

Ben Bronz Academy celebrates opening

By Bill Doak

Town, state and school leaders gathered facing the tall brick wall with the big, new sign stating “Ben Bronz Academy” on a pleasant autumn evening Tuesday, and took turns expressing amazement at the transformation of the former St. Rose Catholic school at Church Street and Burnside Avenue into an advanced place charged with new educational purpose.

“This ribbon represents a new promise and beginning of a lasting partnership,” noted Richard Rubenstein, board chair.

After buying the closed school from the Archdiocese of Hartford for \$1.6 million, the school spent nearly as much adapting and transforming classrooms, rewiring and reconfiguring walls and doors to accommodate teachers and students. From the cramped office in West Hartford where the school library consisted of one bookshelf, Ben Bronz students now can look out onto the front lawn of their school from of a double-wide library. Other classrooms are set aside for specialties such as STEM, math, English, chemistry, art and a Maker Space laboratory. Work continued right up until the first day of school as teachers scrambled around tiles being laid in the hallways to get classrooms ready and set up. They laughed about it two months later, a happy memory. After leaving the cramped quarters Ben Bronz Academy rented for 40 years in West Hartford, for some teachers having an actual classroom to teach in was a first.

Wiring are still exposed in the ceilings, but the hallways

are now decorated with artwork everywhere and personal imprints of the students who proudly call Ben Bronz Academy their educational home.

Central to the project was general contractor Dava Siedman who commanded crews of tireless workers through the renovation. But Siedman, who is also the mother of an academy student, was not present Tuesday. Praise for her work came from all who marveled at the transformation of the classrooms along the long corridor of the 71-year-old school.

Mayor Connor Martin was also pleased to hear school officials sing praises of working with town staff. West Hartford political leader Jonathan Harris called the mayor and encouraged him to work with the school, and also called state elected leaders and urged them to support the planned relocation. He was also singled out for his support even though he was not at the ceremony.

House Majority Leader Jason Rojas remembered attending the St. Rose carnivals back in the day, and noted today, “as grownups it is our job to meet kids where they are. Ben Bronz Academy has been doing that for decades. I bought in as soon as we met,” he added, and thanked the school for helping his son, Sammy.

State Rep. Patrick Biggins also praised the work of the teachers. “Thank you for all you do.”

State Sen. Saud Anwar also spoke, and noted “every child has a light. This is a place to shine brightly for those who shine a little differently. This is a labor of love and we appreciate it.”

See BEN BRONZ, pg. 14

BEN BRONZ GRAND OPENING



CUTTING THE RIBBON signed by students and teachers, above, The renovated gym, below, has new windows.



AROUND TOWN

EH Rotary donates coats

The Rotary Club of East Hartford continues its long-standing commitment to helping local children stay warm through its annual Koats for Kids program, working in partnership with the Town of East Hartford's Health and Social Services Department, Youth and Social Services Division, and Burlington.

This meaningful community initiative provides new winter coats to eligible East Hartford children, helping families prepare for colder months while ensuring youngsters have the warmth and comfort they deserve. Through the generosity of Rotary members, community

supporters, and dedicated town employees, Koats for Kids demonstrates the power of neighbors helping neighbors.

"The Rotary Club of East Hartford is proud to support programs that make a real difference in the lives of local children and families," said Rob Rosa. "Working together with our town partners allows us to continue giving back to the community we care so much about."

The Rotary Club of East Hartford remains committed to its mission of Service Above Self, supporting initiatives that strengthen the community and improve lives.

KEEPING KIDS WARM - 'KOATS FOR KIDS'



ROTARY GIVES COATS From left, Rotarian Ceil Collins, East Hartford Director of Health and Social Services Laurence Burnsed, Tasha Bobb, Lizbeth Pabilla, Mayor Connor Martin and Rob Rosa, president of EH Rotary Club representing the community partnership supporting East Hartford's Koats for Kids program.



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DESDE LA ESQUINA *by Carmen Maldonado*

Hay algo bien curioso sobre la manera en que solemos recordar a quienes ya no están con nosotros. Algunos guardamos fotografías, otros conservamos objetos que pertenecieron a nuestros seres queridos y, de vez en cuando, aparece una canción, un olor o hasta una comida que nos transporta a algún recuerdo.

Y ni hablar de esas historias familiares que hemos escuchado veinte veces, pero que seguimos contando como si acabaran de suceder. Es bonito pensar que, aunque todos tenemos nuestras propias maneras de recordar, hay culturas que han convertido esos recuerdos en toda una celebración. Una llena de colores, flores, música y tradiciones que, para quienes no crecimos con ellas, pueden despertar mucha curiosidad.

Ese es el caso del Día de los Muertos, una celebración profundamente arraigada en la cultura mexicana que nos invita a mirar la muerte desde una perspectiva diferente; no solamente desde la tristeza de una despedida, sino también desde la alegría de recordar a quienes formaron parte de nuestras vidas.

Para quienes no crecimos con esta tradición, ver las famosas calaveras decoradas, los altares llenos de fotografías y las flores de cempasúchil puede resultar fascinante. Especialmente cuando estamos acostumbrados a relacionar la muerte con tristeza, silencio y despedidas. Pero esta celebración nos presenta otra manera de mirar la ausencia. Una donde recordar también puede ser motivo de alegría.

Cada 1 y 2 de nov. se celebra el Día de los Muertos, una tradición en la que las familias honran a sus seres queridos que ya no están físicamente con ellos. Durante estos días, los hogares se llenan de colores, flores, velas y ofrendas decoradas con fotografías, comidas favoritas y objetos que evocan recuerdos de quienes partieron. Según la tradición, estas ofrendas sirven para darles la bienvenida simbólica a las almas que regresan a visitar a sus familias.

Aunque el Día de los Muertos es una tradición principalmente mexicana, creo que muchos podemos identificarnos con el sentimiento que hay detrás de esta celebración. Porque, sin importar de dónde venimos, todos tenemos nuestras

propias maneras de mantener presentes a quienes ya no están.

Hay quienes visitan los cementerios, llevan flores, encienden velas o guardan con mucho cariño algún objeto especial. Otros encuentran consuelo en las pequeñas cosas del día a día, como preparar aquella receta familiar que tanto le gustaba a alguien o recordar alguna de sus ocurrencias.

Y ni hablar de las reuniones familiares, donde basta con que alguien diga: “¿Se acuerdan cuando fulano hizo aquello?”, para que comiencen a salir las anécdotas, las risas y, de vez en cuando, una que otra lagrimita. Porque así somos, encontramos maneras de mantener presentes a quienes queremos, incluso cuando ya no están para compartir la mesa con nosotros.

Al final, quizás nuestras tradiciones sean distintas, pero el cariño y las ganas de sentir cerquita a quienes se fueron son sentimientos que muchos compartimos.

Y quizás eso sea una de las cosas más bonitas de vivir en una comunidad tan diversa como la nuestra. Tenemos la oportunidad de conocer las tradiciones

de nuestros vecinos, aprender sobre sus significados y descubrir que, a pesar de nuestras diferencias, hay mucho que nos une. El Día de los Muertos también nos recuerda que las tradiciones no desaparecen cuando cruzamos fronteras. Viajan con nosotros, se adaptan a nuevos lugares y encuentran maneras de mantenerse vivas, incluso a miles de millas de donde comenzaron.

Así que, cuando veamos una ofrenda decorada con flores anaranjadas, fotografías y velas, vale la pena recordar que detrás de cada elemento hay una historia, una familia y mucho cariño.

Porque recordar a quienes ya no están no siempre tiene que ser un momento de tristeza. A veces también puede ser una oportunidad para sonreír, compartir una buena anécdota y celebrar todo lo que esas personas dejaron en nuestras vidas.

Eventos próximos que no te debes perder: No te pierdas el Access Walk & 5k Run: Community Health & Wellness Day. Este se llevará a cabo el 31 de oct. de 2026. En East Hartford High School 869 Forbes st, comenzando desde las 9:00am hasta las 2:00pm

FEMA sets up online flood insurance policy tool

It is now easier for Connecticut residents to prepare for the devastating financial consequences of flooding. FEMA launched a tool to purchase a National Flood Insurance Program policy completely online through Floodsmart.gov. An online purchase option is available to anyone living in one of the almost 22,700 NFIP communities. By making it easier to purchase flood insurance, FEMA is empowering people to help ensure resilience and reduce de-

pendence on federal assistance. "I've seen firsthand how floodwaters devastate American communities," said FEMA Administrator Cameron Hamilton. "We are making it easier for people to reduce their financial risk and protect what they've spent their lives building. With this new digital tool, you can get a quote and buy a flood insurance policy in a matter of minutes. This innovation demonstrates how FEMA is working to cut bureaucracy and

deliver results to the American people." You can get a quote on Floodsmart.gov after providing basic information about your building. Once you receive your quote, you will have the option to purchase a policy online or through an insurance agent. If you choose to purchase online, you can do so on Floodsmart.gov in just a few minutes. If you choose to purchase through a local or national carrier, you can share

your quote details with your insurance agent, or Floodsmart.gov will offer the contact information of three licensed state insurance agents. Floods are the most common and costliest natural disaster in the United States. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program provides nearly \$8.4 billion in coverage for more than 30,000 policyholders in Connecticut. For a quote or a policy, visit www.floodsmart.gov/policy-quote

Regulating AI concerns Sen. Murphy

Ahead of next week's midterm elections, U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy spoke with NBC News's Garrett Haake on the politics of artificial intelligence (AI) and the path ahead for Congress to regulate it.

Murphy discussed the corrupt influence Big Tech currently holds over AI and data center policy, the urgent need to regulate AI before humans lose control over the technology, and his own bipartisan proposal, the AI Agent Accountability Act, which would force AI operators and developers to prioritize safety or face consequences including potential jail time when their technology goes rogue.

Sen. Murphy vowed that Democrats will make regulating the AI industry a top priority.

"We did a lot when Democrats were in charge, and it was a mistake for us not to add to a very long list of things we did, regulation of AI. If Democrats win control of the House and the Senate, then we will [regulate AI]. I mean, I can almost guarantee you we will pass legislation, at least beginning the work of regulating artificial intelligence." Murphy shut down the AI industry claim that Congress doesn't have AI expertise.

"I don't buy that argument at all. I also don't know how to create nuclear energy. I don't know how to perform a surgery. But I regulate the health care industry. I am in charge of making sure that we're safe from nuclear disaster. I mean, if members of Congress weren't allowed to regulate industries that they aren't experts in ... we wouldn't do anything. That's what a democracy is: you have citizens standing in, learning as much as you can, relying on experts, and making the best decisions that we can."

Murphy stated there is precedent for regulating complex technology. "It is true that we have had other potentially life-destroying inventions in the last 100 years: nuclear energy, for example. ... we decided that we were going to regulate those new technologies. We were going to accept the benefit of nuclear energy, but we were going to protect ourselves from the potential existential downside."

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♦♦ John Karas, jkaras@ehgazette.com ♦♦ Corinne Horan-Action!
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SPEAKING OUT!, LETTERS

'I chose East Hartford. Now I hope East Hartford chooses me'

To the Editor:

I'm Angie Parkinson, a teacher, Town Councilor and longtime East Hartford resident, and I'm running for state representative in House District 10, the seat currently held by my friend Henry Genga.

East Hartford is a place I chose. I wasn't born here, but almost 20 years ago I bought my first home here, and I've continued to choose this community as my home ever since. I've built my life and served four terms on the Town Council here. East Hartford isn't simply where I live...it's home.

For 26 years I've taught global studies at the high school level, and my career has allowed me to experience many different parts of the world firsthand. Those experiences taught me that there is rarely just one way

to solve a problem, and that we have much to learn from people and communities different from our own.

I've come to appreciate how much of that world exists right here in East Hartford. We are an extraordinarily diverse community, and connecting with people from different backgrounds isn't just something I've studied; it's something I've practiced throughout my life.

My four terms on the Town Council have shown me how deeply our community is impacted by decisions made at the Capitol in Hartford. I've also seen the pressures facing working families up close. Housing, healthcare, utilities, taxes and everyday expenses are stretching household budgets. I've seen families turn to food banks and struggle to afford medication.



ANGIE PARKINSON

Unnecessary tariffs and the war with Iran are adding further pressure through higher prices

and energy costs.

These aren't abstract policy debates when you're trying to make ends meet.

I believe people deserve to live with dignity, work should provide a livable wage and a path to stability, healthcare and education should be universal and accessible, and everyone deserves clean air, clean water and a safe community.

I don't pretend to have every answer, but I know how to research, listen, learn and keep working at a problem. After 26 years as a public educator, being a lifelong learner is simply part of who I am.

I've spent more than a decade involved in activism and advocacy and have built strong relationships at the Capitol. I've also structured my teaching schedule so I can serve effec-

tively. I understand the responsibility that comes with representing a community, and I'm prepared to do the work.

Representative Henry Genga has a reputation for looking at every issue through an East Hartford lens. I've heard that when someone asks for his support on a bill, his response is almost always, "Okay, but what's it going to do for East Hartford?" That question captures something important about the job: whatever happens at the Capitol in Hartford, we should never lose sight of the people back home.

East Hartford is the community I chose nearly 20 years ago. It's my hope that you will choose me to represent you on November 3rd.

Angie Parkinson
East Hartford

'Support Angie Parkinson for State Rep'

To the Editor:

Campaign season is nearing its end. Early voting is underway, the final ads are playing on television, and mercifully, soon we will be able to look at our phones again without seeing a political text message.

For those that don't follow politics too much, you may not know that for people running for office, an enormous amount of work goes into organizing and campaigning long before Election Day.

I am proud to support my colleague and friend for State Representative, Angie Parkinson. Angie has been knocking on doors, having conversations with residents, and talking about her vision for East Hartford if elected to serve as state representative for months.

I knew Angie before our service on the Town Council,



DON BELL
TOWN COUNCILOR (D)

and what I will say will not be a surprise given the ringing en-

dorsements from so many community members in the *Gazette* in recent weeks.

Angie is a thoughtful, passionate, and dedicated public servant. In our time on the Town Council, Angie has always provided a necessary perspective—one that centers people and community engagement.

We are fortunate in East Hartford to have individuals on both sides of the aisle that care deeply about selfless service. Angie will continue the tradition set by Representative Henry Genga in being a fierce advocate for East Hartford.

There is no room for anything else at a time when affordability is a top issue for residents.

In our community, there are still too many that battle hunger. There are too many that are rightfully afraid of whether

they can withstand the rising cost of living much longer. There are too many of our friends and neighbors that live in fear of leaving their homes and being a full member of our community because of weaponized immigration enforcement.

As our representative, Angie will speak truth to power and work to build consensus for change that will positively impact us all.

The work is daunting and the road will be long, but I know that Angie Parkinson is up to the task.

Best of luck to all of the candidates running to serve East Hartford. Please support Angie for State Representative.

Don Bell
Vice Chairman
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FORUM

East Hartford served as a final resting place for royalty

Did you know that the Podunk Tribe buried its royalty right here in East Hartford? The site was at the junction of Main Street and Ellington Streets. Here the leaders of the tribe and their families were interred.

This fact was standard third grade curriculum in the

1960s. Based on Mathias Spiess, a leading Native American writing in the 1920s and 30s we know, that when the site was excavated, nine complete male skeletons were removed from the location.

In 1879, Goodwin's history of town writes of two local native tribe burial sites. One was "in the highland south of Podunk Brook, and just west of Main Street." This site was excavated in the early to mid-1800s. Goodwin includes a description of the burial procedures including leg folding to the chest and heads facing southwest, as well as artifacts found. Most of these artifacts, he states, appeared not to be native products, but items obtained from the Dutch trading post in Hartford.

He also notes that along the banks of the Connecticut River in South Windsor was another Native American burial place.

Spiess, writing forty years later goes into a little more detail. He claims that there were five known burial places for the Podunk tribe.

The most striking he writes about was the royal cemetery in East Hartford. Located "on land now owned by Mr. Frederick Olmstead." Here nine well preserved intact six-foot skeletons with excellent teeth, were found while the Olmstead house cellar was being dug. "Here is the scared spot where the Podunks buried their chiefs and their families. During the excavation, relics were found but no observations were made."

Other burying places Spiess notes were: on the south bank of the Podunk River near Main Street, the same spot outlined by Goodwin; South Windsor

near the Connecticut River bank, "now partly washed away by the fast-flowing current;"

On the bank of the Scantic River where it flows into the Connecticut; and at Hockanum west of Main Street near Ensign Street. taken from this site, now P&W land, were the native American artifacts now displayed in the Raymond Memorial Library collections. Spiess, ever the frustrated anthropologist, states, "so many graves were opened by relic hunters and bones of the Indians buried there can be found today among many Indian relic collections."

Arrowheads were commonly found by farmers turning their fields. East Hartford had to prohibit the desecration and artifact digging around the town. But the late 18th century fascination with these relics no doubt erased the fragile traces left of our earliest human inhabitants, who trained the colonial settlers in shad fishing and farming techniques allowing East Hartford to serve as the fertile bread basket for a growing Hartford across the river. A shad dropped in a mound helped invent Brewer's corn.

Spiess concludes his account of the Podunk tribe:

"Those Podunks who had outlived the organized tribe rest in Christian cemeteries, among the slaves in a corner of the graveyard and usually no records where kept regarding their nationality or race."

"In the West Cemetery (which became Manchester in 1823) there are two unmarked graves, in which lie the wife of 'Chief Toby,' and an Indian man."

"At Windsor and South Windsor Cemeteries many are buried. Those whose death and burial are recorded, with one or a few words, we may rest assured were 'servants' - slaves, owned by someone who gave them a Christian burial. The brief records make it impossible to distinguish them from the negroes."

DID YOU KNOW?

Looking back on our East Hartford

By Robert Kanehl

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Medicare advantage Part D termination

A new analysis shows that 4.3 million Medicare beneficiaries will have their Part D stand-alone prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan with prescription drug coverage terminated on December 31.

The 4.3 million includes about 1.2 million enrollees in stand-alone prescription drug plans (PDP) who will see their plan terminated on December 31. This is double the share of PDP enrollees affected by plan terminations last year (6% vs. 3%).

Most of these PDP enrollees – 81% or 950,000 – are enrolled in one plan, the SilverScript Choice PDP sponsored by CVS Health, which is being terminated in 13 PDP regions for 2027. Enrollees in terminated plans will need to select a new stand-alone plan to supplement their traditional Medicare or switch to a Medicare Advantage plan if they want to continue having drug coverage under Part D.

About 3.1 million people in Medicare Advantage prescrip-

tion drug plans (MA-PDs) will see their plans terminated at the end of 2026. This is a similar share of MA-PD enrollees affected by plan terminations last year (14% vs. 13%).

Most of them, 2.8 million beneficiaries, are in plans available for general enrollment while about 300,000 are in Medicare Advantage special needs plans (SNPs). Enrollees in plans that are being terminated must proactively enroll in another Medicare Advantage plan if one is available.

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ARTS & EVENTS

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FOR THE SECOND YEAR, THE EAST HARTFORD WOMAN'S CLUB donated, assembled and delivered sixty "birthday bags" to the East Hartford Food Bank. Each birthday bag contained a baking pan, cake mix, frosting, candles, and a birthday card. Pictured above with the cake mixes and frostings is, from left to right, EHCW members Cynthia Messikian, Joanne Sullivan, Ginny Alleano, Marge Leonard, Lauren Keegan, and Marie Zerba. At right, delivering the cake mixes and assembled goods is EHCW member and Birthday Bag Chair Elaine Santos, second from left; and from left to right, Cynthia Joiner East Hartford Social Services Case Worker, Tasha Bobb, Coordinator of the Town's Foodbank, Santos, and Lizbeth Padilla, Youth Services. If you are interested in becoming involved with EHCW, please call either Membership Co-chair Ginny Alleano at 860-569-7409 or Lauren Keegan at 860-655-4047.



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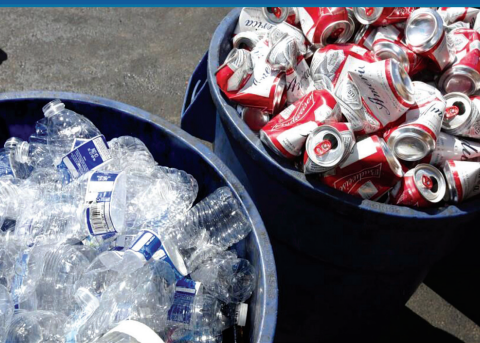
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EAST HARTFORD SPORTS

Bowls, Giants, Brewers & bets

It seems like just yesterday the college football season kicked off and here we are just past the midway point.

The next month will be one of anticipation as the College Football Playoff wrestles with the decision on expanding the post season tournament from 12 teams to 24 beginning next season. As teams compete for bowl eligibility they'll play the second half knowing, as members of the Power Four or Group of Six, they may be part of a totally new landscape next season. Representatives of all ten conferences met last week to evaluate the proposal between the CFP and

SCOTT GRAY on SPORTS

by Scott Gray



ESPN. As I mentioned last week UConn's not on the outside looking in if the expansion is approved. As an independent in football, the Huskies are in the mix with the Group of Six in terms of playoff consideration. UConn passed the midway point of the season last week with a rout of UMass at Rentschler Field to go to 4-3. Two wins in their remaining five games will earn them bowl eligibility for the third straight season. Of 138 1-A teams, UConn is currently ranked 84th, a major jump from the previous week. Another impressive number for UConn was the 32,000 plus that showed up for the game here, a number that's becoming pretty consistent at the Rent. That doesn't go unnoticed in major college football circles.

The answer is "Yes". They've sucked me in again. Oh those New York Giants. With Sundays overtime win in Houston they become one of only two NFL teams to win games this season behind three different starting quarterbacks. The Giants were 10-1/2 point dogs against a team riding a two game winning streak while they were 1-1-1 in their previous three games. The Texans also boasted last season's #1 defense. New York's running game was the difference. They won without J.J. McCarthy throwing a single touchdown pass.

The Giants are in first place in the NFC East and I'm back in the fold. I must be crazy.

How about that World Series? First time the Brewers got there in 44 years, back when a guy named Bud Selig was their owner. He was better known as the Commissioner who opened the door on, and turned a blind eye to, baseball's "Steroid Era".

I always believed by moving all the World Series games to late starts MLB lost an entire generation, the kids who can't stay up for finishes closing in on midnight. Now I believe it cost them a second generation. I fell asleep at 2-0 in game one and 4-4 in game two. They're losing the last generation that embraced their game as the "National Pastime".

By the way, before game one, introducing the lineups, the first player numbers shown were, not their batting statistics but their home run odds.

Think before you bet (and maybe you won't). Sunday's New York Post "Top Pick" on the betting page was "K.C. will conquer Seattle in showdown on SNF".

Remember, they lose if you win and they can't let that happen. It's bad for business.

Huskies make mincemeat of Minutemen

The UConn Huskies ran for 265 yards behind running back Cyncir Bowers who notched his second 100-yard game of the season on the way to a 35-16 win over the UMass Minutemen Friday night in front of 32,106 at Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field.

Pictured on the cover of the media guide, UConn receiver Shamar Porter played a key part on both sides of the ball. Wearing No. 5, quarterback Kalieb Osborne connected with him at the end zone for the Huskies' first touchdown. Then, wearing No. 43 defending a UMass punt, Porter Supermanned through for the block, then pursued a bouncing ball to the back of the end zone to put his team up 28-3 in the third.

"I might be the first one in history to ever get a touchdown in two different jersey numbers," Porter said. It was the first time Porter's blocked a punt in his three years at UConn, all of which have fea-

tured a role on special teams.

"I've definitely been trying to do that, so it was definitely a big accomplishment for me," he said. "It was definitely a good feeling. We've been working on it all week. We didn't know I was gonna do it, we thought it was gonna be somebody else, but whenever the opportunity came I definitely took every bit advantage of it and went and made the play."

The Huskies (4-3) have won four-straight over their New England counterpart and have edged in front in the all-time series, 39-38-2. UMass evens their record at 4-4 and have lost four in a row. Bowers had 131 yards on 15 carries and scored on a 70-yard run to lead the UConn rushing attack. Quarterback Kalieb Osborne turned in another strong two-way performance, completing 14-of-19 for 173 yards and two touchdowns while running it 15 times for 66 yards and a score. The Huskies finished with 438 yards of total

offense and held the ball for 34:15 in the win.

Defensively, the Huskies put the clamps on the UMass running game, holding the Minutemen to just 53 yards on the ground and 303 yards of total offense. UMass was just 2-of-14 on third down.

UMass opening drive was stopped with a 24-yard field goal for a 3-0 lead then Connecticut countered with the Porter touchdown drive to go up 7-3. The Huskies then struck for another TD before the half.

A Husky punt pinned UMass down at their one-yard line and UConn would take advantage of a flip in field position after forcing a three and out, their fourth straight since the opening drive.

The Huskies got the ball on the 45, and four plays later Osborne dropped the ball right in the bucket to JD Willoughby to make it 14-3. The defense got the ball back with 1:16 in the half, and Bowers barreled 70 yards for a score.

SALUTE TO VOLLEYBALL SENIORS



JOSEPH A. ZEBZDA PHOTO

EAST HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS VOLLEYBALL Seniors at their home game against Enfield. Although the Lady Hornets fell to Enfield, 3 sets to 0, the seniors posed with cutout photos of their early years. Pictured above is #4 Alyssa Destremps, #24 Sara Miranda, #11 Kristen Nwafor, #14 Sophia Leslie Caraballo, #12 Akhari Henry and #22 Anyia Griffin.

OBITUARIES

Brenda M. Chester

Brenda M. Chester was born on August 31, 1949, in Greensboro, North Carolina, to Hoyle Moore and Erlene Shoffner (Hairston). On Wednesday, October 7, 2026, she peacefully transitioned from earth to glory, leaving behind a legacy of faith, service, and unconditional love.

At age 12, Brenda moved with her family to Hartford where she attended Barnard Brown School, Hartford High and graduated from Weaver High School in 1967. In 1968, she married Joseph Chester, and together they raised three children: Candace Paige, Joseph Jamel, and Chari Lynn.

Brenda dedicated 44 years to the banking industry, beginning at Hartford National Bank and ultimately retiring from Bank of America in 2015 as an Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager. A respected professional and community leader, she also served on the boards of Community Health Services, the Upper Albany Merchants Association, My Sister's Place, Connecticut Valley Girl Scouts and DACS Foundation.

Having accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior in 1974, Brenda devoted her life to serving God and His people. She served at Refuge Church of Christ and Abundant Life Tabernacle as a founding member before joining Grace Worship Center (GWC) in 1996, where she faithfully served for more than 30 years. As a licensed minister, she contributed to numerous ministries and committees, most notably leading the Women's Chapter. Through prayer, fellowship, community outreach, and the beloved annual Women's Retreat, she inspired countless women to grow in faith. Her commitment to spiritual growth led her to earn an Associate Degree in Biblical



Brenda Chester

Studies in 2020. A woman of prayer, she also established a prayer group that continues to encourage and strengthen others.

Family was Brenda's heartbeat. She was a devoted mother, proud grandmother, and loving godmother whose generous heart embraced many. She cherished reading, traveling, and creat-

ing treasured family memories, including summer vacations in Martha's Vineyard and an Alaskan cruise in 2025. Above all, Brenda had a remarkable gift for making people feel loved, welcomed, and valued.

Brenda was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Joseph Chester; her father, Hoyle Moore; her stepfather, Roy Hooks; her sister, Julianne Tillman; her father and mother in-law, Elisha and Dorothy Chester; brother in-law Calvin Chester; and sister in-law Imogene Chester; and dear friends Shirley Satchell, Etter Jean Elliott, Emma Tyson, and Elder Karen Davis.

She leaves to cherish her memory her children, Candace Chester Mafe (Olukunle Stephen), Joseph J. Chester, and Chari Chester Anderson (Edwin); her mother, Erlene Shoffner; siblings Hoyle Moore (Norma), Marilyn Moore, and Sandra Holloway; five grandchildren, Sydney Satchell, Jaelyn Chester, Edrick Anderson, Eli Anderson, and Emoni Rainey; beloved godchildren; sisters-in-law; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, church family, colleagues, and dear friends.

The family of Brenda M. Chester invited all who knew and loved her to join them in celebrating her life, honoring her legacy, and giving thanks for the many lives she touched.

The Celebration of Life took place October 17 at Liberty Christian Center, 23 Vine Street, Hartford.

Sandra Lee (Cague) Flath, 84

Sandra Lee Flath, 84, of Pomfret Center passed peacefully on August 25, 2026. Born Sandra Lee Cague on September 7, 1941, in East Hartford, Connecticut, she was the daughter of Maynard Leslie Cague and Irene Orise Cague.

Sandy was predeceased by her parents; her brother, Forest Leonard Cague; and her husband, David Edward Flath.

She is survived by her daughters, Dayna Flath and Leslie Flath Ganz and her husband, Mark Ganz; her grandchildren, Hannah Flath, Paloma Flath, David Ganz, and Clara Ganz; her sister-in-law, Mary-Burton Cague; and her nieces, Jen Cague, and Rebecca Cague and her children, Liam and Cody.



Sandra Flath

Sandy graduated from East Hartford High School and earned her bachelor's degree in Economics from Lake Erie College for Women. She married her high school sweetheart David, and had Dayna and Leslie, Irish twins born exactly 11 months and three weeks apart. A devoted wife and mother, Sandy followed David's career to Ohio, upstate New York, and Indiana before the family eventually returned to Connecticut.

Sandy was deeply involved in her community and her church, where she sang in the choir. She served as a volunteer board member at Seely Brown Village, was a longtime member of the Woodstock Garden Club, and sang soprano for many years with the Concert Choir of Northeastern Connecticut.

A Master Gardener, Sandy was happiest with soil under her fingernails. She was also an

entrepreneur and business owner, founding Sandra Lee's Herbs and Everlastings, which she ran for 20 years. She was an accomplished seamstress, a wonderful baker, and the sort of woman who kept an extra can of Crisco in the pantry in case an emergency pie was needed.

Sandy was an outspoken feminist caught between generations—a woman ahead of her time in so many ways. She was an early advocate of organic farming who was curious, creative, and always thinking about what might come next. She loved to say, "ooh, I have an idea." She loved bluebirds, blankets tucked in tightly, and her family. She was fiercely loyal to her two daughters.

A memorial service was held Saturday, September 5, at Christ Church in Pomfret Center. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Concert Choir of Northeastern Connecticut, P.O. Box 4, Pomfret Center, CT 06259, or to The Friends of Pomfret Public Library ~ Memory Café program, PO BOX 24, Pomfret, CT, 06258.

The Gazette publishes obituaries of those connected to East Hartford free of charge.

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Ben Bronz Academy opens

From Page One

US Sen. Richard Blumenthal said he was familiar with the school and had visited it many times to see the progress. "This is a change of zip code but not a change in the spirit of caring. I can feel a spirit of caring that will inhabit this place and this mission here. This is what America looks like. This is what the best of America looks like."

Inside, visitors had the chance to mingle in the gym after the tour of the school.

The kitchen is still a work in progress, and work will begin soon on the former St. Rose church building creating even more educational areas. Outside a playscape is planned to honor slain Hartford police officer

Bobby Garten.

With a new grant from the state Bond Commission just announced late this summer, the former church will be renovated and it will also restart research for which the academy's approach to learning was based.

Founded by Dr. Ian Spence and Dr. Aileen Stan-Spence as "The Learning Incentive" with five students, the academy was renamed in honor of Aileen Spence's father, Ben Bronz.

The school is based on the research of psychologist Dr. Reuven Feuerstein, emphasizing individualized learning and the belief that education should adapt to fit the child.

Key principles of Feuerstein's research include Mediated Learning Experience



(MLE), which emphasizes personalized instruction tailored to each child's needs, and the concept of cognitive modifiability, which asserts that intelligence can be developed and improved through effective teaching methods. The academy has instructors who are Orton-Gillingham dyslexia specialists, a sought-after methodology.

Students attend Ben Bronz Academy from towns throughout the state as it has earned a reputation as one of the best schools for students who need their mentoring style.

At the back of the church the former rectory is now school administration offices and learning areas for older students. Ben Bronz Academy rarely has a student enrolled for 12 years of school, but it also offers an extended program for

adults up to age 22 known as The Learning Incentive.

For more information about Ben Bronz Foundation, Inc. and the Ben Bronz Academy and

The Learning Incentive programs, visit www.benbronzfoundation.org, www.benbronzacademy.org, or www.learningincentive.org



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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF

KEVIN MICHAEL AYERS, JR.
(26-00400)

The Hon. Richard P. Gentile, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of East Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated **October 27, 2026**, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Tobi Dolan, Assistant Clerk

The fiduciary is:

Kevin Michael Ayers
c/o Edward Mason Barron,
Esquire; Charter Oak Law
Group, LLC, 34 Jerome
Avenue, Suite 120,
Bloomfield, CT 06002

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF

RONALD S. RALL
(26-00434)

The Hon. Richard P. Gentile, Judge of the Court of Probate, District of East Hartford Probate Court, by decree dated **October 27, 2026**, ordered that all claims must be presented to the fiduciary at the address below. Failure to promptly present any such claim may result in the loss of rights to recover on such claim.

Tobi Dolan, Assistant Clerk

The fiduciary is:

Tracy A. Chasse
c/o James J. Philopena,
Esquire; Tobin Carberry
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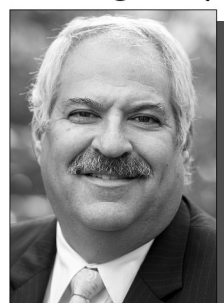
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WHERE THE ACTION IS!

BY CORINNE HORAN

NOV 7: HOW TO STOP OVERTHINKING: A MEDITATION WORKSHOP, Sat, Nov 7, 11am at Odiyana Center, Glastonbury. In this practical and uplifting class, discover how meditation can help you quiet mental chatter, let go of worry, and create space for clarity and peace. **LUNCHTIME MEDITATION** at Odiyana Tues/Thurs, 12:15 - 12:45 pm. Guided meditation. Info at meditationinconnecticut.org

EVENTS AT THE WORLD WAR II LEGACY FOUNDATION MUSEUM, 102 Pitkin St., Saturday, **Saturday, Oct 31**, open 1 - 5 p.m. **Sunday, Nov. 1** 2 - 6 pm. **Saturday, Nov. 7: World War II Reunion Luncheon**, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reservations, \$25. Veterans Day Luminaries are available for purchase. Visit and explore the displays. Admission \$5. FMI call Gary, 860-810-8736.

OCT. 29, "REMEMBERING THE EXCAVATION OF THE PITKIN VAULT" Join us tonight at 6:30 p.m. at the Raymond Library for a retake of the slide show presented by Friends of Center Cemetery. Discovery of the Pitkin remains was a surprise as the tomb was believed to be empty, BUT was not! We will be joined by our State Archaeologist emeritus Dr. Nicholas Belantoni who will help Ruth Brown with showing various skeleton features from the 13 Pitkins entombed. Historic event. Free.

OCT 30 - HARVEST FESTIVAL, Friday, 6 until 8:30 p.m. 1492 Silver Lane.

OCT 31: TOGETHER WE RUN FOR EDUCATION 5K ROAD RACE AND 1.5-MILE WALK, hosted by the East Hartford Alumni Association & Education Foundation. Registration starts at 9 a.m. with 5K and walk beginning at 10. Wellness events continue until 2 p.m. 5K around East Hartford High or 1.5-mile walk on track. Register also at www.dtcare.org/events/together-we-walk-run-for-education

NOV 4 : WICKHAM DAY QUILTERS OF EAST HARTFORD meets, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at Wickham Library meeting room, 656 Burnside Avenue. Like to sew? Interested in quilting? Not a fan of driving at night? Attend a meeting to see if you would like to join us. Any skill level welcome. We normally meet the second Wednesday of the month, but November 11 is Veterans Day and the library is closed. Wickham Day Quilters is a chapter of the Greater Hartford Quilt Guild. The November program will be making stuffed pumpkins and cutting batik leaves for the Gathering quilt. Any questions? Email us at Wickhamdayquilters@gmail.com.

NOV. 5: JANE EYRE DISCUSSION. Thursdays, Nov. 5 & 19, 2-3:30 p.m. at the President's College Lifelong Learning at the University of Hartford. Hartford. Looking for your next great literary deep dive? Revisit Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë's beloved classic, through a fresh lens. Professor Emeritus Catherine Stevenson will lead two engaging sessions on Jane Eyre and the female gothic. Explore Jane's journey from imprisonment to freedom, selfhood, family, and power.edu/pc. Questions? Email

pcollege@hartford.edu or call 860-768-4495.

NOV. 7 - AMERICA AND APPLE PIE PANCAKES - What could be better in autumn? Celebrate the month of elections, veterans and Thanksgiving and fall back with a big stack of apple pancakes at Hillstown Grange #87, 617 Hills St., starting at 8:30 a.m. Breakfast included sausage, coffee, tea and juice, \$6; \$3 for those 14 and under. Plain and chocolate chip pancakes also available. In memory of Frank Forrest, the Grange welcomes any items to send to soldiers overseas thru SOS Connecticut, which will hold a packing event Nov. 8 at the Grange hall. Wanted are Halloween candy, drawings of fall leaves and hand-made Thanksgiving themed creations. Packaged snacks, dental or

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hygiene products also welcome. Have you visited the upstairs room at the Grange Hall? Check out the book sale in the library, read a book, play a game, or sit and just visit. The historic 1889 "Hillstown Grange Hall" is free to visit. Located in the Hillstown corner of East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Manchester since 1888 Grange is one of the oldest Agricultural and community service groups in the United States. FMI call Michelle at 860-558-4688 or e-mail kma.dedominicis@gmail.com. FMI on Hillstown Grange, visit www.HillstownGrange.org; for more about Granges go to www.CTStateGrange.org

NOV 7: AUTUMN TEA hosted by the Historical Society of East Hartford has been **cancelled** due to ongoing repair work underway at the Selden Brewer House. The tea will be rescheduled at a later date.

NOV 8: SUNDAY THE SOS SUPPORT OUR SOLDIERS will be holding a packing for our soldiers deployed overseas. Thanksgiving/Fall is the theme for this event. Donations of Halloween candy, drawings and homemade cards of fall leaves and Thanksgiving and other goodies are needed. Donations can be dropped off from noon to 1:30 p.m. at Hillstown Grange, 617 Hills St. Volunteers are needed on the day of the event to sort items and pack boxes. For more info call Michelle at 860-558-4688 or Jen Marinko at 860-558-5897.

NOV 8: THE HORSZOWSKI TRIO performs Sunday at 2 p.m. at Evergreen Crossings Retirement Community, 900 Hemlock Ave, South Windsor. The free chamber music concert is by an up-and-coming American trio which tours extensively. Reception with the artists follows.

NOV. 17: WANGUNK TRIBE - UNEARTHING THEIR HISTORY. Thursday, Nov. 17, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Long before Dutch or English settlers arrived, the Wangunk, "people at the bend in the river," thrived along the Connecticut River corridor from Hartford to Middletown. Though central to early Connecticut history and the founding of Hartford, their story is too often untold. Discover the Wangunk past and present with three expert perspectives: Sarah Sportman (CT State Archaeologist) on recent excavation findings, Gary Red Oak O'Neil (Wangunk Elder) on oral tradition and art, and Tom Wickman (Environmental Historian) on early village dynamics. The panel will conclude by discussing contemporary Wangunk cultural preservation and modern sovereignty. President's College Lifelong Learning at U of Hartford. Hartford.edu/pc. Questions? Email pcollege@hartford.edu or call 860-768-4495.

NOV 18: MEETING OF THE P&W AND UTRC RETIREES Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the P&W Club, 200 Clement Road. Conversation, coffee and doughnuts at 9:30. Jeff Wieselberg, piano. 860-565-6236 for more info.

NOV. 21 - HOLIDAY FAIR at First Congregational Church, 837 Main St., 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Come visit for gift ideas, handmade wreaths, Christmas decor, special cookie booth, sweet candy booth, and homebaked goods. Why not sit a spell and have lunch while you visit? Sample your choice of chili, soup and more. Lots of wonderful crafts, thoughtful gift baskets for a perfect present, evergreen boxes plus the jewelry booth. Explore Grandma's Attic for a one of a kind treasure, and duck into the Children's Corner for memorable gift items. See you there!

GET A FREE CHECKUP - Malta's Mobile Clinic is open from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, by appointment. Call 860-725-0171 to register. Van parked in the lot on Maplewood Avenue off Main Street.

VISITING NURSE AND HOME HEALTH SERVICES are looking for Hospice volunteers to provide companionship and support. If interested, please contact John Roush at jroush@ech.org or 860-682-3405.

MY SISTERS' PLACE: Help provide affordable housing and services for families. Mail donations to Community Housing Advocates, 221 Main St., 4th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106. FMI call 860-808-2048.

FOSTER FAMILIES needed for children in DCF care in every town. FMI or to register for a meeting, contact Annie C Courtney Foundation, 475-235-2184. Annie C works with the Dept. of Children and Families to find foster parents for over 3,000 children.