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The Anatomy of a Crisis: Connecticut’s Unsustainable Healthcare Costs



By Russell Barksdale, Ph.D.

For thousands of Connecticut families, the end of the year brings a familiar anxiety, one that has little to do with holiday shopping and everything to do with the family budget. It is the dread of opening the letter that details next year’s health insurance premiums. This year, that anxiety is particularly acute, as the rising costs of utilities and rent pale in comparison to the shocking escalation in medical insurance premiums. While media reports have highlighted individual crises, the systemic nature of the problem has so far only garnered shortsighted recommendations.

Consider the case of one Connecticut couple in their 50s, who reportedly face a premium hike from \$670 a month to over \$2,600—a nearly 300% increase. This

is not an isolated incident. The harsh reality is that federal subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) have artificially masked a fundamental truth: under the cover of the ACA, and at great expense to employers and taxpayers, the underlying cost of healthcare has gone unchecked, becoming unaffordable for most families.

In response, our leaders in both Hartford and Washington have sprung into action. Governor Ned Lamont announced a plan to use \$70 million in state emergency funds to soften the blow, while our U.S. Senators fight to extend the very federal subsidies that are disappearing. Respectfully, while these actions may be well-intentioned, they share a fundamental flaw. They are temporary, reactive measures that fail to address the primary symptom—unaffordable insurance—while completely ignoring the disease: the unsustainable, ever-increasing cost of healthcare itself.

Nowhere is this policy

disconnect more apparent than in the predicament of a full-time, minimum-wage worker in our state. In 2026, Connecticut’s minimum wage will be \$16.94 an hour, translating to an annual income of about \$35,235. While promoted as a step toward a living wage, this income creates a painful healthcare paradox. It is too high to qualify for HUSKY Health (Medicaid), which cuts off eligibility for a single adult at \$21,597 a year, yet it is often insufficient to comfortably afford a plan on the ACA marketplace. This “Medicaid gap,” an unintended consequence of policies seeking headlines rather than holistic solutions, traps thousands of our state’s hardest-working residents. They earn too much for public assistance but too little to handle the full brunt of private insurance costs.

The business of providing healthcare is increasingly about cost-shifting—billing commercial insurance plans more to cover below-cost reimbursements from

A subsidy does not negotiate down the price of an MRI. A one-year state grant does not reduce healthcare costs; it just masks them for another election cycle.

government payers and the uncompensated care of the uninsured. Pharmaceutical drugs costing more in the U.S. than other countries—cost-shifting. With a shrinking commercial payer base, this model forces dramatic rate increases onto the insured population. The state’s plan is an insufficient and unsustainable shield against this reality. The push for federal subsidies is merely a continuation of a national strategy that fails to ask the most important question: how do we change the trajectory of healthcare costs?

To understand why these policies are not viable long-term, we must look past the premium and at the price of the services it covers. The real conversation, one absent from candid public debate, is about why a hospital stay, a routine procedure, or a life-saving drug costs what it does. Over

the last two decades, prices in the healthcare sector have grown faster than in almost any other part of the economy. This is fueled by rampant consolidation, with over 1,500 hospital mergers since 1998 creating regional systems that can dictate prices. These mergers are often a defensive response to inadequate commercial insurance payments and rising operational costs, creating a vicious cycle of consolidation and price hikes.

These are not political issues; they are structural economic problems. They are not solved by writing a check, whether from Hartford or Washington. A subsidy does not negotiate down the price of an MRI. A one-year state grant does not reduce healthcare costs; it just masks them for another election cycle.

As long as our policy

debate remains fixated on who pays the premium, rather than why the premium is so high, we will remain trapped. A lasting solution will not come from more subsidies, but from the courage to tackle the root causes of higher costs. It requires a new, apolitical conversation about promoting competition, provider independence, and ensuring the price of care is fair and justified. Connecticut families deserve more than a temporary reprieve from a problem guaranteed to return. They deserve a system where coverage is affordable because the care itself is affordable. It is time to respectfully demand we stop adding buckets to catch the leaks and start fixing the roof.

*Russell R. Barksdale, Jr., PHD, MPA/MHA, FACHE
President and CEO Waveny LifeCare Network*

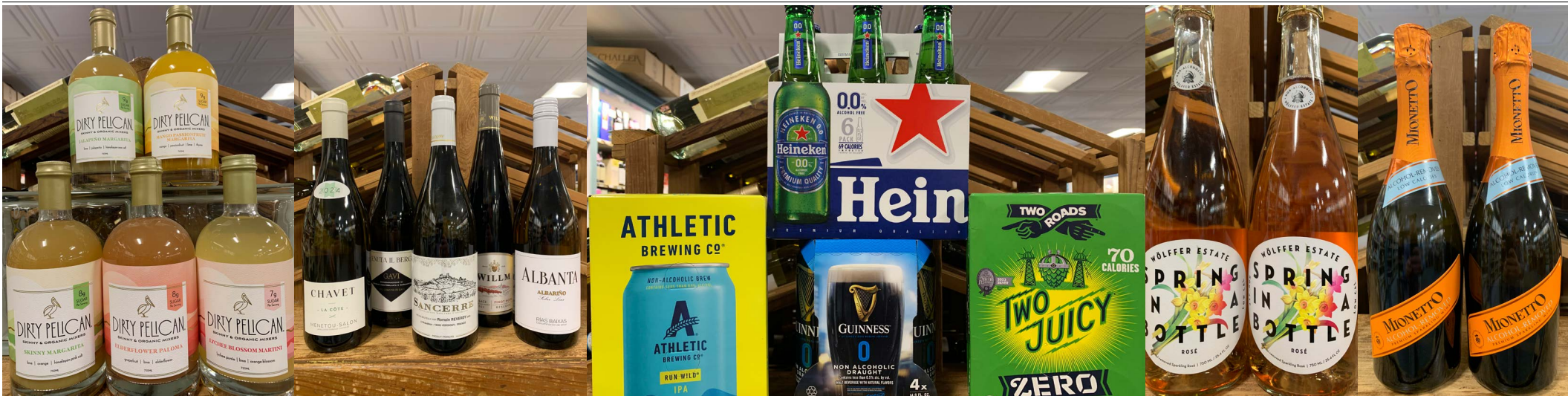
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebratory Service on Jan. 19



The Interfaith Council of New Canaan is proud to host its 24th Annual Celebration of the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 19, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at the United Methodist Church of New Canaan, 165 South Avenue.

The Service will include inspiring music and speakers from the ABC House, New Canaan, and special keynote speaker, Rev. Richard Williams, the Executive Director of Pivot Ministries (Back by popular demand!).

A reception will follow the Service and Donation Proceeds will benefit the New Canaan Food Bank. Non-perishable Food Donations will also be gratefully accepted.



COLUMN

What to Drink When You’re Drinking Less

By CARL FRANCO

The season’s magic has worn off. Perhaps some garland still wraps the railing, a stray stocking hangs from the mantel, Three Kings have come and gone, the Christmas tree is drooping from neglect, and the best decoration, the twinkling of brake lights as the last of your relatives pull out of the driveway.

But as we put the 2025 holidays behind us, we’re still left staring down our 2026 New Year’s resolutions. Even if you’re not a resolution person, chances are we’ve all over-indulged on food, booze, or some festive combination of the two, and January feels like the moment to gently pull in the reins. Dry January is very much a thing these days, but there are plenty of ways to rethink your drinking habits if your goal is to tighten the waistline, clear the head, or just hit a soft reset.

My suggestion is to approach January in whatever way feels most comfortable to you. Some people swear by going completely dry for 31 days, and if that works for you, full speed ahead. Others choose to cut out drinking two or three days a week for the entire year, which is also a compelling alternative. In fact, skipping alcohol two days a week adds up to the equivalent of roughly three alcohol-free months a year; make it three days and you’re closer to five. That’s a much bigger impact than one dry month in January. And if you just want to pick and choose your days as you move along, that works too.

Yes, I realize it’s a little odd for a wine shop owner to suggest drinking less, but as a purveyor of wine and spirits, I want my customers to truly enjoy that glass when they do indulge. With that in mind, I’ll be using this article to introduce you to some excellent non-alcoholic and lower-alcohol options that make cutting back feel a lot less like giving something up.

Non-Alcoholic and Alcohol-Removed Wines – Grape Expectations

While the terms are often used interchangeably, there is a difference between non-alcoholic wines and alcohol-removed wines. Some non-alcoholic wines are never fermented at all; they’re essentially grape juice or wine-inspired beverages made without alcohol from the start. Alcohol-removed wines, on the other hand, begin life as real wine, grapes are fermented just like any traditional wine, and the alcohol is gently removed afterward with some being zero, but most being below 0.5% ABV. Because they go through fermentation, alcohol-removed wines tend to retain more of the structure, acidity, and complexity people associate with wine, making them a more convincing alternative in the glass. That said, the wines that come closest to tasting like traditional wine are usually the sparkling wines, often outperforming many of the still wines currently on the market.

Among the sparkling options, the Wölffer Estate Spring in a Bottle Rosé is one we’ve carried for over a year and it has consistently been one of our most popular choices. More recently, we added the Nozeco line from France, which is also vegan and includes a Sparkling Brut and Sparkling Rosé (both available in individual 187ml bottles) as well as the Nozeco Spritz for anyone looking for a non-alcoholic take on an Aperol Spritz. For Prosecco fans, Mionetto offers a non-alcoholic version of its very popular Prosecco. And finally, Dr. Fischer distributes a zero-alcohol Sparkling Riesling under the name Steinbock that is dry, crisp, refreshing, and definitely worth a try.

One of the standout examples in this category is St. Buena Vida Sparkling Chardonnay from Spain, which has earned its reputation by taking a more thoughtful approach to alcohol removal. Rather than simply stripping out the alcohol

and hoping for the best, their process carefully captures and preserves the wine’s natural aromas before the alcohol is removed at low temperatures, then reintroduces those aromas afterward. The result is a sparkling Chardonnay that actually tastes like wine—bright, balanced, and nuanced—rather than a sweet substitute. For anyone exploring lower- or no-alcohol options without wanting to give up the experience of drinking wine, St. Buena Vida is among the better alternatives currently on the market.

Don’t Mock Me!

While the term “Mocktail” is no longer in vogue, there are options for NA cocktails. Granted, I have yet to find a non-alcoholic spirit I’m ready to invest in, there are a few pre-mixed NA cocktails and mixers we enjoy. Both The Pathfinder and St. Agrestis make excellent Phony Negronis, with St. Agrestis offering both the Original Phony Negroni and a Phony Mezcal Negroni.

As for mixers, if you haven’t familiarized yourself with the Dirty Pelican line, they are certainly worth paying attention to as they offer many options for a creative cocktail. These mixers are low in calories, low in sugar, organic, and vegan, and are designed to work just as well with spirits as without them. Dirty Pelican comes in Elderflower Paloma, Lychee Blossom, Skinny Margarita, Jalapeño Margarita, and Mango Margarita. All of these flavors mix beautifully with tonic, club soda, sparkling water (both flavored and plain) as well as many non-alcoholic sparkling wines we carry.

Lowering Your Standards

If going completely alcohol-free isn’t your goal, there are plenty of wines on the shelf with lower alcohol levels that still deliver on flavor most comfortably at 13% and under. Starting at the lighter end, we have several options, including Broadbent Vinho Verde (9%), Koehler-

Ruprecht Riesling (11%), and Proidl Grüner Veltliner (12%).

Moving up slightly, you’ll find a great lineup at 12.5%, including Chavet La Côte, Bergo Gavi, Domaine Roman Reverdy Sancerre, Albanta Albariño, and Willm Pinot Noir, all excellent choices if you’re looking to keep things balanced without sacrificing character.

And for those comfortable just a step higher, we offer several wines at a modest 13%, including Three Otters Pinot Noir, Sàtiro Rosso, and Frantz Chagnoleau Mâcon-Villages, all examples that you can drink thoughtfully and still drink well.

Beer Me!

Probably the most popular non-alcoholic options on the market right now are beers. Often nearly indistinguishable from their alcoholic counterparts, NA beers, much like wine, come in both true zero and under-0.5% ABV versions. The brand that has really cornered the category is Athletic Brewing Company, which offers several consistently good styles. There’s also the widely loved Guinness 0, which is surprisingly close to the real thing, and for those who prefer to keep it local, Two Roads Two Juicy Zero is a delicious option.

All of these options aren’t just for January, they’re worth exploring all year long. Non-alcoholic offerings are no longer relegated to the bottom shelf or hidden in the back of the store. They now sit right alongside the rest of our inventory, front and center, reflecting a growing and increasingly curious segment of the market.

However you choose to navigate January, whether you take a dry road, make a small dog-leg to the left, or cruise straight down the center lane, the choices have expanded dramatically, and are aiming to get better. Drinking less no longer means settling, and that’s a shift worth raising a glass to... or at least a very good alternative.

Safety Is CERTain

Editor’s Note (Jan. 9, 2026):

This article was originally published in February 2025 and has been updated and reprinted to reflect current Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training opportunities and program details in New Canaan. The reporting and interviews were originally conducted by John J. Kriz.

“They’re an extraordinary group of people – extraordinary resource for our town,” says New Canaan Director of Emergency Management Russ Kimes about the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) www.newcanaancert.org “I couldn’t do my job without their assistance. So it’s truly appreciated.”

But just what is CERT, and what does it do? When it comes to public safety, just about everyone knows about the police and fire departments, as well as our Emergency Medical Service (EMS) – the ambulance, with its EMTs and paramedics. But they’re not all.

What CERT Does

New Canaan’s all-volunteer Community Emergency Response Team’s mission is to train and equip themselves and fellow citizens to be prepared to help themselves and their neighbors in the event of a disaster or emergency – to be ‘the help until help arrives.’ In addition, CERT assists and supports first responders in case of an emergency or other event, when those first responders are overloaded. CERT is a force multiplier, helping first responders to leverage their capacities. While CERT members do not participate directly in so-called DLH (Danger to Life and Health) events, as would police and fire personnel, “there’s a ton of activities that need to happen outside of that, particularly within the incident command,” says Russ Kimes.

New Canaan’s CERT is the oldest one in Connecticut, having been established in 2003.

If an incident occurs, CERT’s resources can be requested by Mr. Kimes at the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), EMS, the First Selectman, Fire and/or Police. Once the ‘Bat Signal’ goes out, CERT’s management, in turn, contacts, organizes and deploys its team of trained volunteers, who would coordinate with first responders and incident command.

When New Canaan’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated for an emergency such as a major storm, CERT is usually right there in support. CERT can be dealing with traffic control and monitoring road closures in the field, as well as helping to leverage incoming resources, such as fire apparatus and ambulances. Furthermore, CERT can assist in monitoring radio traffic, keeping track of key events and available resources, directing people to shelter resources and helping operate the EOC’s call center, answering residents’ questions and managing new information such as downed trees and power lines. CERT volunteer Kevin McIntosh says “it’s neighbor to neighbor. It’s kind of a reassuring voice on the phone when they call and they realize that they’re talking to one of their neighbors.”

Other emergency tasks include “damage assessment,” notes CERT volunteer Peter Bergen. “We’re requested to go out and if a pole has come down – Is it sparking or not? Is it endangering somebody’s life? That’s what we report on, too.” CERT volunteer Jim Davis adds that downed trees and power lines also mean road closures and a need for traffic control, and CERT is usually assigned those tasks.

CERT provides important extra sets of skilled hands when and where they’re most needed.

For example, during Hurricane Sandy New Canaan had 150 road closures, plus flooding, downed trees and power lines, and urgent medical issues. The 18 fire, police and EMS first responders on duty were overwhelmed. CERT was there with forty volunteers on day one. In 2024, CERT’s cadre of 105 volunteers logged 1662 hours of service, 12% more than in 2023.

In addition to assisting during emergencies, New Canaan’s CERT is prominent at various large, planned events in town, such as May Fair, the Family Fourth of July celebration in Waveny Park, Caffeine & Carburetors and Veteran’s Day ceremonies. CERT is also part of the planning of the town’s involvement in these events. Assisting at these events, which can include such duties as vehicular and pedestrian traffic control and safety, and directing people to medical or other resources,

helps CERT members hone their skills and support our community.

Emerging Tasks

Over the last year, CERT volunteer Elena Imbimbo has worked to expand connections with town emergency services. For example, there is an effort underway to get CERT more involved in operational roles in the field, says Fire Chief Albert Bassett. This would include acting as a “staging area manager where they [CERT] would be on the radio to assist us moving apparatus from one place to another. We’re also looking at them to assist us with our accountability and accountability system where they’re tracking the people that are arriving on scene.” In addition, Fire Chief Bassett has plans to train CERT members to operate the command board, which tracks major points in and the progression of an incident. CERT volunteer Tracey Hamill notes that CERT participation in perimeter control – keeping people away from possibly dangerous areas, and access avenues open – is a part of this.

New Canaan’s Fire Department has a “very good relationship” with CERT, says Fire Chief Bassett.

“The new move we’re trying to do is try to get them [CERT] out more and help us with some of the tasks that we don’t have the personnel for because I need to put firefighters into firefighting position,” says Fire Chief Bassett. “I can use those support roles that understand emergency services and they can act as an aid to some of our officers working different assignments on the outside, and they could be an aid to the incident commander with that documentation and managing the command board as resources come in.” Another project underway is training CERT members to manage fill sites for fire apparatus needing water, directing apparatus in and out, and notifying incident command that apparatus is leaving the fill site and on its way to the incident.

CERT Structure

The CERT program concept was started by the Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985, and grew into a national program in 1993 under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), with a goal of providing a consistent approach to preparedness training. However, the CERT program also provides substantial latitude to individual communities to ensure that it best meets specific local needs and conditions. Every state has CERTs, which total around 3000 volunteers. More than 600,000 people have received CERT training since inception.

CERT is an independent organization, led by its own sixteen person board, with offices and storage facilities at Irwin House. It is one of Connecticut’s Citizen Corps programs, under the state’s Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. <https://portal.ct.gov/demhs/emergency-management/resources-for-officials/citizen-corps> Most of CERT’s funding is sourced locally via donations, with some money from the Town, plus some from the state, via Department of Homeland Security grants. CERT is also a value-for-money group, with only a few thousand dollars spent yearly for equipment and other needs.

CERT Training

Basic CERT training comprises a FEMA-developed 20-hour course covering disaster response skills such as disaster preparedness, fire safety and suppression, light search-and-rescue, basic first aid

Here is the schedule for our winter 2026 class:

Day	Date	Time
Wednesday	Jan. 28	6:30 PM - 9:30 PM
Saturday	Jan. 31	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Saturday	Feb. 7	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Wednesday	Feb. 11	6:30 PM - 9:30 PM
Wednesday	Feb. 18	6:30 PM - 9:30 PM
Saturday	Feb. 28	8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

including CPR and ‘Stop the Bleed,’ disaster psychology, and incident command and management. CERT members can train in additional skills such as pedestrian safety, traffic control, AED and Narcan use, radio communications, volunteer deployment, emergency sheltering, emergency operations center activities and animal rescue/sheltering. CERT members can also be trained in emotional first aid, and in operating family assistance centers. CERT is looking into training to operate family reunification centers if, for example, a school is evacuated and children need to be reunited with parents.

Elena Imbimbo stresses that “every year we propose new topics for training. The goal is to train as many people as possible in different areas so that they’re prepared in case there is an emergency.” Training resources can be local experts, as well as those supplied by the state or others. Examples of state-led training include an active shooter exercise, as well as a plane crash scenario.

CERT also provides the basic FEMA-developed training for free to New Canaan residents. Some residents choose to join CERT after completing this training, but it’s not required. However, once they have received the training, participants will be better prepared to care for themselves and others during an emergency, helping themselves to be more self-sufficient after a disaster. Peter Bergen cites the example of a downed tree blocking a dead-end street. Emergency vehicles cannot get in. Having someone CERT-trained there means better, faster help for someone in need, plus a trained person to coordinate with first responders.

CERT’s next training program starts on February 26. Each person completing the training receives a specially designed and filled backpack to assist them in emergencies.

CERT Equipment

CERT’s equipment includes an SUV, and an equipment trailer containing diverse safety and traffic control equipment. In addition, safety clothing, radios, a generator and emergency lighting are part of CERT’s arsenal.

Why Do It?

“I love New Canaan and I really wanted to do something that I could make an impact on the town that I have grown to love,” says Jim Davis. “It’s part of paying back to the community,” adds Kevin McIntosh. As well, it’s learning “how to take care of yourself when your government might not be there.” Elena Imbimbo says she “just wanted to help by training them to be ready for anything.” Tracey Hamill notes that volunteering for CERT “really reaches into the whole cross-section of New Canaan, which has been eye-opening for me and very rewarding.” Peter Bergen “loves empowering people.”

Tracey Hamill sums it up: “We are out there for the safety of the town.”

If you want to be like so many other New Canaan residents and give back to the community, and to yourself, consider CERT training. It’s free and starts next week. For more information, or to register, go to www.newcanaancert.org

John J. Kriz is a 30+ year resident of New Canaan. The opinions expressed are his own.

Spotted in Puerto Rico: Photogallery by Frank Gallo (COLUMN ON FACING PAGE)



Bananaquit



Venezuelan Troupial



Caribbean Gulf Fritillary



Roosters & Chickens, La Paguera



La Parguera and Islands



Roosters & Chickens, La Paguera



Cecropia leaves



Downtown La Parguera



Gate to PR Parrot breeding facility



Mangrove Cuckoo



Mangrove Yellow Warbler



Palm fronds



Puerto Rican Owl



Puerto Rican Spindalis



Puerto Rican Tanager



Smooth-billed Ani



Zebra Heliconia Butterfly



White-cheeked Pintails

The things I learned while driving a Kia (Scouting an ecotour in Puerto Rico)

By Frank Gallo

Write this down. Never drive up route 388 into the mountains of Puerto Rico (PR). It doesn't matter if GPS says it's the shortest route, or that there's a rare Puerto Rican Euphonia at the end of the road. Take Route 518. It's windy, but at least it has white lines outlining it and no potholes!

I've been on steep and narrow roads before, but Route 388 (and I use the term "route" loosely) may be the steepest, most windy, and least well-maintained road of the lot. There was one curve so tight that I had to back up to swing wide enough to make it and then go up an incline so steep that anyone who has ever driven a lawnmower up a hill and thought it would flip over understands the feeling I had in the pit of my stomach. Going up, I mostly saw blue sky. Going down the other side, I had visions of buses I'd seen at the bottom of ravines in Peru. I had gotten more than halfway, so there was no turning back. Where would I do it, anyway?

There were a few houses along this desolate pothole-encrusted excuse for a goat path, and occasionally a vehicle would come the other way. There was no shoulder. In fact, much of the road edge was missing, no guard rails, just crumbled asphalt. Fortunately, the locals know what horns are for and beep on corners and I quickly embraced their tradition. I did a lot of beeping. Can you imagine if it snowed here? After more than an hour of driving switchbacks, hairpin turns, and apparent onramps to heaven, I made it to Route 518, where I rediscovered breathing, and spent a minute or two peeling my fingers off the steering wheel.

I turned off Route 518, a lovely unpitted main road to the entrance to the US National Forest where I hoped to see the Euphonias, crossed a bridge, passed through a small town and into the park which, as it turns out, is no longer being maintained because of federal budget cuts. Oh, lucky me. Aside from the tall grass growing along the median and edges, the road was still in pretty good shape, so I went to my first GPS pin for the Euphonias.

Did I mention that GPS doesn't work well in the mountains of Puerto Rico? GPS got me to my first stop where all was quiet except for a few Bananaquits feeding in the cecropias. When I hit continue, the GPS lost signal. Not to worry, I set the pins before I left the lowlands with this possibility in mind. So, I went from pin to pin. At each stop, I saw a variety of birds, a Cape May Warbler from our Eastern boreal forests, Pearly-eyed Thrashers (think mockingbirds) but alas, there were no Euphonias. As it was my last day, I wouldn't have another chance to see them. Something to be saved for the next scouting trip.

I thought I was being slick pinning the Euphonia sites into Google maps. I even pinned the airport in San Juan. What I forgot to do was pin the route. When I lost signal, the route to the airport vanished. I knew that I had to get to highway 10, and luckily, I can read a map. So, I enlarged the GPS map, looked for the shortest route to Highway 10 and went for it. Trusty Route 518 as it turned out went "straight" downhill to Route 10, in a windy-mountain-road sort of way.

At one point, just before I reached the highway, I got a GPS signal, and the airport route appeared. I stopped and re-plotted my course and it's a good thing I did. Otherwise, I would never have found the on-ramp. To get onto the highway, I had to veer onto Route 123, take a very sharp left onto what looked like a steep narrow driveway past some houses, then crest another steep hill right onto the highway. I've never driven up a hill through a neighborhood and directly onto a highway before. I'll find an alternate route next time. This is why we spend so much time researching and scouting a tour...

Why was I doing all this? This was the last day of a weeklong scouting trip to Puerto Rico to plan a future birding tour for Sunrise Birding, LLC in 2027. Puerto Rico is home to 17 endemic bird species, a host of butterflies and other creatures found nowhere else on earth, and several bird species that have ranges restricted to the Caribbean. This was my first visit to the island, and apart from wanting to see the endemics, my job was to explore and get the lay of the land, accommodation, food, culture, people, and to meet local guides. Aside from route 388, I highly recommend it.

My week-long journey began in the lovely El Yunque National Forest on the east end of the island. The forest there was devastated by hurricane Maria in 2017 but is slowly returning to normal. Young growth has replaced old, and although the mature forest will take years to recover, the birds are still there, though populations are reduced. I loved my daily walks up the valley from Casa Cubuy Ec lodge, where I was hosted by a wonderful energetic 96-year-old expat American and her son. My walks garnered 12 of the 17 endemics. I had fantastic views of the neon green Puerto Rican Tody (perhaps the cutest bird on earth), PR Tanager, PR Spindalis (a tanager), flashy Green Mangos, and many others. I also visited a few coastal sites to see Adelaide's and Mangrove Yellow Warblers, along with a slew of winter warblers that breed in the U.S.

At the famous Noelia's restaurant just down the valley I ate a dinner of delicious grouper with tostones that came with a side of PR Owl singing in the trees beside the veranda. The food and the owner were delightful. Give her mofongo a try. Order upon arrival or you'll wait and check that she's open. Hours are at her discretion.

On the third day, I timed my departure to arrive in Rio Abajo State Forest at 2:30 p.m. where I walked a mile along a rough hilly road to the gates of the Puerto Rican Parrot breeding facility. Through captive breeding, PR Parrots have recovered from near extinction in the 1970s, to 250+ birds in the wild. Although still critically endangered, there is hope. With some luck, I'd see wild ones coming to roost near the facility.

Of course, as soon as I arrived onsite, it started to rain. I'm used to getting wet in the tropics, so I stood under a wide-leaved tree before spotting a tractor with a covered cab parked nearby. I climbed into the cab, stored my camera gear and waited. At 3:50 p.m. I heard parrots. It was still raining, so I left my gear and ran up the hill to the gate. I was greeted there by a raucous group of 16-20 emerald PR parrots with rusty

Write this down. Never drive up route 388 into the mountains of Puerto Rico. It doesn't matter if GPS says it's the shortest route, or that there's a rare Puerto Rican Euphonia at the end of the road.



Waterfall and view from Casa Cubuy

foreheads flying in and out of some palms! I walked back to my car with a smile on my face and a two-hour drive to my hotel in the coastal tourist town of La Parguera.

On the way, I detoured to a site for the endangered PR Nightjar, only rediscovered in 1961, that was six minutes from my hotel. As I drove slowly down the dirt entrance road, I heard several singing on the hillside. I parked and within minutes one flew over the road then sang close to me. I shined my light and found it perched 30 feet away! Amazing.

Over the next several days, I walked La Parguera's neighborhoods seeking the glittering gold PR Mango hummingbird. I explored nearby lagoons filled with White-cheeked Pintails and wintering shorebirds, and local rice farms for rare Grasshopper Sparrows, and Smooth-billed Anis. I also took several trips into the mountains in search of other endemics, including the elusive Elfin-woods Warbler.

On a lovely quiet morning at dawn, I parked at the state boat ramp to watch flocks of rare, Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds leaving their offshore island roosts to head inland to feed. Local roosters, chickens, and a Venezuelan Troupial (oriole) watched with me.

Hikes on mountain trails revealed more endemics, including PR Vireo and Lesser Antillean Pewee, but no Elfin-woods Warblers. I did meet some nice young Chicago birders who I later showed the Nightjars to; they gave me a new

hacking site for PR Parrots that I'll visit next time. Half the fun of birding is meeting kindred souls often in the middle of nowhere.

On my last morning before my flight home, I again drove and walked La Parguera neighborhoods at dawn looking for PR Mango which kept eluding me. Two flashed across the road chasing one another, but I couldn't relocate nor count them. A stop at a hotel where several had been seen provided me with a nice breakfast but no Mango (except for the ones I ate). As I was leaving town blissfully unaware of my future fun on Route 388, I glimpsed a bird fly into a flower-filled hedge. I stopped and checked the hedge. Nothing. I checked the neighbor's flowers. Nothing. The hedge again. Nothing. As I reached for the car door handle, a bird shot out from a nearby tree and hovered 10 feet away. It was the PR Mango! I had just enough time to lift my binoculars and confirm identification before it zipped away. It would be my last endemic for the trip. I went 15 for 17 PR endemics, saw several new Caribbean endemics, and ended with 25 new species for the trip. I'm looking forward to a return visit next fall.

Visiting a new area to scout a potential tour is a wonderful way to meet people, experience different cultures, try new foods, and see incredible scenery. I had fun, and most importantly, contributed a bit to the local economy. It's what ecotourism should be all about.



Downtown La Parguera



La Parguera and Islands



White-cheeked Pintails



Gate to PR Parrot breeding facility

TINA COURPAS COLUMN
CONTINUED From Page 1

what the underlying bill says.

This sounds like an exaggeration, but sadly, it is not. I heard one House member say to another on the House floor this year: “I can’t vote NO on this Bill. The title says “Elderly.” If I vote no, next election my opponent will print a campaign mailer with the headline saying that I hate the elderly.”

At the Special Session in November, I voted against establishing a temporary \$500 million “side-fund” created for the Governor to use largely at his discretion. The fund was intended to make up for shortfalls in SNAP and other important funding as a result of the federal government shutdown which had begun on October 1. The “side-fund” would last only until February 4, 2026, until the legislature reconvened. I supported that proposal.

However, by the time the bill went to a vote, the shutdown had ended. The emergency for which the bill was created was over, and yet the bill proceeded. At the time of the vote, the bill’s proponents could not demonstrate any specific monetary deficit, any program terminating, any a single quantifiable decrease in SNAP benefits before February 4, which would justify such a “side-fund.” The “side-fund” also violated the fiscal guardrails, which I had promised to uphold. I voted no, along with other legislators. I recently read a partisan shorthand attack which obfuscated the real substance of this vote, calling it a vote “against SNAP benefits.”

The problems with this dynamic are obvious. Policy involves tradeoffs, and one-liners don’t explain those. Knee-jerk reactivity gets in the way of simply asking questions, getting the facts and understanding the issues. Finally, the dumbing down dynamic is a race to the bottom – who can be angrier, who can make the content of a bill seem more extreme, and who can make the other side look worse.

So, what is the solution to this “dumbing down” of our state democracy? I welcome your input.

I believe that part of the solution is to resist the trend. I am committed to doing that. As a State Representative, I believe this means asking questions, casting votes on the substance, providing full information to the people I serve, and trusting them to digest it. It is a privilege in all respects to represent the 149th District, including the fact that its citizens care about, read about, and digest the issues at a very high level. Thank you for the privilege of serving you. But I also believe that is possible for any and every district in our state to resist the race to the bottom. If the alternative is the continued dumbing down of our democracy, we have no choice but to resist.

BASKETBALL
CONTINUED From Page 1

highest individual total, and Elliot Hellmann added 12 points to support the Wildcats’ effort. Bethel competed with energy and toughness, particularly during the third-quarter push, but struggled to keep pace with New Canaan’s execution in the final stretch.

For the Rams, Sunday’s win served as a clear example of growth and resilience. The ability to remain steady through momentum swings, execute in late-game situations, and finish strong are all hallmarks of a team developing its identity. New Canaan did not rely on flashy plays or extended scoring runs, instead building its advantage through consistent effort, defensive discipline, and unselfish offense.


The home crowd played its part as well, providing energy during key moments in the second half as the Rams began to pull away. Each defensive stop and made basket in the fourth quarter seemed to reinforce New Canaan’s momentum, turning a tense contest into a confident closing performance.

As the season continues, the Rams can take encouragement from Sunday’s result. The win highlighted the team’s depth, with multiple players contributing across scoring, rebounding, and defense. It also underscored New Canaan’s ability to adjust within a game, responding effectively after Bethel’s third-quarter surge and closing with authority.

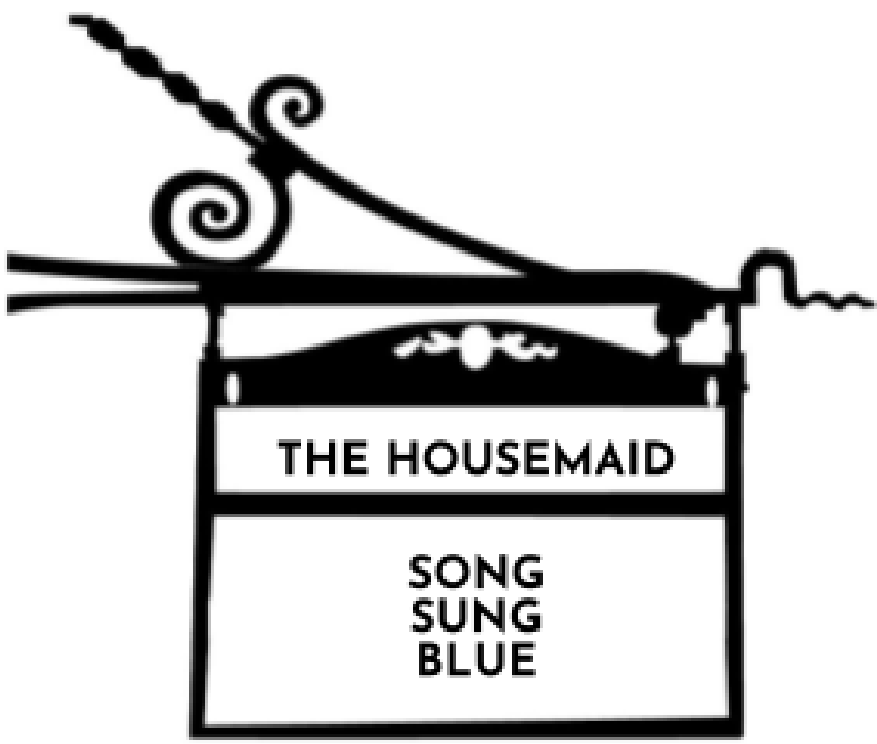
While non-conference games often serve as measuring sticks rather than final judgments, this matchup provided valuable insight into what New Canaan can be when it plays within itself and commits to a full four-quarter effort. The Rams demonstrated that they can compete through physical stretches, stay patient offensively, and rise to the moment when the game is on the line.

With a 58–48 victory secured, New Canaan moves forward with momentum and confidence. The Rams will look to carry the lessons from Sunday’s performance into upcoming contests, continuing to refine their execution and build chemistry as the season unfolds. If the strong finish against Bethel is any indication, New Canaan has the tools and mindset to make noise as the year progresses.

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LEGAL AD

THE TOWN OF NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Public Works Department of the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut, will receive sealed Proposals for “Pumping Station Electrical Panel Upgrade” until 10:00AM Local Time on Tuesday January 27, 2026 at the Department of Public Works Office, Town Hall, 77 Main Street, New Canaan, CT, 06840, at which time and place all proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Specification documents are available at the Department of Public Works Office, Town of New Canaan, Town Hall, 77 Main Street, New Canaan, Connecticut 06840, or by calling William Oestmann, Facilities Superintendent at 203-594-3710. Specifications may also be obtained by e-mailing to william.oestmann@newcanaanct.gov.

There will be a mandatory site visit required for this project. Please contact Bill Oestmann at 203-594-3710 to make an appointment.

No contractor may withdraw his proposal within 90 days after the actual date of the proposal opening. Additionally, the contract documents require the prompt commencement of the work.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals or any part thereof, to waive defects in the same, or to accept any proposal or any part thereof deemed to be in the best interest of the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut.

All contractors are requested to note that the award of this Contract is subject to the following conditions and contingencies:

- 1) The approval of such governmental agencies as may be required by law.
- 2) The appropriation of adequate funds by the proper agencies.

Tiger Mann
Director of Public Works
Town of New Canaan, Connecticut

LEGAL AD

The Town of New Canaan, Connecticut
Department of Public Works
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Public Works Department of the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut, will receive sealed proposals for “Electrical Repairs and Upgrades Services for Town Buildings” until 10:00AM Local Time on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at the Department of Public Works Office, Town Hall, 77 Main Street, New Canaan, CT, 06840, at which time and place all proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Specification documents are available at the Department of Public Works Office, Town of New Canaan, Town Hall, 77 Main Street, New Canaan, Connecticut 06840, or by calling William Oestmann, Facilities Superintendent at 203-594-3710. Specifications may also be obtained by e-mailing to william.oestmann@newcanaanct.gov.

No contractor may withdraw his proposal within 90 days after the actual date of the RFP opening. Additionally, the contract documents require the prompt commencement of the work.

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or any part thereof, to waive defects in the same, or to accept any proposal or any part thereof deemed to be in the best interest of the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut.

All contractors are requested to note that the award of this Contract is subject to the following conditions and contingencies:

- 1) The approval of such governmental agencies as may be required by law.
- 2) The appropriation of adequate funds by the proper agencies.

Tiger Mann
Director of Public Works
Town of New Canaan, Connecticut

LEGAL AD

TOWN OF NEW CANAAN
INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the Inland Wetlands Agent has approved the following application:

Permit Number (IW-25-54) issued to John and Terry Miller, 168 Proprietors Crossing, Map 28 Block 140 Lot 84. Install all soil and erosion controls. Construct new inground 20’x45’ pool with autocover and 6’x8’ spa. Install patio and construct covered porch. Install pool equipment and make connections. Construct sitting wall as depicted. Install 16 units of 2’x4’x8’ galley drainage system and make connections. Relocate 2” septic pump line. Fine grade, topsoil, seed and landscape all disturbed areas upon completion.

LEGAL AD

LEGAL NOTICE

FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT

In accordance with Section 7-394 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the Federal Single Audit and State Single Audit of the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut, for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025, is on file in my office and is available for public inspection.

Dated at New Canaan, Connecticut, this 30th day of December, 2025.

CLAUDIA A. WEBER, CMC
NEW CANAAN TOWN CLERK

2026

New Canaan begins the new year the way it ended the last one: with people in the room.

That is the fact beneath the feeling. In 2025, residents did not retreat into private routines or outsource civic life to a few dependable volunteers. They came out. They attended meetings that were not glamorous. They filled library rooms on ordinary weeknights. They stood along sidelines and sat in folding chairs and waited their turn to speak. They treated community not as an abstraction but as a verb. At the *Sentinel*, we have seen this first hand in our own Coffee&Conversations each week which grew and grew last year.

This is not a small thing. Many towns possess amenities. Fewer possess habits. New Canaan’s distinguishing feature is not merely what it has, but what its people do with it.

Last year made that plain. Municipal meetings were not empty rituals. They were places of argument, listening, persistence. People showed up not because everything was easy or agreed upon, but because they understood that local decisions shape daily life. Civic health here has never depended on unanimity. It depends on presence.

The same instinct animated the town’s public life beyond governance. Downtown events succeeded because residents made them succeed. The Holiday Stroll was not just lights and music; it was neighbors lingering in the cold, children darting between shops, conversations resuming where they had left off months earlier. That kind of turnout cannot be programmed. It reflects affection.

The Chamber of Commerce once again proved itself less an organization than a connective tissue. Throughout the year, it convened merchants, nonprofits, and residents with a light hand and steady purpose. It understands something essential: people want to belong to something that feels human in scale. The Chamber made that possible again and again.

The library stood at the center of it all, as it so often does. In 2025, it was busy in the best way. Children arrived after school. Adults came for lectures and author talks and stayed to talk afterward. People filled the building not with obligation, but with enthusiasm. A community’s seriousness about itself can be measured by how it treats its library. New Canaan treats it as a living place.

Schools continued to anchor the town’s identity. Athletic success was real and celebrated, but what mattered just as much was who was there to see it. Bleachers were filled on regular nights, not only championship ones. Parents, neighbors, alumni showed up. The same was true for school fundraisers, performances, and academic events. Education here remains communal.

First responders quietly did what they always do. They trained. They staffed events. They answered calls. Their presence at town gatherings was reassuring not because it was conspicuous, but because it was normal. Service here retains an element of dignity precisely because it is not performative.

Volunteerism remained a throughline. Nonprofits did not struggle for attention. Walks, drives, and service projects drew participants across age groups. Lobsters were eaten, Christmas trees were purchased, items were repurposed, extraordinary individuals were celebrated. This is a town that still believes effort should be shared. It understands that generosity is a practice, not a posture.

What stands out about the past year is not that it was free of disagreement. It was not. What stands out is how disagreement was handled. Arguments happened in rooms where people recognized one another. That changes behavior. It tempers language. It encourages responsibility. Proximity has a civilizing effect.

There is an old American idea that democracy is learned locally, or not at all. New Canaan continues to validate that idea. Civic life here is not outsourced upward. It is practiced daily, in small ways that accumulate.

The new year will bring familiar pressures: budgets, growth, change, the friction that comes with living closely together. No town avoids that. New Canaan’s advantage is not insulation. It is habit. The habit of showing up. The habit of listening. The habit of staying.

Communities endure not because they are perfect, but because enough people decide they are worth the trouble. In 2025, New Canaan made that decision repeatedly. The task of 2026 is simple: make it again.

Editorial Page



"Now I'm going to ask you again: where are the three beans that this lab spent five years and six billion dollars to develop?!"

A Word About Obituaries This Week

By ELIZABETH BARHYDT

This week we have two full pages of obituaries as we catch up a from our holiday pause on printing the paper. We believe devoting this space to obituaries is important and worth doing but it does limit the space in this issue for other things. We do not charge for obituaries. It is a free service we offer for good reason.

Obituaries are more than announcements. They are tributes that celebrate and preserve the stories of those who have shaped our community. At the *New Canaan Sentinel*, we believe in the power of these narratives to honor the memory of loved ones, connect families with the community, and ensure legacies endure for future generations. As poet Thomas Campbell wrote, “To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.”

The history of obituaries in newspapers is as old as the medium itself. In ancient Rome, public notices of significant deaths were inscribed for citizens to read. By the 17th century, newspapers began dedicating space to the lives of the recently deceased, initially focusing on prominent figures. Over time, obituaries evolved into an art form, chronicling both the extraordinary and everyday contributions of individuals. These tributes became a cornerstone of journalism, offering glimpses into the lives of those who shaped

their communities.

Some obituaries have achieved renown for their ability to distill a life into a few poignant lines. *The New York Times* obituary for Abraham Lincoln began, “Washington, Wednesday, April 19 – Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, a man whose life has been a light and inspiration to a free people, died at 7:22 a.m., April 15, 1865, succumbing to the wounds inflicted upon him by an assassin.” More recently, the *New York Times* honored Maya Angelou with the opening, “Maya Angelou, the memoirist and poet whose landmark book ‘I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings’ was among the first to openly discuss the racism and personal trauma experienced by Black women, died on Wednesday.”

Closer to home, I had the privilege of writing the obituary for my mother, Ceia Webb. It began, “Harriet Cordelia (Ceia) Webb, a master in the arts of grit, faith, and courage, died in New Milford, CT, at the age of 81, while visiting her children and grandchildren on the morning of July 26, 2019.” These words remain deeply meaningful to me and serve as a reminder of the enduring importance of this tradition.

At the *New Canaan Sentinel*, we are grateful to the contributors of the Sentinel Foundation, whose generosity ensures that we can publish

obituaries without charging families. This commitment allows us to honor every member of our community, regardless of financial circumstances, and underscores the importance of accessible remembrance, particularly in print. While many publications have moved to paid obituaries, we remain dedicated to providing this service as a way to strengthen the bonds of community and to celebrate lives without burdening grieving families.

We encourage readers and community members to share the stories and lives of their loved ones within our pages. Obituaries can include personal anecdotes, family photographs, and longer tributes that reflect the uniqueness of each individual.

Obituaries are, at their heart, about connection. They remind us, teach us, inform our past and future, give us perspective, and often offer grace. As a newspaper, we are honored to carry forward this tradition, ensuring that the lives of our community members are celebrated and remembered.

Our hope is that generations from now, the words in these obituaries will be found as clippings in scrapbooks or online in ancestral research. These stories will continue to connect the future and the past in meaningful and beautiful ways.



Sen. Ryan Fazio holds Gen. Z aimed event

By JULIA BARCELLO

Connecticut State Senator Ryan Fazio is taking his campaign straight to Gen. Z as he highlights housing costs, student debt and jobs in an effort to make Connecticut a more prosperous state.

At a campaign event targeted towards Gen. Z, young adults had the opportunity to speak with Fazio and discuss topics important to them. Students from various organizations across the state attended in support of Fazio. The event was held in Stamford, Monday evening. Following student speakers, Fazio spoke about his campaign and his desire to include the youth while improving Connecticut.

Michael Presti, 18, supports Fazio in hopes to see change in the state. He explained following this election, it may be too late.

“Lamont has been in office for, you know, years. And this is gonna be one of our last chances to get him out before, I feel like, the super majority is going to really take hold.”

Blake Constantino, Founder and President of American Destiny which is a youth focused organization that promotes student civic engagement gave a powerful speech where he expressed a sense of urgency for change in

the state. He believes that Gen. Z is capable of making a significant change in the world as the next leaders.

“I’m here to tell you that we, Gen. Z, are choosing to fight. We will not give up on Connecticut. We will not retreat across state borders. We’re not going to be silenced by our peers or professors, by our government or other sensors... We will stand where we are in our towns and cities occupied by a corrupt regime, a unit party in Hartford.”

He continued, “We [Gen. Z] will do whatever it takes over the next 11 months to ensure that we [Fazio] win, and when we do win, it will have been because we chose to win. It will have been because of all of you.”

Presti says he is concerned about the impact of statues like 830-G and Housing Bill 8002. “Low income housing is being proposed for all these little townships and cities. I think that should scare everyone... I really think that’s pandering to the migrant crowd.”

These statutes have been a large focus for Fazio over the past several months and is something he plans to improve while protecting local control.

“By doing small scale developments like accessory dwelling units, residential, in mixed use retail zoned areas. Without giving

developers complete free range. There can be a balanced approach where we can protect the natural beauty of Connecticut while also improving housing affordability,” said Fazio.

Fazio says if he wins the election, he will deliver a 1% income tax cut for the middle class in the first term and cut electric rates by 20%, working to make Connecticut more affordable. He further explained, “I ensure that we have a strategy to create jobs and opportunity for all people irrespective of their background.”

He sees the strength in Gen. Z and is working to gain their involvement for his campaign.

“This campaign is going to be about the future and I’ve seen first hand how young people getting involved in politics, on local and state level can make a positive difference so that’s what our campaign is trying to communicate to the entire state tonight.”

Constantino similarly discussed the importance in, as he says, repairing the state and nation. “Connecticut is being killed. We have been told to leave politics up to our elders. But how can they repair the nation? What it is they who let it be torn to the ground. They tell us that we have not yet matured, but we know that our ideas have and because of that, it is now our time.”

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Worship Directory and Services

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

682 South Avenue 203.966.5849
www.ComeUntoChrist.org
Sunday Service: 9:00 AM

Congregational Church

23 Park Street 203.966.2651
office@godsacre.org
www.godsacre.org

Sunday Services: 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM. The 10:00 am service is also live streamed and recorded, the video replay will be available throughout the week. Church School is available on Sundays for children ages 3 through 7th grade each Sunday from September through mid-June.

Recurring Events:

Tuesdays at 9:30 AM: Women's Bible Study
Wednesdays at 9:30 AM: Bible Study
Fourth Thursday from 12-2:30 PM: Meet at the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk to serve a meal.

First Church of Christ, Scientist

49 Park Street 203.966.0293
christiansciencect.org/newcanaan
Sunday 10:30 AM, in person only. Sunday School is available during Sunday Service and is open to children and young people up to the age of 20. There is also childcare available for children too young for Sunday School.

Wednesday Testimony Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month, join by zoom or by phone 646 558 8656. Reading Room Hours: Open Mondays 11-2, Call to confirm hours 203-966-0293. All are welcome to the Sunday and Wednesday services, Sunday School, and the reading room.

First Presbyterian Church

178 Oenoke Ridge Road 203.966.0002
fpcnc.org

Sunday Service: 10am in person or via LocalLive. All are welcome. Coffee Hour after the service is also available in person or via Zoom. Dedicated childcare is available for all children via Wee Care Nanny Agency from 8:45-11:30am in the Nursery School. Transcripts of previous sermons are also available via the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan's website. Recurring Events: Every Saturday 9:15am (closed) and 10:30am (open): Alcoholics Anonymous. Every Tuesday 8pm: Men's A.A.

Third Wednesday from 6-7:30 PM: Wednesdays at the Well are intergenerational opportunities to learn and grow in faith together. Dinner will be served and all ages are invited.

Upcoming Events:

January 11 at 10 AM: Join Guest Preacher Greg Cootsona for worship followed by an adult forum at 11:30 AM. All Are Welcome. Childcare will be provided and a light lunch will be served.

February 1 at 11:30 AM: Join speaker Dr. Georgette Bennett for an Adult Forum. All Are Welcome. Childcare will be provided and a light lunch will be served.

Saint Aloysius Roman Catholic Church

21 Cherry Street 203.966.0020
www.starcc.com

Service Schedule:
Saturday: Vigil for Sunday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Sunday 8:30 a.m. mass is live-streamed and recorded.
Monday-Friday: 7:00 am and 5:30 pm
Saturday: 7:00 am

Recurring Events:

Last Monday of every month 7pm: Women's Praise & Worship Holy Hour
Fridays 7:30am-6pm: Eucharistic Adoration (September-June)
Saturday 8:30am: St. A's Healing Rosary Prayer Group

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

111 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.4515
churchoffice@stmarksnewcanaan.org
www.stmarksnewcanaan.org

Sunday Services: 8:00am: Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite I; **9:00am:** Outdoor Holy Eucharist Rite II; **10am:** Indoor Holy Eucharist Rite II (Live Stream also available on the St. Mark's website). Coffee Hour follows the 10am service. Church School during the 10am service: Godly Play for children in kindergarten through second grade; Holy Moly for third and fourth grades; Meet in the Middle for fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Professional childcare is offered for children ages four and under. Families with children who are not yet ready to separate for childcare are invited to use the rocking chairs at the rear of the chapel.
Weekday Services: Monday-Friday, 8:30am: Morning Prayer Rite II by Zoom.
Wednesday at 12:05pm: Noonday Eucharist in the chapel.

Recurring Events:

First Wednesday at 1pm: Laundry Love volunteering opportunity to come alongside people who are struggling financially by assisting them with their laundry.
First & Third Wednesdays from 6-7:30pm: Youth Group

St. Michael's Lutheran Church

5 Oenoke Ridge 203.966.3913
office@stmichaelslutheran.org
www.stmichaelslutheran.org

Sunday Service at 10:00 am. Following the service there is coffee, cookies and conversation in the Fellowship Hall.

Recurring Events:

Thursday 12 PM: Alcoholics Anonymous

Trinity Church New Canaan | Darien

1800 E. Putnam Ave, Old Greenwich 203.618.0808
info@trinitychurch.life
www.trinitychurch.life

Join us **Sundays at 10 a.m.** at Greenwich Hyatt Regency for lively worship, thoughtful and applicable teaching, weekly Communion, and an opportunity to make friends and grow in community. Trinity Kids (infants through fifth grade) and Trinity Youth (middle and high schoolers) take place during the service, and coffee and refreshments are served following worship. The service is also available on livestream via Youtube, Sundays at 10:00

a.m.; learn more at www.trinitychurch.life.

United Methodist Church

165 South Avenue 203.966.2666
frontdesk@umcofnewcanaan.org
www.umcofnewcanaan.org
Join us for Sunday Worship!
Sunday Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

Come for uplifting music and a relevant, inspiring message – and stay after for coffee and conversation during Fellowship Time.

Sunday School for ages 3 through high school. Child care is available for children from infancy through age 5.

Recurring Events:

First Sunday at 8:45 AM: All men are invited to our monthly Men's Breakfast – a time of warm fellowship, good food, and meaningful conversation as we grow together in faith and friendship.

Upcoming Events:

January 7: Midnight Run. We invite you to check your closets for men's warm clothing donations, especially coats, as we prepare to serve those in need during the winter months. Sorting will take place from 5:30 to 8:00 PM.

January 16 from 4:30–6:00 PM: Kids on a Mission. An evening of service and reflection for families with children in grades K-8. This gathering will include preparing toiletry kits in support of Midnight Run, creating friendship cards for those who are homebound, and sharing time for music and reflection. A meaningful way for children and families to serve, connect, and grow—together. Dinner will be served. Free to attend.

Community Baptist Church

174 Cherry Street 203.966.0711
cbcnewcanaan@gmail.com
www.cbcnewcanaan.org
Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZ2UNa8aHI3O_Syp_X0KDg
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CBCNewCanaan/>
Sunday School at 10:00am
Worship Service at 11:00am
Live Facebook Broadcast 11:30 am

Upcoming Events:

January 19 at from 10 AM- 12 PM: MLK, Jr. Day.

Grace Community Church

9:30am Service @ New Canaan High School,
11 Farm Road, New Canaan
203-966-7600
info@gracecommunity.info
www.gracecommunity.info

Welcome to Grace Church, where we strive to build a church of action, founded on Biblical truth, characterized by faith, grace, community, service, authenticity, clear thinking, and cultural relevance. Grace Community Church is an exercise in knowing God, knowing truth, and building community that extends to our full lives, not just to our Sunday mornings. Join us **Sunday mornings at 9:30am** or via GCC's Facebook page or YouTube page. Nursery care and Sunday school/teen programming is available for babies

through 12th grade. Coffee and bagels available in the lobby after the service, all are welcome.

Talmadge Hill Community Church

870 Hollow Tree Ridge Road; Darien, CT
203.966.2314
talmadgehillchurch@gmail.com
www.talmadgehill.org

Ministers: Rev. Carter Via and Rev. Cheryl Bundy **Sunday worship service at 10:00am** in person. All are welcome! We encourage everyone to stay for coffee hour after the service. Sunday School is every Sunday during the service and uses the Godly Play curriculum. Please reach out with any questions utilizing information listed above!

Recurring Events:

Thursdays at 9:30am: Bible Study
First Saturday at 8am: Men's Group
Second Saturday at 10am: Women's Circle

Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center

137 Putnam Rd
info@chabadnewcanaan.org
www.newcanaanjewish.org

The Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center is dedicated to strengthening and building the New Canaan Jewish Community by offering local Jewish resources that bring more positivity, Jewish education, charitable activity, good deeds and blessing to our lovely town.

We are about Judaism, not affiliation. Regardless of your background, and however you choose to define your level of Jewish observance or identity, the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center can add spirituality, joy, study, community and connection for you and your family. The programs of the Chabad New Canaan Jewish Center are held in various locations, all located in New Canaan.

Temple Sinai (Reform Synagogue)

458 Lakeside Drive; Stamford, CT 06903
203.322.1649
www.temple sinaistamford.org
Service Schedule:
1st, 3rd & 5th Friday – 6pm in person and via zoom
2nd & 4th – 7:30pm

Recurring Events:

Fridays at 12 PM: Torah Study
Second Saturday at 10:30 AM: Mussar
First and Third Fridays at 5:30 PM: Shabbat Service for Families with Young Children

First Saturday at 8 AM: Avodat Halev Discussion Group
Temple Sholom
300 E. Putnam Ave. Greenwich, CT 06830
203-869-7191
www.templeholom.com

Services: In-person and virtual Friday night Shabbat services, 6:30pm & Saturday morning Shabbat services, 10:30am.

Recurring Events:

Saturdays at 9 AM: Shabbat Study via zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/94358392426?pwd=bFJQem9HWFcxU0EzZUM2VENEZmgyUT09#success>



By MAREK ZABRISKIE

In November of 2018, Christ Church Greenwich held an event called “Follow the Star,” which featured 70 creches collected by parishioners Kay and Michael Langan, while traveling around the world.

Each creche depicted the Holy Family and the Wise Men dressed in the traditional costumes of their country. There were creches from Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, and even Eskimo creches. Parishioners dressed up as the Three Wise Men in colorful costumes sang to those who attended the festive gala.

I thought about that event and those lovely creches last year when our family visited Le Musée National des Beaux-Arts in Quebec City. There amid the indigenous art we saw a creche created by an Intuit artist who mixed Christianity with indigenous culture.

The baby Jesus lay in a manger inside an igloo. His parents were dressed in seal skins. Intuit sled dogs replaced sheep and camels and looked on as three Wise Men brought typical Intuit gifts instead of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

On Tuesday of this week, Christians around the world paused to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, where Christians retell the story of the Magi or Wise Men visiting the Christ child bringing him gifts.

Centuries before Christmas was first celebrated, Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany were the three most holiest days in the Church Calendar. In some countries around the world today such as Spain and Italy, Epiphany, not Christmas, is the day when families exchange gifts in honor of gift-bearing Magi rather than due to Santa's visit on Christmas Eve.

The Magi were a caste of people in ancient Persia who had been in existence for more than 700 years by the time Jesus was born. The were Zoroastrians, who lived in what is today is Iran, and they worshipped the God of Light, Ahura Mazda.

They believed that when each

of us was born a star appeared in the sky that controlled our destiny. The more we spread goodness and light in this world, the brighter our star shone, and the brighter our star the more potential we had to spread goodness and light.

Hence, when the Magi, who were a combination of astrologers, magicians, and philosophers, saw an exceptionally bright star in the sky, they knew that someone had been born who was to spread great goodness and light.

The star that they saw was actually a constellation that appears once every 800 years when Jupiter, Saturn and Mars former a triangular configuration. Each of these planets had a significance. One represented the Jewish people. Another signified kingship, and a third noted that a birth had occurred.

Thus, to the Wise Men, this bright light signaled that a king had been born to the Jews. And because the star was so bright, they sensed that this great spreader of light and goodness was actually a gift not only for the Jews, but for people everywhere. So, they set out on a 700 mile journey to meet this child bearing gifts fit for a king.

The gospels of John and Mark omit Jesus' birth. Luke tells the story of Jesus' birth in a manger in Bethlehem surrounded by shepherds and angels. Matthew's Gospel alone relates how the Magi came from afar to visit the Christ child. In many ways this has become the Christmas story.

In fact, the earliest paintings of Christmas in the catacombs of Rome show the Magi, not the shepherds, gathered around Jesus. And to this day, the story of brilliant, foreign astrologers being led by a star remains our most beautiful portrayal of the encounter with the Christ child, who is the ultimate gift.

Matthew says that when the travelers arrived, “They were overwhelmed with joy.” Joy pervades the story. In meeting the child laying in a manger the Wise Men found the answer to their lifetime's longing – love, purpose, a call for them and for the whole human family.

The gospel says that they “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy,” because they had encountered the ultimate gift – the Christ child.

All of us need divine revelation. We need to chart our way to truth and light. The star that guided the

Wise Men can guide us on our journeys as well. The star is a sign, symbol, and wonder that leads us to the Christ child.

The Magi needed an external source of light just as we do. So, we, like them, must follow that star. The star for Christians is the Bible. Martin Luther wrote, “Scripture is the manger in which the Christ lies. As a mother goes to a cradle to find her baby so the Christian goes to the Bible to find Jesus.”

I always recommend to members of my church to consider reading a portion of the Bible every day. In 2011, I started a ministry called “The Bible Challenge” (www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org) that has helped over a million people read through the Bible in a year.

God's Word found in the Bible is like the star that led the Magi. It can can guide us through the darkness chapters of our lives. Just a few minutes a day of reading God's Word can help illuminate your life and restore peace, hope and joy to your life.

If you want help getting started, just email me at mzabriskie@christchurchgreenwich.org and I will help you. When we engage the

Bible each day, it helps us to find the ultimate gift – Jesus – who leads us to an awareness of all the other gifts that we already possess. Reading the Bible helps God become real to us. It brings out the best within us, improves our relationships, gives us a positive outlook on life and offers us incomparable peace and joy.

Sometimes life can be terribly dark, and you don't know where you're headed. Then you must follow the star to the ultimate gift. Sometimes you feel all alone, perhaps even betrayed or abandoned, then you must pick your Bible and follow the star.

Sometimes you feel afraid, unworthy, and ill-equipped to meet your future, then you must dwell quietly in God's Word. Sometimes everyone and everything seems to go against you, then you must read the Bible and follow its light until you reach the ultimate gift.

May 2026 be the year where you follow the star and receive the ultimate gift of peace and love, which God longs to give you.

The Rev. Marek P. Zabriskie is Rector of Christ Church Greenwich and married to Mims, a lawyer, and is father of three daughters



Obituaries



PETER SMITH

Peter Folsom Smith, of Shepherdstown, WV, passed away on January 3, 2026 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Peter and his wife, Victoria, moved to Shepherdstown in 2003, after both had retired. Prior to his retirement, Peter was Director of Public Affairs for the Washington, DC-based Association of American Universities from 1989 to 2002. Before that, from 1973 to 1988, he served as press secretary to three different U.S. Senators. Earlier, he worked as a reporter at two Iowa newspapers, first the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald and then the Cedar Rapids Gazette.

While living in Shepherdstown, Peter was active in many community organizations, in recent years especially the Shepherdstown Rotary Club and Friends of Music. From 2006 to 2012, he served as president of the Potomac Valley Audubon Society and presided over a major reorganization of that organization. In 2008, he was one of the original members of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation’s Two Rivers Giving Circle and he continued to be active in that organization. At various times, he served on the boards of the Friends of the Shepherdstown Library, the Shepherdstown Men’s Club, and the Shepherdstown Visitors Center, and he assisted many other local organizations with projects on an informal basis.

During 2011 and 2012, he chaired a committee that organized and directed the major events related to Shepherdstown’s 250th anniversary celebration. Starting in 2013, and through July 2025, he organized the town’s annual 4th of July and Christmas parades on behalf of the Shepherdstown Rotary Club. In 2024 and 2025 he co-chaired a committee that organized and directed the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the 1775 Bee Line March, Shepherdstown’s most significant Revolutionary War event.

In 2011, he received a National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Conservation Award. In 2013, he was the Jefferson County recipient of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation’s Spirit of the Panhandle Award, which recognizes individuals in the region for their service to the community.

Peter was born and raised in New Canaan, CT, and attended public schools there. He graduated from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism in 1962 and did graduate work in art history and literary criticism at the University of Iowa. While an undergraduate, he sought and received conscientious objector draft status. Later, while in graduate school and after the Viet Nam war had become a major conflict, he was drafted and served two years as a nurses’ aide at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, most of that time in the hospital’s psychiatric unit.

He and Victoria were married in 1974 and lived in Alexandria, VA, before moving to Shepherdstown.

He is survived by Victoria.
Services will be held at a later date.



JOY LUKE.

Joy Hunt Luke, age 96 and a long-time resident of New Canaan, CT, died peacefully with her family by her side on December 27 at her home in Redding, CT. She was born on November 13, 1929, in Shanghai, China, to George Penn Hunt and Mabel (Mavis) Wilson Hunt. She was predeceased by her parents and her husband of 65 years, Donald K. “Pete” Luke.

Joy spent her youth living in China, the Philippines, California and Arizona before her parents settled in Wilmington, DE. After graduating from P.S. Dupont High School, she earned her associate degree from Green Mountain Junior College. Following graduation she worked in the legal department at DuPont.

Joy and Pete were married in 1953 and three years later settled in New Canaan, which they called home for 58 years until moving to Meadow Ridge in Redding, CT, in 2014.

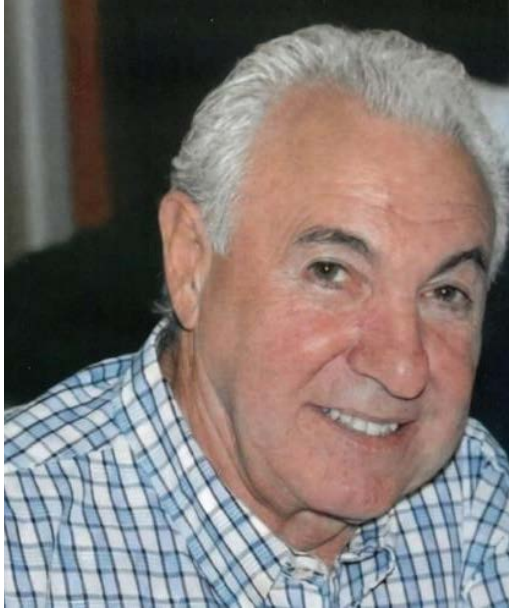
Pete and Joy were active members of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in New Canaan for 69 years, where Joy served as a member of the Altar Guild and on many other committees. Joy was very active in the town of New Canaan, serving as a member of the New Canaan Garden Club, New Canaan Sewing Group, and South School and Center School parent groups. She loved to play

tennis and golf at the Country Club of New Canaan, particularly enjoying time with her “Nine-Hole” group. Among her many other passions were gardening and cooking, but her greatest pleasure was being surrounded by her loving family.

Joy is survived by her daughter Judy Luke of Falmouth, MA and her sons Keith Wilson Luke (Gaynor) of New Canaan, CT, and Andrew Hunt Luke (Calle) of Midlothian, VA and formerly Ridgefield, CT; five grandchildren, Thomas Gaynor Luke (Jenny) of New York City, Mary Catherine Luke of Bronxville, NY, Sarah Wilson Luke of San Francisco, Kristen Luke Glasstetter (Hayden) of Austin, TX, and Michael Hunt Luke of Richmond, VA; great grandson Harold Frost (“Hal”) Glasstetter; her brother Colin Penn Hunt of Wilmington, DE, and his children and their families.

A memorial service will be held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in New Canaan, CT at 11:00 am on Saturday, January 24, 2026, with a reception immediately following.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Joy’s memory can be made to St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in New Canaan or to the Meadow Ridge Scholarship Fund in Redding.



OTTAVIO MALLOZZI

Ottavio Giuseppe Mallozzi, of New Canaan, CT, passed away peacefully at home on December 24, 2025, surrounded by the family he loved so deeply.

Born in Stamford, CT, Ottavio known to many simply as Otto, was truly one of a kind. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend, he lived a life defined by unwavering integrity, tireless work ethic, and a deep commitment to those around him. He shared a remarkable life with his beloved wife of many years, Toni Slider Mallozzi. Together, they built not only a family, but a legacy rooted in perseverance, honesty, and mutual devotion.

Ottavio is survived by his sons, Joseph (Mimma) Mallozzi and Antony (Kristin) Mallozzi, and by his cherished grandchildren, Marina, Joseph, Michael, Lisa, and Sofia. His grandchildren were the light of his life and a constant source of pride and joy, and he took great pride in watching them grow and thrive.

He was predeceased by his beloved daughter Lisa, his son Gregory, his grandson Nico, his parents Giuseppe and Concetta (Pensiero) Mallozzi, and his siblings Betty, Lucy, Jeanne, Josephine, Ellen, and Rosario.

A lifelong and extraordinarily hardworking businessman, Ottavio was the owner of Mallozzi Construction Company, Inc. of Stamford, Connecticut, which he built from the ground up alongside his wife through sheer determination, grit, and an unshakable work ethic. He was also the owner of Handy Lube, Inc. His success was never measured solely by achievement, but by the respect he earned and the example he set.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Ottavio was known for his boundless generosity and his readiness to help anyone in need. He gave freely of his time, wisdom, and resources, often without seeking recognition. Strong yet gentle, driven yet compassionate, he left an indelible mark on everyone fortunate enough to know him. Ottavio Mallozzi’s legacy is one of love, resilience, and quiet greatness and he will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Visiting hours were held on Tuesday, January 6 at Leo P. Gallagher funeral home, Stamford, CT.



DARYA BYHAM

Darya “Dusty” Randall Byham, 77, of Charles St., St. Marys (formerly of Kane) passed away Tuesday (December 23, 2025) at her residence with her family at her side.

Born June 10, 1948, in Webster, NY, she was the daughter of the late Robert Baylard and Betty Reinisch O’Boyle. On January 29, 1972, she married James Byham (who preceded her in

death) at Tabor Lutheran Church in Kane. They met in that same church and went on to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary in 2022.

Dusty graduated from high school in New Canaan, CT. She went on to graduate from Alderson Broaddus University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. She spent most of her life as a social worker in both McKean and Elk Counties, helping both children and adults. She also worked at the Kane Manor for several years where she had many fond memories of working with the community. Dusty later retired from Pinecrest Manor as the Admissions Coordinator. Dusty was a very caring, selfless person. She loved to make other people happy, especially her children and grandchildren. She was beautiful both inside and out. She and Jim were always together. They were truly made for each other. The two of them very much enjoyed the years they lived and raised their children in Kane.

Surviving are three daughters, Shannon (Chris) DeVallance of Ridgway, Amy (Bob) Rezmerski of St. Marys and Kristi (Jason) Cook of Montrose; a son, Christopher (Amy) Byham of Kane; five grandsons, Evan Nourse, Alec DeVallance, Carson DeVallance, Aeden Cook and Brayden Byham; and a granddaughter, Gianna DeVallance. After she retired, she spent her days caring for her grandchildren. She always referred to this as her “Best job Ever.”

In addition to her husband and parents, Dusty was preceded in death by her sister, Deborah Nourse and her brother, Kevin James O’Boyle.

The family received friends on Sunday (December 28) at Cummings Funeral Home, Inc. Burial was in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Elk County Humane Society, 1029 E Eschbach Rd. St. Marys, PA 15857



DEAN PHYPERS

Dean Pinney Phippers, of Vero Beach FL and Manchester VT, passed away peacefully at home in Vero Beach on December 19, 2025.

Dean was born January 13, 1929 in Cleveland OH to Grace Pinney and Fordham Sutcliff Phippers. He is survived by his loving wife of 46 years “Connie,” nee Mary Conway Pendleton, 3 half-sisters, 8 children and step-children, 16 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. Dean was predeceased by two wives-Margaret Anderson Phippers and Janet Thatcher Phippers-2 sisters and a granddaughter.

Dean and Connie raised their blended family in New Canaan, CT where they lived for 35 years. They retired to Dorset, VT in 2001 but began wintering in Vero Beach FL in 1989. They soon became FL residents, spending 34 years at John’s Island before relocating to the Oak Harbor Club in 2023.

Dean attended primary and high schools in Willoughby OH, where he was active in sports and leadership. He won a scholarship to Harvard University, graduated with a BS in Physics, and attended graduate school at the University of Michigan Business School. Harvard, he always said, changed his life. Throughout his school years he worked-as a paperboy, janitor, road hand, factory worker, butcher’s apprentice, cabinet-maker. He built experimental psychology mazes for B.F.Skinner, waited tables, drove a taxi, nursed a paraplegic professor and mowed lawns.

Dean was a talented athlete. And he thrived on competition -on the court or the course where, in his words, he was unfortunately “of less than Olympic quality.” But he loved skiing, tennis, paddle tennis, golf and croquet. He enjoyed hunting in VT and flying his Cessna 182 for the years he owned it. Dean was a strategic and astute card player, be it poker, cribbage, bridge or gin rummy. He loved winning-but always with humor and a twinkle in his eye. He dabbled in wood carving, wrote travelogs and poetry, and encouraged his family to be creative. In his last days Dean still did the NYT puzzles every day.

Dean was in the Navy, first in NROTC from 1948-52, then active duty during the Korean War though he served as Supply Officer on ships in the Atlantic. He remained in the Naval Reserves until 1962.

Leaving the service in 1955, Dean joined the IBM Company as a sales trainee with an aptitude for early binary programming. He rose rapidly through the ranks from sales to personal assistant to the then CEO Thomas J. Watson, Jr. He was elected to the IBM Board of Directors and was made a Senior VP. He was VP of Finance and Planning, then CFO, and served on the 5-man Management Committee. His final job was overseeing all of the International business. During these years Dean also worked with the U.S Treasury, SEC, and Congressional authorities

in Washington, D.C. He was on the corporate boards of American International Group, Church & Dwight, Bethlehem Steel, Newsbank, Cytogen and Cambrex. He was active with Harvard Alumni. He was a Trustee on the Committee for Economic Development, the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Planning Association. He was a former president of the John’s Island Property Owners Association, well as a committee member or chair of numerous national local groups and clubs.

Dean was a Cubmaster, Sunday school teacher, a founder of the New Canaan High School Scholarship March, was on the boards of A Better Chance and the New Canaan Nature Center, and was an advisor to the Environmental Learning Center in Vero Beach.

Beginning in the 80’s and continuing through 2018 Dean and Connie travelled the world, some of their most memorable trips being Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland and Ireland.

Dean was a past member of the Country Club of New Canaan and the John’s Island Club. At the time of his death he was a member of Ekwanok Country Club (VT), Riomar Country Club (FL) and the Oak Harbor Club (FL).

A man who persevered though hard times early in his life, he made it his mission to take care of others. His large and extended family are testament to a task well done. They dearly love and respect him. Dean was a deeply private man, and in accordance with his wishes, a remembrance service will be private.

In his memory donations can be made to the VNA of the Treasure Coast or any charity that is close to your heart.



PAMELA GORES

Pamela Gores, widow of architect Landis Gores of the New Canaan Harvard Five, died on Friday at her home in New Canaan, CT. She was 102 years old.

Pam is survived by four daughters, Catherine Lynch of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Ainslie Gilligan of Scarborough, Maine; Valerie Gores of East Rutherford, NJ, and Elizabeth Donovan of Hollywood, Fla.; and one son, Karl Whitmarsh, of Oughterard, County Galway, Ireland; ten grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

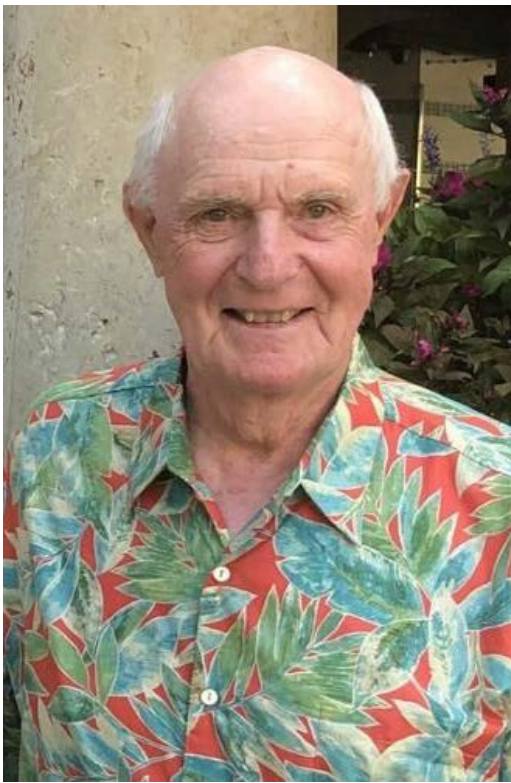
Pamela Gores was born in Cincinnati to Karl Russel Whitmarsh and Catherine Fowler Clarke on November 13, 1923 and spent her early years in New York City where she attended Miss Hewitt’s classes. She studied at the Low-Heywood school in Stamford and at Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Connecticut. For several years she lived with her aunt in Weston and rode at Mrs. Self’s which later became New Canaan Mounted Troop. She also rode with the Wilton Riding Club where she competed against Bill Steinkraus, who won the first US Olympic gold medal in show jumping. Pam graduated from Pine Manor College in 1942 and married architect Landis Gores that same year.

After the war, Pam assisted Landis in countless ways as he was developing his architectural practice. When he was stricken with polio in 1954, Pam took on the additional full-time role of nurse. In spite of her many obligations, Pam was active at St. Mark’s church in New Canaan and hosted prayer groups at her home regularly so that Landis, who was wheelchair-bound, could attend. As Landis began to return to his design work, Pam drove their Land Rover so he could meet clients and make site visits. She served as general contractor on his 1977 House for All Seasons, an experiment in sustainable living, which was designed to minimize the use of fossil fuel. In recent years, she played a key role in the restoration of the Gores Pavilion at Irwin Park and participated in interviews for books and films documenting New Canaan’s modern architecture and the community of architects and designers who settled in the town at midcentury.

Though she outlived all her friends of her own generation, Pam continued to the end to be visited by many of their children, who treasured her friendship with their mothers.

In accordance with Pam’s wishes, there will be no funeral service. Her children will lay her cremated remains to rest in Cincinnati beside her husband this coming spring.

Pam was a lifelong dog lover and took in many rescues over the years. A Memorial donation made to the ASPCA or other worthy animal welfare organizations would be a fitting tribute.



THOMAS CAVANAGH

Thomas Gary Cavanagh, lovingly known as Gary, a resident of New Canaan, CT, passed away peacefully on December 13, 2025 at the age of 89. Born in New York City on March 5, 1936, Gary was raised in Woodside, Queens, where he developed the strong, enduring values of family, faith, and hard work that would define his life. Filled with positivity and endless energy, Gary lived life to the fullest.

A dedicated student and gifted athlete, Gary graduated from St. Ann’s Academy High School in Manhattan and earned a basketball scholarship to Manhattan College. He excelled academically, receiving the Class Marketing Medal and a fellowship to the University of Miami Graduate School of Business. He later completed a Master of Science degree at Rutgers University while establishing his professional career.

His professional life spanned 32 years with Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, where he was the Director of Marketing. He later served as Vice President of its parent company, American Home Products, Inc. (later acquired by Pfizer). While proud of his career accomplishments, Gary’s family was always his greatest source of pride.

The center of Gary’s life was his family, beginning with his beloved wife, Margaret “Peggy” McElroy, also from Woodside, Queens. They shared 65 wonderful years of marriage, filled with love, laughter, and steadfast devotion. Gary was a loving husband, a proud and supportive father, and a devoted “Grandpa,” finding his ultimate joy in his family.

The son of an Irish immigrant, Gary was a masterful storyteller with a great love for telling a good joke. He was an avid history reader, enjoyed Irish music, and relished traveling. He and Peggy were devout members of St. Aloysius Parish in New Canaan, St. Thomas More Catholic church in Darien, CT and St. William in Naples, FL. Gary was a member of the Arimathean Choir at St. William and volunteered for many years at the Village Oaks School in Immokalee, Florida,

Gary was preceded in death by his cherished wife, Peggy Cavanagh, and his parents, Thomas and Jessie Cavanagh. He is survived by his children: Mary Kroll (Jeff) of Wilton, Gary Cavanagh of Simsbury, Eileen Cavanagh (Chris Brown) of Westbrook, Jeanne Cavanagh of Madison, and Elizabeth Kaliski (Drew) of Wilton and his sister Carol Mott. He was a deeply loved Grandpa to Madeline, Emma, Colin, Caroline, Olivia, Grady, Sean, and Kelly.



HELEN CONNEELY

We announce with profound sadness the death of Helen Conneely (nee-Lydon) of White Plains, N.Y., and Renvyle, Galway, Ireland, on December 12, at the age of 71, after a long battle with Dementia. She was lovingly cared for by her husband, Martin (Mattie) Conneely. Helen was born in New York City and raised in New Canaan. She graduated from Sacred Heart Academy in 1972 and Sacred Heart University in 1976. In later years, she received an MBA from Pace University. She had a long career in banking with Citicorp in trust and corporate services.

Helen was predeceased by her parents, John and Bridget Lydon of New Canaan. She will be sadly missed by her husband, Mattie Conneely of Galway Ireland, her brother, John Lydon and his wife, Eileen, her aunt and Godmother, Angela McGovern, all of New Canaan and her many cousins in CT, elsewhere in the USA and Ireland.

There will be a Memorial Mass at St. Aloysius Church, 21 Cherry St., New Canaan, CT, on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at 11:00AM. A funeral service took place at Christ the King Church in Tullycross, Renvyle, County Galway, Ireland, followed by cremation in Shannon Crematorium in Ireland.



SUSAN HICKENLOOPER

August 18, 1930 – December 10, 2025
Susan Owen Nelson Hickenlooper passed away in Lehi, Utah, from causes incident to age on December 10, 2025. With her passing, the world lost a talented and compassionate woman whose musicianship and leadership skills blessed multiple generations within her family, church circles, and the communities in which she lived.

Sue was born August 18, 1930, in Brookline, Massachusetts, to Margaret Gaylord Nelson Philbrick and Edwin Navine Philbrick. As her birth occurred a month following her father’s premature death, Sue was adopted and reared by loving parents—Frank Howard Nelson and Gertrude Pierce Nelson—who recognized and fostered her musical talent from an early age. As her father Frank initially served in the United States Navy and then as a commander in the Coast Guard, Sue and her younger sister Karen moved periodically but stayed primarily in the California Bay Area and Washington State, growing up with an overall sense of security despite the Great Depression and the advent of World War II. In Seattle, Sue received violin training at the famous Cornish School of the Arts, performed with the Seattle Youth Symphony, and graduated from high school as valedictorian of her class at Holy Names Academy.

While earning a B.A. in Music at Brigham Young University, Sue played the violin in the symphony orchestra, participated in multiple honor societies, and served as the Vice President of Associated Women Students, receiving the “Block Y Award” in recognition of her service to the University and involvement in student activities. At BYU she met Monte Paul Hickenlooper, from San Francisco, California, and they were married August 12, 1952, by their close family friend Elder John A. Widtsoe in the Salt Lake Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sue taught music courses in the public school system in Seattle while Monte completed graduate studies in Nuclear Chemistry at the University of Washington, after which the couple settled in the San Francisco Bay Area near the Lawrence Livermore Radiation Laboratory, where he was first employed.

In Livermore, Sue focused primarily on rearing her young children—Debra Sue Hickenlooper, Cheryl Lynne Hickenlooper, and Kent Nelson Hickenlooper. The discovery that Kent had been born with a crippling blood disorder, for which there were limited treatment options in the 1960s and ’70s, caused a major shift in Sue’s life, as she took on the major responsibility of managing his medical care. Even so, she found time to organize a community-based women’s choral group, for which she arranged the music and conducted the concerts, in addition to serving on the Board of Directors for the American Association of University Women in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

A series of moves took the family first to Palo Alto and eventually to the East Coast—specifically, the Connecticut suburbs of New York City in the late 1960s. They settled first in Westport and eventually moved to New Canaan. In Connecticut, Sue developed many meaningful relationships through her church service and community engagement. After serving as their ward Young Women’s president, she served as stake YW president for nine years, during which she instituted a highly successful Girls’ Camp leadership program for the junior and senior girls. Her commitment to the youth of the Church also extended to teaching early morning seminary for three years. Her love for the women of the Church found expression as she served again as ward Relief Society president and then Stake RS President of the Yorktown Stake for five years. Along the way, she was also a Public Affairs Director.

Although Sue thrived on this organizational involvement, her activities never strayed far from her early musical training. Having served as Stake Music Director in two stakes, she was at one point also the Regional Music Director in the New York Region, where she prepared choirs for

the New York Stake Visitors Center opening and the dedication of the Washington, D.C. Temple. She also organized and conducted the first New York Stake Messiah Sing Along held in the NY Stake Center, across from Lincoln Center. In the community, Sue was a member of the Schubert Club of Fairfield County, and her private teaching studio typically included fifteen violin students. She was also the violinist of the Laurel Trio, a professional ensemble including Elaine Jorgensen (flute) and Kate Handley (piano) that performed at events in the area.

In New Canaan, Sue’s commitment to serving others found expression in multiple avenues. She made deliveries for Meals on Wheels, coordinated blood drives for the Red Cross, and served as president of New Canaan’s Interfaith Council. Under her leadership, that ecumenical organization oversaw the construction of housing for the elderly and the developmentally disadvantaged, a project close to her heart. She also became involved with American Mothers, Incorporated—an organization dedicated to educating, supporting, and honoring mothers as they positively impact families and communities. In 1999, while serving as AMI’s national Executive Director, with an office in New York’s Waldorf Astoria, Sue received Brigham Young University’s Distinguished Service Award for community service. Over the years, Sue chaired or cochaired four national conventions for AMI, served as national president, and, in 2015, received a lifetime achievement award from that organization in recognition of her outstanding contributions. Her involvement with AMI continued after she and Monte moved to Southboro, Massachusetts, as she traveled extensively for state visits, board meetings, and national conventions.

A post-retirement move to Cedar Hills, Utah, led to a new chapter in Sue’s life. Living near her daughter Cheryl and her family, Sue and Monte became ordinance workers in the Mount Timpanogos Temple and then served a service mission at the Provo Missionary Training Center, where Sue’s organizational skills were put to good use setting up practice sessions in the Language Training Center.

Monte’s passing in 2019 prompted yet another transition in Sue’s life—this one to move in with her daughter Debra and son-in-law Madison U. Sowell in Lexington, VA. Despite the encroaching memory loss that had become apparent prior to Monte’s death, Sue continued to display a zest for life—enjoying concerts, plays, games, social events, and traveling with the Sowells, including a memorable cruise along the coast of New England. Their five years together included the period of the COVID pandemic. In early 2024 Sue was diagnosed with cancer and became in need of round-the-clock care. That summer, as the Sowells prepared to serve a mission, Sue moved into The Covington Senior Living facility in Lehi, Utah, where she was near her daughter Cheryl and several grandchildren. She enjoyed visits from friends, former students, and family, including her beloved niece Rachel Jones Ustick. The family greatly appreciates the excellent care and attention Sue received from the Covington staff, as well as from leaders of the Lehi 50th Branch.

Susan Hickenlooper is survived by her daughters Debra Hickenlooper Sowell (Madison) and Cheryl Lynne Hickenlooper Casazza; grandchildren MariLouise Nelson Sowell Harrow (Brian), Laura Elizabeth Sowell Peterson (Skyler), Kent Jacob Casazza (Paige), Teresa Rose Casazza Gandolfo (Ryan), Caroline Grace Casazza, and Stephanie Lynne Casazza Embry (Samuel); and great-grandchildren Jonathan Sowell Harrow, Cecily Ray Harrow, Florence Sue Harrow, Marley Ora Peterson, Maverick Skyler Peterson, Lucy Quinn Casazza, Belle Harper Casazza, Sophia Blake Casazza, Gianna Rose Gandolfo, Noelle Lynne Massey, Navy Lee Embry, and Daisy Anne Embry, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband Monte Paul Hickenlooper, son Kent Nelson Hickenlooper, and great-granddaughter Gypsy Rose.



ETTA KAZLAUSKAS

It is with great sadness that the Kazlauskas family shares the passing of Etta Kazlauskas,

who left this world peacefully on December 8, surrounded by the people she loved most - her son Marc, daughter-in-law Tracy, and her grandchildren Sydney, Harrison, Alec, and Tatum.

Etta was a Brooklyn original - forged in tight quarters, loud conversations, and a one-room home shared with her sisters Myrna, Davina, and Arlene. As the youngest, her parents Jenny and Irving liked to joke that she had it easy once the others moved out. The truth is, nothing about Etta was easy - it was earned. She had grit, heart, and that unmistakable Brooklyn edge that told you she’d seen enough of life to know what mattered and what didn’t.

She cut her teeth in the New York garment industry before settling into a lifelong career as a bookkeeper - the quiet engine behind countless retail businesses, keeping things honest, balanced, and moving forward. She made homes in New York, Connecticut, and Florida, collecting stories, friendships, and memories along the way.

Florida is where she found her happy place. In Auburndale, she found her rhythm - a tight circle of friends, long card games, endless laughs, and a community that felt like home. Playing Hand and Foot with her crew was serious business: competitive, animated, loud in the best possible way - her kind of evening.

Etta is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Marc and Tracy Kazlauskas of New Canaan, Connecticut; her grandchildren Sydney, Harrison, Alec, and Tatum; Harrison’s fiancé Madison Lay and her sister Myrna Levenhar. She was predeceased by her sisters Davina and Arlene, and by her ex-husband, Kenneth Kazlauskas.

Etta loved the good stuff - real food, real people, real laughter. She welcomed everyone, spoke her mind, and made no apologies for being exactly who she was. Her Brooklyn accent, sharp wit, and fierce loyalty made her unforgettable. She didn’t just enter a room - she changed it.

She will be missed - deeply, loudly, and forever. In lieu of flowers or food the family has requested a donation be made in Etta’s name to the National Kidney Foundation www.kidney.org



CAMILLE WHITCOMB

Camille Grimes Henderson Whitcomb, 95, passed away peacefully on November 26, 2025, in Colorado Springs, CO. She was born August 2, 1930, in Annapolis, Maryland, to USN Capt. Clifton Garvin Grimes and Frances Sellers Grimes. Camille was greatly influenced by growing up as a Navy daughter, evidenced by her love of travel and ease at meeting people.

She attended The Bishop’s School in La Jolla, California, graduating in 1948. Her time there was immensely meaningful to her, and she maintained fond memories and lifelong bonds to the school. She attended William and Mary College and joined the Pi Beta Phi sorority, another connection she maintained throughout her life. While in college she met Bruce Frederick Henderson, and after graduating with a degree in psychology, she and Bruce married in 1952. In 1956 they moved to Sao Paulo, Brazil on a “two-year” assignment; 18 years later, they returned to the U.S., settling in New Canaan, Connecticut. Camille loved living in Brazil and especially loved its art and simpatico people.

Always putting family first, Camille waited until her children graduated from college before returning to school to earn her Ph.D. in psychology and then going into private practice. She was an avid bridge player and who also enjoyed sailing, entertaining, and reading. She was an exemplary mother, loyal friend, and the heart of every social gathering. Camille’s love of life, particularly family reunions or bridge games with close-knit friends, exemplified her loving, caring nature.

Camille married James Howard Whitcomb in March 1991. Jim and Camille lived in Hobe Sound and later in Naples, Florida, until Jim’s death in 2024. During those years, they often had a full house hosting Jim’s three children, Camille’s four children – and all the grandchildren.

Known to close friends and family members as Kiki, Camille was an extraordinary mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, renowned for her graciousness and warmth. She is survived by four children, Leslie Weddell (Douglas), Barbara Henderson, Elizabeth Garrett (Scott), and Thomas Henderson (Gwen); nine grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her sister, Avonelle (Jo) Delzingaro.

A memorial service will be held at a later date in Connecticut.

YOUR NEWS BRIEF
CONTINUED From Page 1


The New Canaan Rotary Club held its annual Christmas lunch and holiday grab bag. The exchange included practical, essential, and humorous gifts. Pictured: Chieh Jen. Photo credit: New Canaan Rotary Club.

SCHOOLS


Bus Route Improvements


Important Update: School Bus Route Changes


THE PROBLEM:
WHY ROUTES ARE CHANGING




Flawed Software Created Sub-Optimal Routes
The new system resulted in long routes, late arrivals, and unsafe stop times.

 Long Routes


 Late Arrivals


 Unsafe Stop Times

THE SOLUTION:
WHAT TO EXPECT



Reverting to Proven 2024-2025 Routes
We are restoring reliable, vetted routes to ensure efficient and timely service.

 Efficient Service

 Timely Arrivals

New Routes Begin: Tuesday, January 20, 2026
Please be aware of this official start date for all changes.

Check Your Email on Jan 7th
You will receive your child's specific bus number, stop time, and location.

Have Questions?
Call the transportation department directly at 203-594-4039.

New Canaan Public Schools will implement updated morning and afternoon bus routes beginning January 20, after problems with the implementation of a new software system this summer. The district said it will return to the previous route structure and adjust schedules to improve service. Families received updated route details by email on January 7 and can contact the transportation department with questions at (203) 594-4039. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.

South School New Resource Officer



New Canaan Police Officer Mairee Castro has been assigned as South School's new school resource officer. Officer Nicole Vartuli will remain in the district and will serve as West School's resource officer. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.

NCHS Alumni Roundtable



On December 19, New Canaan High School held an Alumni Roundtable for the Class of 2026. Alumni from multiple colleges shared their experiences and answered students' questions. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.

NCHS Creates Collage

On December 17, New Canaan High School used a Community Block for students to create pieces for a schoolwide snowperson collage. Photo credit: New Canaan Public Schools.



SLS Study Chinese Calligraphy

Before winter break, St. Luke's sixth graders learned traditional Chinese calligraphy, practicing brush technique, stroke order, and pressure control. They wrote the character for "love," which they had been studying in class, and took their work home to share with their families during the holiday season. Photo credit: St. Luke's School.

SLS Alumni Earn NESCAC Honors

Four St. Luke's School alumni were named to the 2025 NESCAC Fall All-Academic Team after earning at least a 3.50 GPA while competing in college athletics. The honorees were Ali Gall, Andrea DiTeodoro, Brielle Renwick, and Tani Smart.

ACROSS CT

Girl Scout Cookie Season

Girl Scout Cookie season began nationwide January 6 and runs through April, with proceeds supporting local councils. The 2026 lineup adds Exploremores, while returning favorites will remain available. Cookies can be purchased to support New Canaan's Troop 50564 at <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/cookies/how-to-buy-cookies.html>.

Audi and Porsche Recall

Volkswagen Group of America has recalled 356,649 Audi vehicles and Porsche Cars North America has recalled 173,538 vehicles after NHTSA said the rearview camera image may fail to display. Dealers will install a free software update, and owners are expected to receive notification letters in mid-February. Audi VINs are searchable at <https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls>](<https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls>), and Porsche VINs will be searchable beginning January 19.

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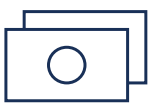
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Inside the Fight: Yale’s Pediatric Neuro-Oncologists and the Families They Serve

By Elizabeth Barhydt

This three-part series examines how one Greenwich family’s loss has sparked a broader effort to change the landscape of pediatric cancer care. The series follows the creation of the Vivienne C. Finn Foundation, launched in memory of 11-year-old Vivienne Cecilia Finn, who died in 2020 from a diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, one of the most aggressive childhood brain tumors.

Part One traced Vivienne’s life and the path that brought her family from “Diagnosis Day” to the founding of the organization that now bears her name. Part Two brings readers inside Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital, where pediatric neuro-oncologists describe the medical, emotional and systemic challenges facing families.

Through this series, readers will see how a single child’s story has inspired a mission aimed at better treatments, stronger support systems and lasting structural change.

When Vivienne Finn arrived at Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital days after her diagnosis, her parents were ushered into a space that hardly resembled a conference room. “It was really a broom closet,” Dr. Vidya Sarma recalled. Yet into that small room came the neurosurgeon, an ICU physician, a social worker, residents, and two doctors who would become central figures in the family’s life: Dr. Sarma and Dr. Asher Marks. It was an early signal of what pediatric neuro-oncology requires—a full team, crowded in close, because the work is too complex and too human to be done by one physician alone.

Dr. Sarma’s path to this field began far from Connecticut. At 19, studying engineering in college, she traveled to India to visit relatives and spent time in a pediatric cancer hospital. The hospital served both wealthy and poor families, and the children she met there—“fighting for their lives and so happy and full of energy,” she said—changed her direction. She returned to school and changed her major. Looking back on that decision, she called it “very life altering.”

Dr. Marks describes himself as “a reluctant oncologist,” but not for lack of interest in medicine. He always expected to become a pediatrician and admired the primary-care doctor he saw growing up. During residency, he imagined hanging a shingle and treating neighborhood families. “I loved working with kids,” he said. But by his second year of training, he felt something missing. Primary care was becoming, in his words, “a business model,” leaving less time for deeper



Sue Moretti Bodson interviews Dr. Vidya Puthenpura and Dr. Asher Marks

“It’s their body. We want them to have a say.” – Dr. Vidya Sarma



conversations with families. He found himself drawn to the oncology rotation, where he could sit, listen and learn about a child’s life.

He made one promise he later broke. “I told my wife I would never go into oncology—her father died of cancer,” he said. “Then I said I would never do brain tumors, because that’s what he had. And I ended up doing brain tumors.” He has spent more than a decade at Yale working with children from diagnosis through treatment, often for months at a time.

The difference between pediatric and adult neuro-oncology is stark. Pediatric neuro-oncologists are trained first as hematologist-oncologists and then trained further in brain and spinal tumors. Adult neuro-oncologists often come from neurology. That distinction shapes treatment. Children metabolize chemotherapy differently and can endure higher doses. Their cells recover faster, but the intensity of their care means they may spend weeks in the hospital with suppressed immune systems and require frequent blood transfusions. “We bring them to the brink and then pull them back,” Dr. Marks said.

With diffuse intrinsic pontine gliomas and other diffuse midline gliomas, the defining challenge is biology. Historically, physicians relied on MRI scans alone to diagnose

these tumors, because surgical removal is not possible. In recent years, neurosurgeons have become more comfortable performing targeted biopsies, and laboratory advances allow physicians to identify the specific molecular mutations that drive aggressiveness. That information has begun to reshape treatment pathways, though it has not produced a cure.

Dr. Sarma emphasized the collaborative nature of the field. “The pediatric brain tumor community is very small and we all know each other,” she said. They participate in national and international tumor boards, debates that bring together clinicians from major centers to examine hard cases. There is no competition among institutions when the disease is this unforgiving. If a trial is open at Memorial Sloan Kettering that might suit a child in New Haven, the Yale team will call Sloan directly. The goal is simple: “They want to go to school. They want to be around their siblings,” she said. If a trial can be opened at home, the team will work to make it happen.

Families face more than medical decisions. Many have to weigh whether traveling across the country for a trial is worth the strain. Dr. Sarma noted that a young person’s own voice matters: “It’s their body. We want them to have a say.” Adolescents who have returned to school may resist further scans because they want distance from their diagnosis. “Sometimes you have to let them live,” she said.

Supportive care forms the backbone of Yale’s program, and the doctors make clear that it affects outcomes. Dr. Sarma’s research shows that nearly half of families treated at Yale have at least one unmet basic need—food, housing, utilities or transportation. Those families often arrive later in the disease course, experience more severe treatment side effects and face higher financial instability. Parents working hourly or inflexible jobs may lose employment because of the time required for treatment. “These are just very basic things that every human should have, not just a family whose child is fighting cancer,” she said.

Insurance adds another layer. “No treatment takes place until insurance approval is obtained,” Dr. Marks said.

day was eight complex patients supported by several staff members. “Now I have to see 16 just to keep afloat,” he said.

Coping requires boundaries. Dr. Marks drives home from New Haven each night and crosses a particular bridge that marks the point where he forces himself to let the day go. His wife works with victims of human trafficking, so the rule in their home is strict: neither brings work across the threshold. Dr. Sarma relies on humor and a group text thread among colleagues that serves as a place to decompress. They build Lego sets—a ritual that grounds them through cycles of grief.

They still speak of Vivienne often. She was direct, witty and fiercely curious. “She used to call me ‘V-Dizzle,’” Dr. Sarma

said. Dr. Marks remembers her humor and sharpness: “She gave it back just as hard as you do.” They also remember the day she died. After leaving the ICU, the two physicians walked away from each other without speaking, each needing space before they could talk.

Despite the weight of the work, both insist they cannot imagine doing anything else. They measure success not only in survival but in honoring a family’s goals: allowing a child to remain at home, preserving moments of normalcy, providing clarity during frightening choices, and, when cure is not possible, offering peace at the end of life.

They also return to the importance of community. A room full of people willing to hear the stories and understand the gaps—financial, scientific and emotional—gives them confidence that the work can move forward. As Dr. Sarma put it, “It’s a hard conversation to have, but being willing to have it matters.” For the Finns, the Yale team’s honesty and compassion provided the guidance they needed during the worst months of their lives. For the doctors, Vivienne’s story—and the foundation now built in her name—is a reminder that the smallest patients can leave the deepest imprint on the science and the care that will follow.

Learn more at the Vivienne C. Finn Foundation online at <https://vcfinnfoundation.org/>

Part Three in next week’s issue will explore the foundation’s pillars—drug development, family support and legislative reform underway in Connecticut and Washington.

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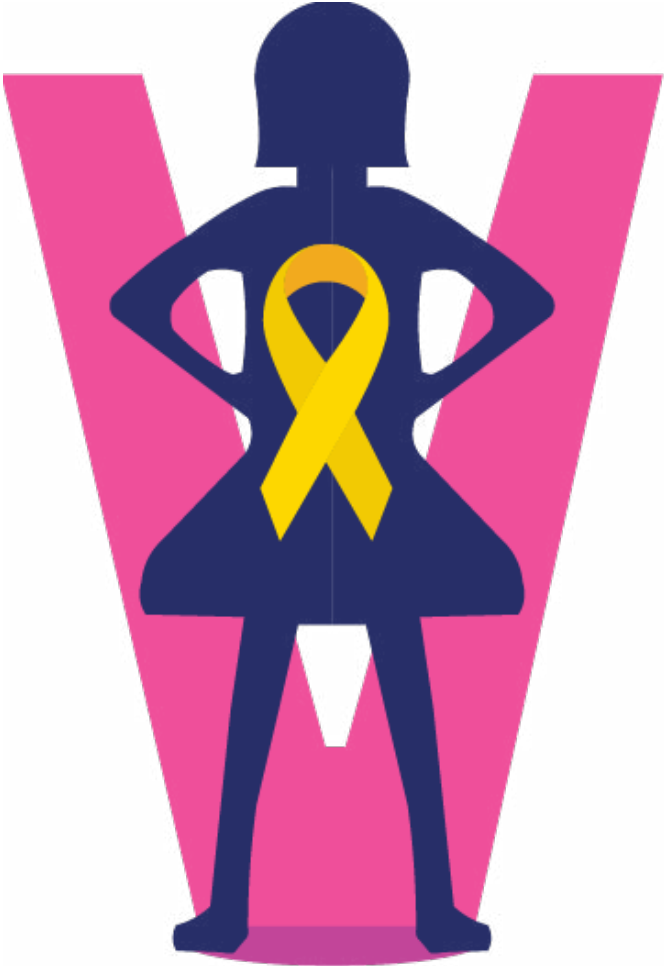


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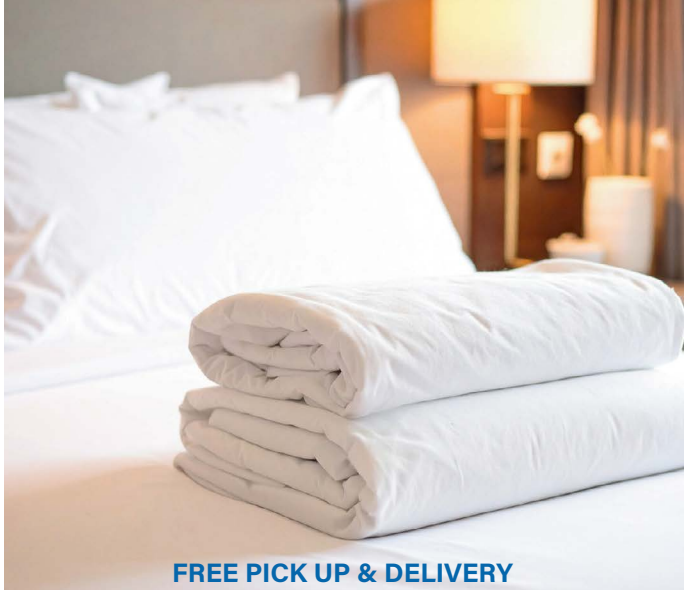
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New Canaan Rams Sports Varsity Roundup

By Christopher DeMuth

Girls Hockey

The New Canaan girls hockey team closed out December with a steady run of results against strong local competition.

On December 15, the Rams earned a 2-1 win over Trumbull, holding on in a close game decided by one goal.

On December 19, New Canaan played Wilton to a 1-1 tie, with neither team able to break through late.

The Rams picked up a key conference win on December 22, defeating Darien 4-1 on the road. New Canaan controlled play and pulled away as the game went on.

To end the month, the Rams shut out SEHEMLC (co-op) 2-0 on December 31, closing the year with a strong defensive performance.

Boys Hockey

Boys hockey put together several notable wins over the last few weeks.

On December 15, New Canaan

opened with a 2-0 shutout of Northern Highlands, setting the tone defensively.

The Rams traveled on December 20 and fell 4-1 at Bishop Hendricken, facing one of the top programs in the region.

Back home on December 22, New Canaan rebounded with a 5-3 win over Darien in a conference matchup.

The momentum continued on January 3, as the Rams defeated Prout 6-2, using balanced scoring to pull away.

Boys Basketball

The boys basketball team showed improvement and consistency during a busy stretch.

On December 16, New Canaan dropped a 54-47 road game at Fairfield Prep, staying close throughout.

The Rams responded on December 20 with a convincing 74-45 win over Ledyard, controlling the game from the opening quarter.

On December 28, New Canaan followed up with a 58-48 win over Bethel, using steady defense and timely scoring to secure the victory.

Boys Indoor Track

New Canaan boys indoor track competed at the FCIAC Qualifying Meet (Week 1) on December 20 at the Zeoli Fieldhouse, with several athletes posting strong finishes and personal bests.

In the 45-meter dash, Willem Wrede placed 7th overall with a time of 6.33, while multiple Rams recorded personal records across the field.

In the 300 meters, Brandon Barua finished 8th in 44.43, and Sean Deasy followed with a season-best 45.94.

Deasy also led New Canaan in the 600 meters, running a personal best 1:46.25, with Leo Grady close behind.

Distance runners delivered solid results as well, with John Spilker placing 5th in the 1000 meters at 3:18.84, and Oscar Humphreys finishing 6th in the 1600 meters.

In the field events, Benjamin Thomas stood out with a 4th-place finish in pole vault (8'6") and a 3rd-place finish in long jump (16'10.5"), both personal bests.

Date	Team (School – Gender – Sport)	Opponent	Score
12/28	New Canaan – Boys – Basketball	Bethel	New Canaan 58 – Bethel 48
1/6	New Canaan – Boys – Basketball	Staples	New Canaan 47 – Staples 69
1/3	New Canaan – Boys – Hockey	The Prout School	New Canaan 1 – The Prout School 0
1/5	New Canaan – Boys – Hockey	Ridgefield	New Canaan 6 – Ridgefield 0
12/29	New Canaan – Girls – Basketball	Greenwich	New Canaan 16 – Greenwich 44
1/6	New Canaan – Girls – Basketball	Staples	New Canaan 20 – Staples 51
12/31	New Canaan – Girls – Hockey	Suffield	New Canaan 2 – Suffield 0
1/2	New Canaan – Girls – Hockey	Ridgefield	New Canaan 5 – Ridgefield 1
1/6	St. Lukes – Boys – Basketball	Hamden Hall	St. Lukes 57 – Hamden Hall 52

COLUMN

As Flu Surges Across Fairfield County, Health Officials Urge Residents to Roll Up Their Sleeves



TERESA ALASIO

Clinics and emergency rooms across Fairfield County are reporting a sharp rise in patients with high fevers, cough, and body aches as influenza sweeps through the region this winter. While COVID-19 remains relatively quiet, flu is filling the gap, mirroring trends seen across Connecticut and neighboring New York. State respiratory dashboards now show elevated influenza activity across much of Connecticut, including Fairfield County.

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the 2025-26 flu season has already caused about 7.5 million illnesses, 81,000 hospitalizations and 3,100 deaths, including eight children, as of late December. The vast majority of laboratory-confirmed cases so far are influenza A(H3N2), a strain that tends to hit older adults especially hard. CDC maps show high levels of flu and other respiratory illness throughout the Northeast, with Fairfield County specifically flagged among the areas experiencing elevated activity.

In Connecticut, state health officials track flu through a respiratory viral disease dashboard, which has shown influenza test positivity and outpatient visits climbing steadily since November. Local reporting based on Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) data indicates roughly 500 flu-related hospitalizations statewide so far this season, a number that does not yet include the most recent surge. Stamford Health, which serves much of lower Fairfield County, notes “an upward trend in influenza A” and rising pediatric cases, and is urging residents who have not yet been vaccinated to do so.

Just over the border, New York State is experiencing one of its worst flu spikes in years. The New York State Health Commissioner formally declared influenza “prevalent” in early December, a legal designation that triggers vaccination requirements for certain health-care workers. In the week ending December 20 alone, New York recorded more than 71,000 lab-confirmed flu cases, the highest single-week total since state tracking began in 2004, with thousands of hospitalizations

and a particularly heavy burden on children. For families who live, work, and commute across the New York-Connecticut line, that surge is effectively right next door.

Public health experts stress that while anyone can get the flu, certain groups are much more likely to develop severe complications. Those at highest risk include adults 65 and older; children under 5 (especially under 2), pregnant people, residents of long-term care facilities, and anyone with chronic conditions such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, or weakened immune systems. For these neighbors, a “routine” case of flu can quickly lead to pneumonia, hospitalization, or even death.

This season’s spike is being driven largely by a newly mutated form of H3N2 known as “subclade K,” which has spread quickly in Europe and North America. Because the variant emerged after the current vaccine was designed, the shot is not a perfect match. Even so, early data suggest the vaccine still provides substantial protection, preventing an estimated 70-75% of child hospitalizations and about 30-40% of adult hospitalizations, according to analyses summarized by national health officials. In other words, you might still get sick, but you are much less likely to end up in the ER or ICU if you’ve been vaccinated.

Connecticut and New York health departments, along with local hospital systems, are therefore renewing their call for flu shots for everyone 6 months and older, with urgency for those in high-risk groups and the people who live with or care for them. The vaccine is widely available across Fairfield County: primary-care offices, pediatric practices, retail pharmacies, hospital-affiliated walk-in centers, and town health departments have all been running seasonal clinics, from Stamford and Norwalk up through Bridgeport, Trumbull, and Danbury. For most insured residents, the flu shot is covered at no additional cost.

Some residents still hesitate, worried about side effects or convinced that “the last time I got a flu shot, it gave me the flu.” Doctors emphasize that the injected

flu vaccine contains inactivated virus and cannot cause influenza. Mild side effects like a sore arm, fatigue, or low-grade fever for a day or two are signs that the immune system is responding, not that you are infected. Serious reactions are rare, while the risks of flu itself, especially for the very young, the very old, and those who are immunocompromised, are very real.

Vaccination is the cornerstone of prevention, but it isn’t the only tool. Health officials continue to recommend staying home when you’re sick, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands frequently, and improving ventilation or masking in crowded indoor settings, especially if you live with someone at high risk. Anyone who develops sudden fever, cough, and body aches should call a health-care provider promptly; antiviral medications such as oseltamivir can shorten illness and reduce complications if started within the first 48 hours of symptoms.

With the holidays just past and school back in full swing, public health models suggest that flu activity will remain high for several weeks, and possibly intensify, before eventually declining later in the winter. That means there is still time for Fairfield County residents to make a meaningful difference in how hard this season hits our community.

If you’ve been putting it off, consider this your nudge: call your doctor, stop by a pharmacy, or check your town’s health department website and get vaccinated. A few minutes in line and a sore arm for a day are a small price to pay to help protect the very young, the very old, the medically fragile, and yourself, from a virus that is clearly not taking this winter off.

The information presented is meant for educational purposes and not meant as a substitute for medical advice. If you have a specific medical concern, please consult with your medical provider.

Dr. Teresa Alasio is the Owner and Medical Director of Intentional Self Aesthetics, located in Downtown New Canaan. She lives in New Canaan with her family who have all received flu shots this year.

Character Steps Forward

By Elizabeth Barhydt

In April 1975, as Saigon moved toward collapse, Chase Manhattan Bank sent a 27-year-old banker named Ralph White from Bangkok to Vietnam with a narrow assignment. He was to keep the Saigon branch operating as long as possible and, if closure became inevitable, evacuate the bank’s senior Vietnamese employees. He was chosen, as White later put it, “because I was 27 years old and was unmarried.”

What unfolded bore little resemblance to the plan.

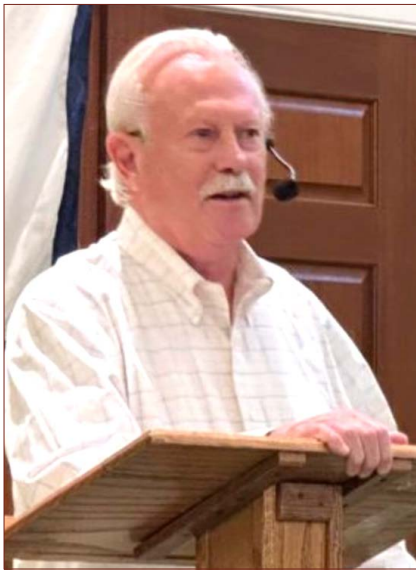
White arrived in a city already unraveling. Enemy troops were closing in. Civil aviation into and out of Saigon had been terminated. The Vietnamese government prohibited its citizens from leaving the country. The U.S. ambassador refused to support evacuations of Vietnamese employees working for American companies, believing he could “negotiate” with the North Vietnamese to protect them after the fall. White thought the ambassador was “crazy,” particularly for instructing embassy staff not to evacuate South Vietnamese colleagues whose cooperation with Americans almost certainly meant imprisonment, torture, or death.

Within days, the distinction between authorized responsibility and moral responsibility collapsed. Senior Vietnamese staff urged White to evacuate everyone—clerks, assistants, drivers—and their families. That was far beyond his mandate. But White realized that once the city fell, no hierarchy would matter. The question was no longer whether to evacuate, but how.

That moral pivot is the center of *Getting Out of Saigon*, White’s memoir published by Simon & Schuster in 2024. The book, described by The Washington Post as “captivating,” and by The Christian Science Monitor as a story of “courage, resolve, and determination,” recounts how White helped evacuate nearly the entire Vietnamese staff of Chase Manhattan Bank and their families—113 people in all—during the final days before the North Vietnamese Army entered Saigon.

White’s account is not about defying institutions for sport. It is about what happens when institutions fail to keep pace with reality. He discovered that a clandestine evacuation channel was operating behind the ambassador’s back. White resolved to use it.

The path out was fragmented



Author Ralph White speaking in 2024 about his book.

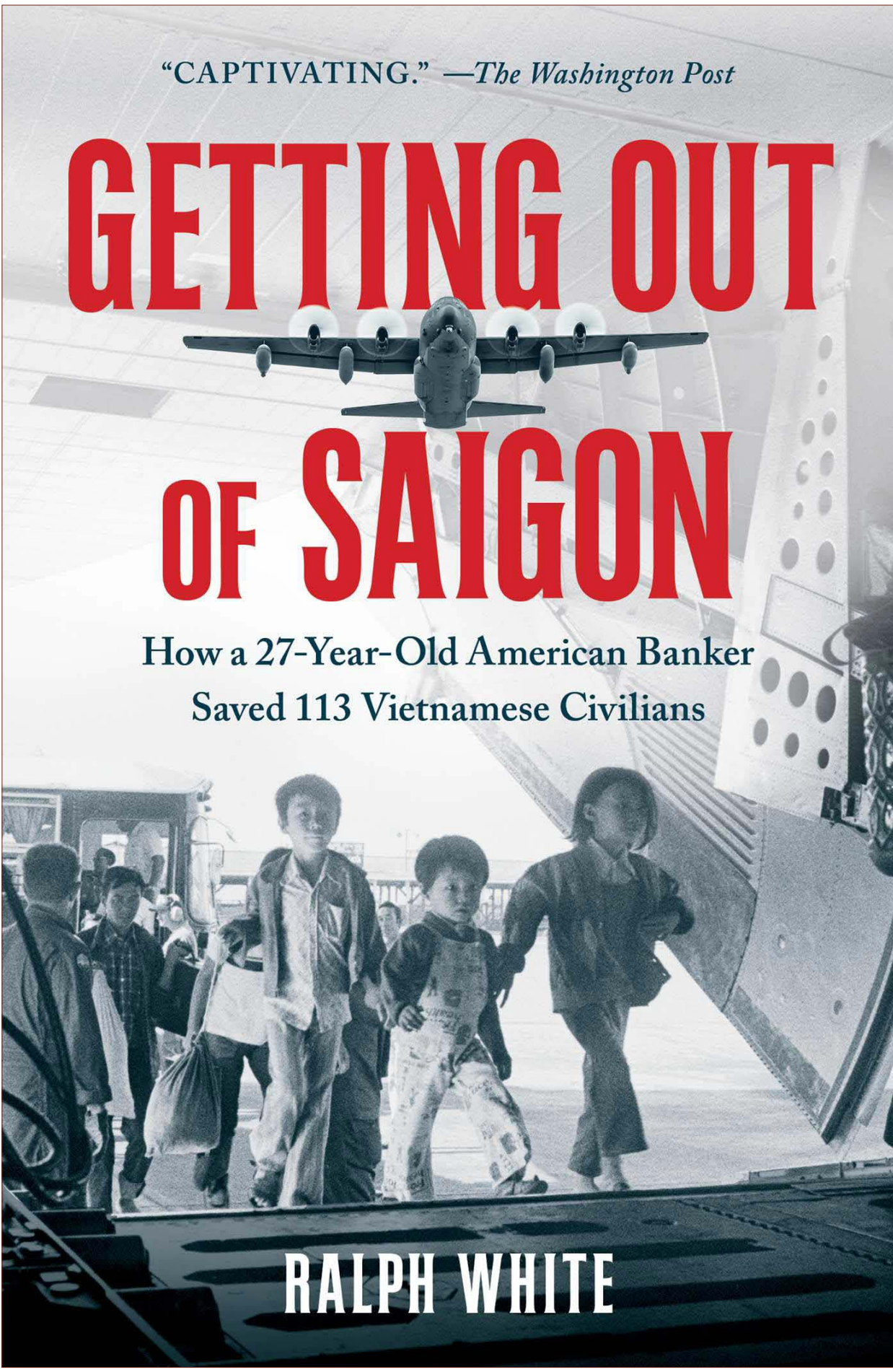
and uncertain. Embassy personnel, acting in direct violation of their ambassador’s orders, confidentially told White that he could have 55 seats on a bus to the airport. He had roughly 120 people to evacuate. It was an agonizing arithmetic of lives. He decided to move whoever he could.

Getting through the airport presented another barrier. White needed “transit papers,” documents intended only for relatives of Americans. He found the embassy official responsible for issuing them and explained his situation. The official paused, then handed him a stack of papers. White filled them out one by one, listing each evacuee as a “relative.” The group boarded a cargo plane with no seats and flew out.

White was left with guilt and despair about those still behind. Then the call came again. Another bus was available, this time with 70 seats. The second journey proved even more dangerous. South Vietnamese forces had established their own roadblock in front of the U.S. checkpoint, stopping buses and shooting civilians attempting to flee.

When a South Vietnamese officer boarded the bus, White was carrying a small handgun, brought from his background as a hunter. “I’m not proud of it,” he later said, “but I came within a hairsbreadth of pulling my gun when that officer boarded the bus.” The officer turned around and left. The bus passed through. The remaining employees and their families escaped just hours before the city fell.

Oprah Daily called *Getting Out of Saigon* “edge-of-your-seat.” The phrase is accurate, but incomplete. The book’s deeper force lies in its examination of moral choice under compression. The Christian Science Monitor wrote that White’s story is about “the choice to do what’s right instead of what’s authorized.” That distinction animates every page.



In the history of the Chase Manhattan Bank, one event stands out as clarifying the bank’s responsibility to its employees.”

The institutional reckoning came later. Anthony Terracciano, a former vice chairman of the Chase Manhattan Corporation, wrote, “In the history of the Chase Manhattan Bank, one event stands out as clarifying the bank’s responsibility to its employees. In 1975, Chase sent Ralph White to rescue its Vietnamese employees before the fall of Saigon.”

Years afterward, White was asked by his publisher to locate some of the evacuees. At a gathering organized by a Vietnamese expatriate group, an elderly woman sat beside him, listened, and said, “I

know just the person to call.” That call led to reunions. White now receives invitations to weddings, births, and Lunar New Year celebrations from families whose lives intersected with his for a few decisive days.

White later returned to Chase’s New York headquarters, left as a vice president, earned an MBA at Columbia University, and founded the Columbia Fiction Foundry. But the defining chapter remains Saigon.

History often records institutional failure in abstract terms. White’s story records what happens when an individual refuses

abstraction. Systems collapsed. Character did not.

White will recount these events for members of the New Canaan Men’s Club at its Friday, Jan. 9 meeting at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 111 Oenoke Ridge. The meeting begins at 10 a.m., with White’s presentation scheduled for 10:40 a.m., following the business portion of the program.

The New Canaan Men’s Club is open to men age 55 and older and is currently accepting new members. Information about joining is available by email at ncmens@ncmens.info.

New Canaan Students Complete SoundWaters Research Intensive

Two New Canaan students stepped beyond the classroom and into the field as part of the SoundWaters Research Intensive (SRI), where students investigated Long Island Sound through hands-on, inquiry-driven research. The students, Connor Flood and Jack Cooley, gained firsthand experience conducting field-based investigations.

Based at the Cohen SoundWaters Harbor Center on Stamford Harbor, SRI allows students to conduct original studies in water quality, animal populations, human impact and climate change. Flood and Cooley were among several students from across the region who took part in SRI this semester. Together, the students conducted field and laboratory research to examine how human impact and environmental changes affect local ecosystems. Flood studied benthic animal populations around Stamford Harbor, while Cooley assessed plankton



From left to right: Theo, Andres, Kayla, Jenna, Xavier, Kai and Jack from the SoundWaters Research Intensive program stand for a photo before their presentations. Photo credit: SoundWaters

populations by speciating and measuring copepods.

“The SRI program helped me realize how interconnected everything is,” said Cooley. “It was empowering to be able to conduct original research and know that it mattered to the community and the world.”

“The Research Intensive program provides students the tools to conduct college-level science while deepening their understanding of the Long Island Sound ecosystem,” said SoundWaters Director of Education Christina Genz. “Students leave the program with advanced research skills, greater confidence and a strengthened passion for protecting the environment.”

Scholarships for SRI are made possible through generous support from the Munzer Foundation, 11th Hour Racing and the Pettee Family, helping ensure students from all backgrounds can participate.

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD EDITOR

John Engel | John.Engel@Elliman.com

REAL ESTATE DASHBOARD CONTRIBUTOR

Robyn Bonder | Robyn.Bonder@Elliman.com

NEW SALES

Address	Original List	List Price	Sold Price	DOM	BR	FB	Acres
439 Cheese Spring Road	\$999,000	\$999,000	\$1,025,000	7	3	3	2.37
339 Old Norwalk Road	\$3,295,000	\$3,295,000	\$3,100,000	45	5	3	1.43

FEATURED OPEN HOUSES

Get Your Open Houses Into the MLS by Wednesday at Noon for a Listing Here

Address	Price	Day	Time	Broker
1038 West Road	\$2,595,000	SAT & SUN	1:00-4:00 PM	William Raveis
176 Logan Road	\$2,795,000	SAT & SUN	1:00-4:00 PM	Coldwell Banker
928 West Road	\$8,595,000	SUN	1:00-3:00 PM	WPSIR

NEW LISTINGS

Address	List Price	SqFt	Price/SqFt	AC	BR	FB
15 Old Stamford Road Unit# D	\$1,599,000	3,632	\$440		3	3
1038 West Road	\$2,595,000	3,362	\$772	4.04	5	6
1421 Oenoke Ridge	\$4,995,000	8,614	\$580	2.46	6	10
67 Carter Street	\$5,500,000	7,300	\$753	2.46	5	6

The House Tour That Changed New Canaan and the Woman Who Made It Last



By
JOHN ENGEL

There is a saying — *Behind every great man is a great woman* — that feels especially apt in New Canaan this week, with the passing of **Pamela Gores**.

To understand why, you have to understand not just her husband, **Landis Gores**, but the moment in which New Canaan found itself in the late 1940s — and why it became the unlikely epicenter of modern residential architecture in America.

Unlike his Harvard classmates, Gores was not doctrinaire. As Bill Earls writes in *The Harvard Five in New Canaan*, Gores and his close friend and fellow Ohioan, **Philip Johnson**, were *mavericks*, the “bad boys” of the group. Gores himself recalled that the two shared “a certain feeling of community, a common outlook.” That spirit, more than theory, defined the early years.

It is no wonder Johnson asked Gores to collaborate on the **Hodgson House**, a project so early that Johnson was not yet licensed to practice architecture in Connecticut. That house captures a moment when ideas moved faster than credentials, and experimentation mattered more than polish.

Those experiments found a receptive home in New Canaan.

In 1949, seven houses — the Glass House, the Gores House, Noyes I, Breuer I, Kniffen, Mills, and Rantoul — were opened to the public during the inaugural Modern House Tour. More than 3,000 people attended. *The New York Times* and the *New Canaan Advertiser* reviewed the work favorably. What followed became a movement. Within four years, more than fifty modern houses were built here.

At the center of that moment stood the **Landis Gores House**.

Completed in 1948 and often described as Gores’s masterpiece, the house succeeds through restraint rather than spectacle. Where others pursued manifestos, Gores pursued livability. *House & Home* magazine noted the structure’s “almost aristocratic scale,” pointing to the tall living room, the entrance lobby, and the stone ramparts facing the valley. Yet the same article observed something rarer: “an almost aristocratic grace about the way of life which the house implies.”

Gores was, as the magazine put it, “a creative young conservative among



The Landis Gores House, aerial view. Drone photography by John Engel.

his avant-garde contemporaries” — a figure common in literature and philosophy, but “an isolated phenomenon” in architecture.

Pamela Gores was part of that life from the beginning. In the same *House & Home* article, she recalled that her direct input into the house was modest but telling: a steel frame in the ceiling of the main section so a helicopter could one day land on the roof — a long-held dream not yet realized — and a blue bathtub in the primary bedroom. The anecdote captures something essential: imagination tempered by practicality; vision grounded in daily life.

After Landis Gores’s death in 1991, Pamela remained closely connected to his work. She supported preservation efforts, welcomed documentation, and stayed engaged in the cultural and

civic life of New Canaan for decades. These buildings survived through continuity. That continuity is visible all around town.

The Gores Pavilion, designed in 1960 for the Irwin family and later given to the town, represents one of the rare moments when modern architecture in New Canaan became explicitly civic. Modest in scale and deeply connected to its landscape, it is modernism without bravado, architecture as generosity.

Less conspicuous, but equally important, is Gores’s work on Wahackme Road, where he designed an addition to a Techbuilt house. There, he worked within a system-built framework, demonstrating how modern ideas could adapt to everyday housing, not just ideal conditions.

I pass those buildings often. Many

residents do. That is part of their success.

I first met Pamela Gores at the Ice Cream Social. She was gracious, direct, and unmistakably herself. On another occasion, she handed me the keys to “The Mistress” — her name for Landis’s 1929 Rolls-Royce convertible — and trusted me to drive it for a video. It was an act of openness.

I also knew Pam’s daughter, Liz, from our time serving together on the Town Council, just another expression of a long family commitment to this town.

For seventy-seven years, the Gores family helped shape New Canaan — through architecture, civic service, and a belief that ideas matter when they are lived with, shared, and protected.

Pamela Gores leaves behind more

than buildings. She leaves behind a community that understands what it has, and why it matters.

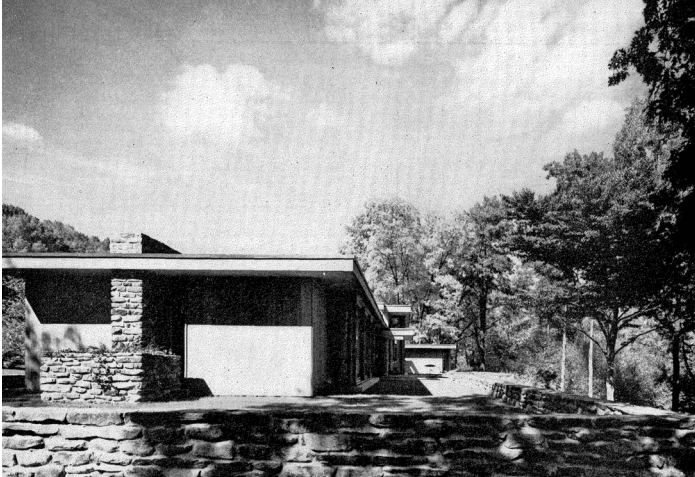
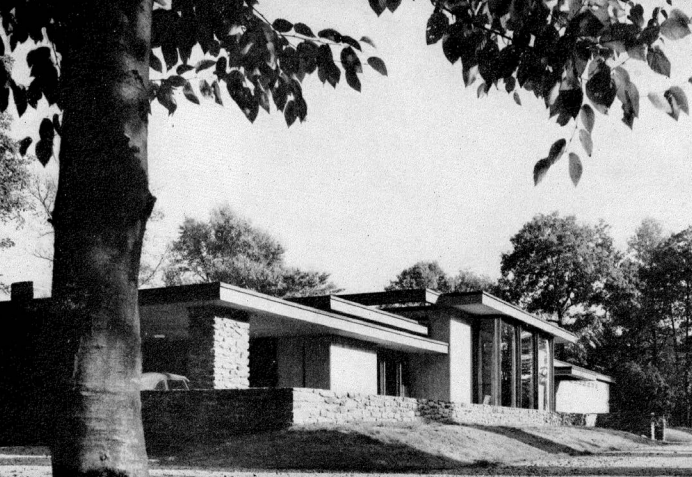
John Engel is a broker with The Engel Team at Douglas Elliman in New Canaan. He writes weekly about real estate, architecture, and the moments that quietly bind a town together. He lives in a valley and measures winter storms not in inches but in which cars can make it up Ponus Ridge without help. This week, after 7.2 inches of snow, one car slid half off the road, and he used his 1976 Land Cruiser winch to pull it back onto the road. Two weeks ago, he wrote about his boat propeller, and then about splitting wood. There’s real satisfaction in getting outside, and we’ll be revisiting this theme throughout 2026. Happy New Year.



Pamela and her car at the 2006 Ice Cream Social.



Melissa and John pose with “The Mistress.”



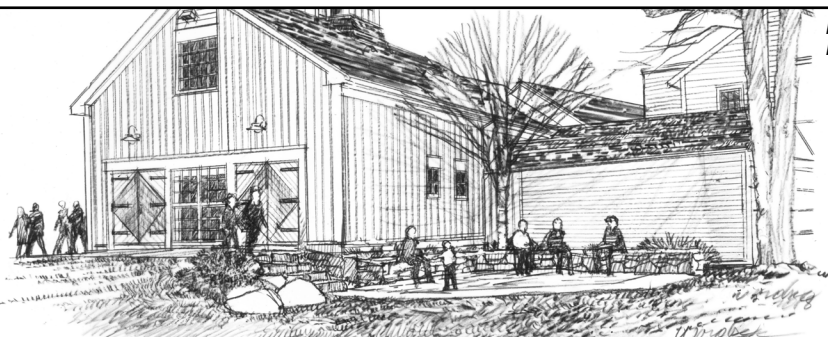
Above: The Landis Gores House as featured in *House & Home* magazine, January, 1952.

Submit questions and comments to John.Engel@Elliman.com



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TOWN MEETINGS

Tuesday, January 13
Fire Commission
5-6 p.m., Town Hall

Wednesday, January 14
Parks and Recreation Commission
7-8 p.m., Town Hall

Friday, January 9
COFFEE AND CONVERSATION
8:30 – 9:30 AM at the Lapham Center
Sponsored by the New Canaan Sentinel
for a weekly community coffee and conversation.

Health Talks with Shannon and Ellen
11 AM at the Lapham Center
Meet up with Shannon and Ellen from the Health Department for coffee, conversation and snacks. These engaging discussions will help improve your mood and your health! Topics will be announced in the Lapham Center eblasts. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Saturday, January 10
Yoga & Sound Bath
9 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
This Gentle Yoga and Sound Bath will engage both body and mind to help melt away the stresses of the week and start your weekend right. Open to all levels; no experience needed. Please bring a mat and any other props for comfort. Tickets are \$40/person, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/yoga-sound-bath-winter/>.

Nonprofit Volunteer Fair
10:30 AM- 1:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
Attend a Nonprofit Volunteer Fair featuring 40 nonprofits in New Canaan and the surrounding area. Drop in to speak with representatives and learn how you can get involved with these organizations. Whether you're looking for volunteer opportunities for kids, teens, or adults; hoping to get involved with a nonprofit's board; or simply wondering what organizations support our community, this fair is the place to find answers and make connections.

Just Write: Writing Workshop for Adults
10:30 AM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
Join this writing workshop to spark your creativity and help you discover your unique voice. Through a series of thought-provoking prompts, you'll have the opportunity to explore your inner writer and share your stories if you choose. Go prepared with a favorite pen and notepaper. Register at <https://shorturl.at/EGzAg>.

New Members: Opening Reception
2-4 PM at Silvermine Arts Center
Join Silvermine for an opening reception as they welcome their newest Guild members. This exhibition showcases their creative energy and diversity and continues the legacy that makes Silvermine a home for artistic excellence.

Sunday, January 11
Note To Yourself Calligraphy Workshop
3 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
Note to Yourself is a reflective, hands-on workshop created as a quiet pause at the beginning of the year – a space to slow down, reconnect, and express yourself through mindful lettering. Participants will explore pointed pen calligraphy while creating a personal handwritten piece. All materials provided. Tickets are \$95/ members, \$110/non-members, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/note-to-yourself-dina-ruzha/>.

Monday, January 12
Computer Basics: Introduction to Windows 11
3 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
Those who are new PC users or are thinking of updating their operating system from Windows 10 will benefit from this class, which teaches the basics of the latest Windows 11 operating system. Register at <https://shorturl.at/PcGIQ>.

Tuesday, January 13
Everyday Indian Cooking – Simple & Wholesome
11 AM at the Lapham Center
Start the year by learning how to prepare light, flavorful Indian meals that are perfect for everyday cooking. Make Poha, a comforting dish made from flattened rice

Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

with onions, curry leaves, and peanuts. You will also make colorful vegetable stir-fries with beetroot and okra, and finish with soft, homemade Chapatis. \$60/person. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Travel Together: Planning for Multi-Generational and Group Vacations
2 PM at the Lapham Center
Join Beth Dwyer, of Bespoke Destinations, LLC to explore a variety of popular options for multigeneration and group vacations. Whether you're hoping to bring the whole family together or planning a memorable getaway with friends, you'll discover practical tips, inspiring ideas, and strategies to make group travel smooth. Free event. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Wednesday, January 14
Game Time with Mike Bacon: Name That Face!
12 PM at the Lapham Center
Mike returns as emcee of Name That Face! Guaranteed to bring a smile to your face, as you test your recall and identify famous world leaders, authors, entertainers, scientists and others in this fast-paced contest. Lunch will be served. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinics
12:30 PM at the Lapham Center
Ellen Samai from New Canaan's Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommend you fast for four hours prior to testing. To register, call (203) 594-3620. Walk-ins welcome.

Thursday, January 15
NCPS Transition to Kindergarten Meeting
9:30 AM at East Elementary School
All incoming parents from East, South, and West are welcome to join for a presentation & conversation about preparation for kindergarten, including social, emotional, & developmental milestones. More information is available at <https://www.ncps-k12.org/o/ncps/page/kindergarten-information>.

Clever and Crafty with Tricia
1 PM at the Lapham Center
Join Tricia to create quilling snowflakes. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Friday, January 16
Winter Drop in Movie | Thelma
11 AM at the Lapham Center
When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her. Free.

Saturday, January 17
Yoga & Sound Bath
9 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
This Gentle Yoga and Sound Bath will engage both body and mind to help melt away the stresses of the week and start your weekend right. Open to all levels; no experience needed. Please bring a mat and any other props for comfort. Tickets are \$40/person, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/yoga-and-sound-bath-winter-series/>.

Cooking Demo: Biscuits & Quick Breads
11 AM- 1 PM at the New Canaan Library, Kend Kitchen & Community Room
In this class demonstration, you'll learn the techniques behind light, flaky biscuits and moist, flavorful quick breads, all without yeast or long rise times. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned home cook,

you'll leave with practical tips and recipes. Registration will be available at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/hold-cooking-class-165649>.

Tuesday, January 20
Lunch & Learn with Arianne Kolb, Executive Director of The Merritt Parkway Conservancy
12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society
Bring your own sandwich, soup or snack and join for a Lunch & Learn. Arianne will discuss the importance of the Merritt Parkway since its creation in 1932 and it's impact on travel in the Northeast and explore the intriguing history of one of Connecticut's iconic landmarks. Register at <https://nchistory.org>.

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COURAGE & FAITH

SPEAKER SERIES

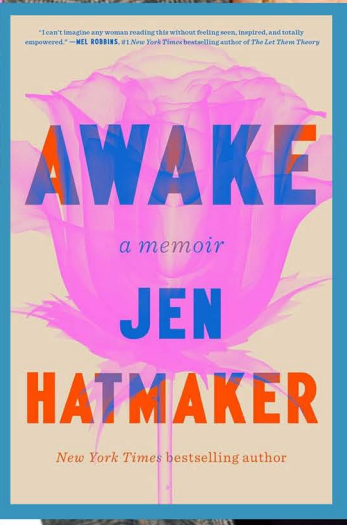



JEN HATMAKER


WEDNESDAY JAN. 21

6:30 PM

Bestselling author, popular “For the Love” podcaster, and dynamic speaker whose New York Times bestselling books, have made her a trusted voice for millions of women navigating life, faith, and reinvention. Her newest NYTimes Bestseller, “AWAKE” offers a compelling journey through disruption, resilience, and the unexpected liberation of beginning again.

All tickets include the book and post-talk reception
\$50 - 6:30pm
General Admission
\$75 - 6:00pm
Meet & Greet Cocktails





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It's Teatime!

2:30 PM at the Lapham Center
Enjoy an old-fashioned tea with friends. A variety of teas, sandwiches and teats will be served. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.
Open Tech
2-4 PM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room
If you need help with email, smartphones/tablets, social media, or accessing the digital library, stop by for one-on-one support from a tech librarian. Tech assistance is limited to 20 minutes per session and is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Wednesday, January 21

Former Navy SEAL Mike Hayes Presents "Mission Driven"
7 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
Mike will discuss his new book Mission Driven: A Path to a Life of Purpose. This lecture is for anyone going through a transition. Mission Driven is a roadmap for discovering what drives you, and a playbook for translating those drives into opportunities. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/hold-mike-hayes-170290>.

Thursday, January 22

Free Medicare Counseling
By appointment at the Lapham Center
Dick Neville is a CHOICES certified Medicare counselor providing free, objective, person centered assistance about Medicare options and related benefits including: enrolling, choosing a supplemental plan and Part D prescription drug plan, and understanding Medicare Advantage plans. Sessions are offered free of charge to New Canaan residents and Town employees. Call (203) 594-3620 to schedule an appointment, no drop-ins.

Get the Most Out of Google

11 AM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
Go beyond basic search and explore the various ways to get the most out of your Google account. Participants will learn about Google Books, Google Translate, Gemini, and more. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/get-most-out-google-189453>.

Origin Stories | The Empowerment Collective
11 AM at Grace Farms

Join Sahin Pravin, Head of Retail for the Empowerment Collective, as she shares insights into the organization's mission, ethical production practices, and impact on women artisans. Following the conversation, enjoy a curated retail experience featuring the Empowerment Collective. Tickets are available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/empowerment-collective-nasreen-sheikh>.

A Brief History of Medieval Medicine
6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
Join Reference Librarian Flannery for a fascinating look at the often misunderstood world of medieval medicine and the surprising foundations it set for today's medical practices. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/flannery-lecture-190496>.

What College Admissions Trends Mean for Your Child's Future – And How to Stand Out
6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Community Room
Join Lindsay Tanne Howe, CEO of LogicPrep, a college admissions consultancy housed in Greenwich that guides families, for an insider's look at selective college admissions – from test-optional policies to the impact of AI – and how applicants can create a powerful, authentic narrative to gain admission to their dream schools. Register at <https://shorturl.at/9KIUE>.

Be Aligned – Human Design Workshop
6:30 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
In this session, we explore the Human Design Centers – the places in your chart that show where your habits, patterns, and emotional cycles come from. This session is interactive and hands-on. You'll receive a personalized workbook to help you identify where conditioning lives in your chart, what patterns you're carrying that aren't truly yours, and what parts of yourself you're ready to release. Tickets are \$50/person and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/be-aligned-workshop-2/>.

Friday, January 23

New Canaan Sports Trivia Night Hosted by Terry Dinan
6 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society
Join for New Canaan Sports Trivia Night. There will be a Mexican Buffet dinner and drinks (including beer & wine). This event is

open to all ages. Register at <https://nchistory.org>.

Saturday, January 24

Adopt-a-Tree Kickoff Event
9:30 AM- 2 PM at the New Canaan Nature Center
This season-long program begins with the Adopt a Tree Kickoff Event where syrup families/groups learn the process and take part in choosing and tapping a tree for the season (about 30 minutes). After the Kickoff Event, participants will then collect sap 1-3 times a week for the entire syrup season and take part in boil downs where real maple syrup is made at NCNC. You'll even get your very own bottle of NCNC-made maple syrup at our end of season celebration in March. Register at <https://newcanaannature.org/adopt-a-tree/>.

Monday, January 26

NC Focus: Paths to Affordable Housing
6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
This presentation by Town officials will explore the paths New Canaan has taken to meet its Affordable housing needs and State requirements by focusing on three specific projects. More information and registration is available at <https://shorturl.at/Wgn2N>.

Tuesday, January 27

"Scents for the Senses" Three Week Workshop
4 PM at the New Canaan Nature Center
Join this three-week workshop with master candle maker and perfume creator Karry Wilson. Karry will guide you in this fun filled series creating your perfect scent, designing a one-of-a-kind double wick candle, and more. The three week workshop is \$180 and will continue on February 3 & 10. Tickets are available at <https://shorturl.at/OdOj2>.

Belle Burden Presents "Strangers" In Conversation with Holly Parmelee
7 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
Join for an evening with author Belle Burden in conversation with Holly Parmelee, to discuss her memoir Strangers. The memoir is about the sudden end to a seemingly happy marriage—an aching, love-filled, and transcendent account of surviving betrayal and discovering joy. Register at <https://shorturl.at/ztQS6>.

Wednesday, January 28

Mahjongg Strategy Class | How to Pick a Hand
12 PM at the Lapham Center
Join Aggie in learning how to choose a hand and make the Charleston work for you. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinics
12:30 PM at the Lapham Center
Ellen Samai from New Canaan's Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommend you fast for four hours prior to testing. To register, call (203) 594-3620. Walk-ins welcome.

Introduction to Excel: Session 1 Excel Fundamentals
6 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
Learn the basics of Microsoft Excel in this beginner-friendly workshop. Learn to navigate the Excel interface, enter data effectively, format cells, and more. No prior Excel experience required. Please bring your laptop to this class. Register at <https://shorturl.at/Ok4ci>.

Moneco Advisors Present: Financial Planning Basics
6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim and Dede Bartlett Auditorium
Join Moneco Advisors for a financial planning workshop where you'll discuss the 6 main areas of planning that you and your loved ones should discuss. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/hold-moneco-171956>.

Thursday, January 29

Cooking Demo: Soups and Stews
12 PM at the New Canaan Library, Kend Kitchen & Community Room
Just in time to help ward off the winter cold, Chef Catherine Macdonald of Tastebudst prepares creative and inspiring soups and stews that will tantalize your tastebuds. She starts with a unique Butternut Squash Soup, followed by a Lentil Soup and end with an African Peanut Stew. Registration will be available at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/cooking%20demo-182904>.

Tech Workshop with Cooper Young and George Geist of Good Kid Tech
2 PM at the Lapham Center
The program will begin with a fifteen-minute

presentation on a tech-related topic, followed by time to answer your personal tech questions. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Mocktails

6:30 PM at Grace Farms
Enjoy an evening of crafting and sipping delicious mocktails. Create three seasonal beverages while discovering connections between food, culture, and community. Tickets are \$28/non-members, \$22/members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/mocktails-2/2026-01-29>.

Friday, January 30

Humanity in Architecture Film Festival | Day One
6:30-8 PM at Grace Farms
Opening night of the film festival will feature an evening film and conversation with inspiring themes that will echo throughout the next day. Register at <https://shorturl.at/HHeEi>.

Saturday, January 31

Humanity in Architecture Film Festival | Day Two
10 AM- 5 PM at Grace Farms
Spend the day with films and Q&As spread among three spaces. Throughout the day there will be additional opportunities to join a guided winter walk, yoga and movement with Pilin Anice, and a design session with Slade Architecture. Register at <https://shorturl.at/PhOr0>.

Owl Moon Night Hike

6:30-8 PM at the New Canaan Nature Center
Join to discover how owls use their senses to navigate the night. Tickets are \$15/person. Registration will be available at <https://newcanaannature.org/night-hikes/>.

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, February 3

Paper Flower Workshop with the Green Vase
11 AM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
Join Livia Cetti of The Green Vase and learn how to create stunning paper roses. These beautiful blooms are crafted to last forever and showcase the art of handmade paper flower making. This two-hour class is a wonderful opportunity to learn this unique art form. Tickets are \$150/members, \$165/non-members, and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/rose/>.

Wednesday, February 4

Demystifying AI
12 PM at the Lapham Center
This AI presentation will demystify artificial intelligence by defining AI in plain language, exploring its main forms—from classic machine learning to cutting-edge large language and agentic models—and tracing its evolution and practical uses both in enterprise and daily life. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

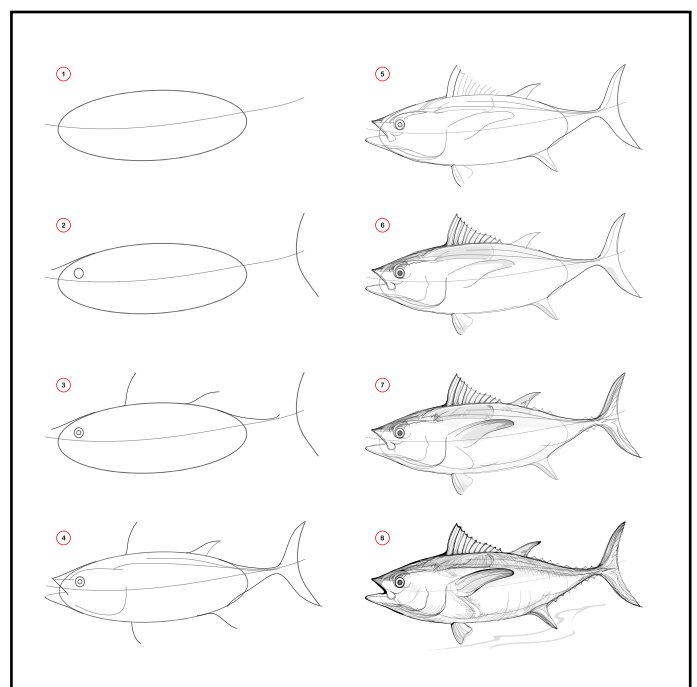
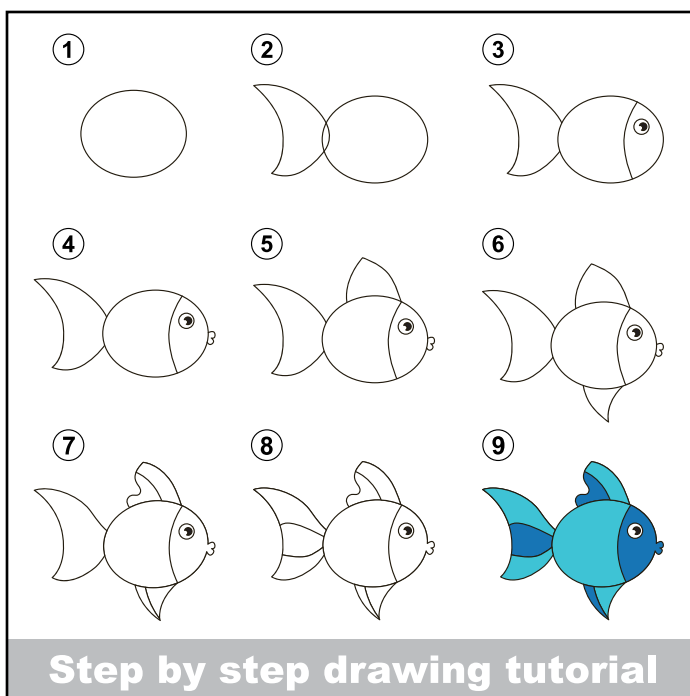
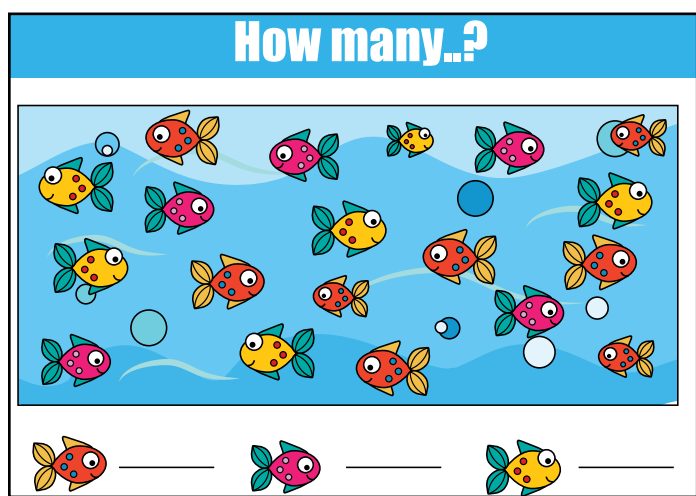
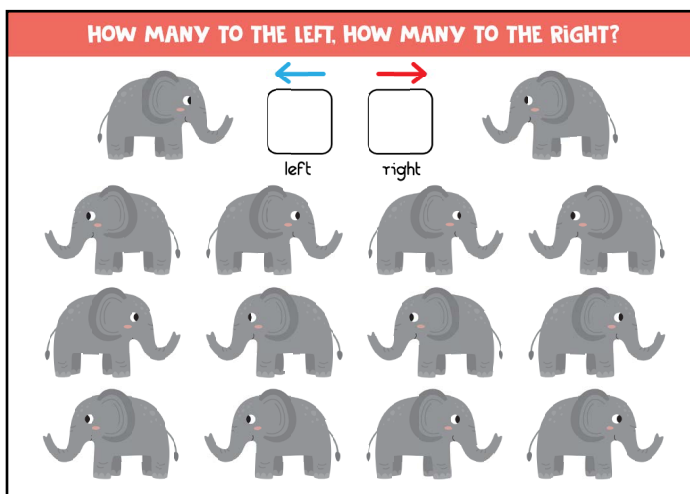
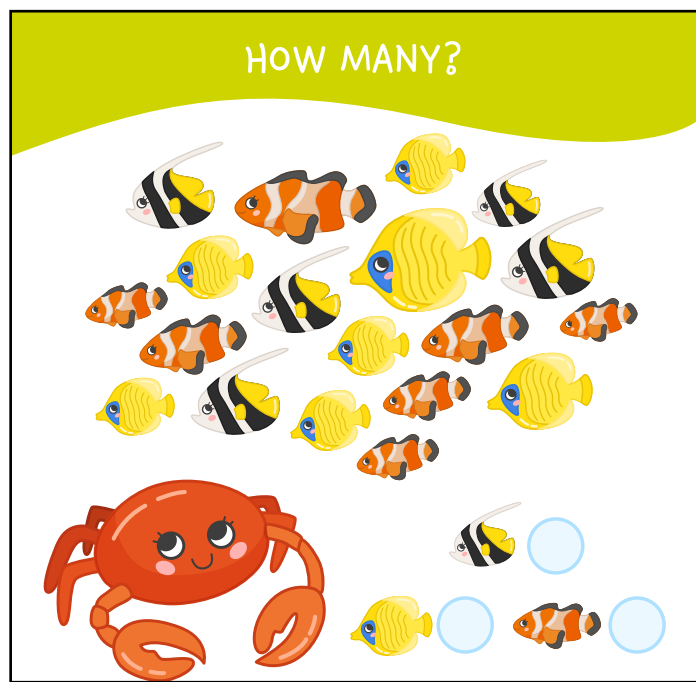
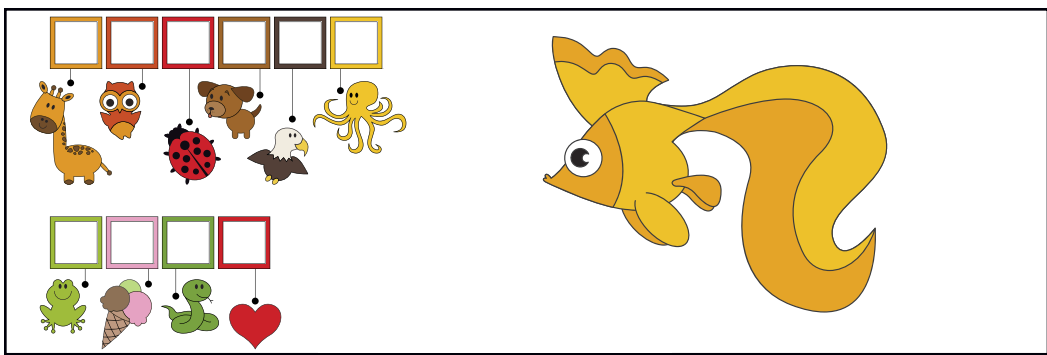
Tuesday, February 10

Flower Arranging with Juliet Howe of Twigs Design
11 AM at the Lapham Center
In this hands-on workshop, Juliet will guide you through echo-friendly, approachable floral design techniques, sharing some of her favorite tips and creative strategies as you craft your own unique arrangement. Containers and choice of fresh flowers will be provided. Participants are asked to bring clippers, if possible. \$50/person. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

South Indian Breakfast & Sweet Delights
11 AM at the Lapham Center
Experience the comforting flavors of South India with this breakfast-themed class. Learn to make Idli, soft and fluffy steamed rice cakes, served with a hearty lentil stew (Sambar) and fresh Coconut Chutney. To end on a sweet note, prepare Carrot Halwa, a traditional dessert. \$60/person. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Lunch & Learn with Mary Frances Malone, and The Town Players of New Canaan on the History of Valentines Day
12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society
Bring your sandwich, soup or snack and join for a Lunch & Learn session. On this special day, Mary Frances Malone, along with The Town Players of New Canaan, will delve into the History of Valentine's Day. Discover the stories behind the celebration through engaging narratives and performances. Register at <https://shorturl.at/F5Llt>.

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					4			2
7							3	
				5		8		
4	3			9	8	7	2	5
				1		6		
1							9	
					7			1
				6				

Bottom row – Very Hard

5	4	3	1	2	6	9	7	8
8	1	9	3	7	4	5	6	2
7	2	6	5	8	9	1	3	4
9	6	7	4	5	2	8	1	3
4	3	1	6	9	8	7	2	5
2	8	5	7	1	3	6	4	9
1	7	4	8	3	5	2	9	6
6	5	2	9	4	7	3	8	1
3	9	8	2	6	1	4	5	7

Bottom row – Hard

8	1	3	6	2	7	5	4
6	7	4	5	9	1	3	8
2	5	9	8	3	4	1	6
5	8	1	7	6	2	9	3
3	9	2	1	4	5	6	7
7	4	6	3	8	9	2	5
9	6	8	4	1	3	7	2
4	2	5	9	7	6	8	1
1	3	7	2	5	8	4	9

Bottom row – Easy

2	6	5	8	9	4	7	3
3	8	4	6	1	7	5	9
7	9	1	2	3	5	4	8
6	3	9	5	7	2	8	1
4	1	7	9	6	8	3	2
5	2	8	3	4	1	9	6
9	7	3	1	5	6	2	4
8	5	6	4	2	3	1	7
1	4	2	7	8	9	6	5

Top row – Very Hard

1	4	7	3	9	2	5	8	6
2	5	6	7	4	8	9	3	1
9	3	8	5	1	6	4	2	7
3	1	9	4	8	7	6	5	2
5	8	4	6	2	9	1	7	3
7	6	2	1	5	3	8	9	4
6	2	5	9	3	4	7	1	8
4	9	3	8	7	1	2	6	5
8	7	1	2	6	5	3	4	9

5	1	6	9	7	8
3	8	7	4	2	6
4	9	2	1	3	5
9	6	4	7	8	3
2	7	5	6	1	9
1	3	8	2	5	4
6	2	1	5	9	7
8	4	9	3	6	1
7	5	3	8	4	2

7	5	1	8	4	2	9	6	2	5	3	7	1	6	2	7	9	1	5	8	4	3	7	9	6	5
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Wednesday, February 11

Blood Sugar & Blood Pressure Clinics
12:30 PM at the Lapham Center
Ellen Samai from New Canaan’s Department of Health provides in-person blood sugar and blood pressure testing. If you plan to have your blood sugar level tested, it is recommend you fast for four hours prior to testing. To register, call (203) 594-3620. Walk-ins welcome.

Thursday, February 12
Clever and Crafty with Tricia

1 PM at the Lapham Center
Join Tricia to create felt needling penguins. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Tech Workshop with Cooper Young and George Geist of Good Kid Tech

2 PM at the Lapham Center
The program will begin with a fifteen-minute presentation on a tech-related topic, followed by time to answer your personal tech questions. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Ask the Attorney with Nedder and Associates

2-4 PM at the Lapham Center
An attorney from Nedder and Associates, LLC will be available for a free, private, fifteen-minute consultations to answer your legal or financial questions. Please call (203) 594-3620 to schedule your appointment. No drop-ins.

Friday, February 13

Valentine’s Bingo

11 AM at the Lapham Center
Play bingo and win prizes with a Valentine’s Day theme. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Health Talks with Shannon and Ellen

11 AM at the Lapham Center
Meet up with Shannon and Ellen from the Health Department for coffee, conversation and snacks. These engaging discussions will help improve your mood and your health. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Wednesday, February 18

Recognizing Cognitive Biases and Building Healthier Thinking Habits

10:30 AM at the Lapham Center
Join Gabriel Corredor, founder of Evergreen Daytime Senior Care, for an engaging presentation on how confirmation bias, the spotlight effect, and loss of aversion quietly influence our decisions - and how understanding them can help us think more clearly, act more confidently, and connect more effectively. Free. Coffee and treats will be served. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Thursday, February 19

Understanding Hospital and Subacute Evaluations: Purpose, Process and Patient Benefits

11 AM at the Lapham Center
Ever wonder why hospitals and subacute care facilities conduct so many tests and evaluations? Join Kathy Collins to learn about the purpose behind these assessments, how they help ensure safety, guide treatment and support recovery. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Friday, February 20

Winter Drop in Movie | Wicked

11 AM at the Lapham Center
Elphaba, a young woman ridiculed for her green skin, and Galinda, a popular girl, become friends at Shiz University in the Land of Oz. After an encounter with the Wonderful Wizard of Oz, their friendship reaches a crossroads. Free.

Tuesday, February 24

How to Use My Rec with Kathy Collins

11 AM at the Lapham Center
If you’ve used MyRec to register for a program at Lapham only to find out when you come to the program that you were not registered, this talk is for you. Join Kathy to learn how to use this system to register for all your Lapham programs and activities. We’ll review Step-by-step how to create an account, browse programs, add choices to your account, register and receive confirmation. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Tuesday, March 24

The Art of American Independence: Beyond the Declaration

12 PM at the New Canaan Museum & Historical Society
Bring your sandwich, soup or snack and learn from Robin Hoffman, of Artscapades. ArtScapades has developed a special lecture which ties in with the 2026 celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Tickets are available at https://shorturl.at/tHR43.

Friday, April 17

Breeches & Bowties Spring Gala

Time to be announced at the Wee Burn Country Club
Join the New Canaan Mounted Troup at their 2026 Spring Gala with guest speaker Drew Doggett. Tickets will be available at https://newcanaanmountedtroupe.org.

Thursday, May 7

NCNC Annual Lecture & Luncheon

11:30 AM- 2 PM
Additonal details will be provided as the event approaches.

BLOOD DRIVES

Monday, January 12 & Tuesday, January 13

Greenwich Blood Donation Center
99 Indian Field Road
Greenwich, CT 06830
11:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Wednesday, January 14

Christ and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
75 Church Lane
Westport, CT 06880
1:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Greenwich Blood Donation Center
99 Indian Field Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

9:00 AM – 5:15 PM

Thursday, January 15

Greenwich Blood Donation Center
99 Indian Field Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

7:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Support Services & Meetings

Friday, January 16

Suicide Prevention Training: Question, Persuade and Refer

11 AM at the New Canaan Library, McLaughlin Meeting Room

Those trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Register at https://shorturl.at/Iz8jL.

Monday, February 2

Hands-Only CPR and AED Training by New Canaan EMS

6:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium
Learn Hands-Only CPR from New Canaan EMS and save a life. Hands-Only CPR focuses on chest compressions (which keep the patient's blood flowing to vital organs) and the use of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) when available. Register at https://shorturl.at/eoFwp.

Thursday, February 19

Understanding Hospital and Subacute Evaluations: Purpose, Process and Patient Benefits

11 AM at the Lapham Center
Ever wonder why hospitals and subacute care facilities conduct so many tests and evaluations? Join Kathy Collins to learn about the purpose behind these assessments, how they help ensure safety, guide treatment and support recovery. Free. To register, call (203) 594-3620.

Every Friday

AA Speaker Meeting Wheelchair Access
Fridays at 7:30 AM
Congregational Church of New Canaan

Every Saturday

AA Meeting-Sober Citizens Group
Saturdays at 9:15 AM
First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

AA Meeting-Laundry and Dry Cleaning Group

Saturdays at 10:30 AM
First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan

Lost Then Found NA Meeting

Wheelchair Accessible
Saturdays at 7 PM
United Methodist Church (back entrance)

Every Monday

AA Meeting
Wheelchair Access
Mondays at 7:30 AM
Congregational Church of New Canaan

Adult Child Al-Anon Meeting

Mondays at 12 PM
St. Mark’s Church, Youth Room

Every Tuesday

Adult Child Alanon Meeting
Tuesdays at 12 PM
St. Mark’s Parish House, Conf. Room

Every Wednesday

AA Step Meeting
Wheelchair Access
Wednesdays at 7:30 AM
Congregational Church of New Canaan

Al-Anon Parent’s & Newcomer’s Mtg.

Wednesdays at 7:30 PM
Silver Hill, Jorgenson House
208 Valley Rd., New Canaan

Every Thursday

AA Big Book Meeting, Wheelchair Access
Thursdays at 7:30 AM
Congregational Church of New Canaan

New Canaan Parent Support Group

7- 8:30 PM
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
New Canaan

OUR NEIGHBORS

Friday, January 9 to Sunday, January 25

The Lion in Winter

Times Vary at Curtain Call
1349 Newfield Ave
Stamford , CT
The Lion in Winter, by James Goldman, is a modern-day classic. The play tells the story of the Plantagenet family, who are locked in a free-for-all of competing ambitions to inherit a kingdom. Tickets are available at https://www.curtaincallinc.com/the-lion-in-winter.

Monday, January 12

MET Opera Encore in HD: Andrea Chénier (Giordano)

12:55 PM at the Ridgefield Playhouse, 80 East Ridge Rd
Giordano’s passionate tragedy stars tenor Piotr Beczala as the virtuous poet who falls victim to the intrigue and violence of the French Revolution. Run Time: 3h 10m. Tickets are \$30/ person and available at https://ridgefieldplayhouse.org.

CRACK THE CODE

..... Musical Instruments
Crack the code to reveal the names of 23 more musical instruments.

1	2	3	4	2	5		6	7	8	9		10	4	8	11	12								
							D	R	U	M														
13	14	14	3	7	6	2	3	5				11	7	8	9	15	12	11						
14	12	4	4	3			16	8	2	11	13	7				11	8	17	13					
18	13	19	3	15	20	3	5	12					14	12	4	12	18	11	13					
17	13	5	21	3			15	2	13	5	3					3	7	16	13	5				
20	3	7	5				3	14	13	7	2	5	13				3	17	3	12				
19	22	4	3	15	20	3	5	12					8	23	8	4	12	4	12					
14	4	13	7	2	5	12	11						11	7	3	9	17	3	5	12				
20	13	7	15						16	4	3	14	23	12	5	18	15	2	12	4				
14	22	9	17	13	4	18										10	4	13	16	12	3	4	12	11

ANSWER: 1=V, 2=I, 3=O, 4=L, 5=N, 6=D, 7=R, 8=U, 9=M, 10=F, 11=T, 12=E, 13=A, 14=C, 15=P, 16=G, 17=B, 18=S, 19=X, 20=H, 21=J, 22=Y, 23=K.



GAMES AND
PUZZLES



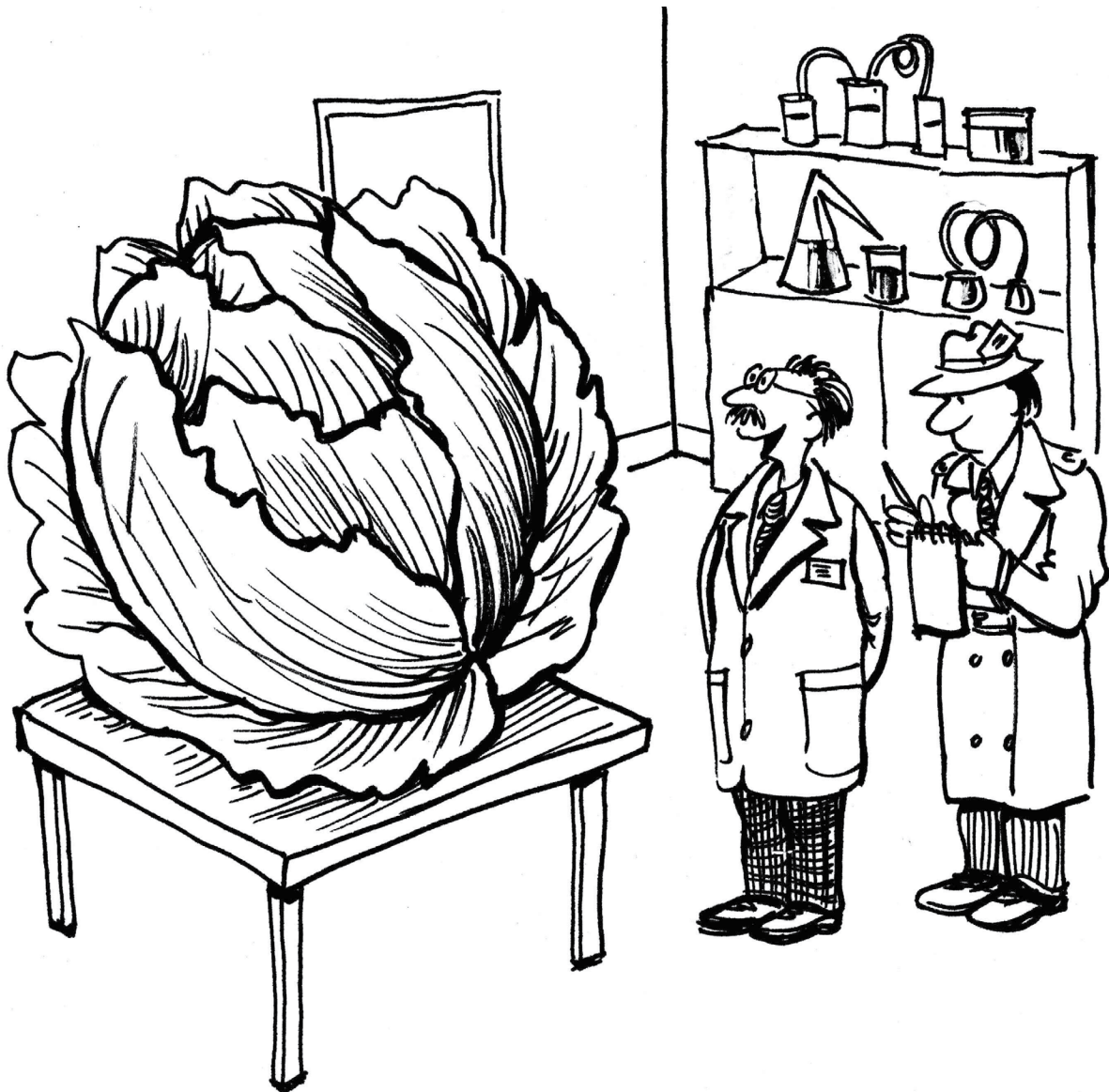
CROSSWORD
PUZZLES



YOUR
HOROSCOPE
FOR NEXT 2
WEEKS



WHAT TO DO:
COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNITY
CALENDAR



"Of course it has no taste ... but just look at the size of that baby."

CALVIN AND HOBBS is only available in the print edition of the paper.

Wildly Successful: The Pink Salmon



By JIM KNOX

Though the clock read nearly 11:00 PM, the subarctic sky grudgingly clung to the remnants of day, outlining the snow-capped peaks high above Prince William Sound's glass-like waters. I'd hiked miles of the rugged Alaskan coastal rainforest with our team just hours earlier, and the thought of a restorative plunge in the glacier-fed waters beckoned.

My eyes drifted up the shore toward the sound's northern terminus. There, just feet off the stony, mussel-encrusted beach, hundreds of dorsal fins cut the surface, swirling the reflection of the deepening violet sky yielding to the sterling pinpoints of stars. I paused, looked out across the water's expanse, and breathed in deeply, savoring the moment. The lights in the Orca Adventure Lodge were few. I was the last one outside. Yet, I was not alone.

A rhythmic clacking of stone-on-shell alerted me to their presence. Just offshore, an adult female Northern Sea Otter floated on her back, hammering away to extract the prized shellfish on her chest. In between smacks, the high-pitched calls of her kit floated over the water. She called back, and the youngster responded—reinforcing their bond while retaining independence from 80 yards away. While nature often warns us of its power, it also has a way of inviting us into its peace. This was one of those moments and if I hesitated, it would be lost. I waded into the chill water to my waist and plunged below. I rolled onto my back, opened my eyes, and beheld the night sky through the clear water. In that moment, I was quite certainly the only person in Alaska swimming in these Pacific waters at night—with this view. It was remarkable. I felt the jolt of the cold, the inexorable pull of the waves, and after a few moments, something else. The movement of water around me, displaced by the creatures I'd come for.

The Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, is the most abundant and smallest member of the Pacific salmon tribe. Named Pink Salmon for the color of their pink flesh, these fish are also known as the Humpback Salmon, for the pronounced hump spawning males develop during migration. These hardy fish are a living symbol of Alaskan wilderness and resilience. Historically found from California's Salinas River northward through coastal rivers of Canada, Alaska, Siberia, Korea, and Honshu, Japan, their range has contracted due to overfishing, habitat degradation, and environmental disturbance.

Ranging from 20 inches in length and 3.5 pounds in weight to 30 inches in length and 15 pounds in weight, these salmon also range wildly in coloration. At sea they are frequently steel blue with scattered oval black spots on their backs and tails, creamy white on their bellies and silver on their sides. Like their brethren, they are anadromous, hatching in freshwater rivers and streams, migrating to the Pacific Ocean to feed and grow, and returning to their original

hatching streams to spawn and renew the cycle. Once they reenter freshwater, males become dark green on their backs with their trademark oval black spots, and bright red sides covered with green blotches. Females are colored similarly but less vividly.

A closer look at these smallest of the world's salmon reveals a little fish with some big credentials. Unlike their cousins, which may spend up to a year or more in the streams in which they hatch, "Pinks" or "Humpies" rocket straight to the sea. There, they feed voraciously and grow explosively—making them the fastest growing salmon. Packing all of their growing into 18 months at sea, the mature salmon return to spawn from August to October. Inhabiting a vast pan-Pacific range, returning in both even and odd year spawning runs, and navigating an army of predators including Humpback Whales, Brown Bears and Bald Eagles, these survivors are the most reliable and resilient of the world's salmon.

In addition to their anticipated challenges, these little fish have stared down a local extinction

known as extirpation—and won. The Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964 was the second most powerful earthquake ever recorded. This Magnitude 9.3 Megathrust quake hit with such force it dropped the northern seabed of Prince William Sound by 8 feet, cutting off the spawning stream of Orca Inlet to the Pacific and effectively dooming this native population of salmon. But these survivors had something else in mind. Faced with lost access to their ancestral waters, against all odds and scientific thinking, these incredible creatures spontaneously adapted—becoming the world's first known salmon population to forego their freshwater migration run to nest and spawn directly in salt water, along the shore Prince William Sound's Orca Inlet!

While Pink Salmon possess an inborn highly attuned sense for survival imprinted in their DNA, we possess the unique ability to study them and glean wisdom from their example. When life confronts us with a seeming earthquake of adversity, we have an option. We can look to the small and humble for

inspiration and rewrite the rules to triumph when our path has been utterly blocked. We must imbue ourselves with the knowledge that we can write our own story to prevail when the ground drops beneath us. The only thing assured in life is that it is brimming with obstacles.

These resilient creatures face adversity and great challenges, yet despite the setbacks they have faced, there is hope. With robust conservation efforts supporting their natural drive to survive, in 2017 Pink Salmon were recorded in Lagunitas Creek just 33 miles north of San Francisco—expanding their known range and establishing a first for the species! If a small creature can overcome one of the world's most powerful earthquakes to redefine its own biology and claim new territory, just imagine what we can do.

Jim Knox serves as the Curator of Education for Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo where he directs education and conservation programs. A Member of The Explorers Club, Jim enjoys sharing his passion for wildlife in Connecticut and beyond.

3x2=6

3x3=9

3x4=12

3x5=15

3x6=18

3x7=21

3x8=24

3x9=27

3x10=30

6

9

12

15

18

21

24

27

30