

West Haven Voice

May 7, 2020

Vol. 25, Issue 9 16 Pages

West Haven's only independent news source
By and For West Haven

Voice Profile

An in-depth feature

Former city resident and still local employee has new album to be released

~ See page 9



Submitted Photos

School Days

Nico (12), Isabella (10), Dante (9), and Marco (8) Antonucci are like all of their fellow students in West Haven, they are "distance learning." To start off the day, the children recite pledge of allegiance in the morning. They recently decided to have a costume parade up and down Benham Hill Road, waving at folks and playing the flute. The kids made signs that said, "Honk for Happiness," and "Everything's Going to be All Right." The goal was to make people smile, according mom, Christine.



Parade falls to illness

By Michael P Walsh
Special to the Voice

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing restrictions, the city and the West Haven Veterans Council have canceled the Memorial Day parade and postponed the Veterans Walk of Honor dedication, Mayor Nancy R. Rossi and council President Dave Ricci announced.

Despite the parade's cancellation, Ricci said this year's grand marshals, World War II veteran Frank Corso and Korean War vet Salvatore Gullo, will lead next year's procession of veterans, dignitaries and bands along Campbell Avenue.

Corso served in the Army Air Forces in 1942-45, and Gullo served in the Navy in 1948-52.

The dedication, which memorializes veterans on the brick Walk of Honor in Bradley Point Park, has been rescheduled for Nov. 11 to coincide with the annual Veterans Day ceremony, Rossi said.

In November 2006, the Veterans Council began the first of 13 campaigns selling bricks to commemorate vets on the 100-yard Walk of Honor between the William A. Soderman and Vietnam Veterans memorials.

The bricks, which cost \$75, have charcoal lettering for personalized messages.

More than 2,700 bricks have been installed so far, including 51 for the 12th phase, which was dedicated May 25, 2019.



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Next Issue Date: May 21, 2020



Columnist Dan Shine sees continued warming with some showers, but more spring-like conditions over the next couple of days.

On this Date

2000 -- Vladimir Putin becomes President of Russia. The former KGB officer enjoys high approval ratings in his country as living standards in Russia have improved drastically under his rule. Internationally, he has been criticized for his authoritarian style of government.

1946 -- Sony is founded. The company started as Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering. It is now one of the leading manufacturers of electronic products.

1945 -- Germany's Nazi regime surrenders unconditionally. The capitulation ended World War II, one of the bloodiest conflicts of all time. According to estimates, between 40 and 71 million people died in the war and the Holocaust initiated by Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime.

1915 -- A German U-Boat sinks the RMS Lusitania. 1198 lives were lost in the attack, making it the deadliest shipwreck during World War I. The fact that some of the dead were U.S. citizens influenced the country's decision to enter the war in 1917.

Voice looking for family pics of fun activities

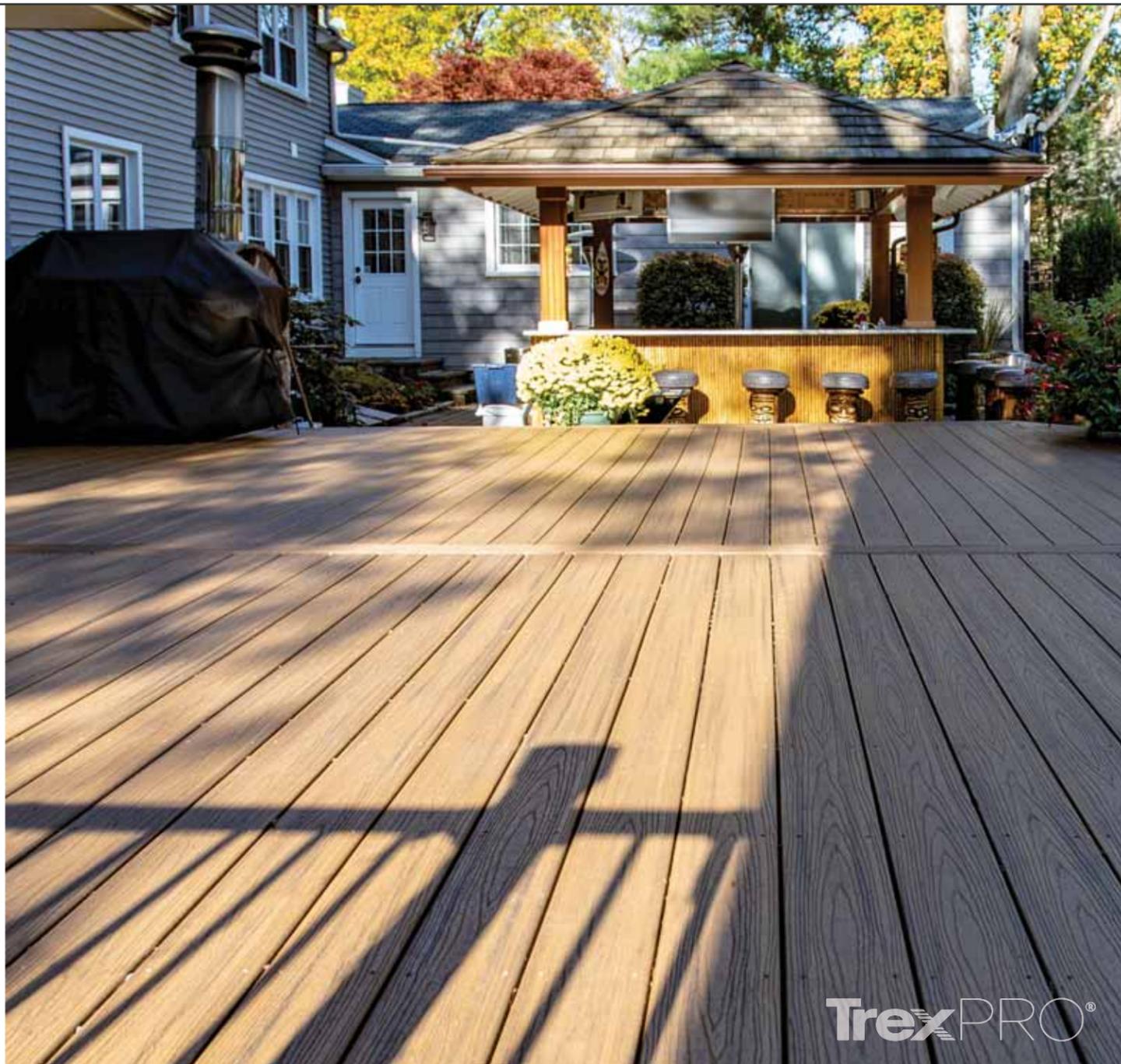
Families throughout the city are making the best of the Stay-at-Home order given by Gov. Ned Lamont and state health officials. Some are learning that staying at home can be a blast!

The Voice is looking for your photos showing the family activities you are enjoying.

Take a photo and send it to our Facebook page or to our email address: info@westhavenvoice.com. Include the names of the people included in the photo and a brief description of the activity.

Two readers have taken advantage of the offer and sent in photographs and captions.

For those needing further information, call us at (203) 934-6397. Your neighbors are interested and so are we!



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Photo by Kerri Rucco

Easter Bunny delivers candy

Peter Cottontail recently hopped his way across the city and delivered egg candy bags to the first 600 children ages 2-10 who registered online as part of the Department of Parks and Recreation's new Easter egg scramble. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing restrictions, the Easter Bunny and his friends distributed the bags to residents at the curb of their house or apartment. Some youngsters even found a purple ribbon in an egg, which they returned to Park-Rec in exchange for a prize.



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Hubbard Farms rehab underway

After months of planning and review with city officials, neighbors, corporate sponsors and the Hubbard Family Association leadership, the revitalization of the Hubbard Nature and Education Center is underway, Mayor Nancy R. Rossi announced.

Under the guidance of Councilman Barry Lee Cohen, R-10, the initiative was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission on March 2 and is being spearheaded by Steven Johnstone, the owner of Hubbard Farm's Wood and Snow LLC of Hubbard Road, who is also the project's lead sponsor.

Jose Amaya, the owner of Above the Ground Tree Care LLC of Westfield Street, is the co-sponsor and a licensed arborist. Parks and Recreation Director Mark E. Paine Jr. and City Council Chairman Ronald M. Quagliani, D-at large, were also engaged in moving the project forward.

"I am thrilled this much-needed revitalization is starting," Rossi said. "The Hubbard Nature Center is such a beautiful area for West Haven residents to use for a short hike, a picnic or to just enjoy being outdoors."

"We are grateful to the Hubbards for their commitment to one of West Haven's most scenic nature preserves. Thank you also to Barry Cohen for his efforts in moving this wonderful project forward."



Photo by Barry Lee Cohen

The revitalization of the 7.6-acre Hubbard Nature and Education Center on Hubbard Road in West Shore is underway, thanks to city leaders and corporate sponsors.

During the major renovation, the West Shore park will remain closed to ensure the safety of residents and workers.

The work is being done under the supervision of Public Works Commissioner Tom J. McCarthy and Tree Warden

Leo Kelly.

All labor and materials to re-establish the front trails, clear brush and debris, replace fencing and beautify the main entrance are being provided by the sponsors at no cost to the city. In addition, the Hubbard Family Association is donating a new sign to replace the existing, weathered one.

Cohen, who represents the district that includes the Hubbard Road nature center, said the sponsors are taking special precautions to enforce social distancing and proper hygienic practices as the project progresses.

Johnstone, who is also the vice president of the Hubbard Family Association, said, "I told Mayor Rossi that my grandparents and great-grandparents would be ashamed of me if I didn't take on this project given that I've been fortunate to build up the tools and the resources over the years to reestablish the integrity of the park."

Cohen added: "When Steve and Allie Johnstone invited me to their house last January to discuss their idea and seek assistance, I was and remain absolutely thrilled to assist as the park has been an ongoing concern of the 10th District for quite some time. The commitment made by the Hubbard Family and the corporate sponsors is a testament to their love for West Haven."

"It's my hope that this park revitalization might serve as a template to foster future private-public partnerships to maintain other recreational areas throughout our wonderful city."

About one-third of the 7.6-acre park, nestled between Jones Hill and Benham Hill roads, is being revitalized this year.

Pending any potential delays due to the coronavirus pandemic, the park is expected to reopen this fall.

A cleanup is being planned for the following spring, when organizers will determine the next steps in moving forward on the remaining acreage while ensuring the preexisting renovations are strictly maintained, Cohen said.

"The Hubbards have lived in West Haven for 200 years," Johnstone said. "There is still a lot of pride left in the tank. I know it's not the skating pond like many fellow Westies remember, but I think a lot of people are going to be quite surprised and impressed when the park reopens later this year."

For more information, contact Cohen at bcohen@westhaven-ct.gov or 203-645-2913.



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There are a number of people and organizations in West Haven who have been providing food assistance to those who need it at this time. It's become quite an operation and this # and email is meant to centralize that process.

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CDA grants help families cope with virus

By Michael P. Walsh
Special to the Voice

The West Haven Community Development Administration has received \$442,726 in Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for preventing, preparing for or responding to COVID-19, CDA Manager Mark J. Bisaccia announced.

Using the federal money, CDA will prioritize the needs of low-to-moderate-income residents and the development of partnerships between all levels of government and the private for-profit and non-profit sectors, Bisaccia said.

Those who qualify for CD-

BG-CV grants must coordinate with state and local health authorities before undertaking activities to support local response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The emergency grants are subject to oversight, reporting and requirements, for which each grantee must prevent the duplication of benefits, Bisaccia said.

CDA is in the process of sending out grant applications to its social services and governmental agencies. For an application, contact Bisaccia at markb@westhaven-ct.gov or (203) 937-3550.

Applications will be reviewed by the West Haven CDBG Citizen Participation

Committee for funding recommendations. Applications are due May 22 to the City of West

Haven, Community Development Administration, 355 Main St., West Haven 06516.

Applications may be inserted into the drop box at the Main Street entrance of City Hall.

Bridges offers scholarship

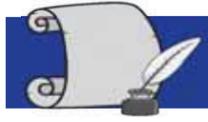
Bridges Healthcare, Inc. announced that applications are now being accepted for The Barry Kasdan Scholarship for the Pursuit of a Graduate or Undergraduate Degree in Human Services. Eligible applicants must reside in one of the towns located in Bridges' service region, or be employed or related to a Bridges employee.

Bridges will award two \$1,500 scholarships in 2020. The successful candidates must meet the following criteria: Must be a Bridges employee, or spouse, child or grandchild of a Bridges employee, or a resident of West Haven; must be pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree in Human Services; and must have completed at least two semesters of college. Completed

applications are due no later than Monday, June 1.

Please contact scholarship@bridgesmilford.org to request an application or visit <http://tinyurl.com/bridgesscholarship> to complete an online application. Hard copy applications with requested additional materials can be mailed to: Barry Kasdan Scholarship Committee, c/o Michelle LeMere, Board Chairman, PO Box 74, Durham, CT 06422.

This scholarship was established by Bridges' Board of Directors, the Board Endowment Fund Committee, and the Board Scholarship Committee in honor of Barry Kasdan's 30-plus years of leadership and service to Bridges.



Historian's corner

By Dan Shine

Wolfe's Bakery Part I

The year was 1912: Arizona and New Mexico became the 47th and 48th states and Alaska became a U.S. territory; The Titanic hit an iceberg and sank, killing 1500 passengers; West Haven was just a borough of Orange; it had unpaved roads with no traffic signals; residents of West Haven were either farmers or laborers who commuted to work in the factories of New Haven by trolley; the Armstrong Rubber Company had just established a business on Elm Street producing automobile tires, and the only other significant industry was that of two small buckle companies.

And it was also in 1912 that Wolfe's Bakery opened for business in West Haven. Wolfe's was destined to grow exponentially and become the largest multiple unit retail bakery in Connecticut.

Two years earlier, in 1910, two German travelers of different stations in life were destined to meet while on the same ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean to America: young Fritz Wolfe (he would later anglicize his first name to "Fred") was a passenger in the steerage while Xaver Pfaff was returning to his home in Con-

necticut on a first-class ticket.

From that meeting, a most memorable friendship was born. Pfaff suggested to Wolfe that West Haven would be an ideal place to open a bakery; Wolfe concurred, and upon his arrival began to put down roots in West Haven.

Soon after, Fred Wolfe also met Xaver Pfaff's eldest daughter Florence, and they began to form a loving relationship. Wolfe asked Pfaff for Florence's hand in marriage, but Pfaff deferred.

"Why don't you travel around the country for a year, and if you are still interested after that, come and see me," he said.

Wolfe complied, and in due course the next year the couple were married.

Now Xaver Pfaff had a son-in-law who had demonstrated his skills as a baker, so Xaver offered to support the opening of a bakery, which initially became known as Pfaff and Wolfe Modern Bakery (and shortly thereafter would simply become Wolfe's Bakery).

And meanwhile, Fred and Florence Wolfe started a family, raising three children: Fred Junior, Katherine (who would die of leukemia at age 9) and Robert. In the years to come, the sons would take over and run the business; this offered

fifty-year old Pop free time for his hobbies--raising quarter horses and carrier pigeons.

To be continued.

Fred Wolfe met and quickly fell in love with the eldest daughter of Xaver Pfaff, and the couple (right) became familiar to West Haven residents over many decades

Below -- The original Pfaff & Wolfe Modern Bakery as it appeared in 1912 in its familiar Campbell Avenue location, now the site of a jewelry exchange.



Dan Shine is a columnist for the West Haven Voice, and former historian of the First Congregational Church.



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Dealing with realities II

In our last issue, we discussed the new realities that face the country, the state and the city as we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Connecticut is part of the tri-state area that saw most of the cases along in the East and it seems we are now in a downward turn. Connecticut is seeing fewer new cases of the virus, and though nothing to celebrate, the bulk of deaths here, and throughout the region seem to be those with serious underlying conditions. We talked in the last issue about dealing with new cases that may come about once the state begins to open; the need to probe why experts' models were so off base, something they willingly admit; and the need to help those who may have trouble recovering from the financial burdens the shutdown created. But the realities we must face go beyond that and are not necessarily negative.

The nation has received a very good lesson in our republican form of government – that's "republican" with a lower case "r." In our Constitution we have separation of powers, and powers given to the sovereign states. Over the last 120 years, those limits, and state powers have been blurred due to the rise of the administrative state. An alphabet soup of agencies, departments and subsets of those have become governments unto themselves, hurting not only separation of powers, but the sovereignty of states.

In this pandemic, President Donald Trump's administration has, to its credit, not arrogated to itself more power, but kept the proper delineation between the federal and state governments. The federal government has been the provider of goods, resources and materials, but it has left the distribution and details to the states.

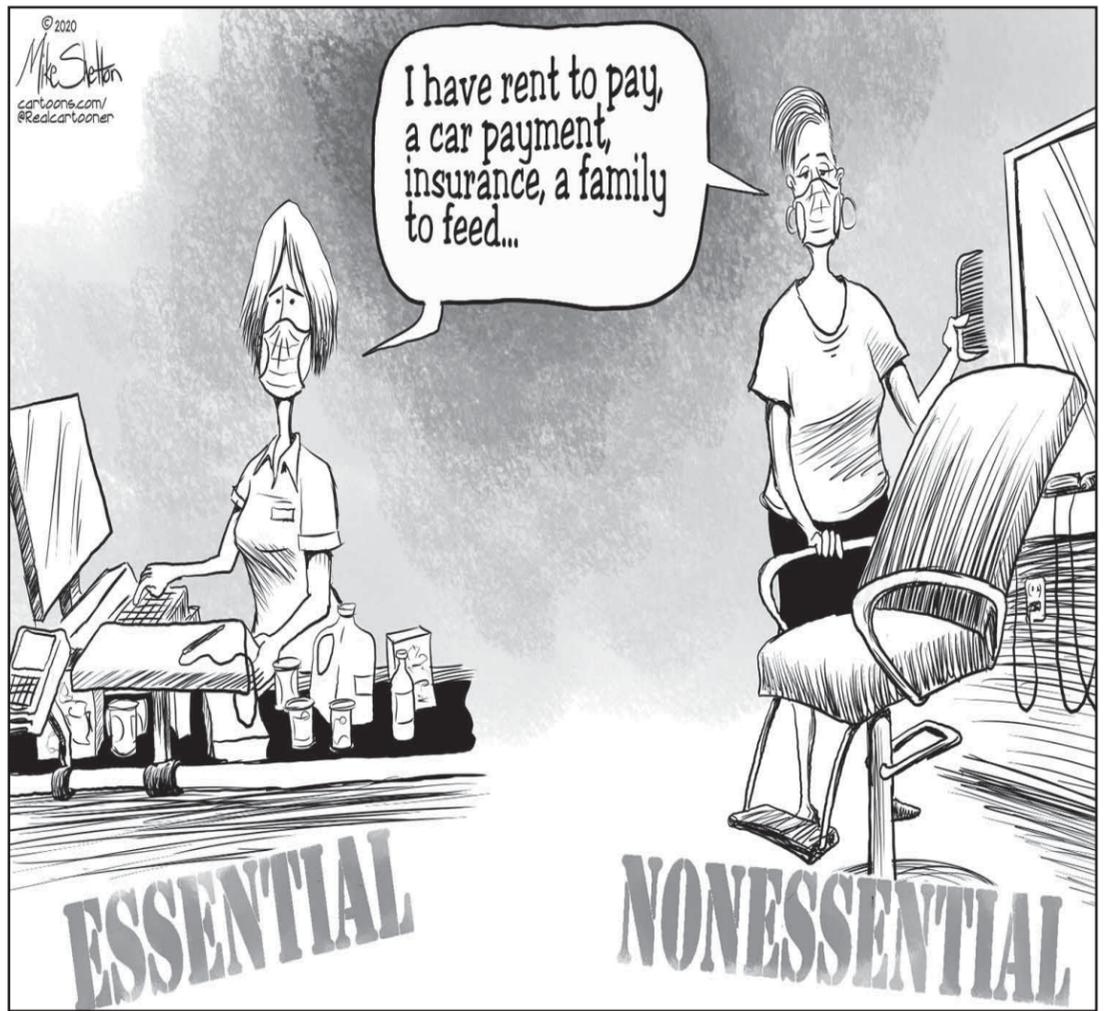
This is something that has been commented on by various think tanks and commentators. The President did make an unfortunate declaration of having absolute power in an emergency, but that was followed up by admitting the governors would make the call, not he or his administration. As with much Trumpian, one must watch what he does and dismiss some of what he says. Something his detractors should take to heart.

Another reality is the converse of the civics lesson mentioned above. Governors, and, in many case, mayors have claimed too much authority to the point of becoming authoritarians. One need only look at Michigan to see it as well as Arizona. Meanwhile, state legislatures, including our own in Connecticut, have abdicated their responsibilities and allowed the executive to micro-manage. It will be interesting to see if the General Assembly will attempt to wrest back its privileges, or allow an expansive executive branch. The Assembly represents the people, a component of society that seems forgotten thus far..

Finally, one new reality that is certainly a good thing is the rediscovery of the nuclear family. Over the last two decades or so, parents have abdicated their responsibilities to sports, clubs, schools and other activities, with the long-revered family dinner becoming a thing of fond memory. This hiatus has allowed families to reconnect.

In some cases not only have nuclear families reconnected but that has expanded to the extended family. Parents who once thought themselves too busy to interact with children, or were stretched by professional obligations that inhibited that interaction are seeing the benefits of quality time.

A recalibration of a balance between making a living and family would not be unwelcomed.



Religious fervor and distancing

By Rich Lowry
Syndicated Columnist
Forgive Jacksonville, Florida,
for it has sinned.

The largest city in Florida partly reopened its beaches, and it became something of a national scandal. CNN ran a disapproving segment, and the hashtag #FloridaMorons trended on Twitter.

As the CNN report put it: "The scene at Jacksonville Beach wasn't one of caution in the middle of a worldwide pandemic. Crowds cheered and flooded the beach when police took the barriers down. People were seen swimming, biking, surfing, running and fishing."

None of these activities has been shown to be a vector for the spread of COVID-19; in fact, no outdoors activities have been shown to be dangerous at all.

A recent study examined hundreds of outbreaks and traced only one to an outdoor environment.

Surfers and bikers are the least of our worries.

Yet, there is a segment of American opinion that takes it as its responsibility to scold and shame anyone who dares go out and get a little fresh air.

Early on in the crisis, CNN anchors spent 20 minutes inveighing against people walking, running, biking and

rollerblading along San Francisco's Embarcadero. Noting that some people were holding hands, Jake Tapper called it "enraging."

Of course, random strangers don't hold hands, but people who are likely in close proximity whether they are enjoying a stroll or not.

Despite there being no indication that outdoor spaces abet the spread of the disease, parks have been shut down throughout the United States, and the closures are at times enforced with rigor.

No less than Tom Brady was chased from a closed Tampa Bay park after he was discovered working out, apparently alone.

A father in Colorado was briefly detained by police for the alleged offense of playing T-ball with his 6-year-old daughter on a softball field.

A sure sign of fanaticism is the inability to make distinctions, in this instance between risky and non-risky activities and between places hard hit and places not.

It's one thing to hold a day-long, 100-person family reunion in a public park, quite another to jog through one. It's one thing to begin opening up in New York City, where there have been more than 10,000 deaths, and another to begin opening in Montana, where

there have been 14.

Jacksonville, Florida is the seat of Duval County. With a population of nearly a million people, the county has had 17 COVID-19 deaths. It is hardly a hot spot.

At least some of the spleen would be taken out of the coronavirus debate if people acknowledged that we live in a vast continental country, with radically different ways of life. Not only are not all states the same, not all counties within states are the same.

But such is the lockdown zealotry that any thought that these kinds of places should be treated differently is considered heresy sure to get people killed.

It seems indisputable that the lockdowns have slowed the spread of the disease, but at an enormous economic cost. We are going to have to show some flexibility and be willing to adopt a patchwork approach to opening up around the country.

We can't be beholden to public officials and commentators who, to paraphrase H.L. Mencken, have the haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be rollerblading.

Rich Lowry is editor
of the National Review.
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Submitted Photos

School Days

Nico (12), Isabella (10), Dante (9), and Marco (8) Antonucci are like all of their fellow students in West Haven, they are "distance learning." To start off the day, the children recite pledge of allegiance in the morning. They recently decided to have a costume parade up and down Benham Hill Road, waving at folks and playing the flute. The kids made signs that said, "Honk for Happiness," and "Everything's Going to be All Right." The goal was to make people smile, according mom, Christine.



Rossi gives update on city response

By Nancy Rossi
Mayor of West Haven

Across the country, communities large and small face unique challenges in combating the COVID-19 pandemic; West Haven is no different. We are a densely populated small city with nearly 55,000 people within 10.2 square miles. We have a large university, a large VA hospital, and more than three miles of public beach with a popular boardwalk.

The West Haven community has responded to the pandemic and its impact in true Westie style, looking out for neighbors and supporting essential workers. I thank all residents for that, and for following the local, state, and national guidelines. As a result, we are starting to see a flattening of the curve and a reduced number of virus infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Throughout this crisis, city officials have focused first and foremost on protecting the health and well-being of all residents. After consulting with public health experts, including our local health department, we closed our parks and boardwalk. Due to the pandemic's impact on fundraising efforts and the health risk associated with large events, the volunteer committees that run our Memorial Day Parade and July 4th Fireworks made the difficult decision, with my full support, to cancel those events this year.

We all want to keep our city running and our residents safe. As part of that effort, I have issued frequent updates and posted important protocols and reminders on social media and on our city website.

Though physically closed to

the public, City Hall remains fully operational, with safety measures and social distancing of course. We have shifted to a four-day workweek, with longer hours Monday through Thursday, and city offices closed each Friday for deep cleaning. While regular updates are posted on the city website and social media, we understand that not all residents have internet access, and not all questions can be answered online. Residents are welcome to contact my office at (203) 937-3510.

West Haven's teachers and educational administrators and staff have done an outstanding job of instituting distance learning using virtual classrooms. This was handled quickly and professionally, and our students are receiving a top-notch education in these very different times.

Our first responders and staff in our police and fire departments have been nothing less than outstanding. The University of New Haven and Yale University have answered our request for housing for

our first responders. Our city employees have kept our city running and are delivering essential services, while many have volunteered to assist our most vulnerable and needy residents.

I want to thank our residents for the outpouring of support for our business community, especially our small businesses. And, I offer heartfelt thanks to our business and faith communities for stepping up to help care for our residents in need. I would also like to thank our Director

of Health and our Emergency Management Director for their help and guidance through this pandemic.

Finally, I am assembling an Economic Recovery Advisory Commission. The commission will include representatives of the healthcare, business, economic development, education, public safety, and recreation communities. I will ask these volunteers to work with me in making recommendations as we move to open the city and ease restrictions, in the safest manner possible.



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Dear Felicia

Howdy do, sweets. Here we are in the Merry Month of May, and to prove it, somebody sent via the computer a "virtual" edition of the Magdalen (pronounced in this case Mawd-lin) College Choir, Oxford, singing as they always do at 6 a.m. British time on May 1. It's a 500-year-old tradition starting a usual May festival – not this year. But the Brits push on and had their annual sing anyway. It was a bright spot in what has been a long slog of a shutdown.

Personally, and this is just my opinion, the powers that be in Hartford and here, can start putting the brakes on these restrictions. I happened by more than one or two local parks and the basketball nets were taken down so as to not let the kids play. They don't get this thing, we are told, so let 'em play. Also, the city closed the boardwalk a month ago cuz somebody complained about social distancing. Have you been to a supermarket?

Regardless of the six-foot perimeter, yore in a place with people passin' by, at least in a park there is the fresh air. It all makes no sense. Methinks the powers like all this newfound authority, especially in Hartford, and they ain't ready to give it up. We don't have maniacs like that gal in Michigan, but the General Assembly has pert near given up its own part in the process.

I jest been around too long with yew, honey bunch. When it comes to politicians and power, it can be, and usually is, a heady thing not given up gladly. Just like there shouldn't be a "one size fits all" approach from state to state, there shouldn't be a one for the counties within a state or cities within a county. The local authorities know what is best. It's just easier to make a catch-all rule than use any kind of common sense.

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Nelly Nuthatch came in and said that the biggest push so far

on the city budget is that which has to do with the library. The Village Improvement Association has been leading a fight to get some of the cuts – and they were perty steep – put back in the budget. Somehow or t'other the thoid floor seems to think the library is one o' those programs that can be pared down. But, it is one o' the departments of government that is actually used by the people paying the taxes – and Goodness knows they get little or nothing for their money as it is.

Now there is a fight over the old Forest School Building. Now remember, there is a branch of the library, and we only have three, at the old school building. The VIA put in a bid for the property of 500,000 kopecks we are told, which was on time and under the rules a local bid, which should give it some clout. Instead it was rejected.

Now, there could be many reasons why this is so, and Iyam sure there is an explanation for rejecting the bid – effen that's what happened. There always is. But we wonder effen nickel and diming the library and then making sure it loses its Allingtown location is a good idea? Many people use the library services – even in this electronic age, and most of those are voters – older voters – who can make life for local politicoes heck.

Let's hope this newest kerfuffle can be settled in a manner that is in the best intereste of all. Just don't bet the mortgage on it.

Sammy Bluejay has been fluttering over to Water Street to see what's going on there. The old thoroughfare, around for many a century and there when we were a ship-building mecca, is now closed and will be eliminated when the "Haven" is under construction. The street closure took place a week or so ago. Right now, it looks like there is a lotta prep work going on before demolition of the houses can take place, and then there'll be prep work for the construction phase.

Tennyrate, Sammy had some good questions concerning the closure. Water Street has been a secondary outlet for traffic off the Kimberly Avenue Bridge comin' into the burg. It has helped the congestion coming into the city. Now that it is closed, and traffic can no longer siphon off Elm, the traffic is gonna be more of a nightmare than it has been.

Sammy said that with the lock down, the traffic comin' back into the city at evening rush hour isn't anywhere near what it was before. Once we get past this lock down, things are gonna get really interesting. Of course, this is what we've been saying all along.

With the closure of the old Exit 43 ramp three years ago, the traffic patterns changed to the point that traffic along Elm Street got less in the morning, but still was heavy at night. Businesses noted this that are

on Elm Street. Now with the closure of Water Street, don't be surprised effen traffic patterns into the city change as well, and it's not as heavy as it once was.

If and when the shopping center opens up, that will create more traffic – we hope – and more problems (not a good thing). Add to it a 50-odd year-old bridge that was only supposed to last for 20, and you've got the possibility of a major difficulty.

~~~~~  
Of course, the announcement that the Memorial Day Parade is canceled for this year came as no surprise. Iva Lootey was here t'other day and said that most people involved in the parade and the festivities had been waiting for a couple o' weeks to see when that shoe would drop. This is because no one is sure whether the state will be in whatever phase of reopening they come up with, and whether social distancing will have to be in force. See my thoughts on that above.

This follows the announcement about the July 3 fireworks. This is the time that the Fireworks Committee does the bulk of its fund-raising for the fireworks, and everything is still in a state of flux. No one is sure what is gonna happen around the Fourth, and with lower traffic, social distancing, restaurants closed where special events take place for the fireworks, there was the thought the whole venture was being set up for failure. According to Iva the committee needs \$15,000 in order to have the display. It doesn't sound like a lot of money, but when you don't have it, it seems farther away. Iva hears that some locals might wanna venture in and try to git the fireworks back on. It can be put on as easily as taken off, they say. And the money can be got. We shall see. That would be bright spot for a lotta people in the city.

~~~~~  
Next up is the Savin Rock Festival. That is supposed to reappear this year now that the city seems a bit more solvent. Nobody reckoned for a pandemic. Sooooo, I guess we'll hafta wait a few weeks before that shoe will drop too. How about having the Fireworks at the Festival this year? It'll be a win-win.

~~~~~  
Lost in all this is the senior rites of passage that are gonna be missing in some places this spring. No decision has been made locally yet, regarding graduation. Prom has perty much been ditched. I guess that was the topic of a conference call at the CAS-CIAC last week. Some school systems are talking about having a double graduation next year for 2020 and 2021. no decision here, yet. It's jest a mess.

~~~~~  
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HOD #362

# Ciambriello album shows his style

A former city resident, but still local employee has taken a big step in the music world. John Ciambriello is releasing a new five-song streaming "album" entitled, "It All Begins."

The new album will be available on popular music streaming platforms such as Apple Music and Spotify on May 22. A videosingle of the EP's title track "It All Begins," can already be seen/heard on his website (ciambriello.com), YouTube, and Facebook. The entire collection of songs have been written, produced, performed, recorded, mixed, and mastered by Ciambriello himself.

The Ciambriellos lived in the city for eight years, and currently reside, in Orange. Ciambriello and his wife, and three girls.

But, he maintains his West Haven connection, working for the Young Adults Services program at Bridges Healthcare, Inc. there he works with "a specific population of young adults, daily using music and other expressive arts as a tool to help them cope with life."

He is known as a performer as well, playing the annual West Haven Apple Festival for a number of years.

Typically his song-writing runs the gamut, and is exhibited in the new releases.

"This collection of songs casts a wide net — there's everything from finding love to losing a loved one, from building a relationship on a road trip to learning from mistakes. The songs have something for everyone," he said.

Ciambriello musical sound could be classified as contemporary folky pop-rock, and resembles popular artists such as Ben Rector, Jason Mraz, Jack Johnson and John Mayer. John's songs give glass-half-full optimism as he takes listeners through stories via melodies and song.

"When writing, recording and performing songs, I want to give listeners a chance to feel something -- something honest and something real,"

he said. "I think that people are more alike than we'd like to admit, and I attempt to find and bring to light the parts of our human experience, that we can all relate to."

Being a singer-songwriter is only one portion of Ciambriello's musical career. He's been a wedding singer since 2014 (connecticutweddingsinger.com), a nursing home entertainer since 2005, playing at around 15 nursing homes around Connecticut monthly, and also plays at restaurants, festivals and other public and private events all over New England.

John has been working a unique music-oriented day-job, right here in the center of West Haven, for the past 14 years, as a part of Bridges Healthcare, Inc.'s Young Adult Services Program, in which he uses music to help his clients express themselves in a posi-

tive and productive manner through songwriting, sound recording, music lessons and an expressive arts monthly open mic night called the Low Key Cafe.

In the future, in addition to his current musical endeavors, John is looking to release more original music and plans on touring outside of the northeast. You can find out more about John Ciambriello and hear his music or watch videos at these online locations: www.ciambriello.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/johnciambriellomusic Instagram: www.instagram.com/johnciambriello, www.youtube.com/johnciambriello, www.soundcloud.com/johnciambriello.

**John Ciambriello takes a big step on May 22 with the release of his new album, "It All Begins."**



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# Around Town

## Shore Haven scholarships

Shore Haven Jr. Baseball will be accepting scholarship applicants from June 2020 high school seniors pursuing further education. The league will be awarding scholarships in the amounts of \$250 in honor of Dave Terese, Sr. and Mario J. Argentino, plus the Joseph Morrell, Sr. Scholarship. All applicants must have participated in the league for two years for the Terese, Argentino, and Morrell Sr. scholarships. Applications must be returned by May 15, to Charles Gunning, 125 Central Ave. West Haven 06516. More information can be obtained from area high school guidance offices or by calling (203) 934-9740.

## Revue rescheduled

The 38th edition of the Golden Oldies Revue, originally scheduled for Saturday, April 4, at Cielo Ballroom has been cancelled and rescheduled for Friday, June 5, 8 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Michael Hoover presents "Memories of Elvis" at 9:30. Also featured Carla Gemma. Tickerts are \$30 per person. Proceeds benefit MDA. for prizes and Raffle! call Geri Caccavale, (203) 795-5473.

## Student loans

The Seth Haley Memorial Loan Fund of West Haven provides eligible college students with loans of up to \$2500 to help students finish their post high school education. Applicants must be West Haven residents. If you are interested in making an application for a loan, please call Ralph Lawson, (203) 934-6442.

UFO

BY TOM ASCHENBACH



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**Gripe Vine Readers:**

I have received requests from readers interested in learning what efforts the local Chamber of Commerce and city officials utilize to bring new businesses into the city of West Haven.

Several months ago I posed this question to Alan Olenick, Chamber of Commerce Director. I have not heard from Louis Esposito, mayoral assistant. If you have been following this column you, no doubt, have noticed that I have been prying both these gentlemen for answers.

However, I finally heard from Alan Olenick and here is his reply on how the Chamber of Commerce encourages new businesses to West Haven:

Dear Eleanore Turkington:  
The West Haven Chamber of Commerce and the city of West Haven work every day to court new businesses to come to the city.



**ELEANORE TURKINGTON**

The Chamber offers an online resource for a new business to open up shop here whether it's a small mom and pop store to a large corporation. This source can be found at <https://www.westhavenchamber.com/business-resources>

This resource is designed to get a potential business all the information they would need in one place whether it federal,

state or local resources. The chamber then acts as an advocate for anyone interested in opening or relocating here. We guide them in the right direction and make introductions to any chamber member that can help them.

Don't forget, we also operate the DMV Express office which brings more than 10,000 people annually to West Haven's Center Business District. More than 60 percent of the visitors are from a 15 mile radius from West Haven.

We have a great working relationship with the City of West Haven when attracting and retaining businesses.

*Alan Olenick, Director*

**Dear Eleanore Turkington:**  
I AM VERY CONCERNED. There is a two-way intersection behind Seth Haley Elementary School on South Street. It seems that not everyone even slows down let alone

come to a complete stop. They just squeeze through it as if there were no sign at all.

This is a neighborhood with families with young children. It is a high traffic area, with bike riding, dog walking ,etc. I know that it is just a matter of time before someone gets hurt. I am hoping something will get done before there is a tragedy.

It would be great if the West Haven Police Department would put an unmarked car there in the area to view this activity and view this situation.

*A Very Concerned Parent*

**Dear Concerned Parent:**  
I have placed this dangerous activity in the hands of Councilwoman Elizabeth Johnson who replied this condition was not in her area but she contacted Sgt. Joseph D'Amato at the WHPD about the possibility of a traffic study and she copied Councilwoman Crystal Fanelli on this email to alert her as well.

Councilman Robert Bruneau

was also notified of this traffic problem and here is what he forwarded to Gripe Vine, "I, along with an officer of the WHPD Traffic Department spent some time at that intersection Monday, April 27 and witnessed an issue there. I reached out to Sgt Joseph D'Amato who is head of the Traffic Department and he has assured me they will increase patrol in that area..

I will also keep an eye on the intersection and update the Police Department as well."

**Dear Eleanore Turkington:**  
Please have someone check out the corner of Forest Road an the Boston Post Road. It is extremely dangerous there.

*JD Dangerous*

Dear Dangerous:  
I reached out to Councilman Peter Massaro who warned drivers to stay away from this area.

"There is major construction going on here and there are cones in the road. Urge everyone to stay away from this

See Gripevine, page 12

# Financial Focus

*Courtesy of Edward Jones Financial*

## Why Should You See a Financial Advisor?

The social distancing and stay-at-home orders necessitated by the coronavirus have led many of us to feel isolated. Still, we've fought back through social media, "virtual" gatherings and walks in the neighborhood, where we could greet friends and neighbors (from 6 feet away). But when you're dealing with the financial effects of the virus and you're *investing* alone, you could encounter some problems that may prove costly.

Of course, with so much investment-related information available online, on television and in any number of periodicals, it's not surprising that some people feel they can invest without any assistance. But the volatility of the financial markets over the past few months has also pointed to the dangers of going solo in the investment world. And you might find that a professional financial advisor can help you in several ways, including the following:

**Taking emotions out of investing.** During this period of market turbulence, many self-guided investors are letting their emotions drive their investment decisions. As a result, they sell investments when their price is down, "locking in" their losses. Furthermore, if they then stay out of the financial markets, they will miss out on the eventual recovery – and some of the biggest gains in market rallies usually occur right at the beginning. But if you work with a financial advisor who has helped you develop a per-

sonalized investment strategy based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon, you will be far less likely to react to extreme market conditions by making ill-advised decisions.

**Maintaining perspective.** When you're putting away money for the future and you suddenly have a lot less of it, you might start to wonder if that future is somehow in jeopardy. But if you've been working with a financial advisor and following your investment strategy, you'll know that you don't have to immediately cash out those investments that have lost value, and you may not need to liquidate them for decades if they were designed for a long-term goal, such as retirement. By the time you do need to sell them, their value may well have appreciated significantly. And if you've got a well-constructed portfolio, you'll also own shorter-term, less volatile investments to help meet your current cash flow needs.

**Understanding the history of investing.** The recent market instability is unique in the sense that its cause – a worldwide pandemic – is so highly unusual, and it hopefully will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Typically, prolonged market downturns are triggered by explainable financial or economic factors, such as the bursting of the "dot-com" bubble in 2000. However, market drops of 20 percent or more – generally referred to as bear markets – are not at all unusual and have happened every few years over the past

several decades. Financial advisors are well aware of this history and share it with their clients. And for many people, the knowledge that "we've been here before" is reassuring and makes it easier for them to continue following their investment strategies.

The road to your financial goals is a long one, with many twists and turns. So you might like to have some experienced company along the way.

###

*This article was written by Edward Jones, Member SIPC, for use by local Edward Jones Financial Advisor Darryl Zebrowski.*



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If you need more writing space, complete your gripe on a separate piece of paper and submit with this form. Your identity will be kept confidential with Eleanore Turkington, Gripe Vine Columnist. You can also email your gripe to [gripevine4wh@aol.com](mailto:gripevine4wh@aol.com)



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Continued from page 11 site."

**Dear Eleanore Turkington:**  
The traffic light at Campbell and Lamson located at the VA Driveway is supposed to be solid during rush hours. It has been blinking. Please correct it.

**PIA Frustrated Driver**  
**Dear Frustrated Driver:**  
Councilman Mitchell Galignano responded to Gripe Vine's request to offer some aid at this traffic light site.

Here's his reply, "That light is on a timer. I will make sure it is working properly."

**Dear Eleanore Turkington:**  
The customers steal the New Haven Toters and bring them to the recycle center at 163 Boston Post Road. We have around 20 of them. Please come get them.

*Toter Griper*

**Dear Toter Griper:**  
Here is what Councilman Peter Massaro said after Gripe Vine posed your complaint, "There is nothing I can do about people stealing the cans. At one time they were leaving them in the parking lot at Gilbert Street and Boston Post Road. I will try to call New Haven."

**Dear Eleanore Turkington:**  
There is a missing light post at 385 Platt Ave. When you go up and down Platt Avenue the street lights are present except for 385. This area is very dark and can be hazardous when visibility is very low during the evening, snow, fog, etc.

*Fearful Resident*

**Dear Fearful:**  
Councilwoman Elizabeth Johnson received your complaint and she replied: "I have contacted Sgt. Joseph D'Amato about this and will gladly get back to you once

he replies. I will also contact United Illuminating about this." Readers, as soon as Councilwoman Johnson sends her reply to Gripe Vine you will read it here.

However, this is what Sgt. Joseph D'Amato said on the missing street light at 385 Platt Ave. "This issue is more for the United Illuminating. Looks like the resident is complaining about lack of a street light on a pole that may never have had a light in the first place. By looking at the poles on Platt Avenue, not every pole has a light attached to it. I can't answer as to why that is. This question is better suited for the UI Company."

Coming up....Pot holes on Plainfield Street, pot holes on Dix Street, water puddling on Nonquit Street sidewalk, deep hole with cone inside on Fairfax Street, cars ignoring stop sign at 64 to 70 Nonquit Street, problems at Aimes, Anawon and Contact Drive, Chestnut Street potholes, and much more.

Send your gripes, comments and issues to gripevine4wh@aol.com or write to Gripe Vine c/o The West Haven Voice 840 Boston Post Road, West Haven, 06516.



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# Bartlett eyes 10th Senatorial bid

There is a new candidate in the state senate seat now occupied by four-term Democrat Gary Winfield of New Haven. Jason Bartlett, a Democrat, has formed an exploratory candidate committee for the seat and has been actively campaigning for the office online. The Tenth Senatorial District includes parts of New Haven and West Haven.

During the Covid 19 quarantine it has been difficult to reach voters and campaign in the traditional door to door practice. Instead, Bartlett has released three videos and is actively promoting issues using Facebook and Instagram.

Bartlett's credentials are extensive. He is a former state legislator and former youth director and Mayor Harp's Liaison to the New Haven Board of Education for the City of New Haven. His campaign information says he will target education and youth issues with the goal of helping them stay on track and be successful; Jobs and the current unemployment crisis due to Covid 19, fighting for West Haven taxpayers when it comes to the Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB)

and pursuing enabling legislation to assist West Haven in imagining a development for the grounds at the Haven.

Bartlett's campaign credits him with "expanding youth employment opportunities throughout New Haven, creating safe spaces for homeless youth in the city, creating several new citywide youth programs such as the area's Hoop It UP 3x3 basketball tournament, implementing technical programs for youth at the high schools for trades such as plumbing and manufacturing, creating Youth Stat to give holistic supports to young people and end youth violence."

He is calling on the General Assembly to get back to work after closing their doors last week and ending the session

"Everyone is hurting due to Covid-19, but the legislature has not had one virtual meeting, not one public hearing, not one vote," he said. "If the surrounding municipalities can conduct business through Zoom meetings and our teachers can report to work and

teach distance learning then surely our state legislators can get to work for the 402,000 unemployed people who have filed in the last two months.

He said the legislature has to be homed into the needs of the voters despite the pandemic.

"This is just one example of where they need to be focused. Being engaged virtually and having accountability at all levels is the least we can expect from them while they continue to be paid their full salaries," he said.

You can find Bartlett's promotional material at *2020 Bartlett* on Facebook or call (475) 319-3561.

**Former New Haven city official Jason Bartlett has formed a committee to eye a run in the 10th Senatorial District. The former Democratic assemblyman will have to unseat incumbent Gary Winfield in a primary.**



# Athletes: *Relate experiences to Westies*

Continued from page 16

Luneau loves his job. He loves his players. With all that, the West Haven assistant football coach and head baseball coach feels a big responsibility when it comes to students and athletes who cross his path.

"Here's how I feel," Luneau said. "The kids put out 100%. As a coach, you owe them something. At the end of the day, there are a lot of coaches who help these kids and want to make sure they are successful in life, not just sports. I get a lot of former players texting me to check in. That's a great feel-

ing."

For Contreras, a freshman outfielder at Chesapeake College, going to West Haven and playing athletics took a back seat to his personal experience. Not speaking any English, Contreras felt out of place. That was quickly resolved.

"When I first came here, I did not speak any English," Contreras said. "They made me feel like family here. The guys on the team taught me so much. They were a family to me."

Kiaunis summed it up best. "I have so much pride in this school,"

Kiaunis said. "It will always be like that. When you come here, you will always love that."

Said Vitolo, "I am proud to tell people I am from here. I am proud of the system I came from. It helped me become a better person. It helped me be ready for life after high school."

The student-athletes are not just focused on athletics as they have carved their career paths as well. Kiaunis is a science major, Jefferson, who plays baseball at Albertus Magnus College, is studying history, Davis and Jennette are both studying sports management,

Vitolo and Contreras are both studying business management, and Geter is studying criminal justice.

Luneau was quick to praise all who visited for their hard work as well as the many other student athletes from West Haven who have worked hard and are enjoying success academically and athletically on the collegiate level.

"I am so proud of all of the kids," Luneau said. "They are working hard and are successful in college. They are preparing for the rest of their lives. Nothing was given to them. That work ethic is going to help them."

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**Harborview Condominiums**  
Commercial space available  
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lessons in your home since  
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Leaky faucets, leaky show-  
ers, and pipes, bathroom  
sinks, common toilet problems,  
clogged sinks and drains, hot  
water heaters installed, gar-  
bage disposals. Call (203) 584-  
6868.

**ROOMS SOUGHT**  
56-year-old female teacher  
seeks a clean, quiet studio, 1  
bedroom, or room with private  
bathroom near West Haven  
area for around \$600 including  
utilities. (203) 934-3743.

**FOR SALE**  
1999 Lincoln Towncar.  
104,000 miles, loaded. Must  
Drive. \$2000 or best offer. (203)  
907-6993.

**FOR SALE**  
2003 GMC Sinoma Pick-up,  
red. Automatic, tires in good  
shape, interior in good shape.  
Asking \$2000. Check Connecti-  
cut Marketplace for pictures.  
Come see it! (254) 228-7124.  
Ask for Jean Hinton.

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West Haven - Park Street. One  
room for rent. \$500/month, or  
\$135/week. Includes utilities.  
One person only. No friend  
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## Americanisms



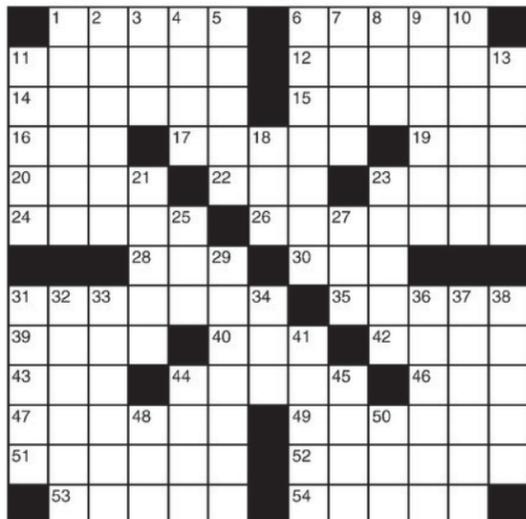
"Some old-fashioned things  
like fresh air and sunshine  
are hard to beat."

— Laura Ingalls Wilder

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### King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Resided
  - 6 Things
  - 11 Demosthenes or Cicero
  - 12 Cancel out
  - 14 Ubiquitous fastener
  - 15 Early spring bloom
  - 16 Feedbag tidbit
  - 17 — the manger
  - 19 Owns
  - 20 Press
  - 22 Ballet step
  - 23 — song (cheaply)
  - 24 Force measures
  - 26 Decorum
  - 28 Quite some time
  - 30 Actor Stephen
  - 31 Went sour
  - 35 Contents of some trays
  - 39 Responsibility
  - 40 Court
  - 42 Story
- DOWN**
- 1 Cheerless
  - 2 "The Compleat Angler" author
  - 3 And so on (Abbr.)
  - 4 Tennyson title
  - 5 Cavalry unit
  - 6 Canine's neighbor
  - 7 Sea bird
  - 8 Id counterpart
  - 9 He-men
  - 10 George Washington
  - 11 Egg-shaped
  - 13 English composition
  - 18 Leg, slangily
  - 21 Must have
  - 23 Banquet
  - 25 Scale member
  - 27 Part of the Justice Dept.
  - 29 Cronkite, Rather, et al.
  - 31 Work together
  - 32 Doubtful
  - 33 Neighbor of Georgia
  - 34 Female deer
  - 36 Risk
  - 37 Cheers up
  - 38 Some lilies
  - 41 Lash — (berate)
  - 44 Comic strip possum
  - 45 Nap
  - 48 Body art, for short
  - 50 Calendar abbr.



### MAGIC MAZE • SEAWORTHY WORDS

R N K I F C A X V S Q O L J H  
E C A X V E S R O H A E S T R  
M D R I B A E S R E D N U P G  
R O H C N A A E S K C A L B U  
G N T L J H C E F S D B Y X L  
V A T T R P A E S D A E D L S  
O M B K O L P E I L G B U E A  
D B Z A E B T X S W A G A U E  
T L I V E D A E S D A R R E S  
Q O E N L S I E J E E I O G S  
F L D C A Y N X S W V R T C S

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: FISH WITH HORSE-LIKE HEAD

- Black Sea
- Coral Sea
- Dead Sea
- Red Sea
- Sea anchor
- Sea bag
- Sea bass
- Sea bottom
- Sea captain
- Sea devil
- Sea gull
- Sea level
- Sea slug
- Seabird
- Undersea



**HIDDEN** in the above frame is a famous proverb. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it counterclockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

**LOOSE CHANGE!** Challenge your friends to move one of these coins to a new position so that there will be four coins along each arm of the cross.

**IT'S MAGIC!** Use the numbers 5 through 20 to fill in this Magic Number Square. The numbers in each horizontal row and vertical column should total 50. We've filled in the four center squares. The rest is up to you. Use trial and error — and a good eraser!

### Junior Whirl

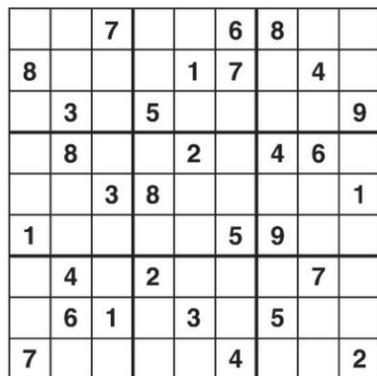
by Charles Barry Townsend

**A SECRETARY PUZZLE!**  
Let's celebrate Secretaries Day, April 21, with a neat little word problem. Starting with the word SECRETARY at the bottom of our word pyramid, try dropping one letter at a time as you work your way up, so that the remaining letters of each level spell out a new word. The following hints are from the bottom up:

1. A record keeper (SECRETARY).
2. Goes back over.
3. Found on the moon.
4. Hardest to find.
5. A type of flower.
6. To satisfy fully.
7. An aromatic beverage.
8. In or near a location.
9. Top grade.

### Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle



Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

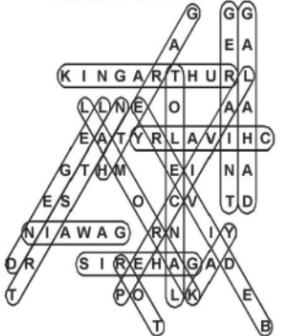
### Answers to last week's puzzles

#### King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | B | I | S | A | P | T | D | A | S | H |   |
| M | A | D | E | L | E | A | I | N | C | A |   |
| P | H | O | N | E | T | A | G | S | T | A | R |
|   |   |   | T | W | O | A | N | O | I | N | T |
| A | W | A | R | E | B | L | E | W |   |   |   |
| C | A | G | Y | B | R | O | W | N | B | A | G |
| E | D | O | S | A | I | N | T | A | L | E |   |
| S | I | G | H | T | G | A | S | E | A |   |   |
|   |   |   | Y | O | U | R | U | S | H | E | R |
| S | T | E | P | P | E | A | S | H |   |   |   |
| N | O | A | H | T | I | G | E | R | R | A | G |
| O | G | R | E | T | O | E | A | U | T | O |   |
| B | O | N | N | E | N | D | M | E | E | T |   |

#### KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE



#### Weekly SUDOKU — Answer

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



This busy, upside down world is not permitting us to stay with our moms at this time. We hope this little gesture for your window gets the message to her on Mother's Day that you still think of her, despite the distance

*Happy Mother's Day !*



## Before COVID-19 Shutdown

# Scholar-Athletes give advice

By Mike Madera

Special to the Voice

With plenty of choices of where to go for a high school education, several former West Haven High student athletes returned to the scene of where they called home during their holiday break from college. What these and other student athletes did not realize was their college year and sports season was going to be cut short due to COVID-19.

Prior to their return home to West Haven for safety reasons, some former West Haven High School student athletes had a chance to talk about what the high school, its administrators and teachers, and coaches meant to them.

Added to the hard work of the staff and coaches will be a new feel to the school for the upcoming school year when it eventually begins due to COVID-19.

With the state-of-the-art high school project continuing, not only will the academics portion be upgraded with new state of the art amenities and a fresh feel, but the athletic portion will as well.

Along with one of the best athletic complexes in the state, there will be a new gym area, and a state of the art system for the student athletes to work with, including weight room, and a system to video practices and games to promote the student-athlete. Among the list of state of the art upgrades, this system will also allow student-athletes to study film on their own.

There will be team rooms, meeting rooms, and an all-purpose room to help prepare each sport for their seasons and contests. The batting cage will also be state of the art for both baseball and softball, while the basketball court may well have the best design seen in this area.

When talking about West Haven, the city and the school, each cited several different reasons why West Haven High was the answer.

For Mario Kiaunis, Sean Jefferson, Lorenzo Davis, Michael Vitolo, Juan Contreras, Tylen Jennette, and Mekhi Geter, their paths were differ-



Photo by Todd Dandelske

Pictured are student-athletes prior to COVID-19 with coaches Ron Luneau (l.) and Tom Unger (r.). The group visited their alma mater prior to the outbreak, with schools -- and their colleges -- closing for the semester.

ent, but the way to collegiate success was aided the same.

"I felt a real connection here," Jefferson said of West Haven High. "The teachers are willing to spend the time and teach you. They are willing to help you. As far as the coaches, they put a lot of time in. The coaches care about you on and off the field. They care about your grades. They make sure you are doing well in school. You want to play for them."

"They care about you here," Vitolo said on his break from Westfield State University where he was to play baseball. "It is more than just about sports. They care about you in classes. They make sure you are doing well, especially the coaches."

While West Haven is a big school, the student athletes felt they never got lost in the shuffle. From the athletic department, to the coaches in the sports they played, to the teachers, and administrators, this returning group says, as a whole, their time at the high school and the guidance they were given has helped shape the start of the rest of their lives.

"I put a lot of personal time in with (coach) Tommy Unger and (coach) Ron Luneau," Geter, a defensive lineman

at UMASS-Dartmouth, said. "They watch you closely with your grades and with sports. They bring you to visits. They check on you. They bring you food. There is a lot that goes on here because they care about you as a person."

"When I was here, I saw how the teachers were willing to spend time with you," Davis, a senior pitcher at Lasell College, said. "I learned so much from this school."

The group as a whole praised how hard you are pushed in athletics as well.

Most stated the perception from those not attending the high school was the student athletes at West Haven were not pushed or worked hard. Each took issue with that perception.

According to Jennette, a freshman strong safety at Wilkes University, that could not have been farther from the truth in the classroom and in athletics.

"They really pushed you," Jennette said. "In the moment, you may be down by them pushing you, but it helped in the long run. You practiced hard so the game was easier."

"I felt we had a better work ethic than anyone," Vitolo said. "They worked you hard here. They put you through the ringer. There were times

we had to run after games, but that made us better. We had that work ethic."

"We worked so hard," Kiaunis, a junior second baseman at Lasell College, said. "The way they work you is second to none."

The student athletes raved about the school system and the coaches. While the academics were thoroughly taken care of by teachers and advisors, there were coaches who went the extra mile and really stood out.

The former student athletes also pointed out how some recent graduates had returned to help their alma mater because of how they loved the system and wanted to give back.

According to those who returned on their break, and based by the sports they played, coaches like Ed McCarthy, Rich Boshea, Ron Luneau and Tom Unger made the world of difference.

The group also pointed to all sports at the high school and how each coach cares, not just about the athlete but as a student and person first.

"Me personally, I did not know what I was going to do after high school," Kiaunis said. "If I played (baseball), I played. But Coach (Luneau) called me and said this is what we are going to do. He went

out of his way to help me with visits. If I did not have a ride, he took me."

"I did not know if I was going to play college baseball," Davis said. "The offers were not coming in. Coach Luneau helped me find a school where academics and baseball were a match."

"I told him (Luneau) what I wanted to study, and he went out of his way to help me," Jennette said. "When there were times I did not know what to do, he went out of his way to help me."

"Coach Luneau is crazy," Geter said with a laugh. "Him, Bo (coach Rich Boshea), Coach Mac (Ed McCarthy), they got you ready. They worked you. They are coaches you wanted to play for."

For Unger, the formula and reasons for success were simple.

"We wanted to prepare them to play in college," Unger said. "There are times that get tough. But, it is so much beyond sports. You have to get them in the weight room and teach them how to do it properly. It is not just about the lifting. It is about commitment and doing it the right way. That made me the person I am. We want to make them better young men, not just athletes."

See Athletes, page 13