six months of age.

4. Neutered animals are less likely to roam and become nuisances. Female cats can go into heat four to five days every three weeks during breeding season. While in heat they will yowl and urinate frequently. Males will be on the prowl for females and can get into fights. Spaying and neutering reduces these tendencies.

5. Neutering and spaying is a lot less costly than having and caring for a litter. It also prevents medical treatment from being needed in the event a pet gets into a fight over mating.

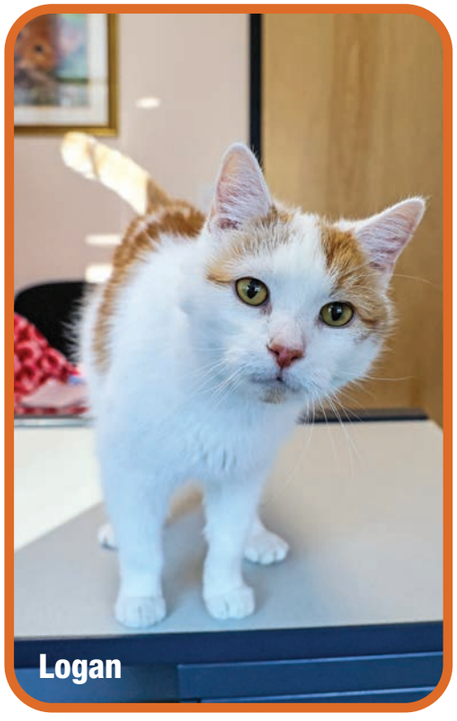
6. Although the surgery will reduce some undesirable behaviors, it is not a magic fix for all behavioral problems, including bad habits.

The ASPCA says the traditional age to sterilize dogs is between six and nine months. Healthy puppies as young as eight weeks can undergo a spaying or neutering surgery. For cats, it is generally considered safe for kittens as young as eight weeks old. To avoid the start of urine spraying, neuter or spay a cat before the animal reaches five months of age.

Spaying and neutering is important for animal health and helps to reduce pet overpopulation. – *Metro*

a new leash on LIFE

Meet Peppa and Logan


Logan

Peppa is a 5-year-old American Staffordshire Terrier with salt-and-pepper colored fur. She weighs approximately 55 pounds. Peppa would do well in any home, including some apartments. She will be an excellent companion for children over the age of 12 who are gentle and respectful of pets. She needs to be the only pet in your home, as she loves to soak up all the attention that she possibly can get. She loves to relax but also has her bursts of energy and would do well with a family that can adapt to her exuberant play style. She has some special needs.

Logan is an orange and white 9-year-old cat and cuddle bug. He has become a CHS staff favorite with his calm personality and love of attention. He would be a great fit in a home with children who are gentle and respectful of pets. He has not had much experience living with another cat, but would do well with a cat that is sweet and respectful. Logan would prefer to live in a dog-free home. He has diabetes and will need a family that can stick to his care plan and work closely with his veterinarian to keep his health up to date and make sure that he is well cared for.

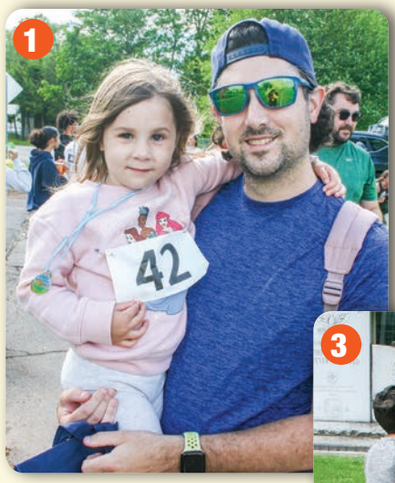
Learn more about the adoptable pets at the Connecticut Humane Society at CThumane.org/adopt or visit the pets at 701 Russell Road, Newington. CHS is an independent, nonprofit organization with locations in Newington, Waterford and Westport, and its work is 100 percent made possible through the generosity of donors.

Peppa

Slice of LIFE

Photos by Mark Jahne

Library 5K draws plenty of runners



1. Brian Watson and his daughter Chloe came from Bristol. **2.** Hundreds of runners turned out for the annual Lucy Robbins Welles 5K Race. Newington native and running legend Bill Rodgers, left, crosses the finish line after running the route alongside Jay Krusell, boy's cross country coach at Newington High School. **3.** Natalie Bevilacqua of Southbury stunned many by finishing second overall among females of all ages. She is 10 years old. **4.** Ashley Kuwaye, Gavin Dusel and Ariana Feliz run track at Newington High School. **5.** Brothers Donald and Eugene Slason love to run. They are from Middlebury and Southington, respectively. **6.** Library Director Lisa Masten welcomes marathon and Olympic champion Bill Rodgers. **7.** Kevin Mason has helped to coordinate the race since its first year.

8. Kate Dyer of Newington was the first woman to cross the finish line. **9.** Volunteers, from left, Pauline Kruk, Christine Shooshan, Lee Ann Manke, Pam Kiniry and Marilyn Melendez served bagels and bananas. **10.** Diane Stamm, chairperson of the Library Board, at the trophy table. **11.** Joseph Bohlke of Newington finished first of all men in the race. **12.** Olivia Lyden and her mother Taylor came from Simsbury to run the race together. **13.** They're off! **14.** Runners stretch before the start of the 5K. **15.** The Newington High School track team was well represented.

Independence...For You??

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that FEAR HIM, upon them that hope in His Mercy" (Psalm 33:12, 18).

"Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10 as inscribed on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia)

INDEPENDENCE

One of America's greatest historic foundational documents, The Declaration of Independence, was approved on July 4, 1776 by the Continental Congress and signed by John Hancock in the city of Philadelphia. George Washington said that The Declaration marked "an experiment on the practicability of republican government, and with what dose of liberty man could be trusted for his own good." The independence in this American republic was to be free from foreign control, free to follow and to find **its dependence upon** God. **When we fail to rightly exercise our founding documents, we fail to find their wonderful influence in our daily living, even Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.**

DEPENDENCE

What we forget is that, in declaring independence from an earthly power, our forefathers made a forthright declaration of DEPENDENCE UPON ALMIGHTY GOD. The closing words of this historic document solemnly declare: "With a firm RELIANCE on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Fifty-six men placed their names beneath that pledge and they lived up to it. They personally paid a great price for the freedoms we now enjoy.

TRUE FREEDOM

Our country was founded upon the basis of an idea – LIBERTY. It was not to be a FREEDOM FROM GOD which always leads to license and ultimate slavery but rather a FREEDOM BUILT UPON GOD AND HIS WORD. Freedom is not free but must be earned anew by each succeeding generation. "Liberty without obedience is confusion. Obedience without liberty is slavery" (William Penn). Rights without responsibility are the seeds of anarchy (disorder, violence). The issue is not freedom from want, war, etc. but the issue is freedom to work, worship, buy, sell, to succeed, to fail, etc.

TERRIBLE SLAVERY

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). America today is experiencing the effects of FORGETTING the God of our Fathers. We need to be reminded of a solemn warning that God gave to another great nation which had just been declared independent from bondage to another nation. Although written over 3,000 years ago it applied to modern America today: "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thoug FORGET the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons… Then beware lest thou FORGET the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage… And it shall be, if thou do at all FORGET the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day **that ye shall surely perish**. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before you face, so shall ye perish: because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 4:8-9; 6:12; 8:19-20).

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but SIN is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). "For the WAGES of SIN is death; but the gift of God is eternal LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord" (ROM. 6:23). "If the Son therefore shall make you FREE, ye shall be FREE INDEED" (John 8:36). "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead YOU WILL BE SAVED." (Romans 10-9)

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People notes

Tyler Ferreira was named to the dean's list at American International College.

Vivian Owusu was named to the dean's list at Southern New Hampshire University.

Jill Mantel earned a master of science degree in analytics from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Shakir Smith was named to the dean's list at the College of Our Lady of the Elms.

Brianna D'Urso, Brandon Kamansky, Arjun Patel, John Piercey, Cynthia Puerta, Reese Sadler, Daniel Siegel, Sarah Visalga, William Visalga, Anna Vumback, Todd Windish and Henry Zaleski were named to the dean's list and president's list at the University of Hartford. **Luke Canepari, Ethan Freeman, Sofia Giguere, Talha Khan, Michaela Lyons, Dylan Maull, Casper Mouthaan, Jack Nenna, Sejla Osmanovic, Michael Padilla, Elias Reji, Carly Sanzo, James Sullivan, Alexandria Thompson, Justin Wichowski** and **Scarlett Zurawski** were named to the dean's list.

Paige Zajack was named to first honors on the Clark University dean's list.

Emily Bolduc, Tavish Rupan and **Tomasz Tomaszewski** were named to the dean's list at Goodwin University.

Oanh Nguyen, Roseenha Rambharak, Jeannies Santiago and **Elizabeth Zwick** were named to the president's list at Goodwin University.

Padraig Brown and **Lucy Campbell** were named to the dean's list at Salve Regina University.

Trey Guest, Lindsay Ronski and **Kathryn Walsh** were named to the dean's list at Emmanuel College.

Christian Amaral was named to the president's list at Siena College.

Amanda Whitton was inducted into the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi at Sacred Heart University.

Breonne Lewis was inducted the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Eli Johnson was named to the dean's list at Purchase College.

Vulang Nguyen was named to the dean's list at Emerson College.

Isabella Marocchini and **Caitlyn Smith** were named to the dean's list at Lasell University.

Annabelle Churyk, Erin Abrams, Michael Bikakis, Aster Cao, Hayley Caracciolo, Ema Costa, Samuel Cultrera, Eric Elliott, Bianca Figueroa, Samantha Gorski, David Gorski, Cecil Ho, Maria Joseph, Andzelika Kluska, Milena Kluska, Pranjali Kulkarni, Phuoc Le, Michelle Martula, Jordan Middlebrooks, Sagal Musa, Vincent Nguyen, Michelle Novikova, Arby Nurcellari, Meera Patel, Easton Patz, Safee Rahman, Veronica Sadil, Aldo Sharofi, Arbi Shehu, Jack Stair, Eshan Tanseer, Payton Tavares, Vidhisha Thakkar, Emmanuel Thomas, Kiana Truong, Bryce Turner, Matthew Utter, Nikhil Vishwanath, Cody Voorhies, Lyla White, Zachary White, Maggie Woods, Joey Yang and **Olesia Zaverbna** were named to the dean's list at the University of Connecticut.

Trey Guest, Lindsay Ronski and **Kathryn Walsh** were named to the dean's list at Emmanuel College. **NL**

News roundup

Club grants award

Newington High School senior Anh-Minh Phan received a stipend check for her internship project that involved creating a new website for the GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club. Making the presentation is Chylene Pender, club president.

Brats and Beer

The Hartford Saengerbund presents "Sommerfest" from 2-8 p.m. July 12 at its club, 719 North Mountain Road. Scha Musi will perform live German and American music.

Bratwurst and sauerkraut highlight the menu and there will be imported German beer and other beverages for sale, as well as homemade cakes. Admission is $5 for adults and free for children.

For more information call 860-953-8967 or see hartfordsaengerbund.org.

Enjoy carillon music

The Church of Christ, Congregational, in town center presents an evening of light carillon music at 6:30 p.m. July 6. Admission is free. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy "Bells on the Green."

Navy honors D'Angelo

Dr. William D'Angelo, director of Directed Energy Health Effects, was presented the Civilian Service Commendation Medal by U.S. Navy Cmdr. Nicholas Hamlin, executive officer of the Naval Medical Research Unit San Antonio, Dental Corps.

D'Angelo was presented with the medal for his meritorious service while serving as DEHE director and department head, Biomedical Systems Engineering and Evaluation, from August 2018 to May 2025.

Student writers excel

Newington Public School students had another strong showing in this year's Connecticut Student Writers Contest. Seventeen of them were honored at the University of Connecticut.

Lilliana DelMastro, a fourth grader at Anna Reynolds School, and Madalyn Visser, a ninth grade student at Newington High School, were both published in the magazine. Numerous other students earned honors for nonfiction, poetry and fiction writing. In addition to the student authors, teachers Jaime Laferriere and Jeff Helming received recognition.

Two teachers honored

The Connecticut Education Association recently honored a pair of Newington teachers. Carla Toney was presented with its Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to public education by an individual. She was nominated by her colleagues.

Jennifer Rodriguez was given the John McCormack Award, which recognizes educators for their professional practice, advocacy for the profession, community engagement, leadership in professional development and attention to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Earning their diplomas

Five students graduated on June 5 from the Newington Adult Education program. Brendalee Delgado, Tyler Libby, Shiannna Rodriguez Torruellas, Reyanie Sanchez and DeMachia Wilson earned high school diplomas.

Maddalena is honored

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare honored Newington resident Jaime Maddalena with the 2025 Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing. This award recognizes nurses who go above and beyond the call of duty in various clinical and educational

environments.

For nearly eight years, Maddalena has cared for patients recovering from life-altering illnesses and injuries at Gaylord Hospital. Her peers say that she is known for her deep commitment to both patients and colleagues, treating everyone with the same compassion and attentiveness as she would her own family.

Remembering Regan Martins

The Newington Children's Theatre Company put on a special production dedicated to the memory of Regan Martins from June 6-8 featuring 48 children ages 5-15. "Pinkalicious the Musical" drew a total attendance of nearly 1,000 people.

Proceeds will support the Regan Martins Memorial Scholarship. Pink was her favorite color and her sisters Morgan, Peyton and Brooklyn and brother Declan were in the show. Joining the cast are members of the Newington Swim Club, another organization with which the Martins family is involved.

Photo by Andy Brecher

Masonicare presents concerts

Masonicare at Middlewoods of Newington senior living community, 2125 Main St., is conducting a summer concert series. Senior citizens and their family members, friends, or caregivers are invited to attend.

Remaining dates are a family picnic at 4 p.m. Aug. 9 with musical entertainment by Susan Judge and Piers Stonehart and Italian Summer at 2:30 p.m. Aug. 29 with music by Johnny P. Reservations are requested call 860-667-1336 or email jdelucia@masonicare.org.

Ruby captures third place

Ruby the chihuahua mix, a certified therapy dog, won third place in the Pet Partners Pet of the Year competition. Her supporters raised $6,312.36.

Ruby is also part of the Tails of Joy Animal-Assisted Crisis Response Team. She was deployed to Newington High School after a motor vehicle crash on Willard Avenue that killed four people, including an NHS student. **NL**

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Editorial

Get outside and enjoy the summer

Summer is finally here. So, now that the skies are sunny and the temperatures are warm and the birds are singing, what are we going to do to take advantage of this delightful season? All it takes is a little planning and imagination.

There are numerous day trips one can take to enjoy all that Connecticut or the nearby New England states have to offer. Our sand may not be the greatest, but we have a beautiful coastline along Long Island Sound and there are state parks and public beaches waiting for those who enjoy the sun and the smell of the ocean air.

Speaking of state parks, these have always been a great value and they are scattered all over the landscape. Some have ponds or streams good for fishing or swimming. Many offer scenic hiking trails. A few even have scenic waterfalls.

Most have places where one can cook out and enjoy a picnic. A few even offer the opportunity to rent overnight spaces for a camper, RV or tent.

State forests are also open to the public and create an ideal opportunity to talk a brisk hike or easy walk while enjoying the flora and fauna. The foresight past leaders had to create and preserve these beautiful natural spaces deserves our gratitude.

Every town has a park system that offers programs for adults and children. Most of them have a swimming pool and/or splash pad. Towns in this area offer concerts at the parks that are always free admission.

Many of them also feature farmer's markets. One can eat healthy while at the same time supporting local farmers. There are also outdoor events in the various towns suitable for families.

Or one can reach a little further and take a cruise along the Connecticut River. Hartford's Elizabeth Park and its famed rose garden is just a short drive away.

Outdoor concerts and plays are making a comeback. So are vintage car shows and tag sales. Not to mention cultural festivals. There's plenty from which to choose if one just does a little research.

Don't sit around the house this summer watching television or spending endless hours on the computer. Get out and play. Take the time to enjoy the great outdoors.

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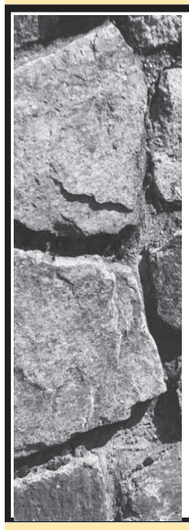

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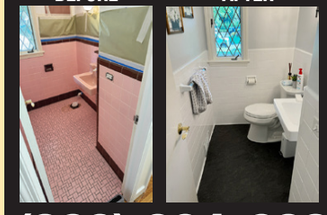

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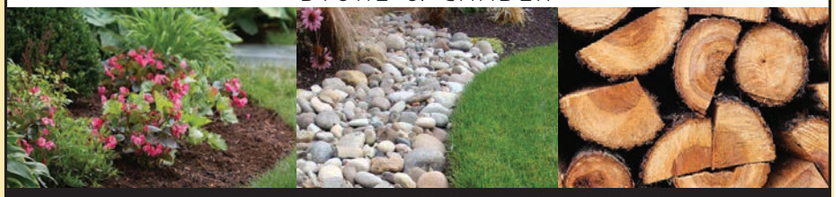

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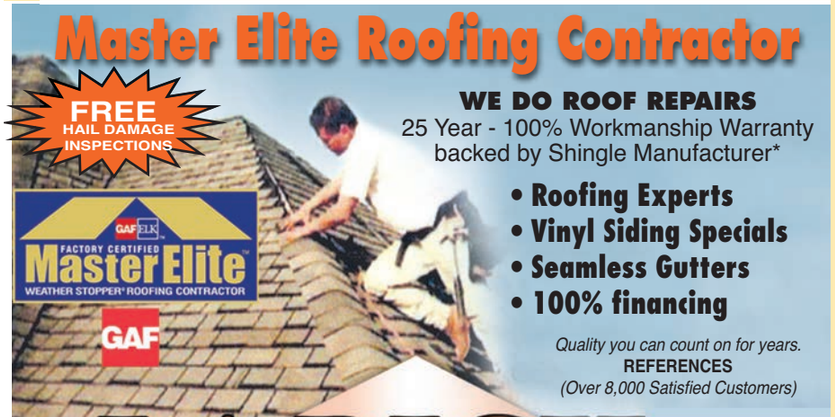

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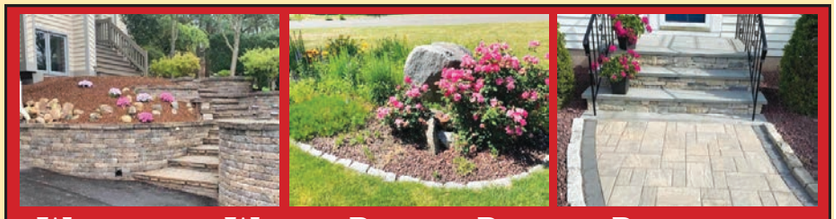

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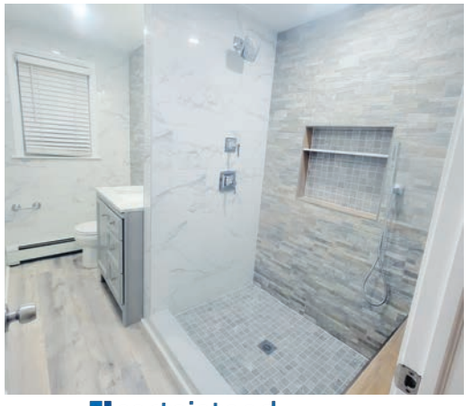

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SUMMER GUITAR, BASS, UKULELE LESSONS by Conservatory Trained Learning Specialist. Learn your favorite songs! $30. Pete Cocolla, 860-463-2734. www.GuitarStarInstruction.com.

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Support Groups

NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS: Do you have a loved one suffering from mental health challenges? NAMI trained volunteers assist at Support Groups. They are focused on providing an opportunity for people to share and learn from each other's common experience. Groups are free and participation is strictly confidential. Contact: 860-882-0236 or www.namifarmingtonvalley.org.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS Needs Volunteers to work at Blood Drives. Everyday The American Red Cross blood drive volunteers help support our lifesaving mission in many valuable ways. Your time is valued. Your skills are needed. Here are some of the benefits of volunteering; Gain career experience and learn new skills; Be a part of a large humanitarian organization; Make your own schedule, work when and where you can; Earn documented services hours; Earn job recommendations; Receive training support; Participate in volunteer recognition activities. Please go to www.redcross.org/volunteer or email us at CTRIvolunteer@redcross.org. We will find a flexible and rewarding position for you that fits your talents and your schedule. Use your time and talent to help save lives.

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS can help you. Take back your life. Phone: 855-2-CALL-GA 855-222-5542 to speak with someone. Gamblers Anonymous is a non-profit fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. www.gamblersanonymous.org.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS - Problem drinking affects as many as one in four people in our community, but many are still uniformed about Al-Anon Family Groups, free services to friends and families who suffer from a loved one's drinking. Please call 1-888-425-2666 (1- 888-4AL-ANON). Meetings in Newington: Alateen-Thursday 7:30pm Grace Episcopal Church, 124 Maple Hill Ave. Al-ANON- Sunday-7:00pm United Methodist Church, 401 New Britain Ave. Tuesday-7:00pm United Methodist Church, 401 New Britain Ave Thursday-7:30pm Grace Episcopal Church, 124 Maple Hill Ave-(Men's Meeting) Thursday-7:30pm Grace Episcopal Church, 124 Maple Hill Ave (Women's Meeting) Friday-9:30am Church of Christ Congregational, 1075 Main Street. Babysitting available at the Friday AM meeting.

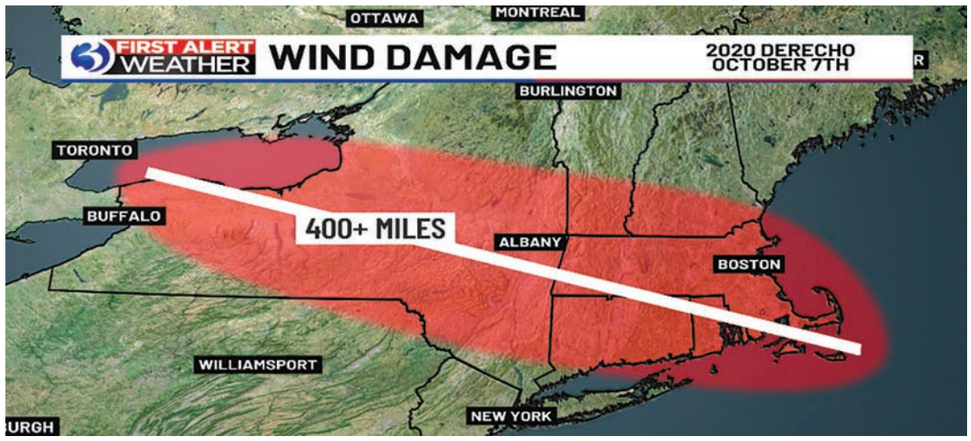
CLASSIFIEDS INFORMATION

Classified Ads: $50 for up to 20 words, 30¢ for each additional word.
Help Wanted Ads: $80 for up to 20 words, 60¢ for each additional word.
Ads run monthly in 5 of our LIFE publications. **Please make checks payable to TURLEY CT and send to: PO Box 725, Farmington, CT 06034.** Credit Card information should be phoned to Maureen at 860-264-5656 or sent with copy.
All major credit cards accepted. **Ads must be paid prior to running.**
Copy will not be taken over the phone.

TO PLACE AN AD -- Email: MLABIER@TURLEYCT.COM *or*
Mail to: Turley CT, Attn: LIFE Classifieds, PO Box 725, Farmington, CT 06034

NAME _____
COMPANY _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE NO _____
Check / Credit Card No _____
Exp Date _____ **Security Code** _____
Months to run _____ ***or* TFN (till further notice)**
AD COPY: _____

BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST[AMS]



Derechos

In Connecticut we get thunderstorms, some of which reach severe limits (wind gusts 58 mph or greater and/or hail 1" in diameter or larger). But have we experienced a derecho?

A Derecho (pronounced day-RAY-cho), meaning "straight ahead" in Spanish, is roughly defined as a fast-moving, long-lived line of thunderstorms that create widespread damage. The term was coined in 1888, by Dr. Gustavus Hinrichs while at the University of Iowa.

While they can be as destructive as tornados, the wind produced is straight-line as opposed to rotational. Also, there's difference in scale. A tornado is relatively small, ranging from an average of 500 feet to over 2 miles wide, that on average travel 5 miles. Meanwhile, a derecho's width can traverse several states.

Imagine severe storms that evolve into a massive line or complex with downbursts that lead to a path of damage spanning a long distance. To be deemed a derecho, the length of damage from those severe wind gusts was recently updated (in 2022) to encompass a swath of 400 miles (up from at least 240 miles).

While derechos are most common in the Midwest, they are rarer here in Southern New England. The last time one passed through the region was on October 7th, 2020, when wind damage in Connecticut was realized from the Litchfield Hills to the shoreline. **NL**

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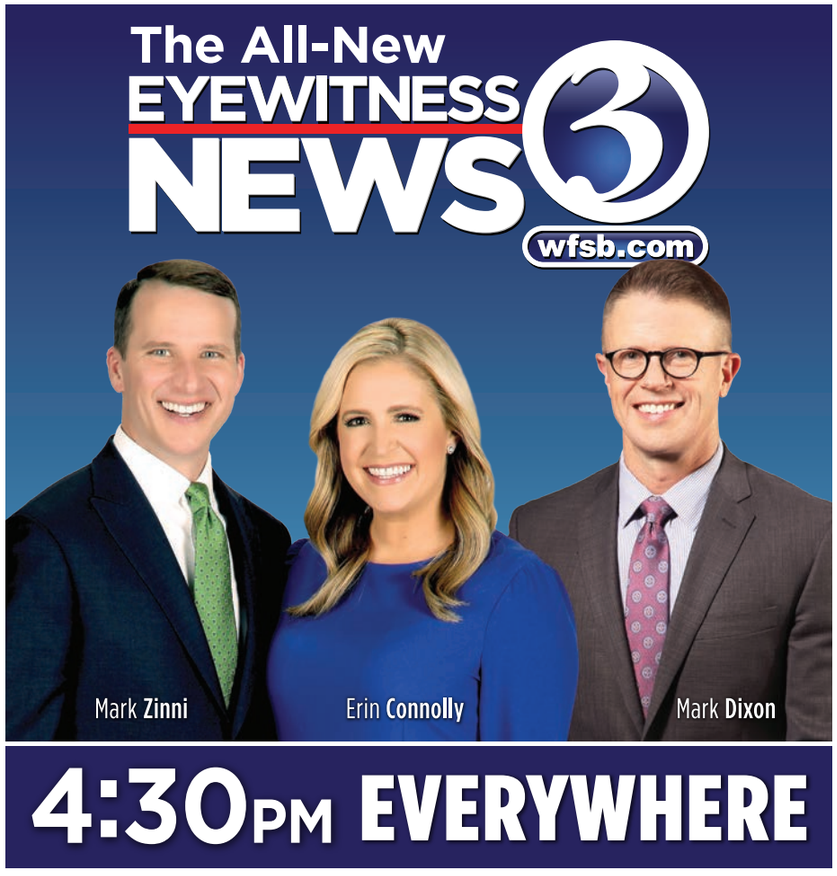

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