



LOCAL NEWS BRIEFING

TOWN HALL

Draft 2025 MS4 Annual Report

New Canaan must submit an annual report to CTDEEP on its stormwater program under the state's MS4 general permit. The draft 2025 report is now open for the required 45-day public comment period before it is finalized and filed. It can be reviewed at the Department of Public Works office or online at <https://cms3.revize.com/revize/canaan/DRAFT%202025%20New%20Canaan%20MS4%20Annual%20Report.pdf?r=202601091057060&t=202601091057060>.

AROUND TOWN

Hiring for Summer

The town's Recreation Department is hiring seasonal staff for summer 2026. The department is seeking part-time applicants for Wavenny camp counselor, art coordinator and lifeguard positions. Applications are available at <https://shorturl.at/20rVh>.

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS

Frank Leahy Discussion



On January 6, the New Canaan Library hosted a discussion between Ivan Maisel and Terry Dinan on former Notre Dame coach Frank Leahy. Photo credit: New Canaan Library.

Riggs Spoke to Rotary Club



Recently, Elm Street Bookstore manager Manda Riggs spoke to the New Canaan Rotary Club. She said Christmas Eve sales were about seven times a typical day, the store has drawn visitors touring the Glass House, and residents supported it during Covid, including a sidewalk display with no theft. Pictured L-R: Rob Fryer, Manda Riggs, and Tom Ferguson. Photo credit: New Canaan Rotary Club.

SCHOOLS

CT Regional Scholastic Art Awards

On January 7, the Connecticut Art Education Association announced the 2026 Connecticut Regional Scholastic Art Awards. Thirteen New Canaan High School students received Honorable Mention, Silver Key or Gold Key recognition. Senior Isabelle Kelly earned a Silver Key for her portfolio *Where Am I Going?*

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Tree*Cycle 2026



Standing among the many hundreds of Christmas trees collected are L-R Service League of Boys (SLOBs) volunteers Graham Jackson, Rial Smedley, Victor Ding and Gavin Stannard, with SLOB parents Tamara White and Garrick Stannard. Photo by John Kriz.

By JOHN KRIZ

Planet New Canaan's annual Tree*Cycle project – the gathering and chipping of post-season Christmas trees – is now over, with nearly a thousand trees having been brought to the Steve Benko Pool parking lot, where New Canaan's Department of Public Works will chip them, with the wood chips ending up on local nature trails. Some of the trees will be used as anti-erosion tools along local riverbanks, further helping the ecosystem.

Financial support from the New Canaan Exchange Club, which operates the annual charity Christmas tree and wreath sales lot at Kiwanis Park, as well as 'heavy lifting' by the many volunteers from the Service League of Boys (SLOBs) and the Town's chipping services, continue to be integral to the success of this environmental effort.

Keeping Christmas trees out of landfills, and gently returning them to the Earth, is a big environmental plus, and brings cost savings to the Town. Landfilled trees,

and other plant and animal matter, create methane -- a particularly bad greenhouse gas -- as they very slowly decompose.

"We are so pleased that Planet New Canaan can continue to partner with the Town, the Exchange Club and SLOBs on this important environmental initiative," said Planet New Canaan's co-president Margo Bright. "The quantity of trees collected continues to increase each year, as residents come to understand the positive impact this has on our community."

Tom Nissley, Minister, Preservationist, Psychotherapist, Theater Critic, and an Example to Follow Dies at 92

By PETER BARHYDT

Tom Nissley, a man of quiet intellect, unshakable grace, and restless civic purpose, moved through the worlds of ministry, psychotherapy, preservation, and the arts with the same guiding instinct: to tend to what others might overlook and to leave each life, building, and conversation stronger than he found it—died on January 10 at his home in New Canaan, reportedly in his sleep. He was 92.

For more than sixty years, Mr. Nissley devoted himself to the patient, often quiet work of community life: preserving a saltbox, attending a dress rehearsal, offering council in a therapy room or over coffee. He was that rare figure in town affairs: omnipresent but never overbearing, learned but never self-important, generous but never performative.

"He wasn't an activist so much as a supporter," said Kevin Moynihan, New Canaan's former first selectman. "He was deeply engaged, but never strident. He was always connecting ideas, people, and places. That's how his mind worked."

A Life Beyond the Pulpit

Thomas William Nissley was born on Jan. 1, 1934, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Franklin & Marshall College in 1955



Photo taken at Tom Nissley's Birthday Party in Jan 2024 with Kim Herr's mother Linda, Kim Herr, Tom, Chris Cluett, and Scott Herr. Tom was born on January 1, 1934. A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, January 17, at 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan, with a reception to follow in the Common Room.

with a degree in English and business and went on to earn a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1958. He was ordained that year into the Presbyterian ministry.

His early career brought him to churches in Virginia and Pennsylvania before he joined the staff of the First Presbyterian Church of Stamford—

known locally as the "Fish Church"—in 1964. There, he served for more than a decade as associate pastor and director of all programs, overseeing educational initiatives and civic outreach as well as Sunday worship.

"He had a way of making institutions feel human," Mr. Moynihan recalled. "He wasn't loud, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Banning B.A.N.S.

By JILL S. WOOLWORTH, LMFT

The words but, always, never, and should (which form the acronym B.A.N.S.) too often close off options for ourselves and for others. In contrast, rarely, sometimes, often, and frequently are usually closer to the truth and leave the door open for change. Banning B.A.N.S. is a way to be kinder and more honest with ourselves and others.

For example, the word

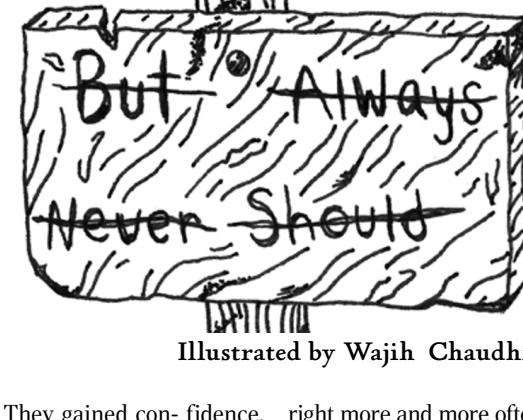
but negates anything we say right before it. "I love you, but we don't do fun things together" triggers the listener's fear and defensiveness. Substituting and for but—"I love you, and I want to do fun things together"—is much more likely to lead to fun.

When we say I want to or I'd like to instead of I should, I must, or I ought to, there's a better chance we'll actually do something. "I want to exercise more" works in

the part of our brain that senses pleasure and fun. The self-critical statement, "I should exercise more" triggers fear.

Carlos never got it right, and Joy always nagged. After a period of counseling, they were surprised to hear each other say that sometimes he got it right, and sometimes she didn't nag. They made a practice of noticing and telling each other when he got it right and she wasn't nagging.

They gained confidence. Over time Carlos got it right more and more often, and Joy rarely nagged.



Illustrated by Wajih Chaudhry

COLUMN

From Fire Safety to Fiscal Strategy: January Launches New Canaan's 2027 Town Budget Process

Wishing you a safe and healthy start to the year.



By DIONNA CARLSON

As we begin the new year, January 6 marked the formal start of the Town's FY 2027 budget process. On that date, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) commenced its review of all Town department operating budgets (excluding the Board of Education, whose budget is reviewed by Board of Finance and Town Council) as well as all department capital budgets. This is a critical step in shaping a fiscally responsible plan that supports essential services while remaining mindful of our taxpayers.

The BOS is scheduled to complete its review and vote on the proposed budget on January 29, 2026. Following that vote, the budget officially moves to the Board of Finance (BOF) on February 3, 2026. The BOF will hold a public hearing on March 3, 2026, and a final vote on March 5, 2026.

Once approved by the BOF, the budget advances to the Town Council (TC) on March 12, 2026. The TC will host a public hearing on April 2, 2026, with a final vote scheduled for April 14, 2026. I strongly encourage residents to follow along and participate throughout this process. On the Town website homepage (www.newcanaan.info) you will find a Budget Documents icon and a Calendar showing dates of all upcoming meetings.

Registry for Vulnerable Residents

Winter 2025/26 has begun as a cold and snowy one, bringing several power outages across town. If you or someone you know is particularly vulnerable during outages – such as residents who rely on medically critical, electricity-powered devices – please register them with Eversource's Life Support Customers List. Eversource requires that medical certification of illness be provided by a physician, APRN or PA. Visit Eversource.com – Medical Web Portal.

Additionally, residents who are 65+, homebound, or disabled are encouraged to join the Human Services Department's Vulnerable Resident Outreach Registry. In the event of a town-wide emergency, Human Services staff will reach out to those residents and make wellness checks. The registration form can be found at www.newcanaan.info/departments/human_services/ For other assistance, call 203-594-3076.

Lapham Medicare Counseling

I want to congratulate and thank the Lapham Community

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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Tom at A.C.T. from October 21, 2024. Tom with Daniel C. Levine, Artistic Director of A.C.T. (A Contemporary Theater), Ridgefield CT and Shelley Lepetich, friend/local actor.

TOM NISSEY CONTINUED From Page 1

he wasn't ideological. He just showed up prepared and thoughtful."

Even as he worked within the Church, Mr. Nissley was drawn to a broader canvas. He helped develop a landmark database analyzing pastoral effectiveness, later studied Christian worship at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland, and participated in a 1970 Geneva symposium on the dating of Easter, co-sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.

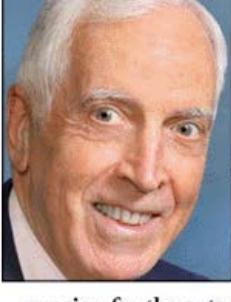
From Theology to Therapy

In the mid-1970s, Mr. Nissley transitioned into psychotherapy, founding the Ridgelea Institute in 1975. Over nearly five decades, he trained and mentored therapists in Transactional Analysis and Gestalt theory, hosting colleagues from across the U.S. and as far as Germany and South Africa. He believed deeply in the power of family systems therapy and frequently lectured on the hidden dynamics within households.

"Tom was almost like a psychiatrist to me," Mr. Moynihan said. "We'd meet for lunch once a month when I was in office—and he would listen carefully, ask good questions, and offer insight. He had that pastoral gift, even in everyday conversation."

Preservation as Civic Practice

Though he never carried the title of architect, Tom Nissley helped shape the physical landscape of New Canaan and beyond. He served for more than a decade



Tom Nissley earns a front-row seat on the NICE List for his sparkling theater reviews in the New Canaan Sentinel, where he brings the magic of the stage to life with wit, insight, and a true passion for the arts.

Beyond his talents as a reviewer, Tom's dedication to preserving New Canaan's charm is unmatched—whether saving historic homes, serving on the board of the New Canaan Museum and Historical Society, or championing local preservation efforts. A true star in our town, Tom proves that storytelling, history, and community go hand in hand, keeping New Canaan as wonderful as ever.

Clipping from Dec. 20, 2024 issue of the New Canaan Sentinel featuring Tom Nissley on "The Nice List"

on the board of Preservation Connecticut, was a trustee of the New Canaan Museum and Historical Society, and chaired the Historic District Commission.

His preservation work was not arm's length. When the 1735 Ferris Hill House was bought by a developer, Nissley and his then-wife Sandy purchased it themselves, placed a permanent conservation easement on the property, and sold it only to someone who would honor its legacy.

"He put a preservation easement on it so it could never be torn down or significantly altered," said Chris Schipper, chair of the New Canaan Community Foundation. "It cost him dearly. But that's who Tom was. Preserving the house mattered more."

Another example: The Grupes Brown house on Valley Road in New Canaan, slated for demolition by the First Taxing District. Mr. Nissley attended meetings, lobbied officials, and—together with his then-wife Sandy—provided critical financial support that made the eventual acquisition possible.

"You don't try to save a property unless you have backing," Mr. Schipper said. "Tom and Sandy were the backing."

He also supported the acquisition of the Fowler property, which now connects Silvermine to Audubon land. He helped launch the master plan for restoring Bristow Park, the nation's third oldest bird sanctuary. "He'd send you a picture of a flower or a bird and say, 'What a great world we live in,'" Mr. Schipper recalled.

Mr. Moynihan agreed. "Over the last 15 years, no major land trust or preservation project really moved far without Tom's support. In many cases, he was the driving factor."

A Theater Seat, Occupied

Parallel to his preservation work ran a lifelong devotion to the arts—particularly theater. For more than 35 years, Mr. Nissley reviewed plays, musicals, and opera across the region. He published *What to Do*, and later *Ridgelea Reports on Theatre*, and was a longtime member of the Connecticut Critics Circle. In recent years, he served as a regular contributor to the New Canaan Sentinel.

Mr. Nissley was a regular attendee of the *Sentinel* weekly community coffees at the Lapham Community Center, where he gave theatrical dispatches with a critic's insight and a supporter's heart. "He brought the magic of the stage to life with wit, insight, and a true passion for the arts," read the *Sentinel's* "NICE List" tribute in 2025.

"He proved that storytelling, history, and community go hand in hand, keeping New Canaan as wonderful as ever."

Fellow theatergoers noted his tact. "He was always encouraging," said Chris Cluett, a friend who often accompanied him to shows. "Even if he thought a performance didn't quite land, he'd focus on what worked. I don't think I ever heard him speak poorly of a show."

He was a fixture at the Powerhouse Theatre, usually in the third row, and was often introduced to cast and crew as the house's most devoted audience member. "He stayed after every performance," said Patricia Spugani of Town Players of New Canaan. "He talked to the actors; he made people feel seen and appreciated. We all loved Tom's sincere enthusiasm for live performances."

Tom Butterworth recalled Mr. Nissley's energy and distinctive flair. "He had more energy than I did. And he dressed with such individualized panache—if there was a cause, he was wearing the ribbon for it. He was a role model for aging with curiosity and joy."

A Mind at Home

Mr. Nissley brought the same intentionality to his homes that he brought to his professional life. He once lived in a landmark yellow house on Butterly Road and later in a modernist home near the center of town, designed by architect Jim Evans, its glass walls opening onto a wild meadow garden. "Tom lived preservation,"

said John Engel. "It wasn't theoretical. It was how he chose to live."

He continued working as a real estate agent well into his 80s, specializing in historic and architecturally significant properties. He was named Realtor of the Year by the New Canaan Board of Realtors in 2008.

"Selling a house wasn't a transaction to him," said Mr. Engel. "It was stewardship."

A Civic Companion

Though he held no elected office, Mr. Nissley shaped New Canaan civic life with quiet force. He attended meetings, hosted conversations, built coalitions, and introduced neighbors who would otherwise never have met. He mentored. He advised. He encouraged.

"I regarded my relationship with Tom as one of friendship," said Mr. Moynihan. "When I ran for office, he was one of my first dozen supporters. He believed in showing up—and in staying. He was a presence. A listener. A friend."

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, January 17, at 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan, with a reception to follow in the Common Room.

In a town shaped as much by what it has saved as by what it has built, Tom Nissley's legacy endures—in preserved homes, protected lands, reviewed performances, mentored leaders, and well-timed words offered across a table, after a show, or in the fourth row as the lights went down.



Labor Day Picnic at the New Canaan Country Club



2015 at the Grupes House



Charter commission weighs assessor role, hears proposals on strengthening first selectman

By PETER BARRYDT

The Town of New Canaan Charter Revision Commission Group 3 met Monday afternoon to continue its review of the town charter, focusing on the assessor's office and the structure of town government, including the role of the first selectman and the Board of Selectmen.

The special hybrid meeting was held Jan. 12 in the Board Room at Town Hall, with several members participating remotely via Zoom. Commissioner Neville called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Present were Commissioners Neville, Willett and Palo in person, with Commissioners Case, Jameson and Parrett attending by Zoom. First Selectman Dionna Carlson, Town Council member Penny Young and former First Selectman Kevin Moynihan also participated.

Assessor role reviewed

The commission began its work with a discussion of Article VI of the charter, which governs the assessor's office. Town Assessor Sebastian Caldarella answered questions about his responsibilities and the charter language that defines the position.

Caldarella noted that since March 2025 he has served as both assessor and tax collector, prompting discussion among commissioners about whether the charter should explicitly allow the two roles to be combined or separated depending on circumstances. Carlson said the decision depends largely on the skill set of the individual serving in the position.

Commissioners also raised questions about the assessor's appointment process. The charter

currently states that the assessor serves "at the pleasure of the Board of Selectmen," language that differs from other appointed positions, which can be removed only "for cause." Both Caldarella and Carlson said it would make sense for the assessor's status to be consistent with other appointed town officials.

The commission discussed whether the charter accurately reflects reappointment requirements for the assessor and tax collector and agreed further review would be needed to ensure the language aligns with current practice and state law.

Attention also turned to the Board of Assessment Appeals. Caldarella said the board's current size of three members and two-year terms are appropriate but suggested adding an alternate member to address recusals and absences. Commissioners discussed whether training for new board members should be required by the charter, noting that state and professional organizations offer instructional courses.

Caldarella also raised concerns about declining participation in the town's Elderly Tax Relief Program, though commissioners noted that eligibility requirements are set by ordinance rather than the charter and would need to be addressed by Town Council.

Parks and Recreation discussion postponed

Discussion of Article XII, covering the Parks and Recreation Commission, was deferred because the scheduled interviewee was unable to attend. The commission agreed to reschedule Parks and Recreation Director John Howe for a

future meeting.

Former first selectman outlines governance changes

The commission then turned to Article III of the charter and heard from Kevin Moynihan, who served six years as first selectman after time on town committees and Town Council. Moynihan provided written notes and spoke at length about potential changes to New Canaan's form of government.

Moynihan said New Canaan, while small in population, requires a more modern governance structure and suggested strengthening the authority of the first selectman. He compared New Canaan's system to those in Greenwich and Westport, where the first selectman operates under a quasi-mayor model.

Among his recommendations were making all town employees report to the first selectman, designating the first selectman as chair of the Police Commission and Fire Commission, and clarifying in the charter the scope of the first selectman's authority.

Moynihan also emphasized that the first selectman is an ex officio member of all boards and commissions, including the Board of Education, under state statute, and said the charter should recognize the importance of that role.

He recommended keeping the Board of Selectmen at three members, arguing that expanding the board to five would not improve transparency and could reduce public discussion due to Freedom of Information Act restrictions.

Other proposals included making the Board

of Selectmen the town's traffic authority and Water Pollution Control Authority, roles currently assigned to the Police Commission and Board of Finance, respectively. Moynihan said shifting those responsibilities would align New Canaan with practices in other towns.

Moynihan also discussed administrative structure, suggesting New Canaan consider an operations manager model similar to Westport's rather than a town administrator system, which he said would require more extensive study.

Additional topics raised included preserving the role of political town committees in vetting appointments, considering district-based elections for some Town Council seats, allowing Town Council limited authority to add to the Board of Finance's proposed budget, and maintaining the appointed status of the Board of Finance and Planning and Zoning Commission.

Moynihan further suggested converting the town clerk and treasurer positions from elected to appointed roles, removing term limits for Audit Committee members, and adding preservation and conservation goals to the charter.

Throughout the discussion, commissioners questioned Moynihan on the feasibility of various proposals, the role of state law, and the balance between elected oversight and professional expertise. Moynihan cautioned the commission against wholesale charter changes and said revisions should focus on targeted adjustments.

Group 3 is one of several Charter Revision Commission panels charged with reviewing sections of the town charter and recommending potential amendments for consideration by Town Council and voters.

Fazio's Gubernatorial Campaign Breaks Fundraising Record and Draws Support from New Canaan Leaders

By ELIZABETH BARRYDT

State Senator Ryan Fazio's campaign for governor has moved with unusual speed through the early stages of the 2026 race, pairing record-setting fundraising with endorsements from New Canaan's senior elected officials and party leaders who have worked with him closely on issues ranging from zoning to energy costs.

On Jan. 12, the Fazio for Governor campaign filed its second quarterly finance report with the State Elections Enforcement Commission, showing \$272,069 raised in qualifying small-dollar contributions over 141 days. The filing confirms that Fazio crossed the \$250,000 threshold required to participate in Connecticut's Citizens' Election Program faster than any gubernatorial campaign.

Erin Stewart, who is also running for Governor as a Republican, officially qualified for the CEP grant earlier this year after 11 months of fundraising. Governor Lamont, who is running for a third term is expected to self-fund once again.

The most recent reporting period showed \$114,300 raised in the final weeks of 2025. That followed a previous quarter in which the campaign raised \$157,233 in just 49 days, setting a record for any non-incumbent statewide candidate in Connecticut. By comparison, the only other declared candidate for governor reported \$221,772 in qualifying contributions over two quarters and 160 days of fundraising.

The timing of Fazio's filing was also consequential. His campaign submitted its application before the Jan. 13 inflation adjustment that raised qualifying thresholds for all subsequent applicants, allowing it to qualify under the earlier standards.

For New Canaan officials, the campaign's early success reflects long-standing working relationships and policy alignment rather than novelty. Fazio represents New Canaan in the state senate and has been involved directly in debates

that have resonated deeply in the town, particularly around zoning authority, utility costs, and local decision-making.

In interviews with the *Sentinel*, New Canaan officials who have endorsed Fazio explained why.

"As First Selectman, I'm endorsing Ryan Fazio for Governor because he understands that strong communities start with local control," said New Canaan First Selectwoman Dionna Carlson. "Ryan has consistently stood up for towns on zoning, pushed for lower-cost energy solutions for Connecticut families, and demanded transparency around the public benefits charges on consumers' energy bills. He also opposed the sale of Aquarion to the RWA because he knows decisions about critical resources like water must put ratepayers and local accountability first. Ryan Fazio is a smart, common-sense leader who asks the right questions and delivers practical solutions for our state."

State Representative Tom O'Dea echoed that assessment, pointing to years of collaboration in Hartford. "Ryan has been a good friend and colleague with whom I've had the privilege of working in the legislature for a number of years," O'Dea said. "He is a thoughtful, energetic, and highly effective lawmaker who has championed important legislation that has made a real difference for our state. I have no doubt that his leadership, integrity, and vision would make him an outstanding governor."

Party leaders who have worked with Fazio at the state level emphasized similar traits. Republican State Central Committee member Joe Kelly whose district includes Greenwich, Stamford, and New Canaan said, "Over the past seven years, I have had the pleasure of working with Ryan, and I have consistently observed his exceptional honesty and unwavering willingness to lend an attentive ear. He possesses a deep understanding of the challenges facing his constituents and, more importantly, possesses the ability to address these issues effectively. While finding solutions can be

At the beginning of this campaign, I was told by many people how surprised I would be about the differences between Connecticut residents from all over the state," he said. "However, my experience over the past five months has been quite different. - Ryan Fazio

a daunting task, Ryan consistently demonstrates a proactive approach to problem-solving. He is exactly what we need to right the State of Connecticut and return us to prosperity."

In an interview with the *Sentinel*, Fazio described the campaign's progress in measured terms. "Our campaign is building momentum very steadily," he said. "We have gained grassroots endorsements from every corner of the state at a faster pace than any other campaign. We have raised money from small dollar donors at a record breaking pace. And we're listening and focusing on the issues that matter most of voters. But there is much more work to do and we will continue to crisscross the state for the next 10 months to listen to people, bring people together and focus on what matters."

Asked about qualifying for public financing, Fazio said the milestone came quickly but did not mark an endpoint. "In less than 150 days, we reached a key fundraising milestone faster than any other statewide campaign in either party," he said. "We qualified for the first state campaign finance grant at the beginning of the year. We are waiting now on the CEP to confirm we have met the necessary requirements. There may be more fundraising for us to do in order to cross the final threshold, and we will likely know that next week."

Fazio said his statewide travel has challenged assumptions about regional differences. "At the beginning of this campaign, I was told by many people how surprised I would be about the differences between Connecticut residents from all over the state," he said. "However, my experience over the past five months has been quite different. People have the same concerns and feelings about our state government in every part of our state."

Those concerns, he said, are consistent with what he hears in New Canaan. "They are primarily concerned about our state economy, the high taxes, and the sky-high electric rates," Fazio said. "Whereas most people in our area thought that local control of zoning was primarily a Fairfield County concern, it turns out that people all across Connecticut are deeply offended by the efforts of the governor and the state legislature to take away more local control of decision-making from our towns and cities."

For New Canaan, where debates over zoning authority, infrastructure, and state mandates have been central in recent years, the campaign's early arc reflects a familiar argument carried onto a larger stage. Whether that argument sustains itself through a full gubernatorial race remains to be seen.

Silvermine Exhibition Introduces New Guild Members

Silvermine Arts Center welcomes 24 new members into its historic Guild of Artists with an exhibition presenting innovation across a variety of artistic disciplines. The new Guild members represent established and emerging artists. Each one brings an original eye and a skilled hand to material and subject matter. The exhibition opened on Jan. 10 and will run through Feb. 6.

Layered landscapes, dynamic weavings, bold color studies, and stunning assemblages explore a capacity for joy or a nuanced vision of the world. Westbrook artist Rosemary Cotnoir's hypnotic paintings evoke rivers seen from above and currents moving beneath the surface.

Evelyn Harvey of New Canaan merges inner and outer worlds in works that include painting and photo transfer. Donna Scarpa of

Ridgefield describes her painting titled Chakras as "energetic, blazing cycles of marigold loop de loops." Barbara Scioscia-Reed of Trumbull adds delicate coiled handles and Sumi brushstrokes to the classical vase form. Salvaged or reclaimed materials find new life in the saturated colors of North Carolina artist Cheryl Prisco's intricate, framed wood sculptures and in the bright geometric patterns of Berlin, CT, artist Eddie Hall's paintings on reclaimed windows.

Textile pieces and works referencing poetry are strong presences in the exhibit. Brooklyn artist Fannie Lee's split, woven tapestries are an interpretation of Chinese landscapes depicting vastness. Adrienne Sloane of Watertown, MA, printed fabric texts of the founding documents of the U.S. that are stretched and twisted until almost unrecognizable.

Literary texts served as inspiration both for Cheryl Prisco in her piece that channels Theodore Roethke's poem, "The Far Field," and for Rick Shafer's large-scale drawings in charcoal on sheets of synthetic vellum, which refer to Chaucer's "The Parson's Tale." Viewers can guess which plants and animals represent the seven deadly sins.

Since its inception, Guild membership has been a selective peer jurying process, and the Guild holds its membership to high standards. Many members have work represented in permanent collections of some of the world's most prestigious museums, as well as prominent private and corporate collections. This exhibition offers visitors an opportunity to engage with the newest members of this dynamic community of professional artists and learn about their works.



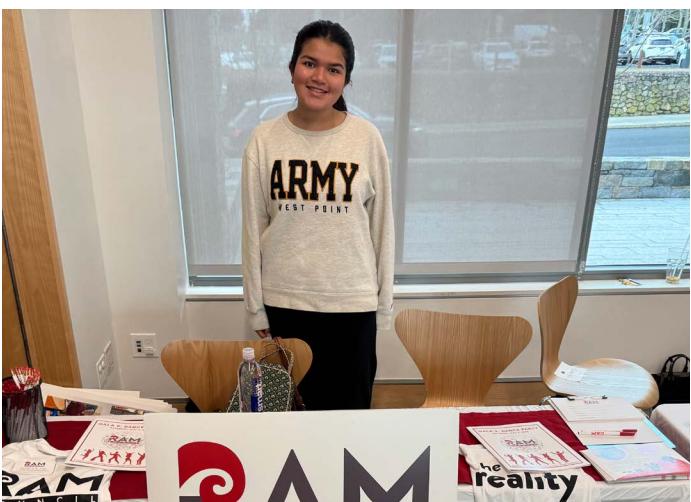
Connections That Count: Volunteer Fair Highlights New Canaan's Civic Heart



New Canaan Library, in partnership with the New Canaan Community Foundation, hosted a Nonprofit Volunteer Fair last Saturday.

Forty nonprofits in New Canaan and the surrounding area had tables at the fair, at which they spoke with the many attendees interested in donating and volunteering, or just learning more about what these charities do. In the words of the Library, this fair was "the place to find answers and make connections" with local charities, which perform so many good works in our community.

Photos by John Kriz



Volunteer Fair Highlights New Canaan's Civic Heart

New Canaan Library and the New Canaan Community Foundation hosted a Volunteer Fair last Saturday that felt less like a recruiting event and more like an exercise in coming together to do something good. Spread across the Library's open spaces, representatives from 40 local nonprofits sat at long tables, not only handing out brochures and sign-up sheets but engaging in something vital these days: human connection.

From mid-morning into the early afternoon, residents streamed in. Some were looking for tangible ways to give back. Others came simply to understand or support the intricate latticework of care, service, and purpose that undergirds life here. They met face-to-face with those doing the slow, patient work of meeting people where they are—feeding, tutoring, transporting, mentoring, healing, planting, teaching, and showing up.

According to the Library, the event was designed to be “the place to find answers and make connections.” It was. But that undersells it. It was a local civics class, not in the theoretical sense, but in the lived, relational one. Whether it was the woman from Meals on Wheels explaining her delivery route through back roads, or the high school student asking questions about Planet New Canaan’s conservation efforts, the room had the texture of neighborliness made visible.

In a town often defined by excellence and performance, Saturday’s gathering emphasized something that also defines New Canaan:

belonging. The nonprofit leaders present weren’t making a pitch; they were extending invitations. An invitation to be part of something that transcends individual striving. To be bound, instead, by common cause.

Each organization told a story, not just of need, but of trust. These are not programs that necessarily scale up easily. They are relationship-driven—relationships that deepen slowly. And they depend on exactly this kind of fair to find, as one attendee put it, “a way in.”

Photographs (at left) by John Kriz captured a glimpse of the people working to keep New Canaan strong. Below are the websites of each organization represented at the fair. These are also clickable, hot-linked, in the digital edition.

ABC New Canaan – abchouseofnc.org

Children in Placement - CT, Inc. – childreninplacement.org

Circle of Care – thecircleofcare.org

Earthplace – earthplace.org

Family & Children's Agency – familyandchildrensagency.org

Filling in the Blanks – fillingintheblanks.org

Food Rescue US/Fairfield County – foodrescue.us/fairfield-county

Fresh Start Furniture (Catholic Charities program) – ccfairfield.org/project/furniture-

ministry

Future 5 – futurefive.org

GetAbout, Inc. – getaboutnc.org

Help for Kids – helpforkidsct.org

Inclusive Together – inclusive2gether.org

JFS of Greenwich – jfsgreenwich.org

Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk – jlsn.org

LiveGirl – golivegirl.org

Meals on Wheels of New Canaan – mowofnc.org

New Canaan Beautification League – newcanaanbeautification.org

New Canaan CARES – newcanaancares.org

New Canaan CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) – newcanaancert.org

New Canaan Community Foundation – newcanaancf.org

New Canaan EMS – newcanaanems.org

New Canaan Land Trust – newcanaanlandtrust.org

New Canaan Library – newcanaanlibrary.org

New Canaan Mounted Troop – newcanaanmountedtroop.org

New Canaan Museum & Historical Society – nchistory.org

New Canaan Nature Center – newcanaannature.org

New Canaan YMCA – newcanaanymca.org

New Canaan Young Life – newcanaanyounglife.org

Open Doors – opendoorsct.org

Pacific House – pacifichouse.org

Person to Person – p2phelps.org

Planet New Canaan – planetnewcanaan.org

Ram Council – ramcouncil.org

Saint Joseph Parenting Center – sjpcenter.org

Silver Hill Hospital – silverhillhospital.org

Stamford Public Education Foundation – spefct.org

Stand Together Against Racism (S.T.A.R.) – star-ct.org

Staying Put in New Canaan – stayingputnc.org

Town Players of New Canaan – tpnc.org

Vote New Canaan (supported by League of Women Voters) – my.lwv.org/connecticut/league-women-voters-new-canaan (local League page)

Waveny LifeCare – waveny.org

Women's Mentoring Network, Inc. – wmninc.org

Library Leaders to Address Men's Club with Program Highlights and Digital Access Tools

On Friday, January 16, Ellen Sullivan Crovatto, CEO of New Canaan Library, and Cheryl Capitani, Library Director, will speak to the New Canaan Men's Club about the Library's current offerings, digital tools, and programs tailored to older adults, lifelong learners, and community members of all ages.

The talk begins at 10:40 a.m. during the Men's Club's weekly meeting at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Guests are welcome.

The event offers members a chance to hear directly from the leaders behind one of the town's most dynamic public resources, now operating out of a new, state-of-the-art facility on South Avenue.

A Vision for Access and Lifelong Learning Capitani, who was instrumental in shaping the new library building, brings 12 years of experience in various leadership roles—including teen services, adult and family programming, and as a member of the building committee. She now oversees operations, services, and infrastructure for the Library.

Crovatto, who leads strategic planning, partnerships, and advancement efforts, is expected to highlight how the Library has expanded its reach with both in-person and digital programming since reopening in 2023.

Their presentation will include information on classes, author talks, lifelong learning

opportunities, and one-on-one tech support available through the Library. Club members will also be encouraged to explore free streaming and digital services such as Kanopy, Libby, and The Great Courses, which are available to all New Canaan Library cardholders.

A Natural Partnership

New Canaan Men's Club members, many of whom are active users of library resources, will also be reminded of the Club's own recorded speaker archive. Dozens of past talks are available at newcanaanmensclub.org

, including lectures on artificial intelligence, international trade, political history, and conservation science.

Recent speakers have included retired U.S. ambassadors, legal scholars, engineers, scientists, and authors—many with ties to New Canaan.

The Men's Club meets weekly and is open to retired or semi-retired men residing in New Canaan and neighboring towns. Meetings combine social connection, civic engagement, and intellectual exchange—an approach that aligns closely with the mission of the New Canaan Library.

Friday's program will offer members a fresh look at how to stay connected, informed, and supported through one of New Canaan's most vital institutions.

New Canaan YMCA Waives Joiner Fee Through January 31, Offers Extra Perks

The New Canaan YMCA is kicking off the new year with an offer for new members that goes beyond typical resolutions: no joiner fee, plus the chance to earn a free month and more fitness perks for sticking with it.

Now through January 31, anyone age 14 and older who joins the Y will receive a complimentary Custom Fit session with a personal trainer. Those who complete 10 workouts

in their first month will earn an additional free month of membership. Members who complete another 10 workouts in their second month can choose a free training session, small-group class, or Y gear.

The promotion is part of the YMCA's ongoing effort to build a healthy, inclusive space for residents of all ages and abilities.

According to the ad, the Y features two

updated fitness centers, three pools, and more than 100 group exercise classes per week—including yoga, Pilates, Zumba, aquatic classes, and chair fitness. Facilities also include a gymnasium with drop-in basketball, pickleball, volleyball, and open gym time for families and individuals.

Programs span from youth sports and swim lessons to chronic disease support, senior

wellness, and activities for individuals with varying abilities. Financial assistance is available for eligible families.

To learn more or to sign up, visit [www.newcanaanymca.org/join-the-y](http://newcanaanymca.org/join-the-y) or call 203.966.4528

DIONNA CARLSON COLUMN

CONTINUED From Page 1

Center for its outstanding Medicare Counseling Services. Medicare options can be complex and confusing because there are multiple parts, plans and rules, and the options have different costs, provider networks and coverage limits. Local volunteer counselors just completed the 20th consecutive year of Lapham helping New Canaan residents find the most appropriate Medicare coverage and save money in the process. In 2025 alone, 157 clients saved \$758,599. Since 2011, these services have resulted in \$4,696,235 in savings for residents.

The program continues this year with appointments available for residents two Thursdays of each month, and Monday through Friday between October 15 and December 7. For appointments call 203-594-3620.

The Community Center is seeking additional volunteer Medicare CHOICES Counselors for the 2026 program. Counselors receive extensive training in all parts of Medicare. If you are interested in getting involved, you may call the CHOICES program manager Katie Wheeler at 203-814-3639.

Police Department Survey

Finally, I encourage residents and businesspeople to participate in the Police Department's Citizen Survey to share feedback on department performance. The survey has been open for a month and closes Thursday January 15. Find the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCPD2025> If you miss the online survey, the department is happy to hear from members of the community throughout the year.

Wishing you a safe and healthy start to the year.

Dionna Carlson is the New Canaan First Selectman. Her leadership is guided by a respect for local decision-making and a commitment to keeping residents informed and engaged. Read more from Dionna each month by subscribing to her email newsletter, News From Town Hall. To sign up to receive the newsletter visit newcanaan.info and click on the red bar at top, Sign Up For Alerts. To read the latest issue of the newsletter, visit newcanaan.info and click on the yellow bar at top, News From Town Hall.

CERT Training Begins Jan. 28

New Canaan's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) will launch its winter 2026 training program on Wednesday, Jan. 28. The course is free and open to all New Canaan residents. Participants receive FEMA-developed instruction in disaster response, emergency preparedness, CPR, "Stop the Bleed," traffic and crowd control, and more.

CERT trains volunteers to assist first responders during emergencies such as storms, power outages, and large-scale town events. "They're an extraordinary group of people – an extraordinary resource for our town," said Russ Kimes, Director of Emergency Management. "I couldn't do my job without their assistance."

Graduates are not required to join

CERT, but those who do become part of a coordinated network that supports police, fire, EMS, and the Emergency Operations Center when needed.

The winter 2026 training dates are:

Wednesdays – Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 18 (6:30 PM-9:30 PM)

Saturdays – Jan. 31, Feb. 7, Feb. 28 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)

Each participant receives a fully equipped emergency backpack upon completing the course. CERT's 105 active members logged more than 1,660 hours of service in 2024, assisting during weather events and major town gatherings like the Fourth of July, May Fair, and Veterans Day.

To register or learn more, visit www.newcanaancert.org.

PLAYING THIS WEEK AT

THE PLAYHOUSE

HAMNET

MARTY SUPREME SONG SUNG BLUE

93 Elm Street
New Canaan

And Join Us in the Pub !

CINEMALAB.COM
for showtimes and tickets

New Canaan Sentinel

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A Presence That Mattered

There was something about Tom Nissley that settled a room. It wasn't his volume—he rarely raised his voice. It wasn't a commanding presence—though his energy suggested a deeper current. It was his way: deliberate, measured, constructive. He carried himself as if time were something to be honored and others something to be esteemed. For those of us lucky enough to sit with him each week at the New Canaan Sentinel coffee, his was a kind of civil ballast—a gentle resistance against the noise of modern life.

He was the sort of man who reminded you, by his example alone, that support doesn't need to be loud to be powerful. Engagement is often confused with confrontation, instead Tom brought clarity: be gracious, be thoughtful, be present.

He was all three.

Each Friday, he came—a little early. Coffee in hand, notebook tucked under one arm, newsprint neatly folded. He listened first, then offered a comment or an insight—never performative, always generous. It wasn't just that he cared about the *Sentinel*, though he did, and we felt it deeply; it was that he believed in the larger civic fabric it wove. He contributed regularly—dispatches from local stages and playhouses—finding the moments worth celebrating, even in the flawed or the unpolished. He was a critic only in name. In practice, he was a celebrant.

In his passing, we are reminded that good communities are made not by those who dominate the room, but by those who show up, week after week, with care, curiosity, and good cheer. His instincts were restorative: to notice, to preserve, to support. He saw institutions not as monoliths but as living things—churches, historic houses, land trusts, newsrooms—all in need of tending, of stewardship.

To describe his legacy is to speak in plural: he left behind protected lands, preserved homes, nurtured relationships, emboldened neighbors. He served as a minister, a therapist, a preservationist, a writer, and a Realtor. But even these labels fail to capture what he actually did. He helped other people become better versions of themselves. He encouraged. He steadied. He noticed.

Civic life is often marked by flash and clamor, but its endurance relies on something else entirely: on patience, on grace, on the steady hum of commitment. Tom Nissley gave his town that. And now, in his absence, we are left not only with sorrow but with instruction.

Leave nastiness at the door. Support what you love with enthusiasm and a positive approach. Be gracious. Be energetic in your praise and limited in your scolding.

There was never anything passive about Tom's gentleness. It was principled. It was practiced. And it was, in a sense, defiant—in the best sense of that word. "Grace is not part of consciousness," wrote Marilynne Robinson. "It is the amount of light in our souls, not knowledge nor reason." Tom carried that light. It shaped the way he preserved homes, greeted newcomers, reviewed plays, or lingered after meetings to thank someone for their effort.

He reminded us that community is not a given—it is a posture, a set of habits. And those habits must be taught, modeled, protected.

The lesson he leaves is not complicated, but it is essential: If you want to change something, support it. If you want to be heard, listen first. If you want to be remembered, lift others up.

We will miss him—his gentle voice, his colorful ties, his love of performance, his knack for making people feel seen. But more than that, we will try to be a little more like him. It's the least we can do. And maybe the best.

Editorial Page



"It's too late! Bob's brain has been sucked out by the internet!"

Thank you to the New Canaan Community

To the Editor,

As a recent transplant to New Canaan, I moved here expecting a charming town, but I wasn't prepared for the overwhelming depth of its heart. Working at Waveny LifeCare Network over this holiday season has given me a front-row seat to a level of community collaboration and generosity that is, quite frankly, unlike anything I've seen elsewhere.

Our halls have been brighter, and our spirits lifted thanks to an incredible outpouring of local support. I want to publicly share my gratitude for all the partners who made this season so meaningful for our residents and staff. Thank you to the National Charity League (NCL) and the Service League of Boys (SLOBs), whose multigenerational energy and hands-on decorating remind us daily of the strength of our local youth. Thank you to The New

England Academy of Dance, as well as so many school and local choral groups, for bringing the grace and magic of the season to our residents through their beautiful performances. Thank you to Pennyweights, UBS, and so many other local businesses for their corporate generosity and for investing in the well-being of our seniors. Thank you to our local clergy and spiritual communities for joyfully celebrating the season with us. Thank you to the New Canaan Beautification League, the New Canaan Garden Club, the Exchange Club of New Canaan, the Rotary Club of New Canaan, and the Wilton Turnover Shop for always being steadfast partners—supporting us, keeping us engaged in local events, and ensuring our campus always looks beautiful.

And so on...

I couldn't possibly cover all the countless

individuals, past and present family members, and volunteer groups who dropped off gifts, shared their talents, or simply spent time with us this season. Please know you are deeply appreciated, and we are so grateful. And, if you would like to come for a tour or spend some time volunteering with us, please don't hesitate to contact me.

To my neighbors in New Canaan: thank you for welcoming me into this community, and more importantly, thank you for the way you look after Waveny. You don't just support an organization; you embrace it as family.

With gratitude,

Kerry Filippone

Director of Volunteers

Waveny LifeCare Network

Martin Luther King Day Celebratory Service

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.

Local International Singer-songwriter Drops New Album and Performs Locally

Laura Budzelek is a multilingual singer-songwriter and actress. The artist's operatic background makes her stand apart from other pop rock singers. *TIMELESS TURQUOISE*, is scheduled for release on January 23, 2006! Fans will be pleased to discover fresh tracks that experiment with new genres, while maintaining Laura's signature style. Her latest singles, "I Became the Rock," "I'm Done," "Cheers to Love" and "Timeless Turquoise" recently dropped! Best of all, she will perform this Saturday, January 10th at 4:00pm, at the Ferguson Library in Stamford.

TIMELESS TURQUOISE, Laura Budzelek's sophomore album, is a revolutionary collection of powerful tracks. Listeners are transported to another dimension...perhaps the past or the future, yet they are always in the moment. Elements of classic rock, soul, folk, hip-hop and even rap are all blended into a melodious flow. The artist's hypnotic mezzo-soprano voice seduces her audience to enjoy uplifting unique music and lyrics. Her recent travels to Santa

Fe, San Antonio, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Paris, London, Madrid and Salamanca, all inspired her writing and left a cultural imprint in her songs.

Laura Budzelek has been featured on television with News 12 in Connecticut, New York and Long Island. Her bold music video "Get Up Now and Move" was filmed in London. She has kicked off her 2025/2026 tour at a palace in Spain and will appear at memorable venues in the United States and elsewhere. Her single "Relish the Romance" was recorded at Abbey Road Studios on none other than Valentine's Day and has been remastered and featured on

TIMELESS TURQUOISE. Laura's debut album *TREASURE THE WORLD NOW* is available on major music platforms and selective stores such as Academy Records & CDs, Rough Trade NYC, The Historical Society, Hogwild Records in Texas, Fetén Discos in Spain, Crocodisc in Paris and Portobello Music in London. Her songs take

listeners on a journey through melodies and lyrics reminiscent of French cafés, Caribbean

festivities, grand Viennese ballrooms, Celtic folk and New Orleans brass bands. On her tracks, Laura sings, plays keyboards and is joined by talented musicians on bass guitar, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, trumpet, violin, sousaphone, electric mandolin and drums. The eclectic record is a captivating stream of music.

Fans can follow Laura on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. She has been featured in British and American media, in addition to interviews in Spain, France and Italy. Laura has performed in acclaimed venues in Europe and New York, including the Casino de Salamanca, The Fiddler's Elbow, Symphony Space, The National Opera Center and the Austrian Consulate General in Manhattan. She sings musical theatre and holds New York theatre and IMDb credits as well. The international artist and her band perform original songs and popular covers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean (www.laurabudzelek.com).

Submit Your Letters Here

NewCanaanSentinel.com/letter-to-the-editor/

At The New Canaan Sentinel, we value the opinions and insights of our readers. Our "Letters to the Editor" section is dedicated to providing a platform for the community to say thank you and to share their views.

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By SCOTT HERR

Although most of the world has moved on to headlines about Venezuela, ICE shootings, the latest economic indicators, or football championships, in the church we still are savoring the last chapter of the Christmas story, the part known as the Epiphany, celebrated on the 6th of January. As the Rev. Marek Zabriskie from Greenwich noted in his fine article last week, Epiphany is known as the "Feast of the Magi," and we Christians name each Sunday (this year for 6 weeks) the "1st Sunday after the Epiphany," "the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany," etc. until the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which this year fall

on February 18th and begins the season of Lent.

I invite you to continue to reflect on why Epiphany is important and given so many weeks for reflection in the ecclesiastical calendar? Who were the "Wise Men, anyway? Scholars uniformly believe they were Zoroastrian priests from Persia (Iran), astrologers, students of the stars. They were men of the science of their day and followed evidence in pursuit of truth.

And what did they find? According to the story found in Matthew 2:1-18, the wise men did not discover a new theory of the universe. They did not discover a new philosophy or political movement. They did not even discover a new religion. There as the star stopped over Bethlehem they were overwhelmed with joy, because they found a young baby. And when they found the infant Jesus, they "knelt down

and paid him homage." They worshipped Jesus by offering themselves and their gifts.

There are three things that strike me about these distant journeyers that might be worth our consideration today. The first is the fact that they were seekers. Many Christmas cards feature a bright star hovering over the holy family, but only the Magi noticed the star among the thousands of others visible stars on a clear night. The local political leaders of the time looked to these visitors to lead them to the newborn king. Matthew's theme here, perhaps, is the hiddenness of the Christ, the small and often unnoticed ways God enters our lives in epiphanies large and small. This hiddenness is a kind of divine signature. And so it is the Magi,

as Seekers, are those who find, because they are looking, they are searching.

After they found the child, Matthew writes "they went home by another road." You can never go the same road home after you've had an encounter with God... But even by another road, they had to go back home to their people. Which is the second thing that strikes me about the Magi. They are foreigners, intruders on the manger scene. They are Gentiles, non-Jews, people outside of the ancient covenants of Israel; men with no apparent claim upon the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but people for whom God cared for deeply and guided in a way they understood to discover the Christ.

The third thing that strikes

me about these Magi is they are not Kings. In churches around the country every holiday season, we sing incorrectly every year, "We three Kings of Orient Are." Early Christian thinkers, such as Origen (c. 185-253 AD) and St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407 AD), began interpreting the Magi as kings to align with prophecies of kings worshipping the Messiah. But, in fact, there are only two kings mentioned in the gospel narrative: King Herod and King Jesus. The Magi are caught between the two and must choose who they will honor.

Consider in your own spiritual journey: that being a "seeker" is the only way you will find; that to pursue questions, doubts, and curiosity is an essential component of

healthy spirituality. Consider that it is often the "foreigner," the stranger, the outsider, who shows us a new way. We would do well as a society to reflect more thoughtfully on the importance of the stranger in our midst, and the divine imperative to protect and care for them, "for you were once foreigners in Egypt." And finally, as we move through these weeks of Epiphany beginning a new calendar year, consider that like the Magi, you have a choice about what "king" you will serve. To what kind of power and authority will you bend the knee? Choose wisely! And may we be transformed and find ourselves taking another way home, following the star of God's glorious light and love for all people.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Herr is one of the pastors serving the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan (fpcnc.org)

We Three Kings?

In fact, there are only two kings mentioned in the gospel narrative...

Worship Directory and Services

UPDATE SERVICES AND ADD SPECIAL EVENTS TO THIS CALENDAR AT www.NewCanaanSentinel.com/worship-calendar-updates

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:

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 PrayerRite 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

Upcoming Events:

February 28 at 6 PM: The professional members of the St. Mark's Choir will delight everyone with their talents in a program of solos from operas, oratorios, and musicals, as well as entertaining works for vocal ensemble. A festive reception will follow.

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 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.templestainastamford.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

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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=d=bFJQem9HWFcxU0EzZUM2VNEZm](https://zoom.us/j/94358392426?pwd=d=bFJQem9HWFcxU0EzZUM2VNEZmgyUT09#success)



Obituaries

WILLIAM KING

William Eldridge King, age 73, died in his sleep on December 26, 2025, after several years of declining health.

Elly was born in Chicago, IL, on November 29, 1952, to the late John Eldridge and Mary Jane Volkmann King. The family moved to New Canaan in 1955, where Elly spent his childhood. He graduated from N.C.H.S. in 1970 and headed west. He graduated from the University of Oregon and became a lifelong Ducks fan.

He spent his adulthood living and working in California and Idaho. Upon retirement, he moved to Summerlin, NV.

He is survived by his twin brother, John, of VT and his sisters: Jenifer Falls (John) of Jefferson, NC, Mary King (Wojton) of Lakewood Ranch, FL and Laura King (Craig Kopka) of Lakewood Ranch, FL. He is also survived by his nieces, Sara Wojton of Miami, FL and Alexandra W. Sayegh (Michel) of Miami and their three children, and his nephew, J. Wilson King of VT.

He leaves behind his best friend, Jeff Watt, who made his last years comfortable and his beloved dog, Duncan.



JOHANNA ARMSTRONG

Johanna "Jo" Fuess Armstrong, 95, of Naples, FL, passed away on January 4, 2026.

Jo (a.k.a. Jo Jo) was born in Syracuse, NY, on September 9, 1930, to Winifred and Frederick Fuess. She grew up in Baldwinsville, NY, with her siblings, Terry, Bob and Kate. She attended Syracuse University, where she received a Bachelor's degree and was a proud member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. Shortly after her college graduation, Jo's mother took her on a year-long European exploration, along with her 10-year-old sister, Kate, and their trusted station wagon. Upon returning, she began her career with General Electric, where she met her future husband, Bob. They married in 1954 and started their life together in the Syracuse, NY area. They began their family and had 2 children, Carol and Rob.

The family moved with Bob's career to Schenectady, NY, New Canaan, CT, Saratoga, CA, and then back to New Canaan. Upon Bob's retirement in 1988, Jo and Bob made the decision to spend their retirement years in sunny Naples, FL, where she lived until October 2025. Recently, with increased medical issues, Jo made the courageous decision to move to Montgomery, Ohio, to be closer to family.

In both New Canaan and Naples, Jo was a leader in the local Kappa Alpha Theta Alumni chapters. In Naples, she was active with the Naples United Church of Christ. Jo created a community of NUCC members at Bentley Village, where they watched the live streaming of the weekly service together. Additionally, Jo served as a Steven's Minister for several years.

Friendship was the cornerstone of her life and everywhere she lived, Jo made lifelong friends. Jo will always be remembered as a strong, spiritual, kind, generous and loving person. She always liked being well-dressed, complete with matching lipstick. Jo was a fascinating and multidimensional woman and

her smile was bright and contagious.

Jo was predeceased by her husband, siblings, and granddaughter. Jo is survived by her two children, Carol Rubeo (Ed) and Rob Armstrong (Shannon), and four grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the future in New Canaan, CT, where she will be buried next to her husband, Bob.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Beaver Lake Nature Center (Please note the "Fuess Fund"), 8477 E. Mud Lake Rd., Baldwinsville, NY 13027.



MARGUERITE REED

Marguerite "Margot" Mann Reed, of Ligonier, died on Jan. 4, 2026. Born on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1933, in Birmingham, AL, Margot was the daughter of Kathleen Clarke Mann and Kenneth Dudley Mann. She and her late brother, Kenneth "Tod" D. Mann Jr., grew up in Birmingham, Youngstown, Ohio, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh, which gave her a lifelong ease with new people and places.

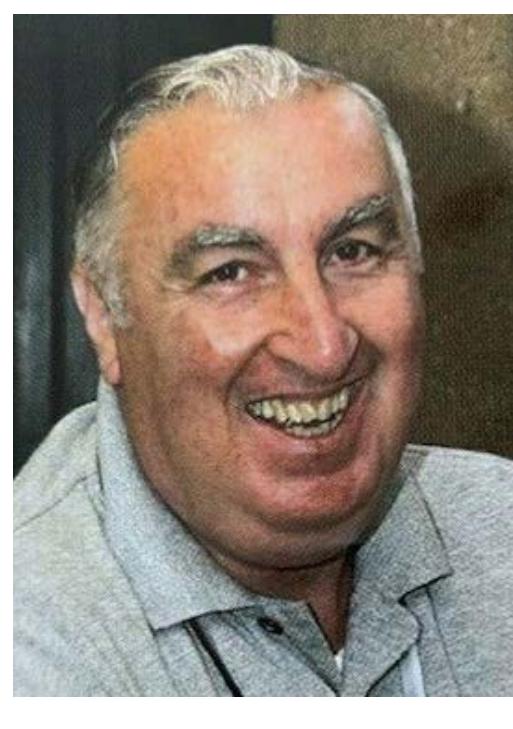
Margot was a graduate of The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, NY, and Briarcliff College. On July 10, 1954, she married Henry Mason Reed Jr., beginning a devoted partnership that lasted an extraordinary 72 years. She is survived by her husband, Mason; and their three daughters, Elizabeth (Ted) Gramkow, Robin Reed, and Laura (Andrew) Schulkind. She loved being a grandmother to Megan (Derek) Minnema, Taylor (Christina Lim) Gramkow, Casey Schulkind, and Ella Schulkind, and a great-grandmother to three wonderful, spirited boys.

Margot and Mason spent 42 years in Darien and New Canaan, CT, where they raised their family while Mason worked in the New York City area. She served for many years as a guidance counselor at New Canaan County School and was involved with institutions she cared most about, including The Masters School (as both an Alumnae Board member and Trustee), and served on the Board of Friends of Winterthur. After retiring to Ligonier in 1998, Margot and Mason enjoyed time with friends, travel, and a full and happy life in the Ligonier Valley. She later served on the Board of Fort Ligonier, a historic site that held special meaning for her, and as a member of the Strategic Committee of the Valley School.

At Margot's request, all services will be private and held at the convenience of the family.

If desired, memorial contributions may be made to St. Michael's of the Valley Cemetery, P.O. Box 336, Ligonier, PA 15658, or Fort Ligonier, 200 South Market St., Ligonier, PA 15658.

Margot will be remembered for her warmth, quiet generosity, and deep love for her family, friends, and community.



HENRY ANDRONACO

Henry Louis Gehrig Andronaco, 84, a lifelong resident of New Canaan, CT, passed away on December 30, 2025. Born on October 31, 1941, Henry proudly served his community through his work with the New Canaan Public Schools and was a devoted supporter of New Canaan High School Athletics.

He was predeceased by his parents, Joseph and Lillian Andronaco; his sister, Louise Andronaco; and his brother, Anthony Andronaco.

Henry is survived by his brother, Joseph Andronaco; his nephews and niece, Michael and Jessica Andronaco, Anthony Andronaco, Joseph John Andronaco, and Laura Andronaco; and his great-nephews and niece, Zachary Andronaco, Addison Andronaco, Noah Andronaco, and Isabelle Andronaco.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Saint Aloysius Church 21 Cherry St, New Canaan, CT on Saturday, January 17, 2026, at 11:00 am. Interment will be Private.

Angela Cristiano, Nancy Brown, Anthony Conetta and Mario Conetta, all predeceased her, as did niece Barbara Conetta and nephew Thomas Conetta.

A funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, January 17 at 11 a.m. at St. Leo's Church, 24 Roxbury Road, Stamford, CT. Interment in Lakeview Cemetery will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to your church, your preferred charity, or to Brookside Garden in Wheaton, MD, through mountgomeryparksfoundation.org



MARY HOFMANN

Mary Joan Hofmann, 84, a devoted wife, adored mother and grandmother, and cherished friend to many, passed away peacefully on December 27, 2025, in Wilton, CT.

Joan, as she was affectionately known, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Mary and Charles Joseph McGonigal and was raised in a close-knit family alongside her siblings, Charles Joseph Jr. ("Bud") and Susan.

Joan graduated from Chestnut Hill College with a degree in English and began her career as a high school English teacher. Shortly thereafter, she married the love of her life and high school sweetheart, Richard Hofmann. Together, they shared 62 blissful years together, taking great joy in their five beautiful children, Rick, Beth, Tricia, John, and Chris; and nine grandchildren: John, Will, Matthew, Andrew, Cooper, Emerson, Kezia, Alexandra, and Isabelle. She is also survived by her daughters-in-law, Stephanie, Elizabeth, and Annalise; and her son-in-law, Adam.

A longtime resident of New Canaan, CT for more than 30 years, Joan was deeply involved in the schools and community, serving actively in the PTA and dedicating countless hours to supporting local initiatives. Above all, she was a devoted parent, who never missed her children's sporting events or concerts. She always looked forward to spending summers on Nantucket and delighted in a full houseful of family, spending quality time together. The beach was her happy place, and the spirited discussions at the dinner table always made her smile. She loved to travel, and her and Rich's trips to many fascinating places filled their lives with many wonderful friends and memories.

Joan will be remembered for her kindness, warmth, resilience, and ever-present smile. She always saw the best in people. Her thoughtful advice, deep sense of compassion, and legendary handwritten thank-you notes were a profound reflection of the care she extended to everyone in her life.

A celebration of Joan's life will take place at the Roger Sherman Inn in New Canaan on April 17, 2026; details to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Joan's memory to the Alzheimer's Association.



LORETTA SERAFINO

Loretta Ann Serafino, a longtime resident of Stamford, died on December 29, 2025, at a Kensington Park Senior Living residence in Kensington, MD, at age 104. She was born on December 9, 1921, in New Canaan, CT, to the late Daniel and Maria Conetta. She graduated from New Canaan High School in 1939, and then from the Merrill Business School in Stamford. During World War II, she worked at the Boots Aircraft Nut Corporation and later at Brotherhood & Higley, both in New Canaan. A few years after marrying Edward P. Serafino in 1946, she moved to Stamford where she lived until joining her daughter in Maryland in 2015. She contributed to the founding of the Roxbury Swim Club in the 1950s and worked as a travel agent for many years. She joined St. Leo's Parish when it was founded in 1960 and later became an active member of its senior group. She loved gardening and decorating and was a truly great cook. Her husband predeceased her in 2005.

She is survived by her son, Edward L. Serafino, and his wife, Christina, of Lewes, DE, and their sons, David, James, and Michael Serafino, and great-grandson Christopher (David's son), as well as by her daughter, Nina Maria Serafino, and her husband, Dennis Gilbert, of Bethesda, MD. Other survivors include God-daughters Linda Reed and Patricia Muller (also a niece), and nephew Donald Conetta, and many grand and great-grandnieces and nephews. Her siblings,

At Margot's request, all services will be private and held at the convenience of the family.

A Plan for Change: Pillars and Policy Goals

By ELIZABETH BARRYDT

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 beginning with its first fundraising dinner, 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 introduced readers to Vivienne Cecilia Finn, a Sacred Heart of Greenwich student whose diagnosis with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma led her family into a world of radiation, MRIs and clinical trials. Her story became the foundation for a new organization created in her name.

Part Two examined pediatric neuro-oncology at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, where Dr. Asher Marks and Dr. Vidya Puthenpura described the realities of treating rare childhood brain tumors, the pressures families face and the gaps that persist in supportive care.

When the last plates of Vivienne's favorite dessert (ice box chocolate cake) left the tables at the Founders' Dinner, the focus of the evening shifted from remembrance to resolve. For the Finn family, telling Vivienne's story is essential. But the creation of the Vivienne C. Finn Foundation is not only an act of grief or love; it is a response to structural gaps that continue to shape the lives of children with cancer. This final installment examines those gaps and the foundation's plan to close them—through research investment, family support and legislative change now gathering traction in Hartford and Washington.

For many in the room that November night, the statistics Mairead Finn shared were jarring. "Only four percent of the National Cancer Institute's budget goes to pediatric cancer research," she said. Of that, an even smaller fraction supports the rarest cancers, including diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma. The imbalance is long-documented by pediatric organizations and acknowledged by clinicians. Drug companies, operating in a financial model built around adult disease, face little incentive to develop treatments for cancers that strike fewer individuals and often require longer, costlier early-phase trials. As Dr. Asher Marks noted, "It's a very poor business decision."

That reality shapes the foundation's first pillar: accelerating drug development for rare pediatric cancers. The Finns understand firsthand how thin the pipeline can feel. After Vivienne's first clinical trial showed progression, her family began researching other investigational options. They found promise in a molecule then known as ONC201, a therapy aimed at the molecular drivers of certain diffuse midline gliomas. But the company manufacturing the drug was struggling to maintain supply for expanded use. "The parent company was running out of supply," Mairead told the audience. The family decided to make a direct philanthropic investment to keep the drug in production, and they worked closely with physicians and researchers to help open an expanded-access arm of the study at Yale.

Vivienne died four months after initiating treatment, but her parents remain convinced that she helped set the stage for progress. In 2025, the Food and Drug Administration granted accelerated approval to dordaviprone, the therapy formerly called ONC201, for certain pediatric brain tumors. Only seven drugs specifically tailored to children's cancer biology have been approved in the past several decades. The foundation's aim is to help ensure that new candidates follow more quickly. To that end, David and Mairead participate in scientific review meetings with organizations such as the Sontag Foundation and the Ellos Foundation and maintain a close partnership with the ChadTough Defeat DIPG Foundation, which evaluates promising early-stage research across the country.

The second pillar—supporting families—reflects another set of realities: the financial, logistical and emotional burdens that begin on the day of diagnosis. "One in four lose about 40 percent of their income," Mairead said. For many families, the early weeks

of treatment involve daily travel, abrupt changes in employment, time away from siblings and a sudden immersion in medical terminology. Something as small as a toiletry bag at the Ronald McDonald House made a difference in the Finns' own experience. "These are invaluable for people rushing out the door with a sick child," she said.

To meet those needs, the foundation has built a resource hub that consolidates travel assistance, lodging options, financial aid programs and psychosocial support. The site was created by a family friend known as Nini, and the foundation intends to add more Connecticut-specific resources in the coming year. The goal is not only to help families navigate their first days after diagnosis, but also to reduce disparities in access to information—gaps that clinicians say can affect outcomes.

This pillar includes another initiative strongly shaped by clinician feedback. Families facing pediatric brain tumor diagnoses often describe the treatment landscape as a maze: multiple trials, complex molecular data, differing eligibility rules and difficult decisions about whether to remain local or travel for care.

The Finns helped support the launch of My DIPG Navigator, a 24-hour nurse-practitioner program offering individualized guidance on symptoms, side effects, trial eligibility and treatment transitions. "What's my next trial?" is one of the most common questions. So is, "How long should I wash out of this drug?" The service aims to give families a clear point of contact in moments of uncertainty.

The foundation's vision for family support extends beyond patients. Siblings often shoulder unspoken burdens—fear, confusion, depression and the disruption of daily life. The Finns hope to collaborate with Yale New Haven to fund psychologists dedicated to pediatric oncology families, helping ensure that children who are not patients also receive structured support. They also plan to advocate for stronger coverage of clinical trials under HUSKY and Medicaid so that Connecticut families are not forced to choose between financial stability and medical access.

The **third pillar—legislative advocacy—**has grown more urgent in recent months. At the dinner, Mairead spoke about her work with Kids v Cancer and executive director Nancy Goodman to advance the Give Kids a Chance Act, federal legislation designed to modernize pediatric trial design and improve access to combination therapies. At the time, the bill had strong bipartisan support but had not yet reached the floor.

That changed December 1. "The House of Representatives passed unanimously the renamed Mikaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act and so we are onto the Senate for a vote," Mairead wrote in a message updating supporters. She expressed gratitude to those who helped advance the measure.

"I have received co-sponsorship from Senator Blumenthal, Senator Murphy and Representative Himes. I wish to thank them for giving kids a chance at life."

The bill's renaming carries its own story. Mikaela Naylor, a 16-year-old from Oklahoma who spent nearly six years pursuing treatment for osteosarcoma, became a tireless advocate for improving access to pediatric trials. She died on October 29. Earlier this year, Senator Markwayne Mullin introduced the bill with Senator Michael Bennet, and in the days before the House vote, Mullin announced that it would be renamed in Mikaela's honor. In remarks entered into the congressional record, Mullin described Mikaela as "a fighter and a fierce advocate" who "never once wavered in her effort to bring awareness to the importance of patient access to life-changing therapeutics and trials."

The Finns traveled to Washington and met Mikaela's parents, Kassandra and Doug. "They are the loveliest of people," Mairead said. "They told us it was surreal to see their daughter's picture on the floor of the House of Representatives—never the reality you hoped for your child but yet an honor that she will be remembered as giving her life for others." Together with other advocates, they sat in the gallery and watched the unanimous vote.

For the Finns, these issues are not abstractions. They remember scrambling for childcare for their other children, negotiating time away from work and navigating insurance approvals that arrived



Families and advocates gathered in Washington to witness the House vote on the Mikaela Naylor Give Kids a Chance Act. The group, including Kassandra and Doug Naylor and supporters of the Vivienne C. Finn Foundation, met after the unanimous passage of the bill, which now moves to the Senate for consideration.

"Children make up 25% of the population, and they are 100% of the future." — Mairead Finn

The bill contains two provisions that align directly with the foundation's policy priorities. The first expands the Pediatric Priority Review Voucher Program, which incentivizes companies to develop pediatric treatments by offering expedited review for future drugs. The second allows children to participate in combination trials that include both investigational therapies and already-approved targeted medicines. For diseases like DIPG, where single agents rarely produce meaningful results, the ability to study combinations earlier in the treatment process is critical.

If adopted by the Senate, the bill would represent one of the most significant federal pediatric oncology reforms in more than a decade. For the Finns and for clinicians like Dr. Marks and Dr. Vidya Puthenpura, legislative movement signals a shift toward more equitable trial design.

The foundation is also shaping a parallel effort in Connecticut. Working with State Representative Tina Courpas and State Representative Nicole Dieter, Mairead is advocating for a state tax-refund checkbox allowing residents to direct a portion of their refund to pediatric cancer research. Eight states have implemented similar programs, collectively generating tens of millions of dollars for research, family support and trial infrastructure.

Mairead argues that Connecticut's contributions should support clinical research at Yale New Haven and UConn Health, giving families the opportunity to remain home while pursuing cutting-edge care.

"Our kids need to do their trials at home," she said at the dinner. Keeping children local preserves school routines, reduces emotional strain and allows siblings to remain connected during prolonged treatment.

Other Connecticut priorities include strengthening HUSKY coverage for clinical trials and funding statewide nurse-navigator resources to ensure families can access timely guidance anywhere in the state. These initiatives are grounded in the realities described by Yale's pediatric neuro-oncology team: families with unmet basic needs experience worse outcomes, private insurance denials delay care, and clinical teams are stretched thin when hospital budgets cut essential psychosocial services.

The foundation's policy agenda is rooted in practical experience. Dr. Marks has seen families lose jobs, drain savings and struggle with transportation for daily radiotherapy appointments. Dr. Puthenpura's research shows that nearly half of families treated at Yale face at least one unmet basic need—food insecurity, unstable housing, difficulty paying utilities or lack of transportation. These conditions contribute to delayed presentation, increased treatment complications and higher financial stress. Legislative change cannot erase the emotional toll of childhood cancer, but it can address preventable structural barriers that worsen outcomes.

For the Finns, these issues are not abstractions. They remember scrambling for childcare for their other children, negotiating time away from work and navigating insurance approvals that arrived



too slowly. They remember

rushing to Yale unprepared and relying on the simplest acts of generosity from strangers. They remember the difference it made when doctors were able to open an expanded-access trial near home, allowing Vivienne to sleep in her own bed and attend school when she felt well enough.

"Children want to be around their siblings," Mairead said. "They want to go to school." Supporting that normalcy is part of the foundation's mission.

As the evening at the Founders' Dinner drew to a close, Mairead returned to a theme she carried through each of the three pillars.

"We all live under the shade of

trees planted by others," she said.

Her hope is that the work now underway will grow into trees that shelter future families—families who may face the same words she heard on Diagnosis Day but with more options, better support and a clearer path forward.

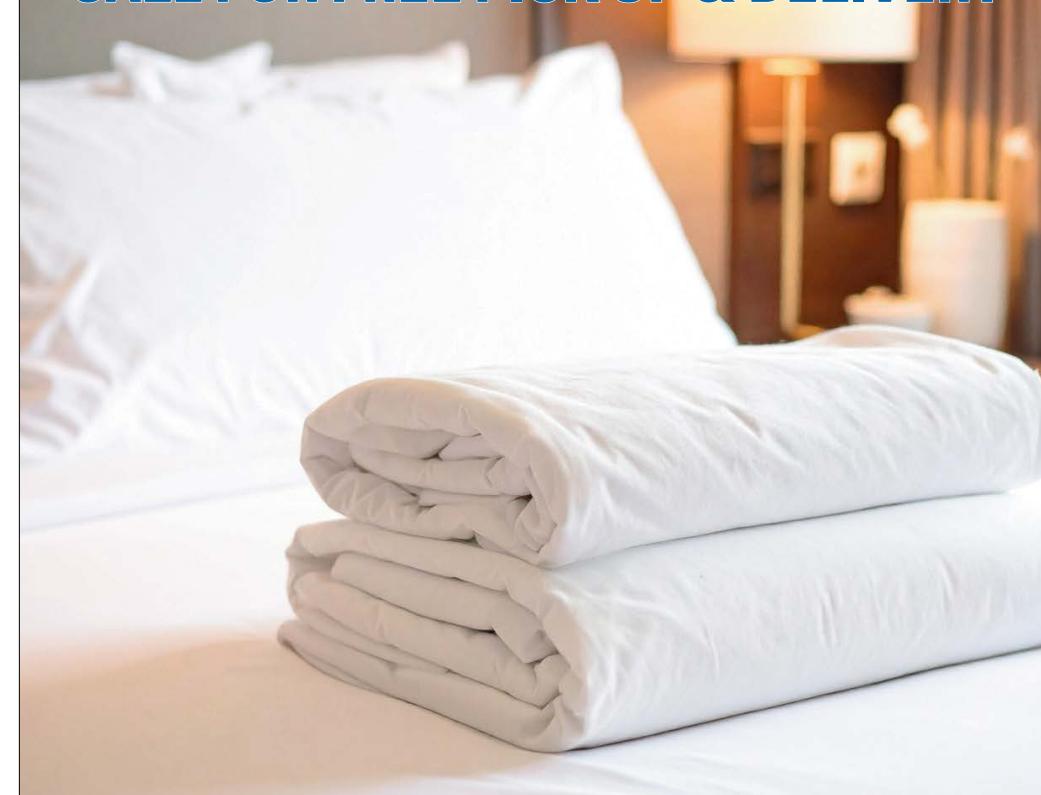
She urged attendees to remain engaged. "Give within your means, but give often," she said. She asked them to tell newly diagnosed families that the foundation exists, and to lend their voices to legislative efforts in Hartford and Washington. And she reminded them, as she had throughout the night, why this work matters.

"Children make up 25% of the

American population," she said, "and they are 100% of our future."

The story of Vivienne's life launched a foundation. The work of that foundation now moves into laboratories, hospital clinics, legislative chambers and living rooms across Connecticut. The pillars set out that night—better drugs, stronger family support and smarter laws—are ambitious, but they reflect a conviction at the heart of the Finn family's mission: no child should die from cancer, and no family should face that journey alone.

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



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NCHS Dramafest at Powerhouse

By MILO ZINSER-TRUDEL

On January 9, New Canaan High School's 2026 Dramafest was hosted by the Town Players of New Canaan at the Powerhouse Theatre in Waveny Park. Dramafest, an annual event at NCHS, is a showcase of one-act plays written, directed and performed entirely by students. Dramafest was performed in the more intimate 115-seat space after many years in the NCHS Auditorium. Theatre Coordinator Chris Myers said, "The High School sometimes felt too large and drowned out smaller plays. We were all glad to have the opportunity to perform in the Powerhouse Theatre." TPNC co-President Patricia Spugani added, "We were so proud to have the students at the Powerhouse. They brought incredible energy and creativity to the stage!"

The event included six plays by high school students, with every grade represented: Once Upon a Glitch by freshman Adrienne Wells, Disaster on the Highway by junior Anna Trofimova, Now That's Peachy Keen! by sophomores Jack Ericson and Nora Nussbaum, Mother and Daughter by sophomore Gavin Stannard, F+O=? by sophomores Milo Zinser-Trudel and Ari Pharsky, and Family Feud by junior Hank Durfee and senior Maddy Peterson.

On participating in her final Dramafest, Peterson said, "Dramafest for the past three years has been very meaningful to me, as I've been able to take creative risks and watch stories that I spend a lot of time creating come to life. I discovered my love for writing and directing during the first year I took part in Dramafest, and I knew that I was going to continue participating for as long as I could. It felt like a full-circle moment watching my last show get produced and performed, as I was able to celebrate my years participating in Dramafest as well as look ahead to future years if I choose to become involved in writing or directing again."

Unlike other high school productions, which typically spend around two months on rehearsals, all of Dramafest was produced in just one week. Students arrived at the Powerhouse Theatre on Monday afternoon to read selections from the plays, which directors used to cast parts. After rehearsals on Tuesday and Wednesday and a final dress rehearsal on Thursday, Dramafest opened on Friday night with two sold-out performances.

Freshman Julia Savelli, who

acted in three of the plays, said "I was super excited to participate in Dramafest as my first performance at NCHS. I had expected it to be much higher stakes, but was relieved that it was truly all for fun. The cast, crew, and directors did such a phenomenal job making it impressively high quality for what little time we had to prepare it. It was such a cool, creative space for everyone to have a fun time while creating hilarious, and moving art."

All of the costumes and props used onstage were provided by students or pulled from the Powerhouse's collection. Students Isla Campbell, Finn Bumbulis and Chace Howe served as stage managers, with lighting designed and operated by senior Nina de Guzman.

New Canaan High School's remaining productions this school year are William Shakespeare's Macbeth (March 6-7), and the musicals You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown (March 27-28) and And the World Goes 'Round (May 29-30). Information about tickets is available at www.newcanaanhightschooltheatre.com.

The Town Players of New Canaan is a non-profit producing community theatre, whose upcoming productions are One Man, Two Guvnors (opening February 27), The Father (April 24), and Once (June 5). Tickets are available at tpnc.org.



(L-R) Tessa Madden, Nick Plasencia, and Jackson Cash onstage in "Disaster on the Highway" at NCHS Dramafest 2026 (photo by Milo Zinser-Trudel)

(L-R) Tessa Madden, Nick Plasencia, and Jackson Cash onstage in "Disaster on the Highway" at NCHS Dramafest 2026 (photo by Milo Zinser-Trudel)



Jack Ericson onstage during Dramafest rehearsals (photo by Milo Zinser-Trudel)



Julia Savelli (lying down) and Emilee Maguire onstage in "Mother and Daughter" at NCHS Dramafest 2026 (photo by Milo Zinser-Trudel)

COLUMN

Two Major Issues and One Possible Solution

By MIMI SANTRY

The lack of affordable housing is a concern facing many younger people in the U.S. Construction hasn't kept up with demand, and many municipalities have greatly restricted the development of new inventory through permitting and other regulatory restrictions. According to the National Association of Realtors, the national median single-family home now costs \$426,800, making home ownership unattainable for many first-time purchasers. Home ownership, a key component of the "American Dream" previously happened for 20-30-year-olds and now many families have to wait until they are in their 40's... if at all.

At the same time, there is a crisis of older Americans who

are dealing with loneliness and isolation. Many older people need help with basic chores and would welcome having an able-bodied tenant/roommate to help and with whom to interact. Could the solution to both challenges be the acceptance and promotion of longer-term intergenerational housing? Utilizing the existing housing stock of 145 million homes more efficiently and providing homeowners/tenants with a

roadmap for how to structure this kind of arrangement ----might be a path to consider. By encouraging and allowing house-sharing arrangements, we might be able to mitigate two problems with one solution.

Imagine a system where students/young adults would receive attractive housing in exchange for reduced rent and an obligation to help in the household. Tasks might be

driving, grocery shopping or light housework. Tasks could be designed to fit the needs and schedules of both participants. The older homeowner would receive support and companionship, and the younger adult would receive a safe and affordable housing situation.

According to the New York Times "Economists estimate that America needs between four million and eight million more homes...it takes money to buy land, time to secure permits. In the meantime, construction costs have exploded. That's why most new homes tend to be luxury rentals or higher-cost houses, rather than something a person with a middle or lower income can afford. Those lower-cost units, however, are the ones in the shortest supply."

A survey of homeowners

across the United States, shows that there is an interest in leasing excess rooms (40% indicated interest) but only few actually do it (2%). The obstacles seem obvious. How would matches work? How do you screen potential tenants? What kind of documentation would be required? How could participants be protected from abuse or fraud? How would payments happen? Would homes need to be reconfigured for privacy/access? Would state and local regulations allow these arrangements?

Already many states have embraced this initiative and have "home-share" offices that work to facilitate affordable housing arrangements. The National Shared Housing Resource Center (www.nationalsharedhousing.org) is a network of independent

non-profit home sharing programs across the U.S. They are working to develop best practices and educate people about the benefits of home sharing. There are companies that also serve to match homeowner and tenants. These include Nesterly.com and Pad Split. Unfortunately, Connecticut does not have a NSHRC office, nor much of a Nesterly or Pad Split footprint.

I encourage our community leaders and residents to explore this as a possible solution to two significant issues: loneliness/isolation and the need for affordable housing. This could be a win-win for everyone.

Mimi Santry is a long-time Greenwich resident and certified senior advisor and owner of Assisted Living Locators. She works with families on issues of care and housing.



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New Canaan Rams Sports Varsity Roundup

BY CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH

Boys Hockey

The New Canaan boys hockey team put together an excellent week, earning two home wins against strong opponents.

On Monday, the Rams dominated Ridgefield in a conference matchup, winning 6-0. New Canaan set the tone early with two first-period goals and never let up. The Rams added two goals in both the second and third periods, showing balanced scoring and steady pressure throughout the game. Defensively, New Canaan limited Ridgefield's chances and protected the lead with consistent play in all three zones.

Later in the week, the Rams faced Greenwich Country Day in a non-conference game that went to overtime. After a scoreless first period, New Canaan took a 1-0 lead in the second. Greenwich Country Day tied the game late in the third period, forcing overtime. New Canaan responded quickly, scoring the game-winning goal in overtime to secure a 2-1 victory. The win highlighted the team's ability to stay composed in a close game and finish strong.

Boys Basketball

The New Canaan boys basketball team played three games over the week,

showing both growth and resilience.

On Tuesday, the Rams lost at home to Staples, 69-47, in a conference game. The teams were close early, but Staples pulled ahead by halftime. New Canaan continued to compete, scoring 18 points in the third quarter, but was unable to close the gap as Staples maintained control in the final period.

New Canaan rebounded on Thursday with a convincing road win against Norwalk, 73-48. The Rams built momentum early and continued to extend their lead throughout the game. Strong team offense and steady defense helped New Canaan keep Norwalk off balance and secure a comfortable conference victory.

The Rams capped the week with a hard-fought 67-65 home win against Bassick in a non-conference matchup. The game stayed close from start to finish, with neither team able to pull away. New Canaan made key plays in the final minutes and held on for the two-point win, showing poise in a tight contest.

Girls Basketball

The New Canaan girls basketball team split its two games, facing tough conference competition.

On Tuesday, the Rams lost on the road to Staples, 51-20. Staples took an

early lead and continued to add to it in each quarter. Despite the result, New Canaan continued to compete and worked to generate offense against a strong Staples defense.

On Thursday, the Rams bounced back at home with a 51-37 win over Norwalk. New Canaan played with more confidence and energy, especially in the second half. The Rams pulled ahead by controlling the pace of the game and limiting Norwalk's scoring opportunities. The win marked a strong response and a solid conference performance.

Girls Hockey

The New Canaan girls hockey team earned an impressive 5-1 road win against Hamden in a non-conference game.

New Canaan took control early and continued to build its lead as the game went on. The Rams showed strong offensive pressure and disciplined defensive play, keeping Hamden to just one goal. The balanced effort helped New Canaan pull away and secure a comfortable four-goal victory.

Overall, New Canaan varsity teams delivered several strong performances during the week, highlighted by dominant hockey wins and key basketball victories at both home and away venues.

Date	Team (School – Gender – Sport)	Opponent	Score
1/8	New Canaan – Boys – Basketball	Norwalk	New Canaan 73 – Norwalk 48
1/10	New Canaan – Boys – Basketball	Bassick	New Canaan 67 – Bassick 65
1/13	New Canaan – Boys – Basketball	Fairfield Ludlowe	New Canaan 37 – Fairfield Ludlowe 55
1/8	New Canaan – Boys – Hockey	Greenwich Country Day	New Canaan 2 – Greenwich Country Day 1
1/10	New Canaan – Boys – Hockey	Barrington High School	New Canaan 4 – Barrington High School 0
1/8	New Canaan – Girls – Basketball	Norwalk	New Canaan 51 – Norwalk 37
1/13	New Canaan – Girls – Basketball	Fairfield Ludlowe	New Canaan 37 – Fairfield Ludlowe 45
1/7	New Canaan – Girls – Hockey	Hamden	New Canaan 4 – Hamden 1
1/13	New Canaan – Girls – Hockey	West Haven	New Canaan 2 – West Haven 1
1/12	St. Lukes – Girls – Squash	Rye High School	St. Lukes 1 – Rye High School 6



Jen Hatmaker Brings Her Fire and Wit to the Area for One Night Only

By ELIZABETH BARRYDT

There's an unmistakable buzz moving through Greenwich: Jen Hatmaker—New York Times bestselling author, speaker, podcast host, and spiritual renegade—is coming to town.

On Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 PM, Hatmaker will headline the Courage & Faith Speaker Series. The event includes a talk, book signing, post-event reception, and a signed copy of her newest book. With limited seating and high anticipation, it's a "must-attend" event.

Hatmaker doesn't just write books—she lives them. Her path from Texas pastor's wife to one of the country's most sought-after spiritual voices has been anything but quiet.

"I was that child, thankfully," she writes. "When I was two years old, some judgey older woman at church handed my mom a copy of *The Strong Willed Child* in Sunday School. My point is that I came out hot (and have apparently been upsetting Church Ladies™ for some time)."

That defiant streak became a gift.

Hatmaker has authored a string of bestsellers, launched the beloved *For the Love* podcast, and built a global community of women drawn to her mix of vulnerability, irreverence, and unflinching honesty. She's raised five children, weathered a public divorce after 26 years of marriage, and documented every glorious, messy step of rebuilding with humor and raw faith.

Her newest memoir and the centerpiece of the evening, chronicles Hatmaker's journey through disruption, resilience, and unexpected renewal.

She's known for telling it like it is—from ordering two Ford Broncos post-divorce ("the first didn't run") to her laundry detergent of choice ("Diva" by Tyler, a \$68.58 indulgence that her best friend says "can be smelled from a block away").

This isn't a book tour. It's a confessional, a comedy set, and a spiritual reboot wrapped into one evening.

The January 21 event is more than a book signing. It's a chance to gather in a room with a woman whose very presence

says: you can start again.

Tickets include a signed copy of her book and admission to the post-talk reception. For those who want a closer connection, the \$75 Meet & Greet ticket offers early entry at 6:00 PM and access to a private cocktail reception with Hatmaker.

She's funny. She's fearless. She still uses her first AOL email account. And she's exactly what Greenwich needs to start 2026 wide-eyed and wide-hearted.

What: Jen Hatmaker,

Talk & Book Signing

When: Wed, Jan 21 | 6:30 PM

Where: Christ Church

Tickets: \$50

Includes: Signed copy of *Awake*, post-talk reception

This is the night to hear the woman who once stormed out of a Scrabble game in fury and still managed to win the hearts of millions. Hatmaker is unapologetically herself—whether she's quoting scripture, confessing her love of Irish Spring soap, or redefining what it means to be human.

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SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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There are so many reasons to join the New Canaan YMCA:

- A Supportive Community:** The Y is a welcoming place where all ages, backgrounds, and abilities come to connect, support one another, and build lasting friendships.
- Fitness Facilities for All:** The Y features two state-of-the-art fitness centers plus three pools providing a place for all ages, interests, and abilities to strengthen their physical and mental health. Plus, on-site babysitting!
- 100+ Weekly Group Exercise Classes:** Free classes for members ages 14+ combining fitness and community through yoga, cycling, Zumba, HIIT, aquatic classes, Pilates, chair fitness, and much more.
- A Place to Play:** The Y's gymnasium is home to drop-in basketball, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, open gym, and family fun.
- Programs with Purpose:** The Y brings our community together through a vast array of youth sports and recreation programs, swim lessons, middle school activities, programs for those with varying abilities, chronic disease support, senior programs, and more. Financial assistance is available!

Join today! Learn more at www.newcanaanymca.org/join-the-y

Join by January 31

\$0 Joiner Fee | Earn a Free Month!

- Receive a **complimentary** private "Custom Fit" session with a Personal Trainer.
- Complete 10 workouts in your first month and **earn a free month**.
- Complete another 10 workouts in your second month and earn your choice of a **free training session, small-group class, or special Y gear!**

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Open to ages 14+. Limit (1) free month per membership and (1) gear item per member. Youth memberships not eligible for offer.



203.966.4528

NEW CANAAN YMCA

www.newcanaanymca.org

YOUR NEWS BRIEF CONTINUED From Page 1

Where Have I Been? and a scholarship to the University of Hartford Art School. Emma McPartland received the CAEA Arnini Award for Best in Experimental Photography for Arabesque and a Gold Key, advancing her to the national level of competition.

SLS Winter Art Show



St. Luke's School is showing its annual Winter Art Show in the Class of 2019 Art Gallery. The exhibit features Upper School student work in media including painting, drawing, photography and mixed media. The show will remain on view until the beginning of February. Photo credit: St. Luke's School.

SLS Student Honored for Songwriting



Sophie Seaver '28 of St. Luke's School received recognition for original songwriting from YoungArts, the EveryLife Foundation for Rare Diseases and singer-songwriter Ben Abraham. Photo credit: St. Luke's School.

UConn Dean's List

UConn released a list this week naming 20 New Canaan students to its fall 2025 Dean's List. The university said eligibility includes at least 12 calculable credits, a minimum 3.0 GPA with a top-quartile rank in the student's school or college, and no grade below a C.

WCSU Dean's List

Western Connecticut State University released its fall 2025 Dean's List, including three New Canaan students. The university said eligibility requires full-time matriculated status, at least 12 graded

semester-hour credits, a 3.5 semester GPA, and no incompletes at the time grades are processed.

SPORTS

New Haven Register's All-State Team

Several Ram football players were named to the New Haven Register's 93rd All-State team. Adrian Delicata, Ryan Brooks and Andrew Esposito were chosen for the First Team. Mikey Hiraman was selected to the Second Team, and Jack Crowell was named to the Third Team.

CHSCA Assistant Coach of the Year



Football Coach Jason Miska was named the Connecticut High School Coaches Association Assistant Coach of the Year. Photo credit: New Canaan Football.

AFCA/AFCF Power of Influence Award

Football Coach Lou Marinelli was named the 2025 AFCA/AFCF Power of Influence Award winner.

Rep. Constantine Welcomes \$60,000 In State Funds To Help Seniors Gain More Independence Funding Will Support The Launch of A New Home Safety Program

State Representative Savet Constantine (D – Wilton, New Canaan, Ridgefield) welcomes \$60,000 in state funding to launch The Home Safety Program through Stay at Home in Wilton, a nonprofit dedicated to helping seniors age in place.

The funding supports a free home safety assessment for members and a checklist of repairs and recommendations from accredited professionals designed to improve home accessibility. In an effort to ensure overall safety through minor modifications and repairs, everyday issues that lead to an increased fall risk will be addressed, such as replacing burnt-out lightbulbs, securing loose carpet edges, safely moving cords and other

trip hazards, installing grab bars in bathrooms, and removing items to prevent falls.

"Aging is not a problem to solve, it is a privilege to plan for," said Rep. Savet Constantine. "This funding will help make homes safer, promote independence, and provide peace of mind for seniors and their families by ensuring trusted help is available. It is also a meaningful reminder that our seniors are valued, cared for, prioritized, and never forgotten."

"It is always rewarding when goals align, as our mission has always been to help our seniors remain independent and engaged," said Lisa Roman, Vice President of Stay at Home in Wilton. "Now we have direct

and meaningful support from the state to further our mission."

Stay At Home in Wilton will host a meeting for members on The Home Safety Program on Thursday, January 29 at 2 p.m. in the Comstock Community Center in Wilton. Interested seniors can find more information here or call (203) 762-2600.

Rep. Savet Constantine serves as Vice Chair of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee and is a member of the Energy & Technology and Education Committees. She represents the 42nd District, which includes Wilton, New Canaan, and Ridgefield.

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
12 Lincoln Drive	\$1,095,000	\$1,095,000	\$1,462,000	11	4	2	.32
22 Father Peters Lane	\$3,995,000	\$3,750,000	\$3,200,000	305	4	5	6.93
152 Long Lots Road	\$3,395,000	\$3,395,000	\$3,575,000	10	5	4	2
113 Skyview Lane	\$3,995,000	\$3,849,000	\$3,600,000	60	5	4	1.67

FEATURED OPEN HOUSES

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

Address	Price	Day	Time	Broker
176 Logan Road	\$2,690,000	SAT & SUN	2-4 PM & 1-4 PM	Coldwell Banker
39 Running Brooke Lane	\$3,195,000	SUN	1:00-3:00 PM	Houlihan Lawrence
67 Carter Street	\$5,500,000	SUN	1:00-3:00 PM	Coldwell Banker

NEW LISTINGS

Address	List Price	SqFt	Price/SqFt	AC	BR	FB
12 Field Crest Road	\$1,850,000	2,160		.35	4	2
77 Winfield Lane	\$2,495,000	4,109		2.88	5	5
176 Logan Road	\$2,690,000	2,852		2.54	5	3
135 Comstock Hill Road	\$2,698,000	3,386		1.74	4	3
1343 Smith Ridge Road	\$3,995,000	6,889		1.94	6	6
111 Parish Lane	\$4,950,000	7,315		3.81	6	6
42 Hillcrest Road	\$4,999,000	5,498		1.03	5	6

What Changed in Real Estate Transactions in 2025? Part 1: Buyers and Sellers



By
JOHN ENGEL

In this two-part series, John Engel examines national residential real estate trends from 2025 and compares them to the New Canaan market.

This week's column zooms in on what buyers and sellers are thinking.

2025 was a year where everyone seemed to be looking for a sign. Mortgage rates moved (from 6.9% to 6.2%), inventory stayed tight (4.2 months inventory), commissions became a headline, and buyers and sellers spent much of the year trying to understand what had actually changed and what hadn't.

Zillow's 2025 *Consumer Housing Trends Report* is based on surveys of 5,000 buyers and 6,200 sellers. It's useful. It's also incomplete in the way all national data is incomplete. Fairfield County is not the United States. We are more expensive, more competitive, more local, and more sensitive to small shifts in leverage.

So instead of treating national findings as conclusions, we'll use them as a starting point. I'll tell you what Zillow says is happening nationally, and then I'll tell you what I'm seeing locally, across the twelve towns that make up my southwest Fairfield County market. In some cases, the data lines up neatly. In others, it doesn't. That gap is where the real story is.

Do buyers and sellers still use agents?

Zillow reports that agents remain central to the transaction. Nationally, 85% of buyers and 93% of sellers worked with an agent at some point during their process, despite the availability of DIY tools and online platforms.

In Fairfield County, those figures are higher. Once a property enters the MLS, professional representation is essentially universal. While off-market and private sales exist, they are a tiny fraction. They're not driving volume. In our market, nearly every sale involves a listing agent, and the overwhelming majority involve buyer representation as well.

What is worth noting is how representation is structured. In the 12-town southwest Fairfield County market, roughly 14% of transactions involve the same brokerage on both sides. That means about 86% of deals involve separate firms representing buyers and sellers. This is not a market dominated by dual-agency or one or two powerful offices. It is competitive, fragmented, and still very much driven by professional intermediaries.

Do buyers and sellers really hire the first agent they contact?

Zillow found that 47% of buyers and 59% of sellers ultimately hired the first agent they contacted, suggesting that many consumers do not shop extensively and often default to an existing relationship or a strong first impression. This is presented as evidence that agent choice is often quick and relatively uncomplicated.

In southwest Fairfield County, that first-agent preference feels overstated to me. Fairfield County has higher prices, more agents per capita, and fewer transactions than national averages. It is also not dominated by one or two large agencies, so the market is more evenly distributed. Instead, there are at least 10 strong firms competing in Fairfield County, and each town functions as its own defined market with strong local players.

In the Fairfield County environment, it is less common for buyers or sellers to call one agent and stop than it might be nationally. The financial stakes are higher, the strategies vary meaningfully, and consumers are more inclined to compare pricing advice, marketing plans, and risk tolerance. Competition among agents is visible here, and clients take advantage of it.

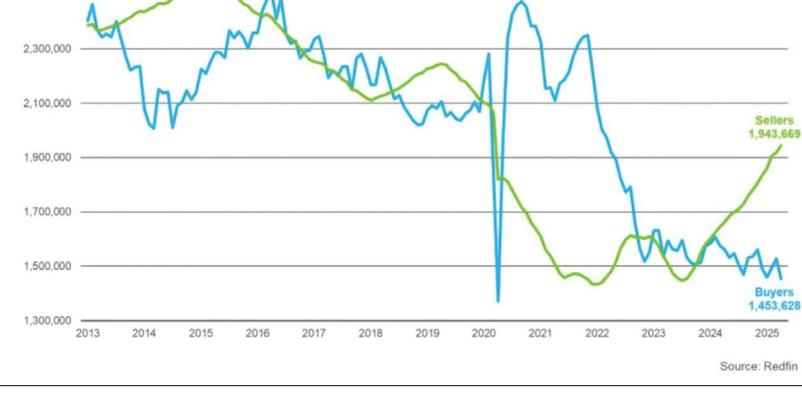
Are digital tools still a differentiator?

Zillow reports that 78% of sellers are more likely to hire an agent who offers high-resolution photography, and 71% are more likely to hire an agent who provides virtual tours or interactive floor plans. Nationally, these tools are framed as meaningful advantages in agent selection.

These numbers feel low in the Fairfield County market because digital presentation is no longer

Buyer and Seller Dynamics Have Shifted

Estimated Number of Buyers and Sellers Active in the Market



– there is an increased reliance on group texts. Deals move quickly, multiple parties are involved at once, and texting allows everyone to stay aligned without slowing the process down.

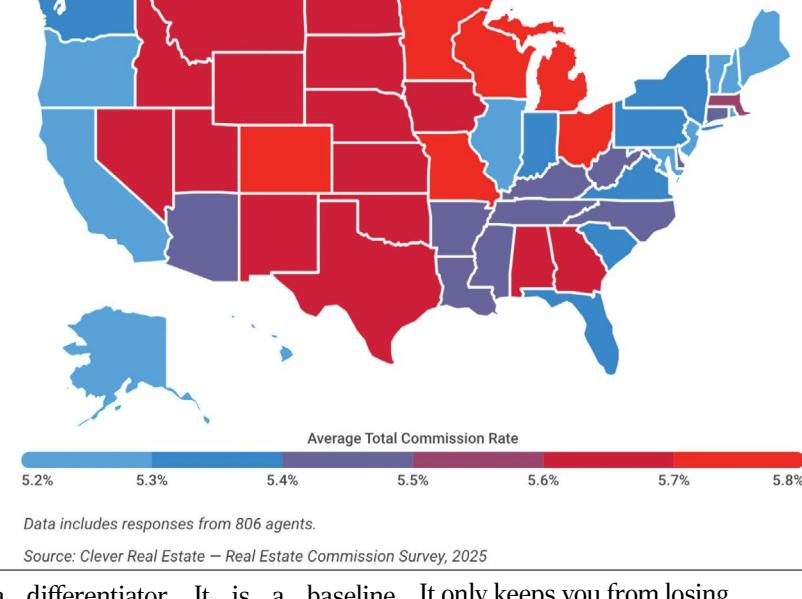
Do buyers and sellers think commissions are fair?

Zillow reports that 73% of sellers and 70% of buyers say their agent's commission was fair, with a small percentage saying commissions were even too low. The finding is presented as reassurance amid widespread discussion of commission changes.

Zillow asked the wrong question in a year that saw unprecedented uncertainty about how commissions are handled. Fair? It's never fair when commission is pegged to the price of the house, not the value of the service. Scarcity has caused power to shift from buyer agency to listing agency, and the effect of court cases this year accelerated that shift. There are more commission conversations taking place than ever before, and they are increasingly happening at the expense of buyer agency. Zillow's findings don't fully reflect the impact these negotiations are having on how deals are structured, how representation is valued, and where pressure is being absorbed in real transactions. We'd all like to know what the real impact of the Sitzer-Burnet case on commissions has been nationally, and in specific submarkets like ultra-luxury, second homes, and here.

Competition among agents is visible here, and clients take advantage of it.

U.S. National Average = 5.44%



Data includes responses from 806 agents.

Source: Clever Real Estate – Real Estate Commission Survey, 2025

Average Total Commission Rate

5.2% 5.3% 5.4% 5.5% 5.6% 5.7% 5.8%

It only keeps you from losing.

How do buyers and sellers want to communicate?

Zillow found that a majority of buyers prefer to communicate with agents by text or messaging apps, rather than phone calls, pointing to a broader shift toward written, asynchronous communication.

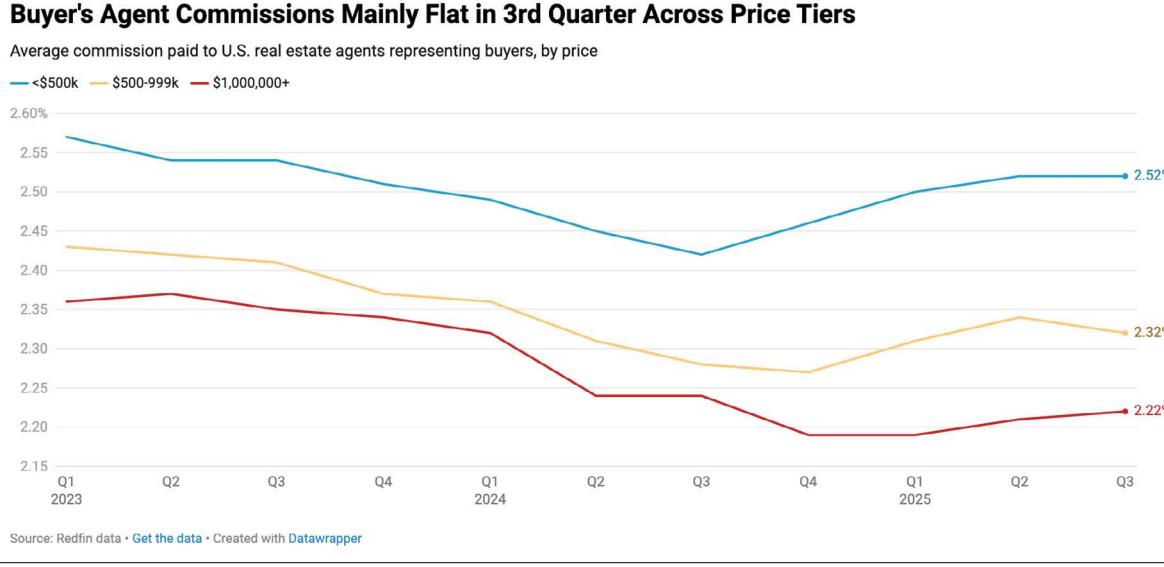
Locally, this is accurate. In competitive, luxury markets with affluent buyers and sellers – and especially where listings are serviced by a team rather than a single agent

In next week's column, John will delve into what's changing in real estate transactions.

John Engel is a broker with the Engel Team at Douglas Elliman in New Canaan. This weekend, he helped set up a sewing room for his daughter in his (unfinished) basement. New Canaan loves a nice, dry basement. It's usually storage, a playroom, a TV room, or a workshop. John has admired a few million-dollar basements in town, with glass walls and fancy lighting to show the wine collection and others with enough big-screen TV's to rival the sports book at Caesar's Palace. A few older houses still have the "working" kitchen in the basement, while the main kitchen is "fancy." In Florida, where there are no basements, they are truly deprived of one of the great joys of home ownership.

Buyer's Agent Commissions Mainly Flat in 3rd Quarter Across Price Tiers

Average commission paid to U.S. real estate agents representing buyers, by price



Source: Redfin data • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

Buyer's Agent Commissions Tick Up For Third Consecutive Quarter

Average commission paid to U.S. real estate agents representing buyers



Source: Redfin data • Created with Datawrapper

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



Keith E. Simpson
Associates

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Thursday, January 15, 2025

SPOTLIGHT on FAMILIES

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GAMES AND
PUZZLES

STO WERE
UISE HANK
NT THE HOUSE
LA LA AA USE
AN SMUITE
MITE IN ALAT
PCALC OLEA
BIL LIAIR

CROSSWORD
PUZZLES



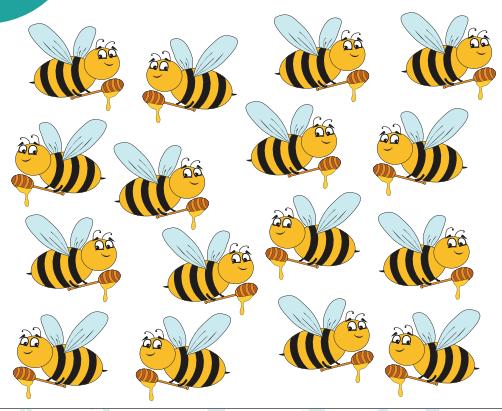
YOUR
HOROSCOPE
FOR NEXT 2
WEEKS



WHAT TO DO:
COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNITY
CALENDAR

KIDS
GAMES

HOW MANY LEFT & RIGHT?



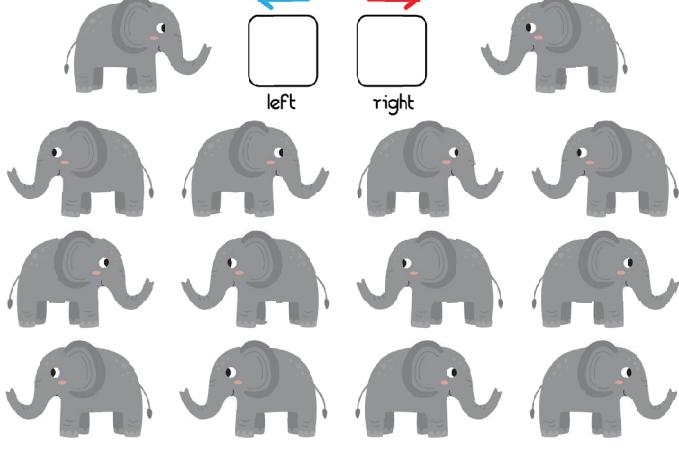
LEFT



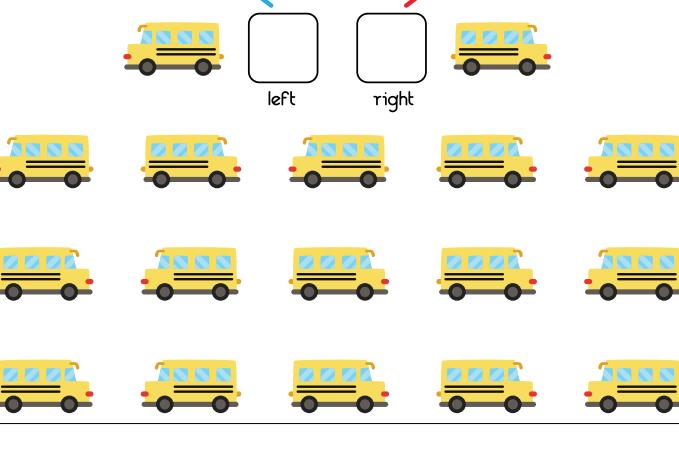
RIGHT



HOW MANY TO THE LEFT, HOW MANY TO THE RIGHT?



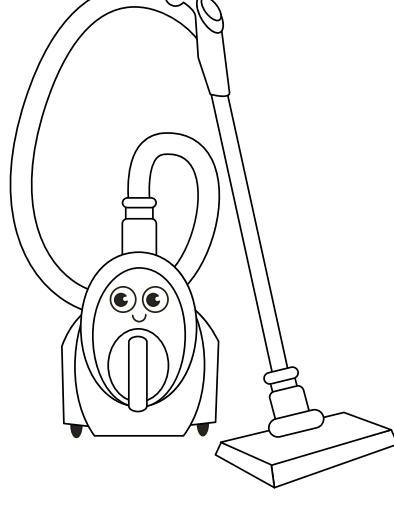
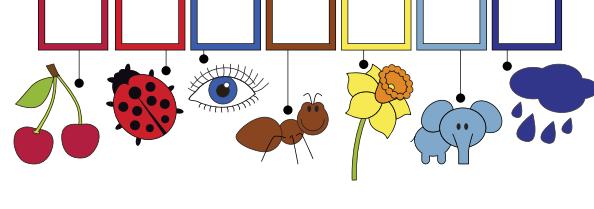
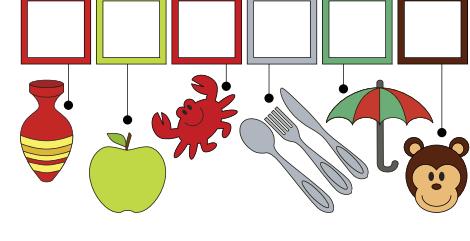
HOW MANY TO THE LEFT, HOW MANY TO THE RIGHT?



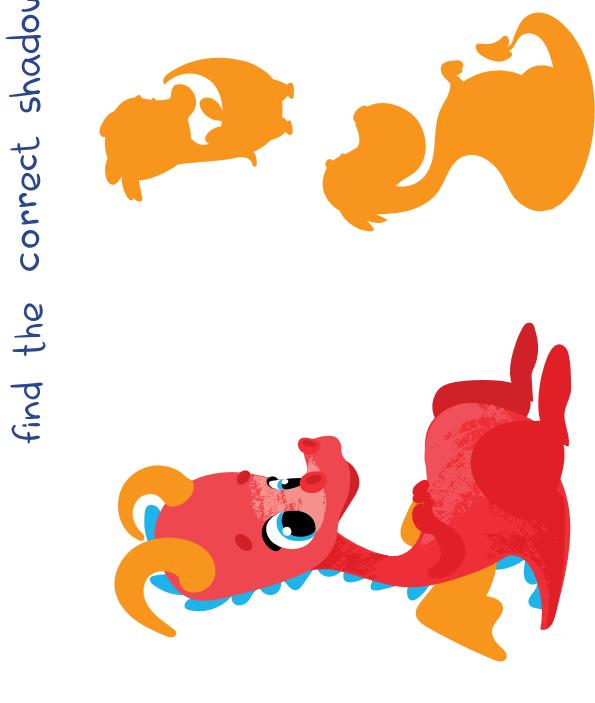
Find two identical parrots



Write the first letter of each thing to solve the puzzle.
Then color the picture of the answer.



FIND 10 OBJECTS
IN THE PICTURE



Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

Submit your events at:
newcanaansentinel.com/submit-an-event/

TOWN MEETINGS

Tuesday, January 20

Board of Selectmen
 8:30-9:30 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room
 Charter Revision Commission
 5-6:30 p.m., Town Hall Board Room
 Board of Finance
 7-8 p.m., Town Hall

Wednesday, January 21

Housing Authority of New Canaan
 5:30-6:30 p.m., Location not posted at time of publication.

Police Commission
 6-7 p.m., New Canaan Police Department

Town Council
 7-8 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

Thursday, January 22

Board of Selectmen
 8:30-9:30 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room

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.

Afternoon Tea

3 PM at Grace Farms
 Gather with friends to enjoy a pot of warm tea with an assortment of bites that fuse traditional English and Japanese flavors. Tickets are \$38/members, \$48/non-members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/afternoon-tea-we-all-build/2026-01-16>.

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/>.

Move with Grace Farms x lululemon | Yoga with Jane Krantz

10:30 AM at Grace Farms

Join instructor Jane Krantz for a fluid yoga class centered on moving through transitions with grace and finding stability in order to move with freedom, awareness, and expression. Starting with grounding breathwork, Jane will guide you through movement that will ignite a little bit of heat and a lot of joy, ending in a restful savasana. Tickets are \$25/non-members, \$20/members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/move-with-grace-farms-x-lululemon-2-3>.

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-l65649>.

Monday, January 19

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr Service

10 AM at the United Methodist Church

The Interfaith Council of New Canaan is proud to host its 24th Annual Celebration of the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Service will include music and speakers from the ABC House, New Canaan, and special keynote speaker, Rev. Richard Williams, the Executive Director of Pivot Ministries. A reception will follow. For more information, visit <https://www.ncinterfaithcouncil.com>.

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 its impact on travel in the Northeast and explore the intriguing history of one of Connecticut's iconic landmarks. Register at <https://nchistory.org>.

It's Teatime!

2:30 PM at the Lapham Center

Enjoy an old-fashioned tea with friends. A variety of teas, sandwiches and treats 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-l70290>.

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-l89453>.

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-l90496>.

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/>.

Sunday, January 25

Author Amity Gaige Presents "Heartwood"

12:30 PM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

You're invited to hear bestselling author Amity Gaige discuss her new novel, Heartwood, in conversation with Daisy Alpert Florin. Heartwood was selected by Jenna Bush Hager as a Read with Jenna pick for April 2025 and became an instant national bestseller. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/hold-amity-gaige-l96207>.

Monday, January 26

Chair Yoga

11:30 AM at the New Canaan Library, Jim & Dede Bartlett Auditorium

With the support of a chair, this gentle Chair Yoga class will help you improve postural alignment, maintain pelvic mobility, reduce muscle tension and gain strength through flowing movements and focused breathing. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/chair-yoga-l80320>.

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.

Journey into the World of Tea | Tea 101

3 PM at Grace Farms

Tea aficionados are invited into the Pavilion to sample teas while learning about the basics of tea varietals. Led by Tea Expert



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Calendar of Events for Your Fridge

Frank Kwei, this tranquil and in-depth exploration of tea offers guests a taste of notable varietals from cultures around the world, with demonstrations and more. Tickets are \$20/members, \$25/non-members, and available at <https://gracefarms.org/event/journey-into-the-world-of-tea-tea-101-2>.

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: Après-Ski
12 PM at the New Canaan Library, Kend Kitchen & Community Room
Just in time for the winter ski season, Chef Catherine Macdonald prepares creative and inspiring dishes for après skiing. Registration opens January 22 at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/cooking%20demo-l82904>.

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.

Business Workshop: Target Marketing, 'Fishing with a Spear, Not a Net'

6 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room

Historically the 'sales lead generation' process has been characterized by the classic 'sales funnel'. Today's digital world and related resources provide the seller with the means to implement more effective "targeted" marketing with a specific benefit message to a better-defined audience. During the workshop you will present an alternative 'targeted' approach to lead generation and its benefits, discuss how to use your competitive advantage(s) to identify your best target customers, and much more. Register at <https://shorturl.at/rv6V4>.

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>.

Opening Reception for Annual Juried Photography Show

4-6 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
All are welcome to attend the opening reception for the 46th annual juried photography show. Meet the exhibiting photographers and be among the first to see works selected by this year's exhibition juror Peter Kunhardt Jr.

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/argentine-guitar-carlos-pavan/>.

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.

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.

Thursday, February 5

Blossom Hill Annual

'For the Love of a Child'

Galentines Event

11 AM- 2 PM at the Country Club of New Canaan

Start Valentine's week with purpose at this annual fundraiser. Guests are invited to drop in with friends for an afternoon of connection and giving, featuring a curated selection of vendors and artisans perfect for Valentine's shopping. All proceeds will support the organization's mission of education for peace, transforming the lives of displaced and at-risk children and youth globally. Tickets are \$50 and available at <https://blossomhill-foundation.org/galentine/>.

Friday, February 6

Developing Athletes for the Long Game

9:30 AM at the New Canaan Library
New Canaan CARES will host a parent education program focused on the growing pressures of youth sports and early specialization. The event will feature a panel discussion followed by a Q&A with NCHS Football Coach Lou Marinelli, a legendary community

figure with nearly 50 years of coaching experience, alongside clinical psychologist Dr. Suzanne Allen of The Parenting Pair and physical therapist Dr. Becky Nardi of Wellness Insights & Concierge PT. Register at <https://shorturl.at/HgChy>.

Saturday, February 7

Cut the Cord to Cable

2 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
If you're considering cutting the cord to cable, then this class will give you the latest information on possible options and alternatives. Librarian James Ludy will also give an overview of Kanopy and teach you how to use your New Canaan Library card to stream free films, series, and documentaries every month. Register at <https://www.newcanaanlibrary.org/event/cut-cord-cable-194349>.

Sunday, February 8

Classical Argentine Guitar: Music & Stories with Carlos Pavan

4 PM at the Carriage Barn Arts Center
Learn about the history and culture of Argentinian Classical Guitar during this unique afternoon recital. Sample some wines from Argentina, then get swept away in the stirring and dramatic music of Carlos Pavan interspersed with anecdotes from his travels and musical experiences. The Argentine Born/Brooklyn based chamber music composer skillfully blends Argentine tango & folklore rhythms with classical and jazz concepts. Tickets are \$35 and available at <https://carriagebarn.org/event/argentine-guitar-carlos-pavan/>.

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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.

Movie Screening: The Princess Bride

6 PM at the New Canaan Library, Craig B. Tate Conference Room
Directed by Rob Reiner, this classic tale of love and adventure is one of a kind. As a grandfather reads to his sick grandson the story of Buttercup and her true love Wesley, the audience is transported into a world of sword fighting, monsters, miracles, and (of course) true love. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/59sx6vje>.

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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 14

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

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS

- Beyond's partner
- Tolstoy's Karenina
- Revolutionary Guevara
- Floodgate
- King in a Shakespeare tragedy
- The groundwork
- "The Birdcage" star Nathan, on the gridiron?
- Valuable rock
- Acura model
- Gets the better of
- Many were played in the '90s
- Sound on Old MacDonald's farm
- As well as
- "Only Murders in the Building" star Martin, at a track meet?
- Abhors
- Book jacket blurb
- Nike competitor
- Lift up
- Most bronzed
- "Here on Gilligan's ___" (end of an old TV theme song)
- Wrath
- Lots of land

DOWN

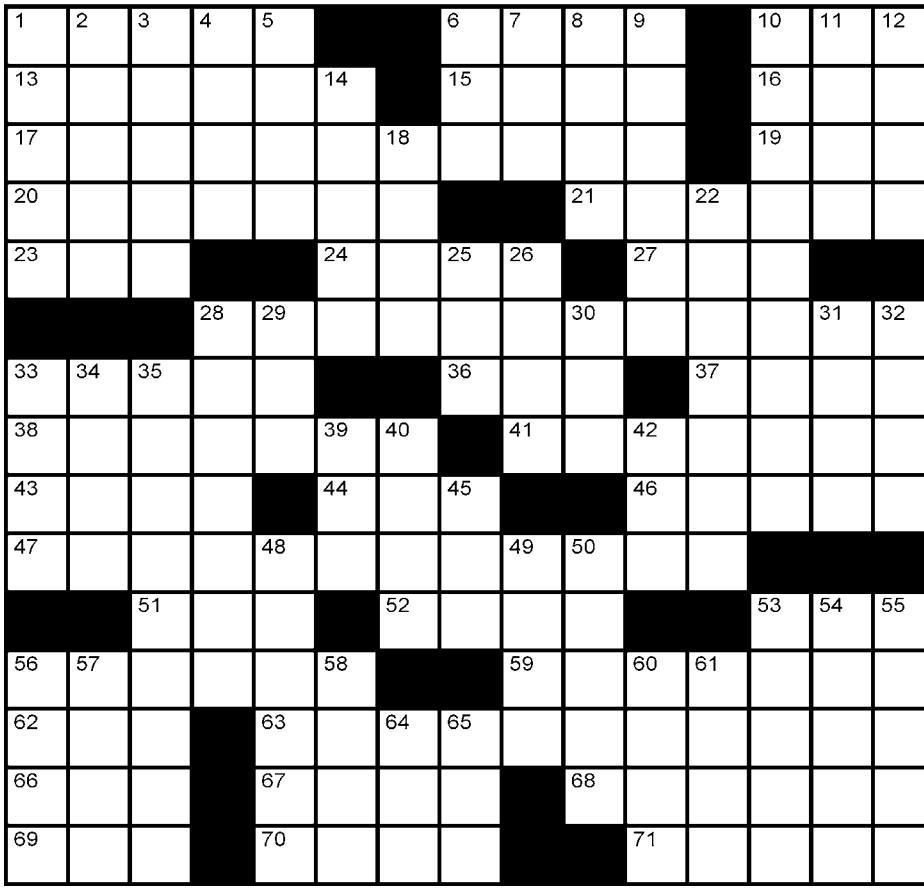
- "Basic Instinct" star Sharon, in a bowling alley?
- Brief time, briefly
- Doing business
- Org. that tracks viruses
- Like some marital assets
- "Essential" herbal remedy
- Chum
- "Mission: Impossible" 2" director John, in the ballpark?
- Boxer banned from 1967-'70
- Sandwich to eat after a sandwich?
- Wild parties
- Stocking part
- Confined, with "up"
- Inferior
- Savory jelly
- Vanilla, or lacking flavor
- Kicks out of office
- Workshop gripper
- Vaping device
- The whole shebang
- Grant-giving grp.
- Second introduction?
- WNBA game venues

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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www.upuzzles.com

7/13

Sporting Group by Gary Larson



Horoscopes

Horoscope: January 16-23, 2026

can help articulate complex ideas with clarity. Practical advice: edit first drafts and embrace feedback – thoughtful revision now solidifies your message.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)

Partnerships are a theme this week. Venus in Aquarius encourages unconventional yet meaningful connections. Practical advice: be honest about your needs and open to compromise – equality and innovation aren't mutually exclusive.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

Shared resources and deep conversations come into focus. Aquarius energy makes you think about legacy and influence. Practical advice: build trust through consistency, not grand gestures – reliability is magnetic now.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

Rest and rejuvenation matter. While energy pushes outward, emotional renewal prepares you for growth. Practical advice: schedule reflection with intention – space to breathe leads to clearer vision later in the month.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

This is your cosmic season. With so many planets moving into Aquarius, your goals benefit from new perspective and collaborative effort. Practical advice: commit to structured plans with built-in flexibility – the most sustainable success integrates both.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

This week shifts strongly in your favor. As the Sun, Mercury, and Mars enter your sign, your voice is empowered, and new partnerships take shape. Practical advice: take the lead in group settings, but listen as much as you assert – influence grows through mutual respect.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

Creativity and intuition are highlighted. You may feel drawn to projects that blend imagination with practicality. Practical advice: write ideas down as they arise and revisit them with structure later – inspiration paired with discipline can be transformative.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

Professional visibility rises. Mars in Aquarius energizes your public efforts. Practical advice: choose strategic action over reactive bursts; your reputation gains from thoughtful follow-through, not speed alone.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

Home matters and emotional foundations remain central. Aquarius season supports community and networking beyond your usual circle.

Practical advice: balance time with loved ones and opportunities to connect outside your home base – both nourish you.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

Communication and learning take a creative turn.

Mercury's arrival in Aquarius on January 20

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Family Time Crossword

The (K) Clues Are for Kids

Created by Timothy E. Parker

ACROSS

- End of a huge fishhook
- "Under the ___" ("The Little Mermaid" song)
- Thing that needs cleaning up
- Popular cookie brand
- 252 wine gallons
- Humpty Dumpty-shaped
- Any 13-year-old
- The-lower-the-better pitching stat
- Prevent
- Relatives with the same 27-Across, e.g. (2 words)
- Lithium-battery
- Like acne-prone skin
- Gray with age
- Live-show equipment
- Late June honoree

DOWN

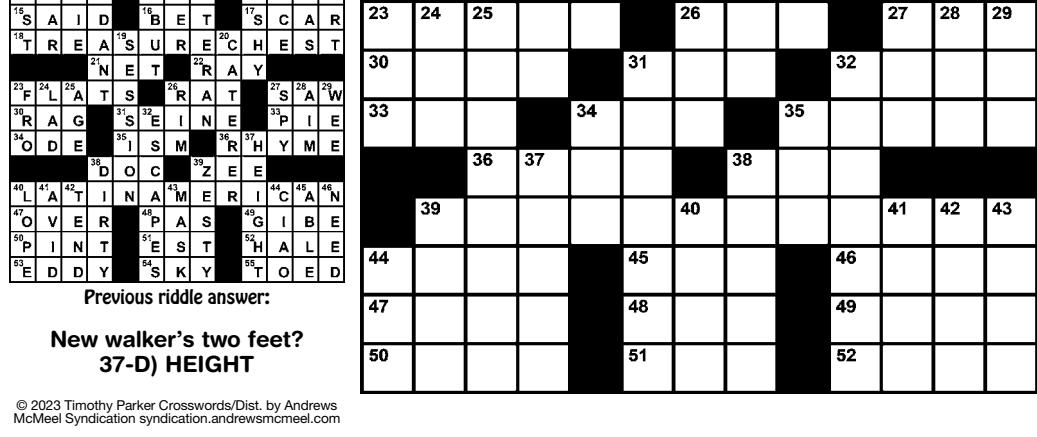
- Persuade
- Laugh? Oh, no, no, no.
- Frilly, like a doily
- Hair application goop
- "See you tomorrow"
- Line on a check
- Symbol on a smartphone
- "Have a seat"
- Razor in a barbershop
- Survey findings
- The Batmobile or Mystery Machine
- Horse with a brownish coat sprinkled with white
- Neck-and-neck
- Enjoyed pig's feet
- In the middle of
- "Where ___ you?"
- Was the frontrunner
- Camera part
- Those two
- Section, as of a city
- Fishing gadget
- Celebratory blaze
- Back on the ocean?
- Money not used in the U.S.
- Physical body of a human being
- Fashion show VIP
- Commonplace
- serif
- Cunning
- Lad
- Joint above the femur
- What "o" in "xo" means
- Groundbreaking discovery?
- Like glistening beads
- "Where ___ you?"
- Important card
- Easter-egg colorer
- Sneering
- Kind of pass in football
- Snake that squeezes its prey
- Part of a cherry
- Construction site hoist
- Make an important work document unreadable, say
- Rescue
- Boarding place in an airport
- Massive curved roof
- "No pain, no ___"
- Brings to a conclusion
- Glistening morning grass stuff

Can you find the answer to this riddle within the solved puzzle?

Didn't go fast?

Look for the answer in next week's paper.

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER



Previous riddle answer:

New walker's two feet?

37-D) HEIGHT

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The answers to this week's puzzles can be found in the next issue on December 5.

www.GreenwichSentinel.com/subscribe

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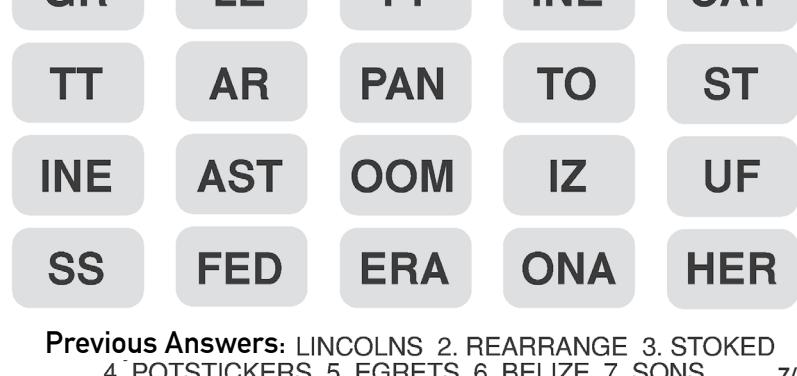
7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES

- concern for plane passenger (7)
- western Pennsylvania school (4)
- "Home Alone" mom O'Hara (9)
- a "Four Corners" state (7)
- like a cheesy pizza crust (7)
- soup-and-sandwich chain (6)
- cozy quality (10)

SOLUTIONS

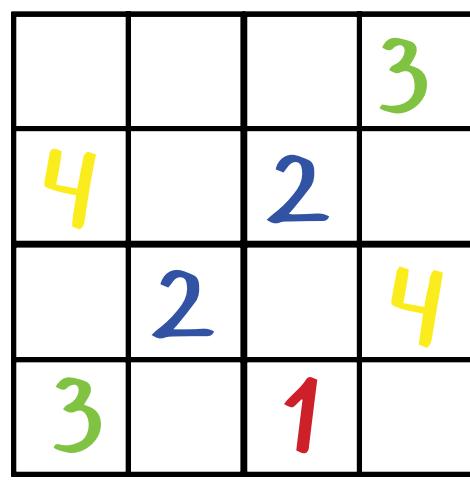
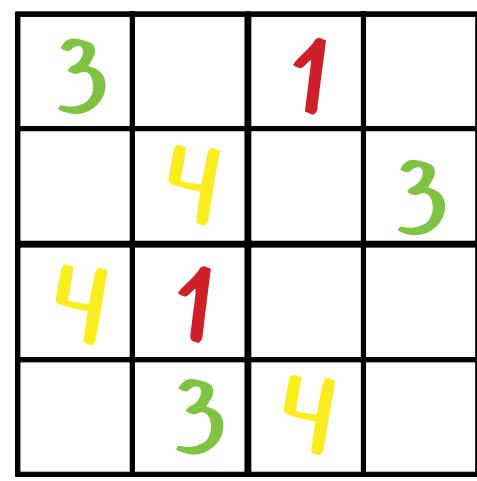
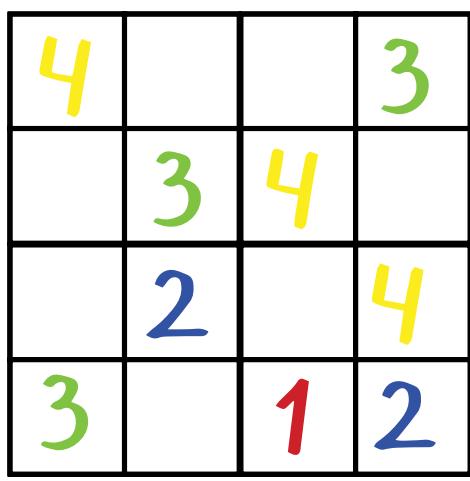
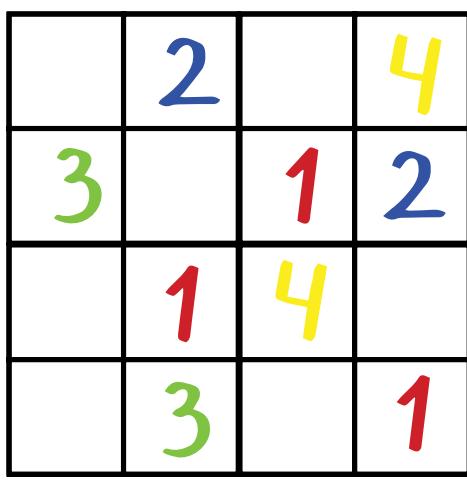


Previous Answers: LINCOLNS 2. REARRANGE 3. STOKED

4. POTSTICKERS 5. EGRETS 6. BELIZE 7. SONS

7/24

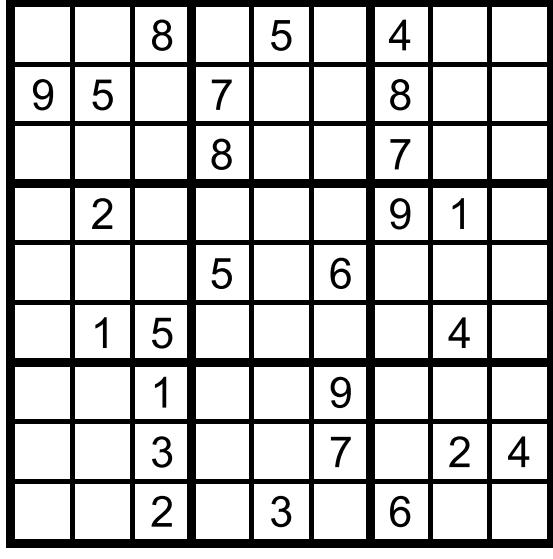
SUDOKU



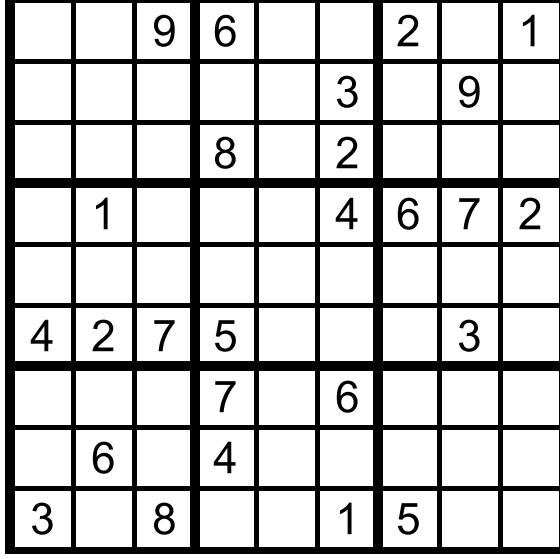
Sudoku

Each row, column, nonet can contain each number only once. Answers below.

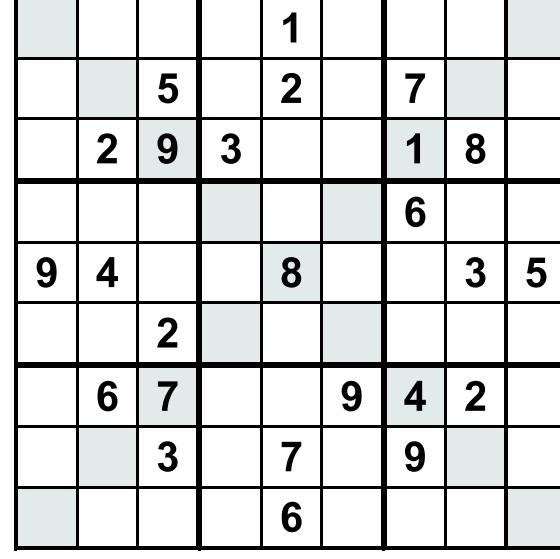
Easy



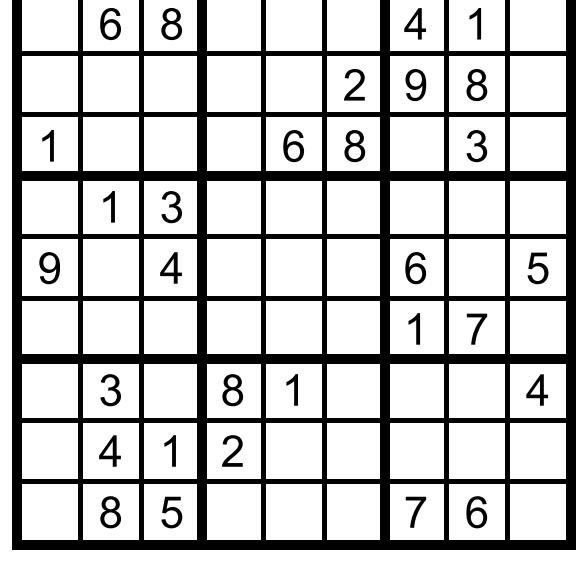
Hard



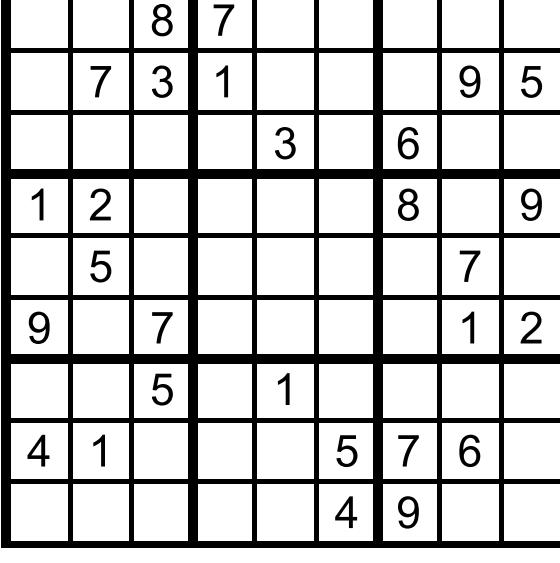
Very Hard



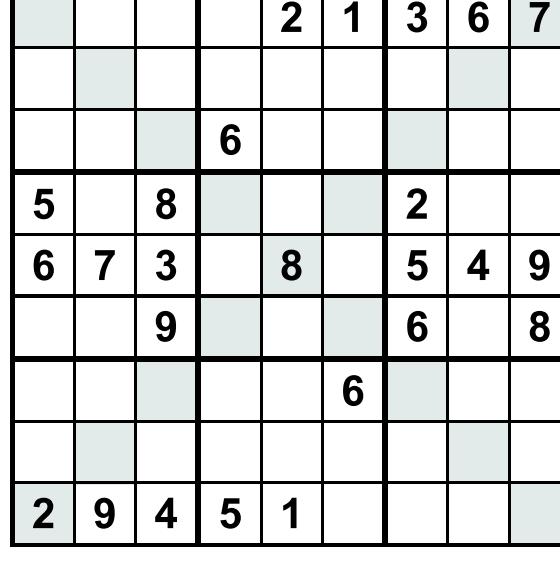
Easy



Hard



Very Hard



x3



6

PURPLE



9

LIGHT BLUE



12

DARK GREEN



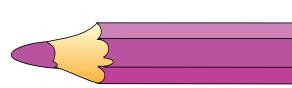
15

YELLOW



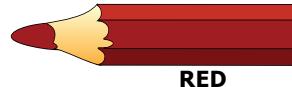
18

BROWN



21

LIGHT BROWN



24

PINK



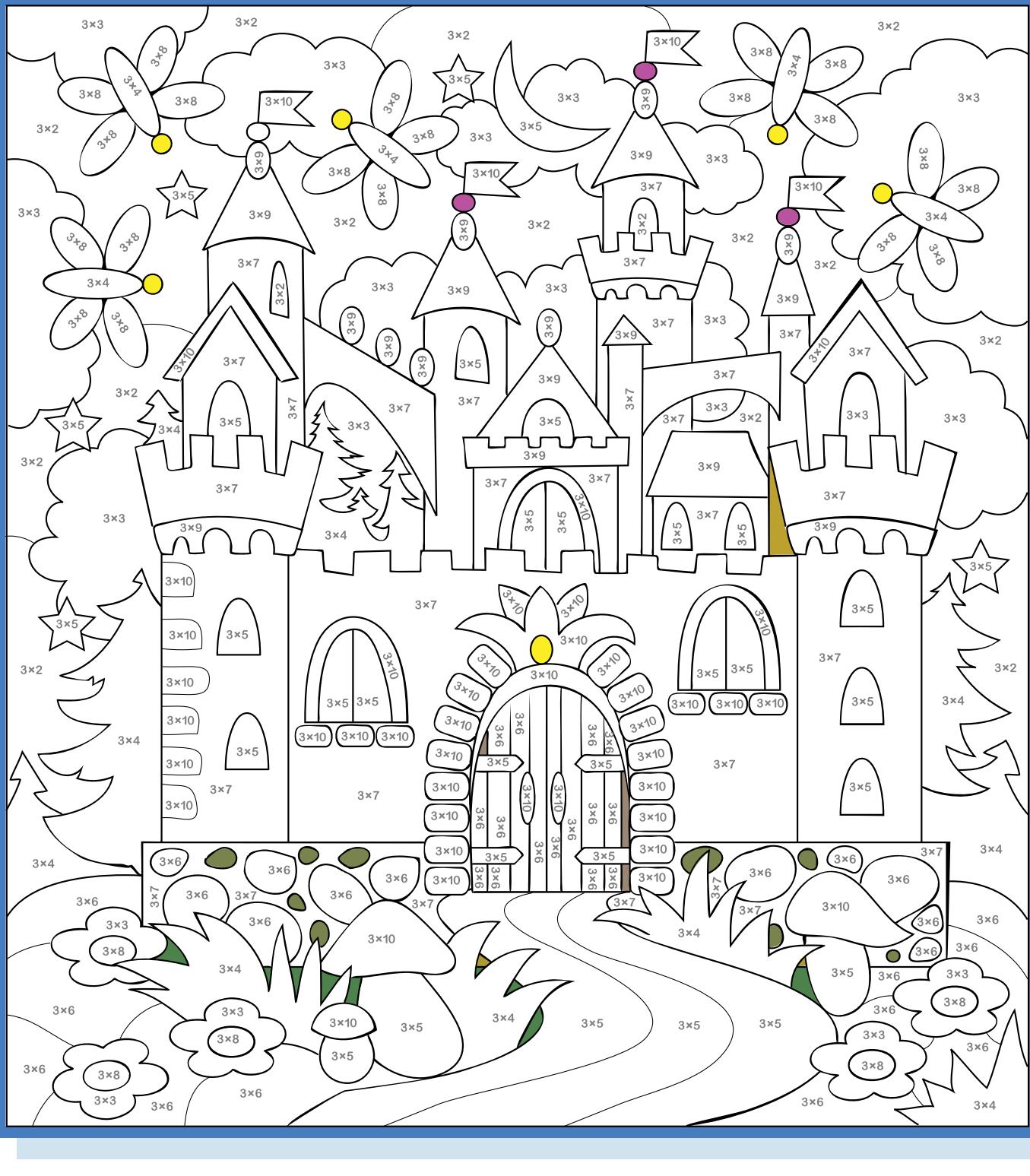
27

RED



30

ORANGE



Sudoku answers

Top row - Easy	Top row - Hard	Top row - Very Hard	Bottom row - Easy	Bottom row - Hard	Bottom row - Very Hard
4 8 2 1 3 5	5 9 3 6 8 7	6 1 4 2 7 8	2 9 4 5 1 3	3 7 8 9 2 1	4 9 1 8 6 2
5 6 1 2 7 8	6 2 3 4 9 1	7 5 6 9 1 3	3 8 5 2 6 7	4 2 5 3 1 6	5 6 1 4 3 8
3 4 9 5 1 6	4 5 2 1 7 8	5 1 5 3 8 4	1 4 6 7 2 3	6 3 5 4 2 1	7 6 1 2 9 5
2 3 7 6 1 8	5 6 3 2 1 7	6 4 7 5 3 2	2 1 3 4 9 6	7 8 4 9 1 6	8 5 2 1 7 9
9 5 4 7 3 6	8 1 5 4 2 9	7 3 9 6 5 4	4 5 7 1 3 2	3 1 5 4 2 8	6 8 3 2 1 5
1 7 8 2 5 4	9 6 1 4 3 2	8 4 6 7 5 3	5 7 4 3 1 6	2 4 1 6 5 7	5 7 8 2 3 6
3 4 9 5 1 6	3 4 8 9 1 6	9 1 5 3 8 4	6 7 3 1 4 5	3 5 2 1 7 9	6 2 7 3 4 5
2 3 7 6 1 8	2 1 6 5 4 7	7 6 4 5 3 2	5 4 8 7 6 5	1 2 9 3 4 8	8 5 1 6 3 7
9 5 4 7 3 6	1 5 2 4 3 9	6 5 2 1 8 4	6 7 3 1 4 5	4 5 7 1 3 2	7 3 9 6 5 4
1 7 8 2 5 4	1 7 3 4 9 6	5 1 3 6 2 7	5 4 8 7 6 5	3 1 5 4 2 9	6 8 3 2 1 5
3 4 9 5 1 6	3 4 9 1 6 5	4 5 7 1 3 2	4 8 5 9 2 1	2 1 3 4 9 6	5 6 3 2 1 7
2 3 7 6 1 8	2 1 6 5 4 7	3 8 5 2 6 7	3 9 8 7 6 5	1 4 6 7 2 3	4 5 2 1 7 8
9 5 4 7 3 6	1 5 2 4 3 9	2 1 3 4 9 6	2 5 9 8 7 6	3 1 5 4 2 8	3 4 9 5 1 6
1 7 8 2 5 4	1 7 3 4 9 6	1 2 9 3 4 8	1 2 9 3 4 8	1 2 9 3 4 8	1 7 8 2 5 4



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COLUMN | WILDLY SUCCESSFUL: THE ROCK HYRAX

An Utterly Unique Mammal



By JIM KNOX

If it wasn't for the movement, I would have missed them. With my eyes trained out toward the deep blue of the South Atlantic from more than 3,500 feet up, I hadn't scanned the rock shelf and boulders just a dozen feet below. If I had seen them in Connecticut, my brain would have quickly assigned them as Woodchucks, with their plump brown bodies and rodent-like faces. Yet, the animals below me were far from New England and were extremely distant cousins to their rodent look-alikes. They foraged in the sun for seeds and leaves among the bushes atop Table Mountain National Park in Cape Town, South Africa.

It was the first of many African mammals I'd hoped to see, and I was ecstatic. The Rock Hyrax, *Procavia capensis*, is known by many names in many lands. Regionally known as Dassies, Rock Rabbits, Pimbi, Cliff Badger or Coneys, they range throughout most of Africa, through the Arabian Peninsula, to the Middle East.

Reaching up to 23 inches in length, 12 inches in height and just 13 pounds in weight, it's easy to see why they are compared to rabbits or even badgers, but a closer look at these adorable little mammals reveals a creature worthy of study. For starters, their closest cousins are neither members of the rabbit nor weasel families.

An examination of the Rock Hyrax's teeth provides a dual clue. Sporting downward curving tusks, a similar skull structure, large molars and toes to their closest cousins, the answer is hard to miss. Though also hard to believe, the hyrax's closest ancestral cousins are African Elephants!

Even by the measure of wildlife biologists,



Ultra-keen eyesight, which can spot a Cape Leopard or a Verreaux's Eagle up to a kilometer away, protects these creatures from ambush.

hyraxes are often termed, "intriguing," "contradictory" and "illuminating" creatures. Though largely herbivorous, hyraxes will mix protein into their diet with a quick meal of a basking lizard or a few bird eggs. This prompts many to ponder, "Just what is the hyrax, exactly?" That is an excellent question and not one which is easily answered.

The Rock Hyrax's physical adaptations are quite unique. Possessing a compact body for squeezing into tight burrows, a hyrax is built for life beneath the boulders. With extra-long guard hairs projecting well beyond their short brown coat, hyraxes can feel their way into crevices within their sheltered boulder habitat for a quick escape from predators. Cushioned, suction cup-like foot pads provide the hyrax with both protection and gripping power within its rocky domain. A dorsal scent gland on its back enables the hyrax to communicate with other members of its

colony of up to 80 animals. A hyper-efficient digestive system enables the hyrax to extract most of the water it requires from the food it eats, thereby rarely making a trip to a water source necessary. Ultra-keen eyesight, which can spot a Cape Leopard or a Verreaux's Eagle up to a kilometer away, protects these creatures from ambush. In

order to safeguard this animal superpower, the hyrax comes equipped with a nictitating membrane (remarkably rare in mammals) to protect its eyes from dust and a bulge in each iris to act as a built-in sun visor.

While the hyrax's physical traits are impressive, it is its behavioral adaptations that enable it to thrive in more than three dozen countries. Though known to humans since biblical times, it is only in the 21st century that we are truly beginning to understand these creatures and what makes them so successful. Perhaps foremost, their social

structure is paramount in ensuring safety. These vigilant creatures feed in groups, facing outward with eyes to the sky, ears to the ground and noses to the wind. Dominant males issue an alarm call at the detection of danger—sending the others scurrying

far apart. In order to conserve energy, hyraxes spend a mere 5% of their time in activity modes such as eating, grooming or playing. Speaking of play, young hyraxes, known as pups, are born precocial—with eyes and ears open—and are even able to stand and run within hours of birth!

These very traits are what make the Rock Hyrax the subject of scientific attention. With their fine-tuned mechanisms of heat regulation, energy conservation, and muscle tone retention, hyraxes are increasingly looked to as a model for scientists studying the physiological demands of extended space travel on humans!

In the Rock Hyrax, we have a creature which offers us new knowledge with each facet of its biology. An utterly unique mammal, the hyrax is just now revealing its secrets to us and hinting at elephant-sized potential in rabbit-sized guise.

Colony living confers a tremendous survival advantage to its members. Whether foraging together, sleeping in close groups, sunbathing for thermoregulation in the mornings, or huddling together on rainy days, the colony members are never

for safety. If cornered, a hyrax will back itself into a crevice, wedging itself tight and biting savagely with its sharp tusks.

Jim Knox serves as the Curator of Education for Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo and as a Science Adviser for The Bruce Museum. His passions include studying our planet's rarest creatures and sharing his work with others who love the natural world.



The Beginning Again

The charm and wit of these early comics continue to delight us, new fans and old alike, reminding us of the joy and simplicity found in the world of a young boy and his tiger companion.

"Calvin and Hobbes," the brilliant creation of Bill Watterson, made its debut in newspapers on November 18, 1985. This inaugural strip introduced readers to Calvin and his tiger, Hobbes. The scene is set with Calvin gleefully explaining his tiger trap to his father, only to reveal Hobbes, who had been lured in by a tuna fish sandwich. This memorable first encounter between Calvin and Hobbes laid the foundation for a comic strip that would captivate audiences for over a decade.

Justin Scuiletti, a digital video producer at PBS NewsHour, said, "Who can blame Hobbes for falling into Calvin's tiger trap — we all were captured too."

We agree. We are happily ensnared as well.