The Gazette

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State Rep. Genga won't seek re-election



HENRY GENGA

by Bill Doak

East Hartford only has one state assembly district it can call exclusively its own - the 10th. And for the past 21 years, Democrat Henry Genga has been the district - and East Hartford's voice at the state legislature.

Genga, 85, said he came to a decision that its time - this will be his last two-year term in of-

See **HENRY GENGA**, page 6

MAYOR DELIVERS 'STATE OF THE TOWN'



MAYOR CONNOR MARTIN, flanked by Town Department Directors, delivers his State of the Town Wednesday.

State crime downturn noted here

Serious and violent crime rates have decreased in Connecticut, but officials who held a press conference at the East Hartford Public Saafety Complex Monday said they are concerned with a 24 percent increase in fraud.

The numbers are out for the first nine months of 2025 on crime, and overall, the majority of violent and serious crime continues a years-long downward trend in Connecticut.

But fraud stands out, going in the wrong direction. State leaders emphasized strategies to curb crime are working, from everything from murder to car theft. But they also alerted everyone to the fraud increases.



COMMISSIONER HIGGINS

"We are all working together to prevent and reduce crime and improve the quality of life for those that live, work and visit the state of Connecticut," said Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. "Serious crimes and violent crimes continue to decline in the state of Connecticut," Higgins said. However, incidents of fraud jumped nearly 24% in the third quarter of 2025, largely driven by Identity theft, which spiked by over 86%. "Criminal activity continues to evolve, and our response is shifting accordingly," he said.

Mayor Martin: Progress on all fronts

by Bill Doak

Wednesday Mayor Connor Martin and Superintendent of Schools Thomas Anderson gave a 'state of the town' and 'state of the schools' presentation in Town Council chambers and then opened up the public meeting to questions from the public.

Mayor Martin went through a long agenda of projects, some closer to fruition than others, voicing his continued determination to get them done. The projects reflected many of those mentioned by Martin before each Town Council meeting during his remarks to the Council, and the 9 member body was familiar with them. From car washes on Connecticut Boulevard and Governor, to roundabouts being designed at Chester and Forbes streets, to Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse, an extra $450,000 obtained for completing historic building renovations, irrigation systems in parks and futsal courts, the

See **PROGRESS,** page 6



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AROUND TOWN

Revaluation vans are rolling

East Hartford is about to commence the state mandated revaluation project of 2026 with the assistance of Municipal Valuations Services, LLC (Munival) of Fairfield, CT (the revaluation company hired to assist the Town with the revaluation). This process will take place from January 2026 through October 31st, 2026.

As part of this process, Municipal Valuation Services will be mailing a Data Verification Letter to all residential property owners. This letter contains information specific to your property. Property owners are asked to review the details provided on the form, make any necessary corrections directly to the form, and return the completed form to Munival promptly. Forms can be returned by mail, email, fax or dropped off in person at the Assessor's office. A drop box will be available outside the assessor's office for added convenience. (Complete address and contact details will be included in the letter.)

In addition to the data verification letter, Munival will have data collection personnel assigned throughout the Town of East Hartford taking exterior photos, inspecting, and measuring the exterior and interior of residential and commercial properties. Residents and business owners should expect to see Munival staff visiting properties and knocking on taxpayer's doors to ask questions.

To ensure the safety and authenticity of the revaluation process, all Munival personnel will carry both a Town-issued identification badge and a company badge. Additionally, field representatives will be clearly identifiable by their company logo on attire and magnetic vehicle decals. They will also carry an official letter of introduction.

We look forward to your cooperation during the revaluation process. This important project will help ensure accurate property assessments, which in turn supports fair and equitable tax assessments for all property owners.

Please call Municipal Valuation Services at (203)292-5500 for any additional information or questions.

WOMAN'S CLUB DONATES



The East Hartford Woman's Club raised $1,215 from its Tree of Lights Project. A check for that amount was presented to Beth Harlow representing the Human Needs Fund of the East Hartford Outreach Partners at EHWC's monthly meeting, held February 3, at St Christopher's Hall.

Town offices shut Feb 12, 16

Town offices, including the Transfer Station, will be closed Thursday, February 12 and Monday, February 16, in observance of President Lincoln's Birthday and Presidents' Day.

Trash and recycling pickup will remain on schedule without delays.

FMI call All American Waste at 860-289-7850.

Ryan Fazio gets CEP financing

The State Elections Enforcement Commission voted February 4 to approve the second public grant payment under the Citizens' Election Program ("CEP") for a candidate in the November 3 regular election.

The Commission determined gubernatorial candidate Ryan Fazio is eligible to receive a $806,875 convention campaign grant.

State Cold Weather Protocol now until Tuesday

Governor Ned Lamont ordered a ten-day extension of the Severe Cold Weather Protocol through noon Thursday, February 10. The protocol was initially enacted on Friday, January 23. However, the updated forecast now indicates that bitterly cold weather will remain even longer, with well below normal temperatures persisting into the middle of next week. Overnight temperatures over the next ten days will largely dip into the single digits, even reaching below zero on several nights.

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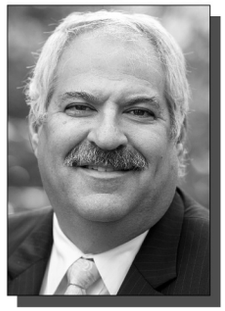



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GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS GET RESULTS
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LOST DOG? ITEM FOR SALE? - A $12 ad in the *Gazette makes more sense* than spending for markers, staplers, etc to place ugly signs on telephone poles.

DESDE LA ESQUINA

by Carmen Maldonado

¡Con pecho lleno y bandera en alto!

Esta semana se celebra en grande y andamos con el pecho lleno.

Uno de los nuestros llegó lejos. Y aunque no es el primero en hacer historia como tal, y sé que no será el último, lo celebramos como si fuera nuestro hermano. Porque así somos. Porque lo nuestro siempre se festeja en familia. Celebramos con orgullo patriótico, ese que sabemos llevar con dignidad, incluso cuando nos dijeron que escondiéramos la bandera, que bajáramos la voz, que suavizáramos el acento. Dijimos que no. Y no solo no la escondimos, la llevamos a todas partes.

Eso es lo que representa un evento como el de este domingo. Mucho más que un logro individual, es una afirmación colectiva de existencia.

Sabemos que, en paralelo, se levanta el racismo. Tenemos claro que ocurrirá simultáneamente otro evento. Y aunque me cuestione profundamente a qué se refieren con ese término "All American", porque esa caja de Pandora ya me quedó más que clara; hoy no voy a abrir esa puerta. Hoy lo importante es darle paso al orgullo latino, al orgullo hispano, y celebrar en familia que este logro no es de uno solo: es de todos.

En estos días en que el ambiente se vuelve cada vez más tenso, donde el color de piel y el acento pesan más que cualquier documento, incluso más que aquel "papel" que antes lo utilizaban como razón de persecución, es urgente recordar quiénes somos. Recordar la unión y la calidez que nos caracteriza. Recordar nuestra historia y mantenerla viva.

Es importante recordar y honrar banderas que, tras mucha lucha, hoy tenemos el privilegio de sacar a la calle y celebrar. Para quienes lo saben, pero quizás no lo recuerdan: en 1948, Puerto Rico estaba sometido a la Ley de la Mordaza, una legislación que prohibía mostrar la bandera puertorriqueña bajo pena de considerarse un acto de rebeldía. No fue hasta 1957 que dicha ley fue enmendada, al reconocerse como anticonstitucional. No se duerman por migajas.

Recuerden que hace años, cuando el ataque cayó sobre un grupo en particular, la retórica fue exactamente la misma. Y estoy segura; sin haber estado en su salón de clases, sin haber estado en su casa, en esa universidad, esa biblioteca o ese espacio donde se discutía el tema, sé que usted afirmó estar del lado correcto de la historia. Pero ese lado no lo decido yo. Ese lado lo decide usted, todos los días.

La historia no es lejana ni abstracta. Vive en nosotros. Se repite cuando bajamos la cabeza y se transforma cuando decidimos levantarla. Hoy, más que nunca, celebremos con la bandera en alto y el pecho lleno. Porque estar presentes, visibles y unidos también es una forma de resistencia.

Eventos próximos que no te debes perder:

No te pierdas Connecticut Flower & Garden Show. Esto será en el Centro de convenciones de Hartford. Comenzando el jueves 19 de feb. de 10:00am a 7:00pm, viernes 20 de feb de 10:00am a 8:00pm, sábado 21 de feb de 10:00am a 8:00pm y domingo 22 de feb. de 10:00am a 5:00pm Consigue tus taquillas a precios reducidos directamente aquí en www.CTFlowerShow.com

No te pierdas el Drive-Thru Cookie Giveaway. Esto será el dia de San Valentin. 14 de feb 10:00am a 12:00pm. Simplemente pasa por el estacionamiento de South Chourch, localizado en 1301 Forbes st. Y recibe unas galletas. Este evento es gratuito.

Conecta conmigo: cmaldonado8816@gmail.com

Russell Vibberts, Jr. in Veterans Hall of Fame

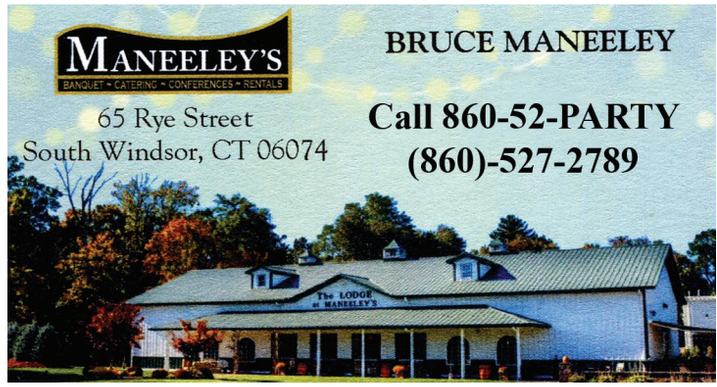
Former East Hartford resident, Russell E. Vibberts, Jr., was inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame on January 22, 2026 at the Department of Veterans Affairs campus in Rocky Hill. Russ grew up in East Hartford and is a proud graduate of Penny High School, class of 1965 and even though he resides in Stafford he is and always will be a loyal descendant of East Hartford. Below is the summary from his induction:

Russell E. Vibberts, Jr. – U.S. Army

Russell E. Vibberts, Jr. embodies a lifelong commitment to service, rooted in a family legacy dating back to the American Revolution and the Civil War. Born in Waycross, Georgia, while his father served in the U.S. Navy, Russell was raised in the longtime family home of East Hartford.

Drafted in January 1967, Russell served with distinction as a combat infantryman in the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment (Mechanized), 9th Infantry Division. During the 1968 Tet Offensive and the Mini Tet in May 1968, his courage under fire earned him the Bronze Star Medal with V Device, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star, Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Valorous Unit Award.

Following his Honorable Discharge in December 1968, Russell transitioned to a successful civilian career, first as a Navy-certified welder and later as an insurance professional. As the owner of a Nationwide Insurance Agency, he achieved the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table distinction for excellence in service. In Stafford Springs, he became a pillar of the community, serving on the Board of Education, the Inland Wetlands Commission, and leading as president of both the Stafford Rotary Club and Midget Football League.



East Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee
is hosting a
Sunday Brunch
honoring
Ashley and Chris Tierinni
East Hartford's 2026
St. Patrick's Day Parade Town Honorees
March 1, 2026 - 11 a.m.
at the *new* Square Peg Pizzeria
130 Long Hill St, East Hartford
Food – Cash Bar – Raffle Prizes
Donation: $25. Bring a nonperishable food item for our town food pantry. Tickets are limited.
For tickets call Sana Hart: ***860-558-6261***

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SPEAKING OUT!, LETTERS

Your tax dollars at work: What to expect during this year's budget workshops

As members of the Town Council, we know one of the most common and reasonable questions we hear from residents is simple: Where does my tax dollar go?

With our annual budget workshops approaching, we want to invite the community into this process and help paint a clearer picture of how town funds are raised, allocated, and invested back into the services we all rely on.

The town budget is not just a spreadsheet. It reflects our shared priorities. Every dollar collected supports essential services that keep our community safe, functional, and moving forward. This includes public safety, education, road maintenance, snow removal, public health, senior services, libraries, parks, and the day to day operations that often go unnoticed until they are missing.

A significant portion of the town budget is dedicated to education, which typically represents the largest share of local spending. These funds support our schools, teachers, staff, transportation, and facilities. Public safety is another major component and ensures our police, fire, and emergency services have the resources they need to respond quickly and effectively.

Other portions of the budget fund public works, including maintaining roads, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, as well as town services such as trash collection, leaf collection, recreation programs, senior and youth services, and compliance with state and federal mandates. Many of these costs are fixed or driven by factors outside the town's direct control, including inflation and state requirements.

The upcoming budget workshops are an opportunity for residents to see this process up close. These sessions allow council members to review department requests, ask hard questions, weigh tradeoffs, and work to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of our community. We would appreciate any public input through emails or phone calls or at the designated public hearing on the budget that is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4.

Transparency and accountability are core principles of good local government. By participating in the budget workshops through attending, watching, or reviewing posted materials, residents can better understand how decisions are made and why they are made.

We encourage you to join us, ask questions, and share your perspective. An informed community is a stronger community, and together we can ensure that every tax dollar is used wisely and in a way that reflects our shared values.

Town Council Democrats

BUDGET SCHEDULE
https://www.easthartfordct.gov/F26-budget-schedule

CONTACT INFO:
TownCouncil@easthartfordct.gov

Connecticut could - and should - strive for 100 percent voter participation

by State Rep. Hilda Santiago and Miles Rapoport

The responses to last November's elections among election observers nationally and in Connecticut were generally celebratory because voter participation was higher than comparable elections in the past. But from a democracy point of view, this applause should be far more muted.

Here are some of the national actual turnout figures in the races that were most closely followed. In Virginia, 53.3%. In New Jersey, 54%. In New York, 39.9%. And in the California Proposition 50 election, the turnout was 47.1%. We would argue that these are far lower than a truly inclusive democracy should have.

And how about Connecticut? According to the Secretary of the State's results for the municipal elections, the statewide participation rate was 36.4%. Should we be satisfied with those results? We absolutely think not.

Let's dig deeper into several participating municipalities. New Britain – 30.6%, New London – 21.9%, East Hartford – 18.5%, Meriden – 26.2%. In Hartford, where there were no mayoral or council elections, but "only" school board races, the citywide turnout was 6.6%. These figures should offer us scant encouragement about the state of voter participation in Connecticut.

We believe we can do better, and that we have an obligation to explore ways to do so. Are there policies or practices in other states, or in other countries, that can dramatically improve participation? We believe there are, and we were close to having a way to explore them in last year's legislative session.

A measure that would have created a task force to examine how Connecticut could reach close to 100% participation gathered strong support. Twenty-nine legislators co-sponsored the bill, and 15 organizations from around the state testified in support of the bill at the Government Administration and Elections Committee hearing. The bill passed the House but died on the Senate Calendar on the last day of the session. It deserves to be reconsidered and passed this coming year.

One of the features of the task force's charge was to study jurisdictions where voting is a required civic duty. It turns out that there are 26 democratic countries around the world that use 'universal voting." Thirteen of them are our Latin American neighbors, from Mexico to Chile to Uruguay. Belgium was the first country to adopt universal voting, in 1893. A remarkable example is Australia, which adopted universal voting in 1924 and has had 90% turnout in every election since then. In its election last year, turnout among registered voters was 90.7%.

Australia's 100 years of experience shows that when people are required to vote, the whole political culture benefits.

Participation increases dramatically, especially among lower-voting communities, and the voting electorate is far more representative of the population as a whole.

People pay more attention to elections, and everyone receives information. Institutions adapt to make the system work. A school superintendent is much more likely to emphasize civic education if every graduating senior is required to vote.

Polarization decreases when everyone votes.

Voter suppression efforts are far less effective since voting is mandatory, and because candidates and parties must appeal to everyone, the election process is more inclusive and representative of the majority. At least in Australia, election day is a celebratory holiday. Polling places are gathering places, complete with "democracy sausage" booths at every polling place.

Universal voting is beginning to be discussed more seriously in the United States as well. U.S. Rep. John Larson introduced a universal voting bill in Congress in 2023. At the state level, in addition to this bill, legislation to advance the idea of universal voting has been introduced in Washington State, Utah, New York, Massachusetts and Illinois. Notably, in Illinois, there are two bills currently being discussed in the legislature, sponsored by the Election Committee chairs in the House and the Senate. The legislation would simply declare that voting is a required civic duty for every citizen in the state. A broad coalition of community-based organizations has rallied to support the initiative.

There are certainly pros and cons to any policy that proposes changes to voting procedures, whether they come from other states or other countries. They also need to be studied and debated before adoption. That is exactly why task forces are created.

Connecticut will have another chance to advance this issue in the 2026 legislative session. We can be a leader in moving far closer to full participation.

State Rep. Hilda E. Santiago of Meriden represents District 84 and serves as Deputy Speaker Pro-Tempore in the House of Representatives. Former Secretary of State Miles Rapoport is the Executive Director of 100% Democracy.

Realizing our history means teaching awareness of how close at hand it can be

DID YOU KNOW?

Looking back on our East Hartford

By Robert Kanehl

Did you know that major historic events can be right under your nose, and still, you don't see them? This was discovered recently when watching the movie 1776.

In the middle of the debate for freedom from England is the eternal issue of slavery. One of the most moving moments of the play and movie is the song "Molasses To Rum." The song is about the triangular trade which brought slaves from Africa to the colonies, while shipping out rum and molasses.

The song links the Boston West Indies traders with the slaveowners in Charleston. But the event was much larger in scope than these two major ports of the Colonial era.

We just never made the connection that must have existed right here in East Hartford.

Could the Pitkin family have been involved with the Triangle Trade?

First off, we know from the town histories that the Pitkins, as well as other leading families in Colonial and early republic times owned slaves.

Secondly, the step we had not connected before, the family made demijohn bottles in their glass factory. These large demijohns bottles were used in shipping molasses and rum.

Maybe the Pitkins were not directly involved with the shipping of slaves, but their product was used to transport part of the cargoes involved in the triangle trade.

Traditionally the trade began in the 1600s and continued into the early 1800s.

Under federal law, transporting slaves into the United States was to end in 1819, but the actual trade ended in the mid-1820s. Connecticut itself did not end slavery until 1846, when it demanded all slaves to be freed, before only children of slaves were freed when they reached the aged of 21.

It is interesting to note that the factory opened after the Revolutionary War funded by a monopoly given to the Pitkins for supplying gun powered to the troops. Traditionally the cause for its closure is given as the cost of importing needed sand from New Jersey, as well as a decline in family commitment. But looking closer at the dates of the operations 1783 to 1830, we note they fall within the height of the triangle trade and the mandated ending of the slave trade.

Could the rise of the glass factory have been helped by the rebirth of the West Indies trade just after independence from England? Equally could the decline of the factory be the results of the ending of the triangle trade? These are questions hovering just below the surface of the traditional historical account. Looking at these facts opens your eyes to the possibility that on at least the outskirts, there is a very clear connection between the West Indies trading and the Piktin family.

The realization that the slave trade was not just 'them over there" but also us here in East Hartford, makes studying history exciting and universal.

Exciting for the other historical connections we might find to events we never considered local.

Universal in the realization that we are all interconnected in history as well as now.

LETTERS, VIEWPOINTS

Trump's 'American greatness' journey takes path of being global disruptor

To the editor:

With little prospect for normalcy to reassert itself in our deranged political culture, the new year unfolds upon us with three dominating stories: the intrusion into Venezuela, the killings by ICE of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minnesota, and the reigniting of Trump's obsession to control Greenland. This letter addresses the interrelated foreign policy issues.

The move to take out Maduro cannot be viewed in isolation but needs to be seen within a broader objective of exerting U.S. power in Latin and South America and the intrusion into the wider western hemisphere. Whatever other reasons offered, the least credible was that of preserving democracy in Venezuela. Equally dubious was the accusation that Venezuela was a primary source of fentanyl importation into the U.S., given that most fentanyl imports originate in Mexico.

A somewhat stronger case could be made for Venezuela's role in facilitating cocaine shipments to the U.S., but Trump's pardon of former president of Honduras, Juan Hernández, who was serving a 45-year jail sentence for conspiring to import cocaine into the U.S., undermines any claim that the administration's Venezuelan's policy was primarily based on concerns over drug trafficking.

Access to Venezuelan oil reserves may have been a more plausible rationale. The issue for the U.S. oil companies, however, is whether the years needed to repair and effectively operationalize the oil fields would be worth the investment, especially if oil decreases as the primary source of energy in succeeding decades. If oil was a primary driver, one wonders if it was based on anything more than Trump's "drill baby drill" obsession and repudiation of global warming as a problem of the first order. A broader factor may have been the opportunity the corrupt Maduro regime presented to assert U.S. dominance in the western hemisphere.

Thus, the "Dondroe" Doctrine—Trump's rebranding of the Monroe Doctrine of 1824—based on the aim of making the U.S. the overriding power in the western hemisphere through direct military force, coercive pressure, financial power, and the ever-present specter of raising tariffs. This has played out in pressure campaigns against Panama's sovereignty over the Panama Canal, the rebranding of the Gulf of Mexico, and the ploy to make Canada the 51st U.S. state. It has also been displayed in intimidating pressures against Cuba, Costa Rico, and Mexico, and raising tariffs on Brazil for the temerity of jailing its former president, and Trump supporter, Jair Bolsonaro, for attempting to undermine the 2022 election. And on Trump's insistence on gaining direct control over Greenland.

The Greenland policy stands as the most naked expression of the Trump administration's drive to exercise its primacy in the western hemisphere, in which that "block of ice" would become the possession of the United States for no other reasons than "we need it"—whether attained by force, intimidation, or purchase. As Trump declared, "we can do it the easy way or the hard way," but in whatever way, the U.S. is going to attain Greenland.

"The "Dondroe" Doctrine has played out in Panama's sovereignty over the Panama Canal, the rebranding of the Gulf of Mexico, and the ploy to make Canada the 51st U.S. state. '

The ratcheting up of tensions occurred when Trump imposed sets of tariffs against eight NATO countries because they had the temerity to oppose the U.S government's right to take control of Greenland, a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark. The administration's rationale to control the island is thin. There is little prospect of Chinese or Russian dominance in Greenland now or in the foreseeable future. Still, Trump insists, it is only the U.S. which has the military might to protect the island from foreign intrusion. In making this case, the Trump administration has dismissed the significance of NATO, whose collective defense capabilities would possess more than sufficient military power to secure Greenland from any such danger. That outcome, however, would require the U.S. to coordinate its NATO policy constructively with Europe. Although this has been established U.S. policy for decades, Trump's supercharged confrontational orientation has left him disinclined to move in this direction.

In the current context, the U.S. already enjoys substantial military, economic, and strategic influence in Greenland through long-standing agreements and its historical position as the preeminent power within NATO. By taking an unnecessary confrontational stance, the Trump administration has threatened the viability of NATO. It has also played right into Putin's hand, which would make Russia's dominance over Ukraine a logical corollary of any forced control over Greenland. It would also provide Beijing with an additional rationale to take direct military action against Taiwan.

Such Trumpian belligerency reflected a pre-Davos stance. With the European NATO partners hanging tough, Trump—while exhibiting the bigotry of The Ugly American in his January 21, 2001 Davos speech—significantly modified the administration's stance. The announced change takes direct military force off the table. It cancels the impending tariffs against the affected nations. In agreeing to negotiations with NATO members in linking U.S. policy to an Arctic joint security framework, the administration removes the ownership of Greenland as an irrevocable red line. The critical issue is the extent to which the emerging framework would provide a viable resolution for the interested parties. On that, Trump remains the ever-mercurial wild card. One hopes that the change in policy is not simply a tactical retreat. Time will tell.

George Demetrion
East Hartford

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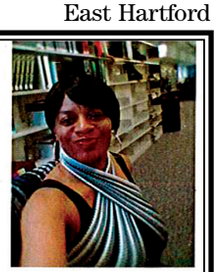
Hartford,CT. 06143



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860-680-5425

Perfect season within reach

Four weeks from now the women's college basketball post season begins when the Big East Tournament tips off on March 6th at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Montville. The defending champion, top ranked, UConn Huskies get into the fray in the quarterfinal round on March 7th. Well ahead of schedule the Huskies are ready.

Eight conference games are all that stand between UConn and an undefeated regular season. There are few, if any, givens in sports. But if anything comes close it's that UConn will clean



SCOTT GRAY on SPORTS

by Scott Gray

the slate against the inferior opposition in the Big East. If they claim the conference tournament title on March 9th it will be impossible to keep them from earning the #1 overall seed in the NCAA tournament.

If there were any doubts about UConn's ability to roll to the seventh unbeaten season in program history they were surely erased in the second half of last Sunday's game against 15th ranked Tennessee in Hartford, the fifth of five games on the Huskies schedule against nationally-ranked opposition, all five in the top 15. Since their 26-point win over eighth-ranked Iowa in December UConn played nine of ten games against Big East teams and one 38-point win over a Notre Dame team that's just a shell of what they were in their glory days under Muffett McGraw. Many observers believed the competition wasn't substantial enough to prepare UConn to suddenly jump onto the court against Tennessee, the last team to beat them last February before the Huskies went on a 38-game winning streak that included a national championship.

Twenty minutes into the game naysayers had reason to believe. Tennessee closed out the first half on a 12-6 run that tied the game at 42, the Vols erasing a 16-point deficit. They made up that ground, and then some, taking a 46-44 lead early in the third quarter behind a full court pressure defense, a tactic that, though frequently effective, takes a lot out of a team, particularly when trying to stop a high powered, potent offense like UConn. The Huskies wore Tennessee down and closed the third quarter on a 14-0 run, pretty much deciding the issue, UConn up 71-53 going to the fourth quarter on the way to a 30-point win, 96-66. It was the worst loss for the Lady Vols in their three decade series with the Huskies, the second worst loss in program history.

Geno Auriemma played eight deep, seven of his players seeing double digit minutes with the mainstays leading the way, Azzi Fudd with 27 points, seven rebounds, seven assists and four steals, national Player of the Year favorite Sarah Strong with 26 points, nine rebounds and four assists. The Huskies hit 58 percent from the field, 50 percent from three point range, on the way to their 39th straight win. In going 5-0 against top 15 opponents their average margin of victory was 21 points.

And now the post season looms, one month away, eight games against Big East teams before the conference tournament.

UConn is already ready.

Mayor Martin provides State of the Town

From Page One

state's first technical magnet school going up on Pent Road, "re-imaging" of Bicentennial Park as a veterans monument space, Silver Lane Plaza, Concourse Park apartments where the old Showcase Cinemas were, opening up DePietro Park to groups to install their own pollinator garden, conversion of the Church Corners Inn to apartments and retail, 108 new streetlights planned for Main Street Downtown and Bissell Street closure, the mayor's presentation gives plenty of subject matter for residents to discuss entering town budget and revaluation season.

Prime projects lauded are the refurbishment of School Street Square, now 85 percent occupied thanks to the opening of an anchor supermarket, Apna Bazar Farm Market. That has attracted two new restaurants and a barber shop. Nearly complete is the remodel of the old Holiday Inn on Roberts Street which will soon open with East Hartford's first Starbucks franchise. In the meanwhile 8 new restaurants have opened their doors or are getting ready to do so, mayor Martin noted. At Port Eastside, state bond funds were used to demolish the parking garage in December. Soon the nearby 99 Founders Plaza Bank of America headquarters building will come down, and the next step will see 111 Pitkin St. office tower, now 90 percent vacant, be rehabbed into 300 units of market-rate housing. For that to happen state funding, some of that from the state DECD and bond commission, will be necessary. More likely to happen sooner will be a new 100-foot fishing dock planned for Great River Park.

Rep. Genga won't seek re-election in 10th

From Page One

fice. His service to the town extends back five decades, as a Town Councilman, chair, and town treasurer.

"I decided its time," Genga told the Gazette. This week Genga notified the Town Committee to look for a successor. Looking back on his years in Hartford Genga will be remembered for fiercely fighting for what he believed in, and that was always for East Hartford first and foremost.

"It's been gratifying to be able to get things done for my consituents," he noted. Working late into the night, Genga saw the budget process up close, an area he always paid close attention to. Often the small percentages of state reimbursement amounted to millions more, or less for a town such as East Hartford with a high percentage of machinery and tax-exempt property at Pratt & Whitney. As a former teacher he knew those numbers had a direct impact in town classrooms. He also got changes made to state law govering fire hydrant inspections and service to mobile home communities, worked to make driving safer on roads and highways, and enjoyed bringing kids over to see how they could make a difference.

Genga's letter to his consititutents:

"Dear Friends and Neighbors of East Hartford,

"After 21 years of service in the Connecticut Legislature, I will not be seeking re-election this year.

"I have been deeply honored and am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me, giving me the gift of serving this wonderful community for so many decades. Working together, we have made a real difference in the lives of East Hartford families—increasing funding for children and education, building a beautiful library and senior center, and delivering tax cuts for every resident—especially for our seniors and veterans. In 2006, when I was first elected, East Hartford received $40.9 million in state aid. As I leave, our town aid has increased to $90.4 million. This is a credit to our whole delegation, and I am proud of this accomplishment, which helps significantly lower residents' property tax burden.

"Throughout my time in office, I have remained guided by two fundamental, unwavering beliefs: that service to humanity is the greatest pursuit in life and that we must always do small things with love. These principles, rooted in my faith, have shaped every decision I have made on your behalf; they have accompanied me through every meeting under the Capitol dome; and they have guided my every interaction when helping people.

"East Hartford is our home, and serving you and our families has always been my highest priority. In my time in office, I have come to understand that our state budgets hold our true priorities because they impact everyone. I am proud to say that, right now, the state is in the best financial condition I have witnessed in all my years of service. Together, we accomplished the greatest tax reduction in state history. We secured the largest investment in childcare ever made, and we have invested heavily in housing and job growth to support our East Hartford manufacturing base. These are the things that working families need: good jobs, good housing, and good schools. That is why I have long championed the largest investment in education possible—because education is the foundation of our society and our future.

"I am certainly grateful to all the dedicated and smart legislators and staff in the legislature with whom I had the pleasure to work. Collaboratively they helped to make the journey fruitful and successful. As just one example of many, these men and women were critical in my efforts to secure two million dollars to pay for disabled veterans' healthcare at the UConn Neuromodulation Center of Excellence, which is implementing breakthrough intervention for stroke, chronic pain, PTSD, and mobility impairment conditions. This new technology is life altering and will return their function, independence, and dignity, and will help lower the more than 17 veteran suicides per day we tragically see today.

"Through decades of experience, I have learned that the best investment government can make is in what we can do to help our children. I am grateful to have been able to make a difference, and I am proud of the work we have done together, but above all, I am grateful for the opportunity you gave me to serve. Others will follow the example I have tried to provide each day as your representative. May they always remember why we step forward to serve."

With deepest gratitude,

Rep. Henry Genga

OBITUARIES

Constance Cora Bain; in GA

Constance Cora Bain peacefully passed away at St. Mary's Health Care System, Athens, Georgia January 29, 2026. The daughter of Eleanor B. Summers and Robert G. Hull , she was born January 5, 1935 in East Lyme and attended Hartford schools then East Hartford High School, Class of 1953. She joined the U. S. Navy for a short time before being introduced to James William Bain whom she married in June, 1957. She became a beloved mother to three children: Pamela Lynn Bain 66, of East Hartford, Douglas Lang Bain (deceased), and Duncan Robert Bain 60, of Loganville, GA.

Connie was a dedicated mother whose children were her pride and joy. A devoted singer, over the years she joined several choral singing organizations, including the Hartford Chorale, Trinity Episcopal Church choir in West Hartford, and even her last 5 years of her life in Saint Albans Episcopal Church, over 80 years of choral singing. Connie went to work as a bank teller which she found to be gratifying, and took great pride in being a grandmother and was especially proud of her youngest son's military service and career.

She had fond memories of traveling around the globe with her husband James including performing at choral events with The Hartford Chorale on three different continents including Europe and Asia, singing for all who would listen.

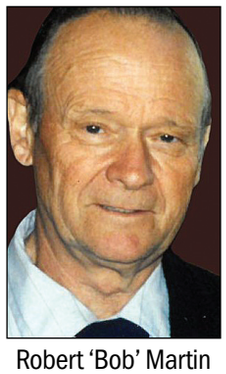
She also loved being a grandmother to her three grandsons, Douglas J. Bain, James W. Bain II, and Austin J. Bain, and felt thoroughly blessed to be a great grandmother to her three great grandchildren.

Connie was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, James W. Bain; and son, Douglas L. Bain. She is survived by her children, Pamela L. Bain and Duncan R. Bain, who will never forget the love she brought to their lives.

A Memorial Service with reception to follow will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 21, 2026 at St Alban's Episcopal Church, 210 North Broad Street, Monroe, Georgia 30655.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made in Connie's name to The Village for Families & Children, 1680 Albany Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105, https://thevillage.org/give.

Robert 'Bob' Martin; Korean War veteran



Robert 'Bob' Martin

Robert "Bob" Martin, 92, of East Hartford, loving husband of 64 years of Dorothy A. (Julian) Martin, passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, January 31, 2026 with his caring family by his side. Born in Stockholm, Maine on August 31, 1933, a son of the late Baptiste and Mary (Cyr) Martin, he had been a resident of East Hartford for the past 60 years. After graduating high school, Robert was a proud veteran of four years of the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War.

After moving down from Maine, Robert began his career with the United States Postal Service where he was a mail carrier for 33 years. He spent most of his time at Bishop Corner, West Hartford before concluding his career at the Silver Lane Post Office. He was a longtime member of American Legion Post #0096, West Hartford. A man of deep faith, Robert was a communicant of both former Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of Peace churches.

A talented bowler, Robert participated in several senior leagues. He was a hockey fan and former season ticket holder for the Hartford Whalers and was a member of the team's Booster Club. He was also a loyal fan of the Red Sox and UConn Men and Women basketball teams. He would love to travel with his wife, was an avid fisherman, card player, and dog lover, especially of his 'granddog', Bailey. Most of all, he was a devoted and proud husband, father, and grandfather who loved spending time with his grandchildren by supporting and cheering them on at athletic events and school activities.

In addition to his beautiful wife Dorothy, Robert is survived by two beloved daughters, Brenda M. Pliszka and her husband Richard of East Hartford, Penny A. Walsh of Columbia; three adored grandchildren: Ashley M. Pliszka of Lincoln, RI; Christopher M. Pliszka of Manchester; and Bethany M. Walsh of Columbia. He also leaves several nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends. Besides his parents, Robert was predeceased by a son-in-law, William "Bill" Walsh of Columbia, and all his siblings.

Funeral service celebrating Robert's life will be Friday (February 6, 2026) at 11 am at the D'Esopo East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St. Entombment with military honors will follow at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield at the Mausoleum. Robert's family will receive relatives and friends at the funeral home Friday morning from 10 -11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Robert's name may be made to the Hartford Healthcare at Home – Hospice Division, 2 North Western Drive, Bloomfield, CT 06002 or to the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, 555 Willard Avenue, Newington, CT 06111.

Robert's family would like to extend their sincere gratitude and appreciation to Robert's longtime home care giver Silvia, along with the entire nursing staff of Hartford Healthcare at Home - Hospice Division, especially Amanda and the social worker Taylor for their professionalism, care, love, and compassion given to Robert and his entire family.

On-line, please visit www.desopoeh.com

Michael Stephen Sawka

Michael Stephen Sawka was born on November 22, 1968, at Hartford Hospital to Julie and Alex Sawka. Raised in East Hartford, Michael grew up surrounded by family alongside his five older siblings—AJ, Judy, Kathy, Mary Ellen, and Cindy—whose bonds deeply shaped the man he became.

Michael had a gentle spirit and a generous nature that left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him. He was a devoted husband to his loving wife, Michelle Sawka, and a deeply dedicated father to his three cherished daughters, Gianna Delisio, Riley Sawka, and Mekah Sawka. They were the greatest pride and joy of his life, and his love, strength, and guidance will continue to live on through them.

In addition to his immediate family, Michael is lovingly remembered by his nieces, Loren, Alexandria, Julie, Sherri, and Katie, and his nephews, AJ (predeceased), Joey, Frank, Tony, David, and Jamie. He held a special place in his heart for each of them, as well as for his many dear friends. Professionally, Michael dedicated 35 years of loyal service at the Wethersfield DMV. He was also an active member of the Elks (BPOE 2063) and the Policemen & Firemen's Association.

Beyond his responsibilities, Michael was known as a "silly kid at heart" and a true character. He was famous for his charming smile and his favorite corny joke: "How does your face feel? Because it's killing me!" That playful spirit and his mesmerizing, sparkling eyes are memories his loved ones will forever treasure.

Michael also had a deep love for nature. One of his favorite places to be was at the P&F Pond with his dog, where he could truly unwind, share laughs, and enjoy the company of friends.

Michael's legacy is one of love, laughter, and quiet strength. An avid fan of the Minnesota Vikings, his preference for the color purple was a testament to his team spirit. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday, February 8th, from 12-2 p.m. with a funeral home service immediately following. For online condolences, please visit www.tierneyfuneralhome.com.

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WHERE THE ACTION IS!

BY CORINNE HORAN

FEB 7: PANCAKE BREAKFAST featuring cherry pie pancakes at Hillstown Grange, 617 Hills St., 8:30 to 11 a.m. We cannot tell a lie, we did not chop down a cherry tree to turn it into pancakes. Come enjoy breakfast of regular or cherry pancakes, sausage, coffee, tea and juice for $6; $3 kids under 14. Chocolate chip pancakes also available.
Upstairs the historic hall welcomes visitors to relax in a big room for reading, puzzles, playing games or socializing with friends.
Browse some tag sale items, and pick out a good book for winter reading. Come browse, eat or visit historic 1889 "Hillstown Grange Hall". Snow on the road, stay home and warm and come next month. FMI call Michelle at 860-558-4688 or e-mail hillstowngrange@aol.com.

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FEBRUARY 7 - TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY DAY at the Raymond Library gets underway at 11 a.m. with a BubbleMania show by Casey Carle. Comedy, jazz-inspired choreography, audience participation and amazing bubble art for patrons age 5 and older. Throughout the children's area there will be crafts, free play, and tables set up by community partners. Free and open to all. 840 Main St. FMI www.easthartfordct.gov/library

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FEB 8: CHILI COOKOFF at South Congregational Church, 1301 Forbes St., beginning at 11 a.m. You are invited to stop by and participate in this free event. There will be at least 8 different chilis to sample. Your vote helps decide the winner! All welcome to come to South and enjoy a crock of chili. Scouts from Girl Scout Troop #10865 will be at the church taking orders for Girl Scout cookies. Each box of cookies costs $6, and will be ready for pick up in March. If you have a hankering for Thin Mints, here's your chance! Cash, check or credit card accepted.

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FEB. 11 - WICKHAM DAY QUILTERS of East Hartford meets from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Wickham Library, 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 meet the second Wednesday of the month. Wickham Day Quilters is a chapter of the Greater Hartford Quilt Guild. The February program will be a demonstration on making greeting cards using fabric. Any questions? E-mail Wickhamdayquilters@gmail.com

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FEB. 12: DOES U.S. HEALTHCARE NEED A BAND-AID OR MAJOR SURGERY? - Join the President's College Lifelong Learning at the University of Hartfordus for a free informal discussion of the U.S. healthcare system. Hear Jillian Gilchrest, CT State Representative and Chair of the Human Services Committee, speak to the political side of this question. Gilchrest is among those vying for the seat of Democratic U.S. Representative John Larson in CT's 1st Congressional District, which includes East Hartford. Get the provider viewpoint from Ben Wade, VP at Stamford Health. Listen in as these experts dig into the complex challenges facing the U.S. healthcare system, including affordability and rising costs, workforce shortages, a shifting federal and state regulatory landscape, and the rapid adoption and governance of AI. Thursday, Feb. 12, 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m. Free but you need to register at Hartford.edu/pc. Email pcollege@hartford.edu or call 860-768-4495 if questions.

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FEB 13 - THE FIRST MOSAICS CONCERT of the year takes place on Friday at South Congregatonal Church, 1301 Forbes St. At 7 p.m. classical guitarist Ben Lougheed performs. Polished, passionate, and enaging Loughheed is a teacher and has performed across the United States. Tickets are $20 online at mosaicsconcerts.com or at the door. South Congregational Church is handicap accessible. FMI visit mosaicsconcerts.com. or call the church office at 860-568-5150.

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FEB 14: DRIVE-THRU COOKIE GIVEAWAY ON VALETINE'S DAY Saturday at South Church. Simply drive into the church parking lot any time between 10 a.m. and noon and pick up a free homemade treat! It's their way of sharing kindness. 1301 Forbes St. FMI Lisa at community@southucc.org.

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FEB 18: LENTEN LOVE PROJECT at South Congregational Church. From Ash Wednesday, February 18, through the Lenten season drive by 1301 Forbes St. between 8 and 9 a.m. Monday through Saturday and be inspired by the message of the day. A member or two from South Church will be on the front lawn holding signs, waving, cheering and celebrating you as you begin your day. It is our gift to the community to offer joy, smiles, laughter and love as we walk the Lenten Road together. You are invited to return to the church that evening to experience Ash Wednesday in a new and meaningful way. The Seven Symbols of Ash: An Interactive Ash Wednesday Experience, takes place on Wednesday, February 18. Stop by the Sanctuary in the church anytime between 5 and 7 p.m. for an interactive, open-house-style journey through seven prayerful stations, each revealing a biblical symbol of ash. You are welcome to move at your own pace - whether you stay for a few moments or linger in quiet reflection. Come as you are. Bring your prayers, your hopes. Let this be a time to slow down, breathe deeply, and step into Lent with open hands and an open heart. Experience Ash Wednesday as never before.FMI call 860-568-5150.

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FEB 21: DAY OF SILENCE: BUDDHIST MEDITATION RETREAT Saturday at 10:30 a.m. at the Odiyana Center, Glastonbury. Let inner noise settle. Become free of thinking that the answer to feeling better is "out there". Instead, understand that happiness is found within. Everyone welcome. Info at meditationinconnecticut.org

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MARCH 1: EAST HARTFORD ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE COMMITTEE SUNDAY BRUNCH benefit, honoring East Hartford's 2026 Parade Honorees Chris & Ashley Tierinni. Brunch begins at 11 a.m. at The East Hartford Golf Course restaurant, Square Peg Pizzeria, 130 Long Hill St. There will be raffles, a cash bar. Donation is $25. Please also bring a nonperishable food item for the townb's food pantry. Tickets are limited. To obtain one, kindly call Sana Hart 860-558-6261. See you there!

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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HORSESHOE CLUB has moved to 50 Oakland St. (off Park Avenue) and are looking for people interested in playing horseshoes indoors during the winter. E-mail debbiescully@comcast.net; 860-778-1057.

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GET A FREE CHECKUP - The Malta House mobile health care van parks on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings at St. Mary's Church.

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

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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.

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

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INTERVAL HOUSE helps victims of domestic violence, advocacy, legal rights. 860-527-0550.

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PROJECT LINUS delivers blankets to local hospitals. We are always looking for people to donate handmade quilts or afghans. Blankets need not be fancy, just colorful and washable, any size. To donate call 860-649-5513.

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