

Orange Town News



Orange's Exclusive Newspaper
Mailed Free To Every Home & Business in Orange

VOL. 17 – ISSUE 12 CIRCULATION 6070 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2022



State Plans Future Improvements to Route 1 Corridor

BY BETTINA THIEL
ORANGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning to install a center two-way left-turn lane on the Boston Post Road in Orange. A virtual hearing regarding the project was scheduled for December 15, after the Town News press time.

“This turn lane is something many residents and motorists are familiar with, as this improvement has been made throughout the Route 1 corridor,” said DOT spokesperson Josh Morgan in an email. “Having the center two-way turn lane improves traffic flow and reduces crashes.”

To accommodate the new turn lane, an additional 14 feet of roadway width needs to be added. The project starts from the Milford town line — just north of Peck Lane — and extends just over a mile north to the vicinity of Lambert Road. Construction is

expected to begin in spring 2024 and will take approximately two years to complete, according to Morgan.

Between 2015 and 2019, the DOT has logged 274 crashes through the project corridor, Morgan said. The majority of the crashes were rear-end crashes (134), sideswipe (44) and angle crashes (82).

“The purpose of this meeting is to provide the community an opportunity to learn about the proposed project and allow an open discussion of any views and comments concerning the proposed improvements,” the announcement read. In particular, the DOT is soliciting public feedback on the option to add sidewalks to the project.

“We are currently evaluating utility, right of way, construction costs, and project schedule impacts associated with the inclusion of side-

See “Route 1” On Page 3



Making Mezuzah – Local women recently gathered at the new Chabad Jewish Center on the Boston Post Road to create glass-fused mezuzah cases. These cases hold parchments inscribed with Torah verses and will be attached to a door frame. [Photo by Riki Hecht]

Chabad Opens Jewish Center

BY BETTINA THIEL
ORANGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Chabad of Orange and Woodbridge, the local branch of a world-wide movement promoting and deepening Jewish life, recently opened a new community center at 280 Boston Post Road, Orange. “We envision this as a space for people to connect, be inspired and engage with their Judaism,” said Rabbi Hershy Hecht, 28, whose parents Rabbi Sheya and Bluma Hecht started the local group right around the time

Hershy was born. He is now continuing their work together with his wife, Riki. The center is open to Jews of any background, he said.

Chabad Jewish Center is located in the space that was formerly occupied by Lampshades Plus. The store, once filled with lampshades of all sizes and shapes, is now a light-filled open space that allows small groups to occupy a corner. There is a corner

See “Chabad” On Page 11

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Families living on Hitchcock Court held on to a new tradition, borne of the Covid pandemic: together they recently decorated the STOP sign at the end of their road. That is, the parents decorated while the kids were playing ball in the yard. After the chore was done, they headed off to the tractor parade through the Center of Orange, another popular addition to the holiday traditions. Pictured are the Lombardi, Ferris and Sorge families congregating around the decorated signpost.

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“Route 1” From Page 1

walks,” he wrote.

The widening of the road also impacts the right-of-way, requiring partial acquisitions and easements to accommodate the installation of the left-turn lane. The project also involves rehabilitation of a bridge, which carries US Route 1 over the Indian River just north of Michaels Jewelers, as well as general drainage improvements.

Morgan said the DOT tries to minimize impacts to businesses. Driveway access will be maintained and coordinated with the businesses during construction. Once completed, access to and from businesses will be improved and traffic congestion will be minimized, he wrote. Similarly, the Orange Fire House will remain operational during construction. The contractor will

work with fire officials to maintain access from Route 1.

The estimated construction cost for this project is \$15 -20 million, 80% of which is expected to be covered by federal funds and 20% by state funds.

Michelle C. Saldana is the project engineer, and can be reached at Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov or (860) 594-3348.

For people unable to attend the hearing, the meeting will be recorded and posted on YouTube. The public comment period will remain open until January 11, 2023. The project webpage is at <https://portal.ct.gov/DOTOrange106-108>. A map of the project is available on the webpage.

Comments can be addressed to DOTProject106-108@ct.gov and (860) 594-2020, or to the project engineer, Michelle.Saldana@ct.gov or (860) 594-3348.





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5 Reasons to Shop Small Versus Big Box

The importance of small businesses to the economy cannot be overstated. Though national chains often garner publicity, local businesses are equally, if not exceedingly, worthy of attention.

What defines a small business as "small" varies significantly, but these businesses are generally privately owned and generate far less revenue than big corporations. General consensus also defines small businesses as companies with fewer than 500 paid employees, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Here's a deep look at why small businesses are so vital, and why consumers should direct more of their purchasing power to smaller companies rather than the big box retailers and other national chains.

and keep hiring centralized to the local area — something that keeps more resources and money in the community.

3. Adaptability and change

Local businesses can move more quickly to respond to economic factors that require change. Since they are focused more on the needs of their customers rather than stockholders, changes can be implemented rapidly without having to go through red tape, meetings and updates to corporate policies. Changes also can be customized to the local community at large.

4. Investing in the town

According to the financial resource Financial Slot, shopping at locally owned businesses rather than big box retailers keeps more money in the community. Local property taxes and other taxes paid by the businesses go right back into the community. This helps raise overall value for homeowners and can even reduce their taxes. The funding helps keep police, fire and school departments functioning properly.

5. Turnover is greater

While no one wants to see a small business fail, that fate is sometimes unavoidable. However, that turnover helps teach communities what was done poorly and helps others learn from those mistakes. It also means fresh businesses will come in and replace the old, driving new growth, opportunity and competition that keeps prices competitive.

The benefits of a thriving small business sector are numerous. Consumers can do their part by patronizing these firms more frequently.

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Below are the next three issue dates & deadlines of the Orange Town News.
Thank you for your submissions to Your Home Town Newspaper.

Upcoming Issue Date	Issue Deadline
February 10 Valentine's Day Issue.....	February 3
March 10 St. Patrick's Day Issue	March 3
April 7 Easter & Passover Issue.....	March 31

Note: Copy due by 4:00p.m. Thank you.

FROM OUR READERS

2023 -2024 Will Be A Difficult Time For Taxpayers

Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge are beginning the process of preparing their town budgets for fiscal year 2023-2024. It is going to be a difficult year with inflation, and there will be many reductions in town department budgets to try and keep tax increases as low as possible. All this while Amity has millions of dollars in surpluses as a result of bloated budgets which causes over taxation of the three towns and ultimately the taxpayers who fund Amity's budget requests. In the past Amity has refunded their surpluses to the three towns to be used by the towns to lessen the burden on the dozens of town departments that provide vital services to all town residents not just those with children who attend Amity schools. This year Amity has decided to no longer refund these surpluses to the towns based on a state statute which has been in effect for years, that allows Amity to retain surplus funds and use them as they feel necessary and then offsetting their budget request with what is left. I have no confidence that the towns will ever see a significant reduction in the budget request to reduce town taxes.

First of all, Amity can retain more than \$1 million into their capital and nonrecurring fund every year to be used for what they deem capital projects that are necessary. Realize that they do this without taxpayer approval. In fact, the Amity Finance Committee which includes town representatives, voted to limit this to \$500,000 this year, but that was rejected by the Amity Board of Education, a regular occurrence with the Finance Committee recommendations, which caused me to resign from the committee after 20 years. The rest of the surplus can be used to fund the dozens of other essential projects the Superintendent sees as necessary, again without taxpayer approval. And the Board of Education

approves all of this with little discussion. Whatever is left can be used to offset future budgets, but I believe that there will be little if any additional funds available and from what I have heard, it might not happen, if at all, for two years. Amity truly has a blank check to fund whatever they want with no input from the three towns or the taxpayers who provided these funds in the first place. That is truly a recipe for disaster.

Dr. Sudhar, a newcomer to the Amity Board, recently wrote a lengthy two-part letter about the subject and he believes that Amity is handling its budget and surpluses exactly as they should. Taxpayers approve Amity's budget at referendum and do not expect part of that approval to include millions of dollars of surplus money to be used however Amity sees fit, with the taxpayers in the dark after they vote for the budget. I would invite Dr. Sudhar to attend our budget hearings and explain to the dozens of departments we make cuts to, that they have to accept these cuts while Amity has millions in surplus funds. These departments provide vital services to ALL town residents and year after year they are told to do more with less. In the past when Amity refunded their surpluses to the towns we would not have to cut as much from department budgets, but that will not happen this year. This is grossly unfair and taxpayers need to make note of this when Amity's budget referendum comes up for a vote next May.

I have never, in my nearly 50 years living in Woodbridge and my 20 years being involved with Amity, seen so much dissatisfaction with Amity. A large group of residents are attending meetings and writing letters protesting educational issues and are routinely disregarded and ignored at Board meetings. Yet this group and our finance group are growing every day with dissatisfied residents. Amity had

See "Letters" On Page 19



OTN LETTERS POLICY

Submit your letters for our "From Our Readers" section to:
Orange Town News, P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
or email: letters@orangetownnews.com.
Please limit letters to 500 words and include a daytime phone number in case we have any questions. Letters must be exclusive to the Orange Town News for publication. We reserve the right to reject any letter.

ORANGE EDUCATION ROUNDUP

Orange Pre-School Blind Lottery

“Limited Openings” for 2023-24 Community Peer/Tuition Based Program

The Orange Elementary School System is now accepting names for the “Blind Lottery” for the 2023-2024 Preschool Program at Mary L. Tracy School. Our Special Education/General Education integrated preschool is looking for three- and four-year old children to enroll as community peers and positive role models. This program enriches each child’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, intellectual, and creative abilities through early academic and social experiences. It is designed to prepare the children for early success and school readiness. By law, students with special needs identified with an IEP are placed in the Preschool Program by the Dept. of Special Services through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process and they do not participate in the lottery.

In order to participate in the pre-school all children:

- Must be 3 years old but not older than 4 years old by December 31st, 2023;
- Must be toilet trained to attend preschool;
- bona-fide Orange residents only;
- If a child’s 3rd birthday is between September thru Deember 2023, they will start on their 3rd birthday;
- Parents need to provide transportation to and from school for their child.

The Preschool Program follows the district’s school year calendar: the AM class is held from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30

a.m. and the PM class is held from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Each classroom will be a blend of three- and four-year old children. Class sizes are limited to a total of 12 students per class, which includes our special education students. The total school year cost of tuition for community peers is \$3,250 paid monthly, \$325 per month. Our fee-based preschool is held 5-days/week, for 3-hrs/day. No transportation is provided for general education community peers.

Community peer children are selected thru the “Blind Lottery”. The blind lottery is conducted in two stages:

1. all names are ‘picked out of a hat’ by age group for the “limited number of available spaces”, with the remaining names drawn and placed on a waiting list;
2. the 2nd drawing decides if your child will attend the AM or PM class to balance each classroom with an equal amount of 3- year old and 4-year old children.

If you wish to have your child participate in the Blind Lottery, please call the Special Services Dept. (203-891-8023) between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to place your child on the list. We will be accepting names for the blind lottery up until 4:00 p.m., Friday, January 27, 2023. Parents will receive a letter with the lottery results thru the US Mail by February 8, 2023.

Any further questions, call the Special Services Dept. (203-891-8023) at the Orange Board of Education.



Holly Hill Childcare Teaches the Meaning of Giving

The true meaning of Thanksgiving was surely evident at Holly Hill Childcare and Learning Center. Thanks to the children and parents of the center, along with generous donations from town residents, 13 baskets were created and given to families and the elderly who otherwise would not be able to partake in a Thanksgiving dinner.

Debbie Manson Fedorko, director said, “Our Thanksgiving food drive is the perfect opportunity for our staff to teach our youngsters some very valuable lessons - the meaning of caring and sharing and the true joy of giving! We are so happy to be able to share with others by gifting them a bountiful Thanksgiving feast.”



Attention Teachers!

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‘Tis The Season for Spreading Hope and Joy

The Peck Place School is getting into the season by doing good deeds for others. Students and staff participated in two worthwhile events throughout the month of December. Their focus was to spread hope and joy to others in need.

On December 9, The Peck Place School participated in PJ Day for Kids

sponsored by the Connecticut Children’s Hospital. “PJ Day for the Kids kicked off its 11th year with a mission to not only raise money, but to honor the brave kids fighting cancer at Connecticut Children’s.” The school community donated money for this cause in exchange for wearing their

pajamas to school. They found a way to provide hope to all families looking for a cure for their children with cancer.

In addition to raising money for PJ for Kids Day, the staff and students held a month-long Toy Drive. Starting at Thanksgiving and running through the Winter Break, students and staff

brought in new toys to donate to those in need. To date, hundreds of items for children from infants to teens have been donated and will be sent to the Toy Closet and Toys for Tots. It brought smiles to everyone’s faces just thinking about the joy they are providing to someone else.

OPINION

Special Amity Board Meeting Highlights Lack of Transparency

Concerns about Board Policy Violations Continue

By Dr. Reena Seltzer
Clinical Psychologist

On Monday October, 24th there was a Special Board meeting at Amity High School for the purpose of voting on a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) ‘mission’ statement, a vote that board members were ill equipped to take due to a lack of transparency by the administration.

Three different Board members complained to the Superintendent about not receiving information in a timely fashion. Not being able to make decisions without all the information seemed to be a recurring theme. One Board member pointed out how she had asked the Superintendent repeatedly for an overview of DEI initiatives and never got an answer. Another Board member was distressed by the lack of transparency and how information was not distributed in a timely fashion for board members to be able to make decisions.

At this meeting a diverse group of 13 speakers -- consisting of current parents, past parents, students, alumni, and community members -- all spoke against the use of DEI in the curriculum. They all spoke from varying perspectives as to why using DEI as a Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum was a poor choice that emphasizes differences rather than commonalities creating more rather than less racism. The board minutes that were circulated after the meeting described each public comment in vague and neutral terms, obscuring the facts and true sentiments expressed by members of the community.

The proposed DEI mission statement is lacking in transparency. It uses vague statements that attempt to in-

corporate DEI concepts without defining what those concepts mean. There has been little information shared as to the impact of DEI on curriculum. For example does ‘Equity’ mean that the goal is to make sure that all students end up with the same outcome, regardless of individual potential, skills, and efforts? Shouldn’t we be supporting “equal opportunity” rather than “Equity”? Shouldn’t we as parents, teachers, and students be having that discussion with the administration rather than having policy dictated?

Policy Violations: A review of Board minutes/packets of all meetings since December 2018 did not include any evidence of the DEI curriculum being presented to or approved by the board. According to policy P9132.3, “It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to establish and approve curricula for the District.” Failure to do so is a violation of school policy. The Superintendent brought in consultants to train staff and faculty on DEI from April 2019 through May 2022 at a cost of \$98,319.64, beginning the implementation of DEI without board approval. The administration then hired a DEI coach, again without board approval of DEI curriculum.

As the board began their discussion that was going to lead to a vote on accepting or modifying this draft document, the fire alarm bell went off and everyone had to leave the school.

This lack of transparency by the administration to both the Amity Board of Education and to the community at large does not serve us well and needs to change.

Dr. Reena Seltzer is a Clinical Psychologist and mother of two Amity Graduates.

Town of Orange Meetings for the Month of January 2023



(Subject to Change, Check with Town Clerk’s Office, 203-891-4730)

3rd	Economic Development Comm	5:30 pm	Gusto’s Restaurant
	Town Plan & Zoning Comm.....	7:00 pm	Town Hall
9th	Traffic Authority	4:30 pm	Police Dept.
	Board of Police Comm.....	4:30 pm	Police Dept.
	Amity Board of Education	6:30 pm	Woodbridge
	Zoning Board of Appeals	7:00 pm	Town Hall
10th	Inland Wetlands Comm.....	7:30 pm	Town Hall
11th	Board of Selectmen.....	7:00 pm	Town Hall
12th	OGAT	7:30 pm	Town Hall
16th	Board of Health	7:00 pm	HPCC
17th	Orange Board of Education	7:00 pm	Mary L. Tracy
	Town Plan & Zoning Comm.....	7:00 pm	Town Hall
18th	Recycling Cmte	7:00 pm	HPCC
19th	Library Comm.....	7:00 pm	Case Mem. Library
22nd	Board of Finance.....	7:00 pm	Town Hall
25th	Park & Recreations Comm.....	7:30 pm	Town Hall



DID YOU KNOW?

Consumers who want to help the local businesses in their community succeed and attract more customers should know that the overall star rating a business has on online review sites such as Google and Yelp can go a long way toward compelling prospective customers to patronize a business. In their Local Consumer Review Survey 2022, the marketing experts at BrightLocal found that 85 percent of consumers indicated overall average star rating was an "important" or "very important" factor in determining whether or not they would patronize a business. That star rating can be especially valuable when consumers are trying to choose which business to support, as 76 percent of survey respondents indicated their decisions would be influenced if one business had a higher average star rating than another they were considering. Consumers can consider these findings as they decide which site to utilize when they decide to write a review.



Chair’s Report

Each month the Board receives numerous communications expressing concerns, asking questions, making suggestions, and offering help and support. I believe it important to address some of these issues as part of our regular Board agenda. To begin with I wanted to clarify a statement made about board policies. I indicated at a previous meeting that board policies, except when they mirror state statutes, do not have the force of law. Some people interpreted that to mean that we don’t have to follow them. That was not my intention. Board of Education policies are to be followed as strictly as possible by all board and staff members. The administration is given some leeway to waive application of a Board Policy under unique and limited conditions such as student safety. It is the expectation of the Board that should those waivers occur, the administration will provide a detailed explanation.

There have been numerous concerns expressed about DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion). The diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at Amity are being developed by Amity staff for use by the Amity School District. We are not importing a DEI curriculum; we do not have a DEI curriculum; we are not in the process of developing one; and do not plan to develop one. We also do not teach, nor have a curriculum or classroom lessons which include Critical Race Theory (CRT). We do have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coach who is working as part of a team on curriculum audits and updates using our own evaluation tools developed for that purpose. That coach is also working with teachers in the classroom to present lessons, based on our curriculum, which students from our very diverse student body will find more up to date, interesting, and meaningful.

Declining enrollment, particularly at the high school level, has also raised concerns that parents are sending children to other schools possibly because of education issues at Amity. By every measure Amity is one of the finest public high schools in the state. A recent review of five-year enrollment figures for high schools in our DRG (District Reference Group) shows an overwhelming percentage have declines in enrollment, many more than Amity. The explanation is probably more about population changes than education. All schools have challenges, Amity is no exception. We continue, as many schools do, to struggle with bullying, racism, antisemitism, discriminatory comments and other discipline issues, but we are working hard to improve our school climates so every student can strive to reach their fullest potential.

Application of the Amity Surplus

The Board of Education tabled a motion on how to apply the unexpended funds from the 2021-2022 budget. Since July, the Board has received clarification, directions, and information on how to comply with C.G.S. 10-51c. When presented with a motion for a

From the Amity Board of Education

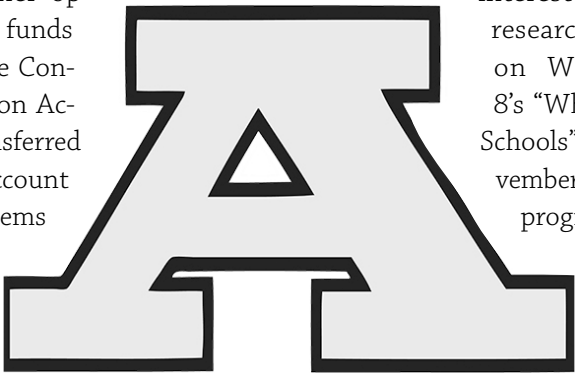
By PAUL DAVIS
AMITY BOE CHAIR



process different from that suggested by the Board’s auditor, members of the Board felt it would be prudent to take more time to consider the options. The motion that was tabled read as follows: *Direct the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Finance to apply the audited surplus to the end of the current fiscal year to reduce the expense of the District for the current fiscal year.* The Board will revisit this issue and motion at the regular December meeting.

Amity Continuing Education Program

After tabling a vote last month, the Board of Education took action on November 14, 2022, to formally end the Amity Continuing Education Program due to declining enrollment, decreasing revenues, and lack of a Program Director. The Board waited for a month prior to making this decision to hear from the public – no comments against discontinuation of the program were received. The District will continue to partner with Hamden Public Schools to offer Adult Education and English Language Learner opportunities. Any funds remaining in the Continuing Education Account will be transferred to the Drama Account for purchase of items that will support our creative theater, musical, choral, band, and whole-school programs.



Amity BOE Recognizes National Merit Scholarship Program Recipients

The National Merit Scholarship Program recognizes and honors academically talented students across the United States. Students qualify for Nation Merit recognition based on their PSAT results from fall of their junior year of high school. On November 14, 2022, Amity continued its tradition of recognizing the National Merit Commended Scholars and National Merit Semifinalists before the Board of Education. Approximately 3.5 million students participate in the PSAT/NMSQT each fall. Commended scholars honors are awarded to the students who score in approximately the top 3% of all test-takers. The Semifinalists represent the top 16,000 students in the country – or those who score in approximately the top 1% nationally. The following students received National Merit Commended Scholars Recognition: Anushka Acharya, Henry Atwood, Simran Jain, Isha Khan, Marin Korenaga, Matthew Li, June Lin, Daniel Liu, Sophia Liu, Jennifer Luo, Nicholas Massey, Sophia McDermott, Harshil Parmar, Kiley Pickens, Lucas Rodriguez Herlihy, Sreenidhi Tadepalli, Silas Turner, Aadya Wijesekera, and Mingyue Zha.

The following students were recognized as National Merit Scholarship Program Semi-Finalists: Piyush Bahel, Jacob Betencourt, Francis Cavallaro, Jennifer Li, Si Ru Liang, Yuqi Liu, Melinda Lu, and Brian Scully.

Policy Committee Updates

The Board took action on two policies at its November meeting, approving updates to the Bus Conduct policy and adopting a new policy on Restorative Practice. Restorative Practice complements the punitive consequences of the student conduct policies by pairing discipline with meaningful instruction and guidance to help students learn from their mistakes. The main goals of Restorative Practice are accountability, community safety, and social skill development. The Board also moved two policies on to a second read, including the revised Conduct & Discipline policy.

Science Research Makes the News

Amity’s Science Research Program, a multi-year opportunity for students interested in careers in research, was featured on WTNH Channel 8’s “What’s Right With Schools” program on November 1, 2022. This is a program co-produced by WTNH and the Connecticut Association of Schools that features positive news about schools.

Virtual Keynote Series

Amity Regional School District is hosting a Virtual Keynote Series. Similar in concept to Parent University, these online webinars are designed for parents around topics relevant to supporting their teens. The ARHS Counseling and District Pupil Personnel Services departments hosted the first Virtual Keynote Speaker presentation of the year on November 3, 2022, featuring Dr. Alicia Farrell, who presented *The Pressure to be Perfect and Its Unintended Consequences*. With over 115 attendees, this program focused on practice suggestions for parents on how to raise resilient children in a society that sometimes values performance over character. Feedback from the presentation indicated this was a much-needed message. Please be on the lookout for additional speakers in this series.

Amity NAHS Exhibition

The National Art Honor Society will have its opening reception for the exhibition at the Woodbridge Library in the Community Room on November 15, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 pm. The NAHS invited all students grade 7-12 to participate in this exhibition. The exhibition can be viewed during normal

Woodbridge Library operating hours through November 30, 2022.

BOE Adopts Its Core Values

Late in 2021 through the beginning of 2022 the Board held a series of workshops to develop a group of core values. We believe these values for our students, staff, and ourselves are critical to building a learning community. After a discussion about the values, how they were developed, and whether they truly express our beliefs; the board unanimously voted to accept these values as the current core values for the Amity Regional Board of Education. These are listed and described below:

- › **Integrity/Ethics:** WE BELIEVE an effective school system requires the highest levels of integrity and ethics, open and honest communication, dependable and trustworthy effort, and accountability to learners and the community;
- › **Relationships:** WE BELIEVE that learning is a social endeavor and thrives in healthy relationships at all levels. Open, strong relations, between and among students, staff, the Board, and families, rooted in common purpose and sense of direction, enhance trust and motivation and promote learning;
- › **Respect/Empathy:** WE BELIEVE a healthy learning environment stems from a foundation of respect that supports expression of human dignity. Learners value different voices and perspectives and grow as kind, humble, compassionate, and open listeners, communicators, and colleagues;
- › **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** WE BELIEVE the district should nurture a community of learners who embrace individual and cultural differences, valuing how differences enrich society. WE BELIEVE that all learners should have access to the resources necessary to achieve their fullest educational potential with the full support of a community of leaders. WE BELIEVE that learners must belong to and feel supported in their learning environment for them to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically;
- › **Resilience:** WE BELIEVE in the importance of generating learners who are resilient and adaptable, engaged, curious, and eager, who embody growth mindsets and are highly motivated to persevere to achieve mastery/excellence in academics, sports, the arts, and extracurricular performance. Further, we value a system that nimbly responds to unexpected challenges, has a process in place to learn from them, and uses this learning to improve future responses;
- › **Commitment to a caring community:** WE BELIEVE learners who establish meaningful, healthy connections will become effective stewards of their broader communities and recognize the importance of their contributions to society.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Adhesive Capsulitis: How to Thaw a Frozen Shoulder

By Warren Rodrick DPT

Those who have had the misfortune of experiencing adhesive capsulitis—commonly known as “frozen shoulder”—are well-acquainted with the tedious and uncomfortable process of getting it to subside, or “thaw.” Characterized by inflammation in the stabilizing ligaments of the shoulder, capsulitis can lead to a profound decrease in function due to a tightening and/or thickening of these structures, as well as the development of dense scar tissue known as adhesions.

The origin of this oft-misunderstood ailment can vary, but tend to fall into two general categories. Cases that develop after a trauma or illness, such as post-fracture, stroke, or surgical repair, are known as “secondary capsulitis.” Instances that develop idiopathically, or without a known trauma or illness, are deemed “primary capsulitis.” This “primary” type usually affects the non-dominant side and is seen most commonly in females above the age of 40, which accounts for 70% of all cases.

Regardless of what demographic a patient may fall within, the hallmark presentation of capsulitis remains consistent: increased pain in and around the involved shoulder, as well as a significant decrease in the motion of the joint. Progression of these symptoms is further divided into three stages: Freezing/Painful, Frozen, and Thawing. As we see a patient’s self-reported pain rating INCREASE during the initial “freezing” stage, we also tend to observe a DECREASE in the active range of motion in the joint, and vice-versa toward the end of the “frozen” and beginning of “thawing” stage.

Although capsulitis can be a painful and limiting issue, accurate diagnosis in the early stage of development, with a timely start of physical therapy treatment, can be an effective non-surgical solution. In addition to alleviat-

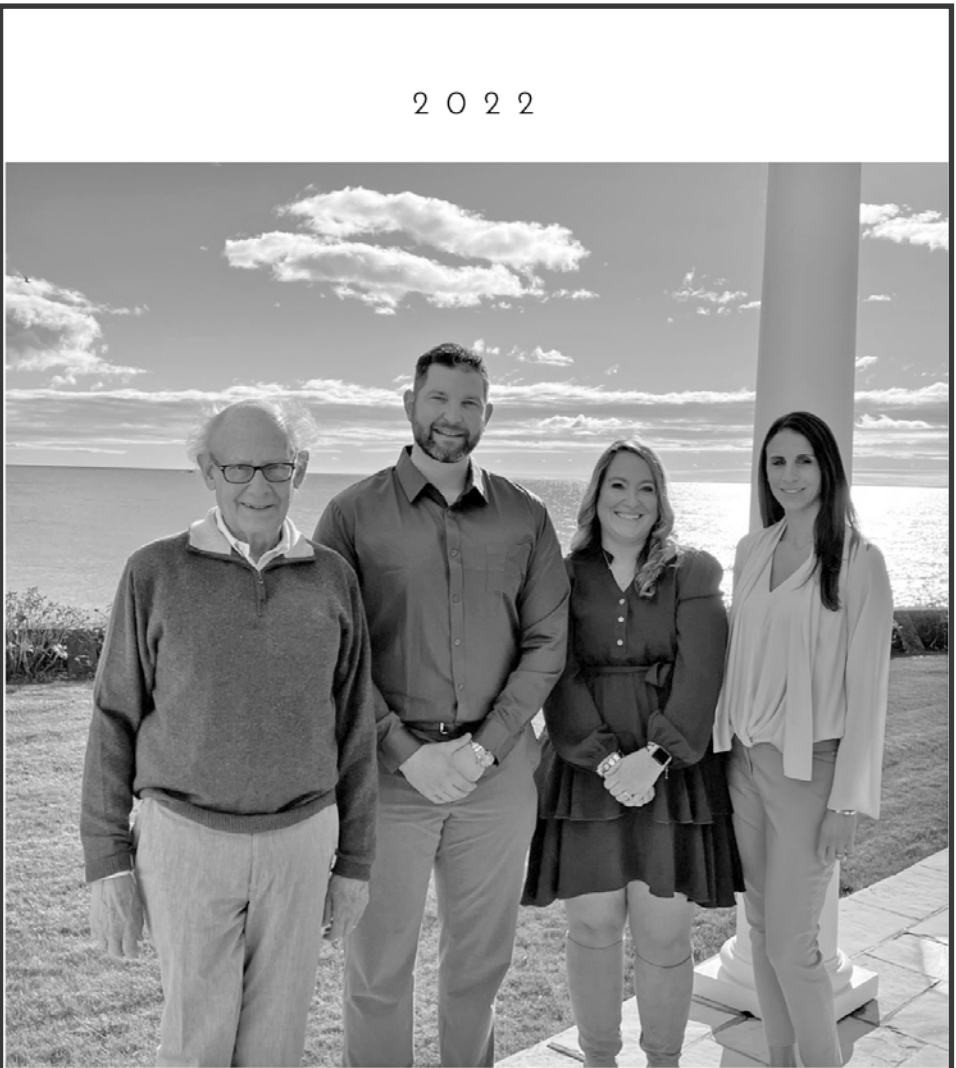


Warren Rodrick

ing the patient’s short-term pain, a treatment approach combining manual techniques (i.e., passive stretching and joint mobilizations) with therapeutic exercise to increase strength/stability of the shoulder joint and surrounding postural muscles, can minimize the possibility of long-term functional deficits or disability.

If you think that you may be developing a frozen shoulder—or any other shoulder issue affecting your daily activities—please consult a licensed Physical Therapist to properly diagnose and treat your particular issue, thus maximizing return of function and quality of life going forward.

Warren Rodrick, DPT, is a Physical Therapist and Site Supervisor of our new Wallingford location. Warren has worked with Amity PT since graduating from University of Hartford with his Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2015. Working with patients of all ages and ability levels, Warren prides himself on his commitment to their goals and providing the individualized care they need. To set up an appointment to see if your Glutes are up to par, contact us at 203-626-5330 or at amitypt.com.



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Just in Time...

The Academy (605 Orange Center Road) and Stone-Otis House (615 Orange Center Road) are all decked out for the holiday gift-giving season. Each building is open on Saturdays. The Academy from 10-3 and The Stone-Otis house 12-3 so stop in and say hello and do some very creative shopping for family, friends and those last-minute hostess gifts... See ya.



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The new Chabad Jewish Center offers a welcoming, light-infused space where Jewish families can deepen their faith. Pictured is Riki Hecht, who is creating programming for children and women.



Rabbi Hershy Hecht and his wife, Riki, with daughter Miriam, preparing for the grand opening of the new Chabad Jewish Center

“Chabad” From Page 1

for a book lending library, a corner for the youngest ones to learn about Jewish life; a corner for the sale of Judaica – currently mostly menorahs, given that Chanukka is just around the corner.

A large conference table points to the heart of it all: the study of and discussion of scripture. Not far away, right opposite the entrance, hangs a portrait of the most influential leader of the Chabad movement, Menachem Mendel, who, according to a Wikipedia entry, “transformed the (Chabad) movement into one of the most widespread Jewish movements in the world today.”

The local Chabad is offering af-

ter-school programs for young children from public schools so they experience Jewish life; also, Torah classes for adults; they will establish a Mitzvah Center for good deeds; form a Jewish birthday club.

For Hershy Hecht, and his wife Riki, the center is an extension of their home life. Both grew up in Chabad households, Hershy in Orange, Riki in Pittsburg. “Our home [in his parents’ house] was always full of guests,” he said. They were delivering food, making Purim baskets, helping those in need. “That’s what I’m made of,” he said when he showed this reporter around the new center.

Even before the center had officially opened, a group of women gathered to make mezuzah cases with fuzed

glass. These cases will be attached to a door frame and hold parchments inscribed with Torah verses. “We had a local scribe to talk and show the practical side of a mezuzah scroll,” said Riki Hecht. It was a joyful gathering.

Up until recently the local Chabad has been operating out of the Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy on Derby Avenue, where Rabbi Sheya Hecht is the headmaster. But the school has been growing and space became tight at times. Events that draw larger crowds, such as for Chanukka or Purim, will continue to be held at the school, Hershy Hecht said.

The new center offers office space, a Judaica shop, a Jewish lending library, a small children’s corner and more. In their vision, the center will

become a welcoming place for Jews who live or work in the area. Parents who wait for their children involved in after-school activities might choose to use the lending library. Hecht is planning to start a Lunch and Learn class for those who work in the area. Starting in mid-January they will host JLI (Jewish Learning Institute) courses.

“It will be a place where the spiritual heartbeat of our community can grow,” the Hechts wrote in an email announcing their plans.

For more information, you can check out their website at www.chabadow.org. The Chabad Jewish Center will be open Monday - Thursday from 10:30 a.m.- 2 p.m. or by appointment.

“I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.” — CHARLES DICKENS

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CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS



Frosty Fest 2022

It's not too late to purchase a snowman for our 2nd Annual Frosty Fest! The Frosty Fest is a chance for you and your family or business to show off your community holiday pride! Be among the group of snowpeople lining the street in front of High Plains Community Center!

With your donation you will receive a "Frosty Kit", consisting of a blank snowman-shaped lawn sign for participants to paint and decorate as you'd like. Be creative. Be fun. Size is approxi-

mately 18"x 32". This fundraiser is open to families, BOW-based businesses, organizations, and clubs while supplies last. Proceeds will benefit BOWDAAC (Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge Drug/Alcohol Action Committee) and substance use prevention/mental health awareness programming for our local youth. Business/Organization/Club: \$50.00 per snowman, Family: \$25.00 per snowman.

Contact info.bowdaac@gmail.com for more information.



Top: Scouts Creating Kits for Beth-El Center. Bottom: Scouts at Sleeping Giant [All photos courtesy Pack 922]

Pack 922 News

Pack 922 would like to thank everyone in town who helped make November a big success. Scouts participated in their annual Scouting for Food Drive, where they helped pack the Orange Food Bank for the holiday season, created kits for the Beth-El Center, participated in a wreath sale, and climbed

to the top of Sleeping Giant. Scouting is open to all children grades K-5. For more information, contact our Cubmaster at cubmaster@orangecubscouts.com or visit our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/CubScoutPack922> and our website <https://orangecubscouts.com/>.



Busy Fall Season for Troop 60274

It's been a busy fall for Troop 60274! The newly bridged Cadette troop have been hard at work planning badge lessons and service projects for the year. The scouts ran a successful veterans drive last month and then this past weekend, met with the Orange Historical Society for a lesson in colonial cooking at the Bryan-Andrew House. Ginny gave them a very informative

background lesson on how different life and especially cooking was for a family back in the 1740s.

With supervision, each Girl Scout from the troop had a chance to chop, zest and prepare the ingredients for the Apple Charlotte dessert. While it was cooking over the coals, the troop received a tour of the home. This was such a great experience for the 6th graders.



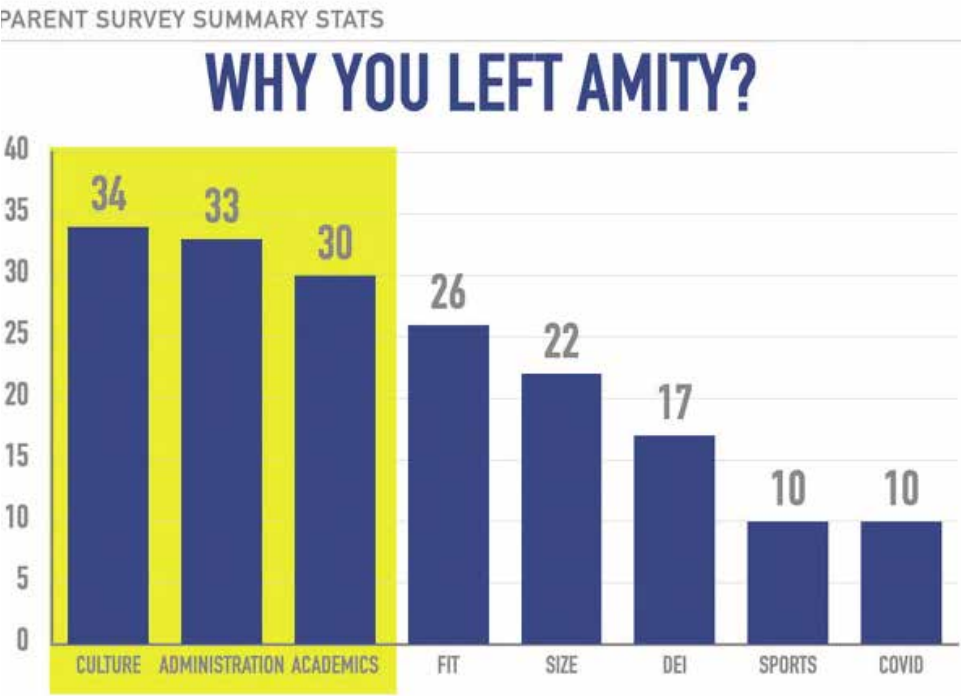
OPINION

Why Parents Are Leaving Amity

TOXIC CULTURE, WEAK LEADERSHIP, AND DECLINING EDUCATION

BY MEGHAN RABUSE
ALTERNATE, ORANGE BOARD OF FINANCE & MOTHER OF 3

Last month, I published data directly from the Amity Board of Education on the accelerating declines in enrollment at Amity. I then sought out the people behind the data to find out exactly why so many families are leaving, and received more than 70 survey responses. When asked, “**Why did you leave Amity?**,” three categories come up most repeatedly: culture, administration, and academics. Below is a summary with quotes pulled directly from survey responses.



TOXIC CULTURE

One word came up repeatedly in describing the culture at Amity: **TOXIC**. There are repeated reports of bullying that goes either completely unchecked, ignored even when reported, or minimally punished. Parents reported instances of sexual assault in the school hallway, ongoing sexual harassment, inability to use the bathrooms “without being surrounded by vapors,” and classes “constantly disrupted by behavioral issues.”

Parents reported “students in Amity who are not liberal, were made to feel they could not express their views.” When one student asked her teacher why they were only assigned CNN clips, the teacher got upset and called her parents. “One student called my family racist for supporting the police.” A parent shared they “want teachers to teach the subject they are certified in, not their political views.”

One said they “left because of an increasingly worrisome community climate,” and while not the school’s fault, they felt neighbors against DEI efforts were “in favor almost of racism and homophobia.”

Another parent indicated they left after “a video regarding gender and transitions was shown to some students without any parental consent. Only 1/2 of the grade saw the video as parents raised concerns and the video didn’t continue. Students were uncomfortable with the content and asked to be excused and they were REFUSED. They were trying to do the right thing and were ridiculed and not allowed to leave - they walked out and ended up in trouble.”

ADMINISTRATION’S WEAK LEADERSHIP

Many responses cited issues with administration - mostly referencing principals and the superintendent. In many of the concerns around bullying, sexual harassment and even sexual assault, reports were made to principals and the superintendent

with minimal, if any, punishments. In some cases, Board of Education policies and state laws, were not followed.

One parent shared that their child and friends “told me the administration ALWAYS KNOWS WHO the problem kids are, and the bullies are KNOWN but not punished severely – ‘it is a joke’ was a common phrase.”

Other parents reported “the hallways and parking lots are not monitored sufficiently and there is a lot of crazy behavior being ignored by the faculty and staff.”

Another parent reported “Leadership was extremely weak. They didn’t seem to have control over the poor behavior demonstrated by many of the students.” Yet another parent shared, “My child was bullied and harassed the entire year while in Middle school by peers. Teachers did nothing, administration did nothing (including the superintendent). Bullying form was submitted with evidence and denied. Given that it was the same superintendent for the following year and same students and nothing happened, I withdrew my child.”

A parent considering leaving the district over concerns her son’s needs were not being met in middle school met with the superintendent: “Her position was that she needs to provide education to 2500 students, and they won’t be looking at any child separately.”

ACADEMIC SHORTFALLS

Academic shortcomings was the third most cited concern. There is a repetitive sentiment that if your child does not have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or is not in honors classes they are “left aside” and easily “slip through the cracks.” One parent shared that they “feel there is little focus on those students. He easily gets lost, and there is minimal teacher support. Almost a “learn if you want” mentality in our experience.”

Many cited the lack of concentration on academics like math, sciences, language, reading and writing, while praising better academics in private schools:

“Overall, I appreciated the [private school] culture: a focus on learning instead of performing, a general acceptance of standardized tests as a poor indicator of capability or success, and the freedom to teach (within the liberal arts) what interests you as an educator. I found that teachers who were passionate about the history they were sharing or the books selected for their literature class were far more likely to inspire passion in my child. I like that the teachers could take risks and challenge my children in a way that may be frowned upon in a public school setting.”

SUMMARY

Based on survey feedback, parents leaving feel Amity is not meeting basic expectations. Amity administration does not enforce basic discipline and academics are declining, while they spend more instructional time and funding on controversial curriculum.

Despite the Board of Ed stressing no DEI curriculum has yet been voted on or approved, elements of it have clearly been implemented. And yet, no one feels comfortable at Amity: not left or right, straight or LGBTQ+, any religious affiliation, or race. We have brought the most contentious topics of the day into our public school, under the context that teaching these topics will bring our community together. This approach is failing.

What is Amity’s goal here? I did share preliminary survey results with the entire Amity Board of Education and Superintendent weeks ago and to date received no response.

However, I’ve received countless responses from parents thanking me for not being afraid to speak up. There are Board of Ed members, teachers, and parents in our towns, who FEAR speaking up and openly talking about these concerns - for their jobs, ramifications to their children at Amity, and even for their safety. And that should scare all of us.



TOWN DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES



Theodore Novicki, president of the Orange Chamber of Commerce and an executive with AVANGRID, presents a certificate of appreciation to the Orange Fire Chief Vaughan Dumas during the Chamber's Bicentennial Brick Dedication at the High Plains Community Center Fairgrounds



Jason Nevis, center, and his family take a look at Orange Volunteer Fire Department's newest fire engine at the Orange Chamber of Commerce's Bicentennial Brick Dedication at the High Plains Community Center Fairgrounds. Firefighter John Hudson, standing next to Nevis, explains the new truck.



Connor Kriss, 4, of Orange tries on a fire chief's helmet inside Orange Volunteer Fire Department's newest fire engine. His dad, Aaron, looks on.

Orange Firefighters Take Part in Town's Bicentennial Ceremony

Members of the Orange Volunteer Fire Department took part in a special ceremony November 19 during which the Chamber of Commerce dedicated a brick walkway in front of the gazebo on the town's fairgrounds. Firefighters

were recognized for their contribution to the town's safety. They also displayed some of their apparatus, including its newest fire engine, designed to reduce the fire department's carbon footprint.



Highway Department Snow Plowing Policy

There are over 110 miles of streets in the Town of Orange. Snow removal can cost up to \$2,500.00 per hour. Therefore, it is important for the Department of Public Works (DPW) to use its resources wisely with cooperation from the residents to minimize the cost.

Plow Routes: The streets are plowed and sanded in order of priority. Main (collector) roads are addressed first with special attention to steep hills, and difficult intersections. Side streets are done next, then dead-end streets. Side streets will remain unplowed if the main roads require repeat plowing due to heavy volume of snowfall. This may not seem fair to the residents of side streets or dead-ends. However, the main roads must remain open.

Blocked Driveways: All snow plows angle the same way; to the driver's right. While plowing, the plow will push the snow in front of a residential driveway. The homeowner is responsible for access to his/her driveway. The only way to avoid additional snow removal is to wait until DPW work crews have completed their final clean up of your road.

Mailbox Damage: The town repairs or replaces only those mailboxes and/or posts that are actually struck by the plow blade. Usually, a paint mark or tire tracks provide evidence of a mailbox strike. The Town does not repair or replace mailboxes and/or posts that fall from the force of plowed snow. Mailboxes and supporting posts must be installed to withstand the rigors of snow removal; including the force of snow pushed from the street onto the roadside. It is recommended that homeowners do not purchase and utilize plastic mailboxes and/or posts as they are subject to damage. DPW recommends the use of a 4" x 4" wooden post or 2" metal pipe with a metal mailbox.

Private Plowing: The Town of Orange prohibits private plow contractors from pushing snow from private driveways or parking lots onto Town streets. This practice is dangerous and impedes the Town's snow removal efforts. If there is no other alternative to pushing the snow into the street, the plow driver must plow off the windrow left across the street by re-plowing until the road is safe. This may not necessarily mean bare pavement, but certainly it should be no worse than when the driver began work.

No Parking: The Town of Orange Snow Removal Ordinance takes effect on November 1 of each year, and continues to April 1 of the following year. During this time, there shall be no parking on public roads during snowstorms. Should your vehicle be parked on the street causing an obstruction to snow removal vehicles, your vehicle may be ticketed or removed by the Town of Orange Police Department. The cost of removal and any other subsequent fees shall be borne upon the owner of the vehicle.

Snow Stakes: The Town of Orange Highway Department reminds Orange residents to install "snow stakes" now before the ground freezes. It is difficult to distinguish between the pavement edge and the edge of a lawn in heavy snowfall. Installing stakes along property edges as close to pavement as possible without interfering with traffic will help homeowners avoid unsightly lawn damage this winter, especially for properties with underground sprinklers or invisible fencing. Snow stakes should be 30-36" high and can be purchased at a local hardware store. If using wooden stakes, paint the top 3" of the stakes red to increase visibility against snow.

Residents who feel they have a legitimate complaint should call the Town of Orange Department of Public Works at (203) 891-4775.

TOWN DEPARTMENTS



Pictured left to right: Chief Vaughan Dumas, Debbie Clancy (OEDC President), and Mike Latella (OEDC Board Member)

OEDC Donates to the OVFD

The Orange Economic Development Corporation (OEDC) presented the Orange Volunteer Fire Department (OVFD) a donation in the amount of \$3,000 at the OEDC’s December 8th Executive Committee meeting.

The funds are proceeds from the

OEDC’s annual golf tournament held in September. The OVFD plans to purchase battery powered equipment for their trucks with the funds.

The OEDC began partnering with the OVFD on the golf tournament last year and is excited to continue the partnership going forward.



From the Town Clerk’s Office by Mary Shaw

The Orange Town Clerk’s Office would like to sincerely thank all our dog owners who submitted photos of their dogs to our office when renewing their dog licenses during the month of June this year.

We received 150+ photos of residential dogs that were on display at Town Hall to help commemorate the Town’s Bicentennial Anniversary. Visitors to our building enjoyed looking at them throughout the year.

The display was recently dismantled, and all the photos will be placed in the Town Time Capsule to be opened in the year 2072. The photos were labeled with the dog’s name and the family they belong to.

We hope this will be a wonderful reflection 50 years from now on how our most beloved four-legged residents got a chance to help celebrate our Town’s 200th Anniversary.

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2020 TOP 25 HHCAHPS Fazzi

2021 TOP 25 HHCAHPS Fazzi

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The 169 Club book is available at the Academy Museum at 605 Orange Center Road on Saturdays from 10-3.

Ask the author of the Orange page to sign it for you.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS

Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel Events

Menorah Lighting

The community is welcome to help light the BEKI Hanukkah menorah each evening before the quick maariv service, starting Sunday, December 18. Details at beki.org.

Hanukkah Singalong

BEKI's Hanukkah Singalong around the campfire (weather permitting) will be Sunday, December 18, the First Night of Hanukkah. The songsheets include Hanukkah parodies of popular songs plus old favorites, including as many verses of "I Have a Little Dreidel" as the group can compose. A light dinner and s'mores will follow.

Hanukkah Concert

The Connecticut Z'mirah Chorale, directed by Dr. Kevin Mack, will perform at BEKI on Tuesday, December 20. The program will include traditional Hebrew favorites and more contemporary songs sung in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino and English. The BEKI Youth Choir will be the opening act. Details at beki.org.



Enemies into partners

Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger and Noor Awad will speak on Saturday, December 17. Colleagues from Shorashim/Judur/Roots, they will share stories about their work with this Israeli/Palestinian grassroots initiative for understanding, nonviolence and transformation. This program is made possible by members of the BEKI community, with support from the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven. Details at beki.org.

Author Liana Finck

The author of *Let There Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation* will speak at BEKI Sunday, January 8, sponsored by the BEKI Sisterhood and Giftshop. In this graphic novel, which the *The New Yorker* listed as one of the best books of 2022, Liana Finck reimagines the story of Creation with God as a woman. Signed copies will



Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel

be available for purchase. Light refreshments will be available. RSVP to giftshop@beki.org.

Mark Oppenheimer

Writer and podcast host Mark Oppenheimer will speak on Sunday, January 29 about his recent project, *Gatecrashers: The Hidden History of Jews in the Ivy League*, an eight-part series about how Jews fought for acceptance at each of the eight Ivy League schools, and how the Jewish experience in these elite schools shaped American higher education. Brunch will be served. Details at beki.org.

Children's Programs

Children's Havura, K-2 Kehila, and Junior Congregation, all led by parent volunteers, meet in person each Saturday morning. On January 6, and every First Friday of the month, BEKI's Kabbalat Shabbat service is kid-friendly, though not specifically a children's service. Starting January 7, and on every Saturday evening in January and February, BEKI's kid-friendly online Havdalah returns. This ten-minute event on Zoom includes singing the blessings along with Rabbi Eric Woodward and reading a story with Education Director Annie Norman-Schiff. For more information, consult anormanschiff@beki.org.

In Person and Online

BEKI offers in-person services twice daily, led by Rabbi Woodward and congregants. Weekday services also are on Zoom. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org.

Healing Service

Rabbi Woodward will lead a Kabbalat Shabbat healing service on Friday, December 16. Located at 85 Harrison Street (corner of Whalley Avenue - Route 63 - in Westville)

Congregation B'nai Jacob Happenings

Weekly Services & Classes

- Daily Minyan Services**
- › Monday - Friday: 7:45am
 - › Sunday - Thursday: 6:00pm (on ZOOM only)
 - › Sunday: 9:00am
 - › National Holidays: Times vary

Weekly Shabbat Services

- › Friday Service: 6:00pm
- › Saturday: Bread & Torah: 9:00am; Services: 10:00am

Bread & Torah

Saturday Mornings 9:00am-9:45am
Meet in the B'nai Jacob Library (or join us on Zoom) to explore the weekly Torah portion and the way in which its story relates to our own. Be prepared for a lively discussion over bagels and coffee. No experience necessary. Taught by Rabbi Rona Shapiro.

Shir Hadash

Saturday, January 21 at 9:00am
A songful, prayerful, soulful service led by Cantorial Intern, Kochava Munro, and Rabbi Shapiro. We use the power of our music and kavanah of our words and hearts to make God's presence manifest. A mini-Kiddush will be served following the service.

Prayerful Shabbat Morning Walk on the Blue Trail

Saturday, December 24 and January 7 at 8:30am (weather permitting)
Join Rabbi Shapiro for a thoughtful, prayerful, meditative walk on the Blue Trail. Meet behind the church in Woodbridge Town Center. Wear comfortable walking shoes!

B'nai Jacob's Annual Family Hanukkah Party

Wednesday, December 21 at 5:30pm
Join us for a festive and fun family celebration! Bring your own Hanukkah



Congregation B'nai Jacob

Menorah, and we will light the candles together. Enjoy dinner, including latkes and sufganiot, with games and activities for kids of all ages. \$10 per person, \$36 max per family.



B'nai Jacob has Connecticut's largest Judaica gift shop.

A great place for Hanukkah shopping!
Menorahs, candles, dreidels, and gifts for all ages. Shop at your convenience. We are always happy to meet you. Call 203-389-2111.

Unless otherwise noted, all services, classes and events are in person at B'nai Jacob, located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge. All services are also live-streamed and some are on ZOOM. Call the B'nai Jacob office for digital access and more information 203-389-2111 or email office@bnaijacob.org. For more information about any of these events, or becoming a member of B'nai Jacob, call 203-389-2111, Email: office@bnaijacob.org, Visit our website, bnaijacob.org. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Shabbat Chanukah at Temple Emanuel of Greater New Haven

Come join the fun and celebrate Shabbat Chanukah at Temple Emanuel. On Friday, December 23, we will welcome Shabbat with a music-filled service led by Rabbi Michael Farbman and the Temple Emanuel Band. We will recite the holiday blessings and fill the sanctuary with the light of our chanukiot, followed by a delicious dinner with family and friends. All are welcome to participate in this joyous annual event. The service begins at 6pm. Please



Temple Emanuel

See "Temple Emanuel" On Page 19

HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS



Congregation Or Shalom in Orange Is Now Debt-Free

On November 19th, a “double-mitzvah” was celebrated at Congregation Or Shalom. The evening featured a celebration of Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus’ 40 years of service as its spiritual leader, as well as a mortgage-burning ceremony. Or Shalom’s longtime member and past-president, Linda Zwerdling, along with her family, recently paid off the Synagogue’s mortgage. The Zwerdlings dedicated their generous gift to the memory of Marty Zwerdling, Linda’s husband. Rabbi Wainhaus was honored by Mitch Goldblatt, Selectman of Orange, who read citations and greet-

ings from Jim Zeoli, Orange’s First Selectman, Senator Richard Blumenthal and House Representative Rosa DeLauro. Speakers included the Rabbi’s past students, Rabbi Marissa James and Jesse Sachs, who focused on the Rabbi’s life-changing influence. Rabbi Richard Eisenberg of Congregation Rodeph Shalom and Father Peter Orfanakos of St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church provided moving invocations and blessings. The evening, which the Rabbi called a “night he will never forget,” included much food, dancing and reportedly great fun.



Congregation Or Shalom held its 16th annual community-wide Kristallnacht Commemoration on Sunday, November 13. Posthumously honored the conscience and courage of Kateryna Sikorska. Kateryna, a Ukrainian widow, along with her three young daughters, risked their lives to save members of the Jewish faith during the Holocaust. Senator Blumenthal is seen here presenting a U.S. Senate Certificate of Special Recognition to Kateryna’s family via Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus.

Orange Congregational Church Upcoming Events

Orange Congregational Church invites you to join us for our holiday worship services in our Sanctuary on the corner of 205 Meeting House Lane and Orange Center Road.

On Saturday, December 24, 2022, Christmas Eve Worship will take place at 3pm and at 10pm. At 3pm you may join us for an Intergenerational Worship Service where our children, youth, and families will tell the story of Jesus’ birth. At 10pm we will offer a Traditional Candlelight Worship Service where our choir and music director will lead us in a service of lessons and carols.

On Sunday, December 25th at 10am you may come in your pajamas or whatever you feel comfortable wearing! We will celebrate Christmas Day with joy, laughter, and fun.

On Sunday, January 1st at 10am our worship will be lay led. Come start



Orange Congregational Church

the New Year with intentions for new beginnings on the first day of 2023!

All services will be livestreamed to our YouTube channel. Please visit orangecongregationalchurch.org for more information on our worship, faith formation, and music programming. We are an Open and Affirming Congregation. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Town of Orange

GRAFFITI CHANUKAH MENORAH LIGHTING

PRECEDED BY THE MENORAH PARADE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022

3:30 pm Line up at Chabad (261 Derby Ave)
4:00 pm Departing from Chabad with police escort
4:30 pm Grand Menorah Lighting & Celebration at High Plains Community Center (525 Orange Center Road)

LATKES
DONUTS
LIVE MUSIC

ARTS & CRAFTS
GRAFFITI WALL

To register for the parade, lighting or both
www.chabadow.org/menorahlighting
info@chabadow.org 202-404-4997

Orange Town News

ATTENTION CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES,
AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP!

Send us your organizations events listings and items of interest.
We will publish them for free.
Orange Town News – P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
edit@orangetownnews.com

Orange Town News

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Display ads start at only \$110 per issue.
Call 203-298-4399 to place your ad!

SENIOR CENTER

BY DENNIS MARSH

Hiking Group

Marianne and Judy will lead us in a 2 mile-ish, 1 hour walk every Thursday at 9am from July-September or 10am from October-December. Meet at the location of the hike.

December 22: **Maltby Lakes** Rt 34, West Haven. Gate is unlocked from 9:45-10am.

December 29: **Ewen Farm Preserve**, 648 St. Johns Drive, Orange

Movie of the Month

Join us January 13, at 1:00pm for “Elvis.” The life of American music icon Elvis Presley, from his childhood to becoming a rock and movie star in the 1950s while maintaining a complex relationship with his manager, Colonel Tom Parker.

Lunch & Fun: Make-Up for Mature Women

Joby Rogers, make-up artist from TV & Film, will present Make-Up for Mature Women on January 23, 12-2:00pm. Call 203-891-4784 to register.

Introduction to Macs

Josh will teach an introduction class on MacIntosh Computers. The class will meet on Wednesdays, December 21—January 11 from 5-7:00pm. A fee of \$20 is required. Come by the office to register. Call 203-891-4784 with questions.

Lions Club Pizza Party – Mardi Gras with Jose Paulo

Join us on February 7 when the Lions Club of Orange host our annual February pizza party. Jose Paulo will be performing his Mardi Gras show. Call 203-891-4784 to register.

Hot Lunch Program

Lunch is offered Monday through Friday, 11:30am – 12:00pm. No meals

on Saturday, or Sunday. A \$3.00 donation is accepted for persons 60+. Call Ellen at (203) 891-4765 to register.

Legal Clinic

The Law office of Floman DePaola has merged with Wiley, Etter, & Doyon, but they are still available the first Wednesday of each month for a free legal clinic. Some things they will be able to help you with, while others may require an office visit and fee. To schedule an appointment, call 203-891-4784.

Griffin Hospital/Parish Nurses Blood Pressure Check

Maggie from Griffin Hospital will be here the last Friday of the month from 10:30-12:00pm to take your blood pressure. Be sure to stop by for this free clinic.

Trips

April 16, 2023: AMERICA’S MUSIC CITIES

Enjoy a finger-snapping, toe-tapping time on a tour of America’s most famed musical cities – New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville (extensive walking).

October 7, 2023: SPOTLIGHT SANTA FE HOLIDAY

Immerse yourself in the holiday spirit of Santa Fe in the Holiday Season as you take in the city’s multicultural atmosphere (extensive walking).

October 2023: SHADES OF IRELAND

10 days, 13 meals: 8 breakfasts, 5 Dinners. Highlights...Dublin, Irish Evening, Choices on Tour, Kilkenny, Waterford, Blarney Castle, Killarney, Jaunting Car Ride, Ring of Kerry, Farm Visit, Limerick, Cliffs of Moher, Galway, Castle Stay. Cost is \$3,719pp for triple, \$3,749pp for double, \$4,449pp for single. Travel insurance and deposit due at registration (extensive walking).

DOLLAR\$ AND \$EN\$E

Financial Gifting for the Holidays!

BY ROBERTA L NESTOR

Gifting in its traditional sense rarely has strings attached. When you purchase something for someone, and they don’t like the gift because it is the wrong size, color or brand, they can return the gift and or exchange it for something else they do like. Once you give the gift, it is a completed transaction. Gifting money is somewhat similar. Here are some ideas for “Financial Gifting” this season.

Cash Gift

Each year the IRS sets limits on the amount of cash you can gift an individual without having to file a gift tax return. The annual exclusion applies to gifts of cash or property given to each person. For 2022 that limit is \$16,000 per individual, this is being increased to \$17,000 for 2023. For example, you can gift your son and his wife each \$16,000. There are no tax advantages to gifting cash and there are no tax implications for the recipient. If you gift more than the allowance, (your home as an example) you must file a Federal Gift Tax Return (IRS Form 806). The IRS is tracking your lifetime gifting exclusion that is set at \$12.06 million in 2022 and bumps up to \$12.92 million in 2023. Most of us do not have to worry about exceeding that lifetime limit.

Contribute to 529 College Savings Plans

If a child has a 529 College Savings Plan (the CT plan is called CHET) any individual can contribute to that 529 plan. Most plans have low minimums of \$25 or \$50. It is a great way to help finance the overwhelming costs of college in the future. Just make the check payable to the 529 plan and note the child’s account number. Contributions you make to any CT CHET 529 plan are tax-deductible on your state tax income tax return up to \$10,000. Since most plans have experienced lower market prices in 2022, it is also an opportunity to buy shares at lowered prices. If used properly (for qualified education expenses); 529 plans grow tax-free.

Establish a Roth IRA

If you have a teenager who is working and receiving income in the form of earned wages, they can contribute 100% of that income into a Roth. This type of gift is long term as there are specific rules as to accessing a Roth before age 59 ½. The maximum contribution to a Roth IRA is maxed out at \$6,000 (under age 50) and will in-

crease to \$6,500 in 2023. Keep in mind that if your child only has earnings of \$1,000, then that would be the maximum contribution level. Most Roth plans have low minimums to establish (\$100 - \$1,000). There are no tax benefits for gifting into a Roth.

Series I Bonds

Very popular in 2022 and, based on inflation, I Bonds are still very attractive. The composite rate for I Bonds issued from November 2022 through April 2023 is 6.89%. The interest earned by purchasing and holding I Bonds are exempt from state and local taxes. However, the earnings are subject to federal tax at the time the bonds are redeemed. To purchase I Bonds, you must go on-line to www.treasurydirect.gov/saings-bonds/buy-a-bond/. The minimum purchase is only \$25 and the maximum purchase is \$10,000 per individual. Similar to a CD, I Bonds have a one year holding period before they can be redeemed.

Money Books for Children

Money management is one of the most critical skills to have, and yet, it is not often taught in our schools. There are several books that make learning about money fun and help to educate on how to Save, Spend, Invest and to Give. The Golden Quest is a graphic novel about a young boy who embarks on a Hero’s Journey with his dog Shelby to discover the Golden Rules of Money. Another one for younger children ages 3 – 6 is What is Money? Personal Finance for Kids, written by Kelly Lee. This book has simple language and great illustrations.

Happy Shopping and Happy Holidays to All - Best Wishes for the coming year ahead!

Roberta L. Nestor is a financial advisor practicing at 759 Boston Post Road in Milford, CT offering retirement, long-term care, investment, and tax planning services. She offers securities and advisory services as a Registered Representative and Investment Adviser Representative of Commonwealth Financial Network® – Member FINRA, SIPC a Registered Investment Advisor. Fixed insurance products and services are separate from and not offered through Commonwealth Financial Network. Commonwealth Financial Network® or Nestor Financial Network does not provide legal or tax advice. You should consulta legal or tax professional regarding your individual situation. Roberta can be reached at Nestor Financial Network, 203-876-8066 or roberta@nestorfinancial.com.

Orange Senior Center to Resume OACC Hop the Bus Program

Hop the bus to the New Haven Symphony Orchestra’s performances at the Lyman Performance Center at Southern Connecticut State University. The bus departs from the High Plains Community Center (HPCC) at 2:15 or 6:45pm depending on the performance. All you need to do is go online and purchase the tickets and we will supply the ride.

Show Dates & Departure Times

› January 20, 2023 (Friday 7:30pm) **Cabrera Conducts Dvorak** departs from the HPCC at 6:45pm;

› March 10, 2023 (Friday 7:30pm) **Miller Conducts Schumann & Beethoven** departs from the HPCC at 6:45pm;
› March 26, 2023 (Sunday 3:00pm) **So Conducts Beethoven** departs from the HPCC at 2:15pm;
› April 16, 2023 (Sunday 3:00pm) **Blachly Conducts Dawson** departs from the HPCC at 2:15pm;
› May 12, 2023 (Friday 7:30pm) **Price, Bonds, & Hagan** departs from the HPCC at 6:45pm.

Organized by the Orange Senior Center, (203) 891-4784 with a grant from the Orange Foundation.

Holly Hill Collecting Stuffed Animals For Children's Hospitals

Once again, Holly Hill Childcare is collecting brand new stuffed animals (with tags) to be given to children in Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Connecticut Children's



Medical Center and other local hospitals during the holiday season. Please drop off your donations by 12/12 to: Holly Hill Childcare & Learning Center, 308 Peck Lane, Orange or call (203) 799-6300.

O.V.F.D. Auxiliary Pancake Supper

The Orange Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary will hold its 11th annual Pancake Supper on Wednesday, February 8th at Chip's Restaurant, 321 Boston Post Road, Orange. Menu includes Pancakes, Eggs, choice of Bacon or Sausage and beverage.

There will be an early seating at 5:30 PM and late seating at 6:45 PM. Prices are: \$15.00 for Adults, \$10.00 Children 10 and under, gratuity included. Tickets must be purchased in advance as

we are limited in the number of seats available. Tickets that were previously purchased for our cancelled 2020 supper will be honored.

Tickets may be purchased from any Auxiliary member or at Knight's Inc., 286 Boston Post Rd., Orange. All proceeds benefit the Orange Volunteer Fire Department.

For further information, email Lynn@ LMK415@yahoo.com or visit our website at www.orangevfd.com.

"Letters" From Page 5

better wake up and realize that voters are taking notice of what is going on at Amity. They rejected the budget twice last year and this year there is much more negative news which will, in my opinion, result in multiple rejections. Consider that 20% of the eighth-grade class from Orange chose not to attend Amity High School and are going elsewhere, with parents paying significant tuition. How do you imagine those parents will vote? If that isn't cause for concern then what is?

Matthew T. Giglietti CPA
Chairman Woodbridge Board of Finance, 20 Year Vice Chairman - Amity Finance Committee

TPZ Should Reinstate Moratorium

The Orange Plan and Zoning (TPZ) Commission held several poorly attended public hearings on the proposal for locating a retail dispensary for legalized medical/recreational mari-

juana in Town. Commissioner Kevin Cornell, Esq. voiced disappointment at the low turnout. These hearings were not well-publicized. Residents deserve to be heard, as well as testimony from medical and public safety experts. It would be a welcomed reprieve if the TPZ Commission reinstated the moratorium and offered well-publicized hearings, with social distancing or on Zoom, before they render a unilateral decision. Rescheduled hearings would affirm the Commission's due diligence in representing constituents.

A reliable source of information can be found at <https://marijuana.procon.org>. This Britannica site contains objective, fact-checked and unbiased content written by experts and vetted through a rigorous editorial process. It provides 13 concise pro & con arguments on legalized recreational marijuana. The site can serve as a guide to whether a retail dispensary is a beneficial or hazardous choice for the town of Orange.

Janice Fodero

PLAYERS ARE WELCOME AT WEEKLY DUPLICATE BRIDGE GAME

A social duplicate bridge game meets Wednesdays 1.00 - 3:30 pm in the Senior Lounge at HPCC.

For More information call Joan or Rick Roberts 203.795.1591.

www.OrangeTownNews.com

LIBRARY EVENTS



176 Tyler City Road, Orange, CT 06477
203-891-2170 • www.casememoriallibrary.org

Teen Break-In Bag Monday, December 19

For teens in grades 7-12. Think escape room except instead of trying to break out you're trying to break in. Solve the puzzles to find the numeric code that will open the lock and free

the loot inside your break-in bag! Registration is required. To register, go to sqr.co/teenbreakinbag

Events are free and open to the public, except as noted. Phone: 203-891-2170. <https://casememoriallibrary.org>. Visit our Facebook page.

BULLETIN BOARD

Derby Historical Society's Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration – December 18, 2022, 1:00-4:00PM, David Humphreys House, 37 Elm Street, Ansonia, Yuletide Carolers, Christmas Stories by the Fire, Children's Holiday Games and Crafts, Gingerbread Cookie Decorating, Hot Chocolate and Holiday snacks, visit from Santa.

Chabad of Orange & Woodbridge New Lecture Series – Real People Real Talk! We are bringing out everyday heroes with inspiring messages. Our first lecture will take place on January 29. Our guest speaker is Judge Ruchie Freier, the first Hasidic woman to be elected to serve as a Civil Court Judge in Kings County, New York. She also founded Ezras Nashim, an all-women's EMT ambulance service. She is a proud wife, mother and grandmother. Go to <https://www.chabadow.org/> for more details and location.

Donate Your Car, Truck or Van – FREE, FAST, TOW AWAY, Running or

Not Running, can be used for a charitable tax deduction. Call Charter Oak Education dba Sterling Education at 860-643-1100.

Woodbridge Recreation Yoga Classes – Yoga offers ways to relax while developing strength, balance, and self-awareness. Gentle classes, modified for individual needs, also focus on posture and breathing within a caring community of practitioners. Of course, we stretch, too! Classes are every Monday and Wednesday from 10:30-11:45 and Monday evenings 5:30-6:45 until December 21. (A new session begins January 2.) Location: Room 16 at The Center in Woodbridge, 4 Meetinghouse Lane. Please email for specific directions if needed. Late fall special is \$10/ drop-in, paid to the instructor, Diane King. Cash or checks payable to Woodbridge Recreation. Questions: yogadiane@gmail.com or call the Recreation Department at 203 389-3446. A perfect time to give yoga a try!

"Temple Emanuel" From Page 16

bring your voices, your favorite chanukiah and candles and your friends. Dinner reservations are required and can be made either on our website, tegnh.org, or by calling the TE office: 203-397-3000. The suggested donation for dinner is \$10 per person or

\$25 per family.

Not a member of TE? Come check us out.

For more information about services and celebrations at Temple Emanuel, please go to the TE website, www.tegnh.org. Temple Emanuel is located at 150 Derby Avenue in Orange.

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DEATH NOTICES



Thomas M. Laugeni

Thomas Michael Laugeni, 57, of Orange, CT died Sunday, November 13th unexpectedly at his residence in Hutchinson Island, FL. He is survived by his former wife, Sue Laugeni, and their children Tj, Jordan, and Amanda Laugeni. Brother of Greg and Carolyn (Bunny) Laugeni. Loving uncle to Tori, Eric, Stephanie, and Tara Laugeni, and Jesse, David Jr., and Jake DeMatia. Tom was born in New Haven on June 20th, 1965, to the late Thomas G. Laugeni and Joyce Gattilia Laugeni. As the President of his fraternity, Theta Chi, Tom graduated the University of Tampa in 1988 with a Degree in Business and Marketing. He had a successful 25-year career as a co-owner of A. Laugeni & Sons Inc. Tom considered raising his kids into adulthood his proudest achievement. Along with instilling important values into his parenting, he shared his passions for cooking, watching sports, and laughing for the sake of laughing with them.

Tom's family and friends know him as someone that lights up every room that he walks into. With that, his family is requesting that everyone please use the link below to share memories of Tom via video, image, text, or a combination of both (the crazier the better!)

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a Mass of Christian Burial Saturday, January 14, 2023 in Saint Anthony Church, 70 Washington Avenue, New Haven, CT at 10:00am. Following the mass Tom will be laid to rest in St. Lawrence Cemetery, 280 Derby Avenue, West Haven, CT. In lieu of flowers, the Laugeni family asks that you please make donations to Sylvester Cancer Center using this website link: <https://development.miami.edu/page.aspx?pid=749>.

The Iovanne Funeral Home, Inc. is in care of Tom's arrangements. Share a memory of Tom by following this link: <https://jlaugeni.wixsite.com/tom-laugeni>.



Nancy Musante

Nancy Musante, 60, of Orange, beloved wife of the late Matthew Musante, passed away on November 13, 2022. Born on August 4, 1962 in Derby, CT, she was the daughter of Geraldine (Holmes) Milazzo and the late Nicholas Milazzo.

A graduate of Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Nancy was a hairdresser before staying home to raise her children. She delighted in crafts, gardening and swimming, and enjoyed going to the movies. She was a member of the Elks Club, and worked at Big Y in Shelton.

Nancy is survived by her children, Nicholas, Michael, and Melissa; her siblings, Joanne (Robert) D'Angelo, Carolyn (Stephen) Murphy, Diane (Blake) Marriner, Patty (Richard) Goldfeder, Janet (Dewey) Forbes, and Maryanne (John) Lippard; her many nieces and nephews; her two dogs, Lyla and Brady; and her cat, Nibbles.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on November 19, 2022 at Holy Infant Church, 400 Racebrook Road, Orange, CT. Interment followed at Orange Center Cemetery, Orange Center Road, Orange, CT. Arrangements were in the capable hands of the Cody-White Funeral Home, 107 Broad Street, Milford, CT. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to a humane society of choice or Melissa's college fund. To leave online condolences, please visit www.codywhitefuneralservice.com.



Pay It Forward: Local Businesses Can Help Each Other

The power of small businesses is immense. However, starting a small business is no easy venture. The financial resource Fortunly states that roughly 22 percent of small businesses will fail in their first year of operation. Thirty percent fail because they run out of cash. One of the ways a small business can do better is to utilize the support of other local businesses.

Business owners often conduct market research to identify who their competition is and to determine if there is room in the market for their products or services. It's just as important for established business owners to keep up with the who's who in the business community, as doing so can pave the way for collaborative efforts that benefit all local businesses. Here are some ways small business owners can support one another.

Offer reassurance: Simply knowing they are not alone can help a small business owner survive. Owning a business can be stressful, and having another person acknowledge that it's alright to feel overwhelmed at times can be the spark owners need to press on.

Share opportunities: A business owner who discovers a resource or an opportunity that worked for him or her, or even one that didn't work but may for another, can pass on the information to another small business owner. It's not about driving others

down, but lifting them up.

Cross-promotion: Business owners can show support by promoting other businesses in their communities. Make a bulletin board (either in-person or online) of other local business cards to recommend. This exhibits your community spirit and builds camaraderie. Use every opportunity to refer complementary businesses. For example, a local pet shop may recommend a pet groomer or veterinarian.

Organize networking events: Whether it's done through a local Chamber of Commerce or individual efforts, small business owners can spearhead events that get other business owners together to network and share ideas. These meetings can be informal to help others let off steam at the same time.

Volunteer and donate: Small businesses can meet other business owners, but also become more involved in their communities through volunteer events. Partner with charities or other local businesses to promote philanthropic efforts. School supply giveaways, beach sweeps, community park refurbishments, or even supporting efforts to clean trash from Main Street are great ways to get involved.

Small business owners willing to work together can collectively improve their communities, which should benefit everyone's bottom line.

Orange Town News

DEATH NOTICES

The Orange Town News will publish Death Notices for Orange families free of charge as a service to our readers. Family members please email notice to: edit@orangetownnews.com

Happy Chanukah!

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“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.” — CALVIN COOLIDGE

BIDDER’S NOTICE OF SOURCE SELECTION (NGFE)

The Tax Collector’s Office of the Town of Orange (Agency)

Announcing the bidding cycle for the Next Generation Front End (NGFE) credit payment system for Orange’s QDS Tax System. Bidding instructions and proposal preparation information is available on the Town of Orange website (orange-ct.gov) under the sidebar of the Tax Collector Department heading. Receipt of proposals in the Tax Collector’s Office are due no later than 27 Jan 2023 at 1 P. M. ET. One hard copy and one electronic copy are required in a .pdf format. Proposal Volumes should be delivered to Tax Collector, 617 Orange Center Rd., Orange, CT 06477-2432. Prospective bidders are requested to email a notice of intent to bid to thurley@orange-ct.gov.



Congregations of Orange Collaborative Sponsoring FOOD²KIDS

Our congregations are Church of the Good Shepard, Congregation Or Shalom, Holy Infant Roman Catholic Church, Orange Congregational Church, St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church, St Joseph of Arimathea ANC Church, Temple Emanuel, and Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Our leaders today.



And some of our volunteers.



A bit of snow slowed the donation line, but they kept coming. A little cold does not deter our support from Boy Scouts Troop 41.



Working hard, the Scouts got the bags, moved them inside, and came back for more.



Even with the cold and snow, the collection continued and the food drive was another success!

HISTORY CORNER

For the Past Few Years...



BY GINNY REINHARD

As the title might suggest, my stories for the past few years have side-stepped the holiday issues because I had written about each one, several times and I want to write about Orange as much as possible. However, I am drawn to the history of the holidays without any specific religious group cited but a general look at what was, which may not be now. I am not familiar with the main religious groups in our town so I will put out the unknown history and see what happens... how's that?

Ok, here goes. Many customs evolved out of fear of the unknown and a Celtic custom of warding off evil spirits through the dark, winter month was to "decorate" the home with juniper and cedar branches. These conifers would last all season, welcoming the good, woodland spirits. According to a Viking tale when Christianity came to northern Europe, Faith, Hope and Charity were sent from heaven to find and light a tree as great as Love, as sweet as Charity and high as Hope. Their search ended when they found the fir, lighting it with the radiance of the stars which by legend was the first Christmas tree.

Saint Wilfred is also credited with the holiday tree when he tried to convince the Druids, who feared the sacred oak that they need not fear it as he struck the tree with his ax and in the center arose the fir tree proclaiming everlasting life. Many superstitions cling to the fir tree such as knowing how long you will live by standing in front of a lighted fir tree and your shadow, cast on the wall will tell you your answer. Yipes, do you know what the answer was? If the shadow did not show your head, you were doomed.

Witches always seem to surface in these dark, winter days and it was considered wise to surround your home with as much holly as possible, over doorways, in windows, next to the chimney to keep them from entering. The Druids enter into the holly story as they honored the fact that the sun never deserted its evergreen leaves. Growing holly near the house also kept the witches at bay, protected the home from lightning and are you ready for this? Whoever first brought holly into the house, husband or wife, ruled for the year.

There are religious connections to herbs as well as the fir tree but it seems

that the Victorians just liked bringing the summer to a winter home with a wreath made of pink rosebuds, lavender blossoms, thymes, oregano, statice and, of course, the fragrant Rosemary. The month before the Christmas holiday held pagan rituals, ancient practices merging into that time of the year, the dark days of winter. The witches surface again and even the devil himself with juniper branches and berries burned to ward them off.

One of the traditions that left its mark at this time was the Roman Saturnalia, observed from December 17th to the 24th. It was at this time that Saturn, associated with the sun would bring joy. No one worked except those that provided food and drink or entertainment. Candles were lit to scare away the darkness and celebrate the sun. At this time gifts were given in honor of the goddess of vegetation

and food was exchanged. There was much feasting, gambling, dancing and revelry which as you can imagine did not please the Christian officials. They did not appreciate the shenanigans but had no way to stop it. Eventually, the two factions merged into a partnership, retaining some of the elements while excluding others or at least watering them down.

The height of the season's rowdiness and extravagance was achieved in medieval England after 1066. People would attend church all right but not as you might expect...no indeed. They wore masks and costumes, costumes that gave "colorful" its name and in the singing, off color songs and, and rolling dice on the alter! King Henry VIII's love of a good party set a high standard for carousing with gambling a big part of the festivities. It is rumored that the royalty loaded the dice to insure against losing with royal excess reaching its height in 1377.

The 4th century saw the beginning of widespread caroling having been used in Roman times as early as the 2nd century but now they came to England by way of France. As you can see by my story, well my whatevers, a time of reflection, stemming from religion, was under fire all the time. As the political scene in England revved up so did the objections to



Charles Dickens

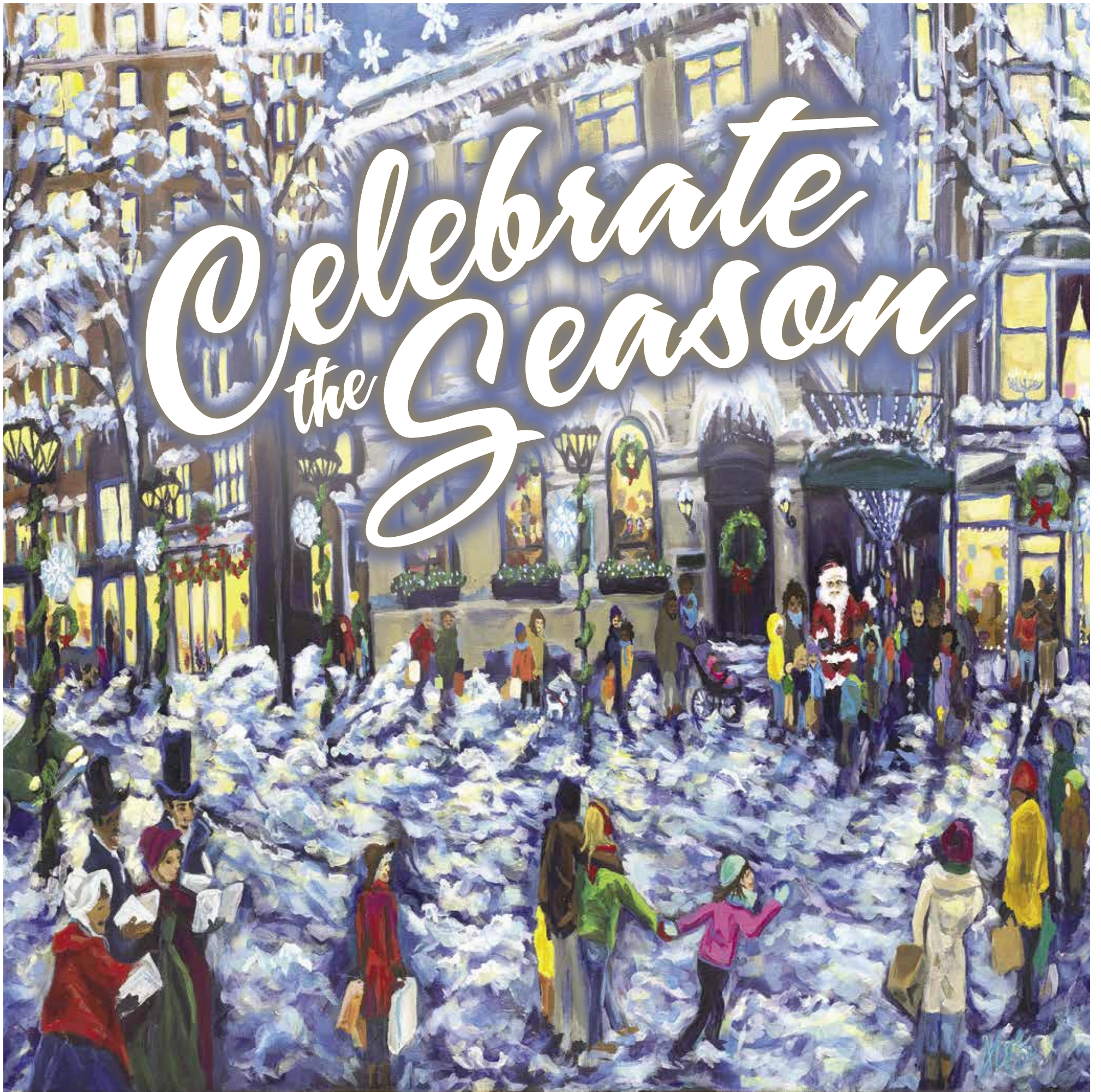
the, yes, the gambling, rowdy behavior, drinking and irreverence.

Just like we have candy for the Halloween crowd, English citizens had to have pear wine at hand lest the revelers, who sang irreverent carols, would pelt the house with rocks...yes, I read that in a book. So, in the middle of the 17th century, the holiday was under fire, yet again. This time laws were invoked by the power of the Puritans and all religious festivals were to cease and desist but not without some rioting. Technically, the Puritans did not object to the religious observance but they believed the only way to deal with the doings was to abolish the day and everything associated with it.

Eventually, the Puritan way of thinking melted into oblivion but not only did it take away the bawdiness of the season but the spirituality as well. The clergy still held a tight rein although the holiday did have a bit of strength until the Industrial Revolution when greed was king and everything outside of money and progress took a back seat with no room for holidays. It was at this time that

Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol, his interpretation and representation of life "in the fast lane". The want of English families is well-depicted in this story and has become a classic on television during the Christmas holiday. It was not until the Victorian era, 1820 to 1914, approximately the reign of Queen Victoria, that the holiday took on form of family togetherness, the idea of giving to those in need, a concern for others and a genuine feeling of quiet celebration of life. Queen Victoria assumed the throne at the age of 18 and three years later, married Prince Albert. Being from Germany, where the Christmas holiday had its heyday, Albert brought many wonderful traditions from his homeland with him. Again, the family was emphasized and in 1841, he introduced the first Christmas tree which was added to the other traditions of a holiday meal and decorations. Remember the herbal wreath I mentioned? Now you can add that to your knowledge of what was to become a quaint and warm holiday. The singing of carols once again revived in the churches, in the homes and carolers in the street...no pelting of rocks this time. There are many customs and legends associated with all religious groups for this time of the year and I hope each and every one of you can enjoy your traditions with your family and friends.





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