

Insightful and informative

THE HAMPTON Gazette



VOLUME XLVII No. 10 / NOVEMBER 2025



Happy Anniversary, Hampton General!

This month we celebrate three wonderful years of Kara's store at the heart of Hampton. It has become so much more than a place to pick up essentials—it's where you'll find thoughtful gifts, cozy sweatshirts, and seasonal treasures that make life in our town richer. Kara has poured her heart into creating a space where neighbors connect, friendships grow, and even catering and holiday pie preorders (a true time-saver and always delicious!) bring joy to our tables. Congratulations, Kara, and thank you for all you've given our community.

Robin Thompson

This month marks three wonderful years of my store in Hampton, and I want to say a huge *thank you* to this community. Your support has meant the world to me. I've met so many amazing people and built friendships that will last a lifetime.

I try every day to listen to what my customers need and to make life just a little easier and friendlier for them. It has been so much fun, and I can't wait to see what the years ahead will bring.

With gratitude (and a wag from Buddy),
Kara Futschik Hicks



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Dayna McDermott-Arriola

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THUMBS UP: to all the candidates seeking office this November. Politics aside, it's always a noble thing to do, especially in a small town with limited resources depending almost exclusively on the dedication of others. Congratulations to you all for volunteering.

THUMBS DOWN: to the Gazette, for inadvertently omitting Matt Rivers' candidacy for Board of Finance. Rivers is running for the Board of Education and the Planning and Zoning Commission, noted in the October issue, *and* the Board of Finance. Our apologies. And to the Democrats, who omitted one of their endorsed candidates from the political signs.

Dear Readers,

The Gazette welcomes Robin Thompson to our editorial board. A life-long resident of Hampton and environs, Robin brings, along with exceptional writing skills and creativity, considerable knowledge of our town and profound respect for all of its citizens. Welcome, Robin!

2026 CALENDARS are available for order as well as notecards of your favorite Hampton places! Hampton artwork by local artists, get one for yourself, your friends, your kitchen, your living room, maybe even the garage! And you sure can't plan your day without one in the bathroom! To order contact: via phone 959.242.4442 or email: hamptongazette@yahoo.com.



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Vote Republican for our Local Team



Allan Cahill, First Selectman
Protecting our quality of life



John Russell, Selectman
Looking out for members of our Community



Kay Johnson, Town Clerk
Providing competent and compassionate service



Tim Studer, Board of Education
Cherishing our schools



Juan Arriola, Board of Education
Listening to constituents



Kathy Donahue, Board of Finance
Staying informed

Fiscally Responsible Protectors of the Town Purse

Also running:

Board of Assessment Appeals

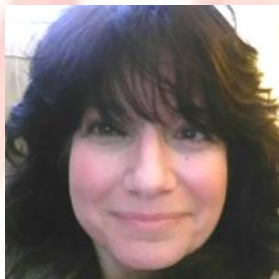
John Berard

Zoning Board of Appeals

Zachary Burdick-Chapel

Constables

Wanda Willard & Ralph Brand



Laura Barrow, Board of Education
Strengthening ties between schools & parents



Jo Freeman, Zoning Board of Appeals
Making unbiased, informed, fair decisions



Gary DeCesare
Planning & Zoning Commission
Safeguarding our Town's rural character

and Beyond.... **VILLAGE VIEW**

SENIORS CLUB

Happy Fall Everyone! On October 8th the Hampton Seniors enjoyed a brunch and chocolate bingo again this month with prizes in chocolate bars of choice. We also had an informative presentation on October 20 on fall prevention by Day Kimball Healthcare at Home stressing the factors that can cause individuals to fall and ways to prevent them.

October 24 was the day of the latest senior luncheon. In November we will continue with our regular activities which include game day on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4PM. Bring a lunch if you wish and participate in the game of the day, or a game of your choice. We are very flexible about our games. If you would prefer you can join us and work on a craft as you join in the socialization. There is also watercolor class on November 6 and 20 from 10AM to noon, and Mexican Trains every Friday from 9AM to noon. All of these take place in the upstairs community room of the Town Hall.

Our Senior Luncheon will happen on Friday, November 21 at 12:30 in the Town Hall downstairs community room. We thank you for your support and hope to see you at one or more of these activities! Lots of additional activities are planned for December and beyond! Stay tuned.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

Hazardous Waste Collection Day for area towns is November 8, from 9AM to 1PM, on Nora Lane in Pomfret. Please bring proof of residence. A list of hazardous waste, from the house, the garage and the garden, and other information, is available at Hampton Town Hall during regular hours.

VETERAN NEWS

Veterans Day is coming -- November 11. Please consider attending local events and show your support. There are programs throughout the state. If you are a veteran, and have a military cap, wear it proudly.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION DAY INFORMATION

The polls will be open for the Municipal Election on November 4 from 6AM to 8PM in the Community Room at Town Hall. Early Voting and Same Day Registration is available in the Office of the Registrars of Voters on November 1 and 2 from 10AM to 6PM. The Registrars will hold a limited registration session from 9AM to 5PM on November 3 for those whose rights as to age, citizenship, or residence was attained since October 17. Same Day Registration is available during the Election in the Registrars' Office only to those who apply prior to the close of the polls. Absentee ballots are available from the Town Clerk during regular Town Hall hours, and curb-side voting will be available during Early Voting and Election Day.

*Dayna McDermott-Arriola and Sulema Perez-Pagan
Registrars of Voters*

HCC ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

Hampton Congregational Church will once again hold their annual Harvest Dinner on Saturday, November 8, from 5-7PM. The event features roast pork, with a vegetarian option of stuffed squash, along with maple carrots, roast potatoes and homemade desserts. The cost is \$15 for adults, \$10 for children, and children under 5 are free. There is also a take-out option,

Hampton Congregational has their annual fall dinner for three reasons. One is to build community within the congregation as we work together to serve it. The second is to provide a place for the broader community to gather. During a time where people are increasingly isolated, and loneliness is an epidemic, having a chance to sit with old neighbors and meet new ones is a gift this meal affords. Finally, it serves as a fundraiser. Hampton Congregational is the second oldest meeting house in Connecticut with continual worship services since it was built, but as the church is over 300 years old and the building is nearly that old, expenses like the new boiler we just installed aren't cheap. The meal helps the congregation support our mission.

So make plans to join us on November 8 with a great meal for a good cause.

THANKSGIVING MEAL

Hampton Congregational Church would like to invite the community to a Thanksgiving Meal on Sunday, November 23 at 11AM. We will provide turkey and stuffing and those who attend are invited to bring a dish to share in a true "potluck" fashion, trusting that we will get what we need for a filling meal. However, if you would just like to join us without providing a dish, that is fine too.

The Congregation wanted to provide this time of gathering during this season of thankfulness as a way to bring the community together for a meal to share the joy of the season. Whether you will be alone on Thanksgiving or hosting a huge crowd, this is a chance to sit down the Sunday before with friends and neighbors and share a time of thankfulness. In a divided world, this is an opportunity to put aside divisions and unite on one thing we can all agree upon--eating good food with friends is filling for both the stomach and the soul.

Prior to the meal we will have a Service of Thanksgiving at 10AM, but attendance is not expected if you just want to partake in the meal.

There is no cost for the meal. This is our gift to the community.

SELECTMEN SUPPORT RESOLUTION TO ROUND OF APPLAUSE

At their regular monthly meeting on October 6, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to publish a “Community Values Statement” on Hampton’s website, a decision which was met with applause from the audience.

The resolution stipulates:

- That Hampton is a place where people—no matter where they were born—deserve to live without fear of harassment, targeting, or unjust treatment.
- That we support state efforts, including Connecticut’s Trust Act, which limit entanglement between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities, except under clear and lawful conditions.
- That our town benefits from the labor, traditions, families, and presence of many—seen and unseen—whose stories are woven into the soil and spirit of this place.
- That public safety is best achieved not through raids or fear, but through trust-building, informed community members, and clear rights-based education.

The proposal was brought forth by resident Robin Thompson who addressed the community on the subject in a letter published in last month’s *Gazette*. Since its publication, Thompson has received much positive support, and while less than a dozen residents attended a Town Meeting conducted earlier that evening, when the Selectmen’s meeting commenced, the number in attendance more than doubled with residents showing support for the proposal.

In a letter read to the Selectmen, Thompson asked the board “to consider issuing a simple, values-based statement affirming that public spaces in Hampton—like schools, libraries, and emergency services—remain places of trust and safety for all residents, regardless of immigration status. This is not a partisan issue,” she said. “It’s a human one.” The Selectmen voted to add a discussion on the issue to the Agenda and welcomed public comment on the subject during the meeting. Thompson thanked the Selectmen “for listening, for your openness to this conversation, and for the care you continue to show this town.”

Thompson also distributed numerous resources for “Welcoming and Safe Communities in Connecticut”, information from “The Connecticut Trust Act”, samples of “Values Statements” from other Connecticut towns, and her own which advocated, “That every person, regardless of birthplace, documentation status, race, language, or origin, holds inherent dignity and worth. That how we treat the most vulnerable among us defines who we are as a community,” characterizing residents of our “small, rural town”, as people who “know what it means to look out for one another.”

The statement was read into the minutes, and a discussion ensued with members of the board and the audience, during which the Selectmen concurred that Hampton has always been known as a welcoming town. Members cited the June, 2022 proclamation adopted by the Board of Selectmen which stated the Town of Hampton “celebrates the diversity of its people and their right to live their lives out loud, free of discrimination, fear and prejudice... and is committed to supporting visibility, dignity and equality” and proclaimed June as “Pride Month in support of the LGBTQ+ community.” The Selectmen voted unanimously in support of the proposal to publish the “Community Values Statement”, and in response, the audience applauded.

As to the Town Meeting held earlier, residents approved “additional appropriations from the Undesignated Fund for the General Budget for the year July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025” to cover unanticipated costs totaling \$5,547.86. These were largely due to increased costs imposed on the Sanitation Department and legal fees to cover the litigation regarding taxes on the Solar Park.

Gazette Staff

COMMUNITY POLL: OLD HABITS DIE HARD

At our Annual Fall Festivals, the *Gazette*, given that we’re a newspaper, conducts a community poll.

This year we asked residents to: **Mark the rules you still adhere to that were passed from your Depression Era parents and grandparents.**

- With 26 participants, 25, or all except one, selected **Have left-over nights for supper.**
- **Turn off the lights when leaving the room** was marked by 22 of us,
- followed by 21 residents who **Wear Hand-Me-Downs.**
- Eighteen of us **Compost** and **Order tap rather than bottled water.**
- Seventeen of us **Save buttons** and **Reuse bows**, but only 15 of us **Save nails** and only 14 of us **Reuse wrapping paper.**
- Fifteen of us **Turn off the water while brushing our teeth.**
- Fourteen of us **Never leave the car running.**
- Thirteen of us **Use fans rather than air-conditioning.**
- Twelve of us **Save the twists from wrappers** (in that “miscellaneous draw” that many mentioned).
- Eleven of us **Reuse uncanceled stamps.**
- Only nine of us **Walk instead of drive whenever possible** (though this was dependent on age, weather, and safety).
- And the number one thing we no longer do: **Darn Woolen Clothes.** Only two of us still do that (though many of us remember wearing darned clothes, especially socks).

In conclusion: we’re a thrifty, frugal bunch, who probably also remember the proverb – “Waste not, want not.”

CALLS FOR HES BOARD OF EDUCATION TO HOLD ITSELF MORE ACCOUNTABLE

An attempt to release an investigative report to the public failed at the Hampton Elementary School Board of Education's October 23 meeting when the motion, made by member Juan Arriola, to discuss the matter, did not receive a second. Arriola, who reviewed the report in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, deemed it important for the public to know, though he refrained from citing details of the report in order to preserve the current confidentiality of the document. Arriola has been a consistent critic of what he and some other town officials consider the school board's lack of transparency.

The report summarizes the investigation into a discrimination grievance filed by Armin Harris, former custodian, against former principal Patrice Merendina in September, 2023. The circumstances surrounding the investigation triggered several complaints, including one lodged with the school board currently under investigation, two, subsequently settled, with the FOIC, and two with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) which are pending.

Additionally, the investigation, conducted by attorneys, cost \$18,000, though board policies stipulate that the Superintendent has ten days to hold a hearing on a discrimination grievance and five days to "resolve the complaint and negotiate a long-term solution, or refer the matter to the Board of Education for consideration".

After the investigation was finalized, the only information released was a correspondence dated December 21, 2023 from former Superintendent Samantha Sarli to Harris concluding that "the investigators substantiated some of your allegations, specifically that Ms. Merendina engaged in certain inappropriate conduct towards you at times". Though no further details were offered, it was noted that the conduct was not racially motivated.

Subsequent to the investigation, Harris filed a complaint with the CHRO, and after the specifics were released in a September 10, 2024 article in *The Willimantic Chronicle*, Merendina filed a complaint to the school board against Arriola regarding his

"involvement" in Harris' case. That complaint alleged that Arriola attempted to attend a meeting, ultimately cancelled, with administrators and Harris, distributed Harris' letter of resignation at a board meeting, and "disclosed information that he obtained based on his position as a Board of Education member to the public and to the media" causing "substantial damage and injury to Ms. Merendina's professional and personal reputation".

After Merendina resigned, accepting a position with Norwich Public Schools which she described as "necessary....to reach my professional goals," the school board at its October 23, 2024 meeting, voted 5-4 to launch an investigation into Merendina's "complaint against a board member."

Invoices received from September 2024 through August 2025 show that the board has spent approximately \$12,000 investigating the complaint thus far, conducting extensive interviews with Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski and all board members except three who voted against the investigation, John Russell, Diane Gagnon, and Arriola himself. According to the invoices, no attempts to date have been made to contact Gagnon or Arriola during the course of the investigation which commenced almost a year ago.

As to the allegations under investigation, Arriola admits to distributing the resignation, at Harris' request, and to attending a meeting between Harris and administrators at the suggestion of the CHRO. He denies disclosing anything that wasn't public, including to the press, and has repeatedly asked officials to "simply ask the reporter", which, he notes, wouldn't cost anything.

In a statement to the board, Arriola said his "involvement" in personnel matters was not one of interference, adding, "I will never turn away from someone who asks me to listen. Never. There is no job or role in this world that's worth turning your back on a human being in need."

Arriola has also filed a complaint with the CHRO, alleging retaliation due to his advocacy of school employees who filed discrimination complaints against school officials. Connecticut General Statutes 46a-60(b) (1) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits actions "against any person because such person has opposed any discriminatory employment practice or because such person has filed a complaint or testified or assisted in any proceeding under section 46a-82, 46a-83 or 46a-84."

The alleged retaliation includes the investigation into Arriola's conduct, the suggestion by a board member that he be removed from the board, or censured, his removal from all committees, and several serious allegations publicly leveled against him at the September 19, 2024 board meeting, which Arriola has labeled "unsubstantiated, slanderous, and false".

In an effort to resolve issues raised in the CHRO complaint amicably, Chairman Becker, Superintendent Skarzynski and Arriola participated in a meeting this summer which was characterized as "positive". The results were announced at the board meeting, with Becker reading from a written statement: "We agreed that the board needs to re-engage in various ad-hoc committees and all the members of the board will be asked to participate. It was also recognized that the entire board needs to work together with the primary goal to support all kids. Improvements are needed in board practice and we need to ensure that across the table we treat each other with respect, listen to the different viewpoints and continue to participate in board presentations and board training, including those related to diversity and equity, all while holding our members responsible for proper behavior but not by singling them out."

There have been no public updates on further discussions and resolutions.

Fletcher Memorial Library

NEW BOOKS

A short, but selective list this month, as we await the big rush of holiday books. Fiction favorites include a Dan Brown (of *DaVinci Code* fame) a new Elin Hildebrand, and another outing with Lisbeth Salander in *The Girl with Ice in Her Veins*. Adult non-fiction concerning Parkinson's disease and the Baroque architecture— and architects— of Rome is on the shelves plus some popular DVDs.

ADULT FICTION

Dan Brown	The Secret of Secrets
Eve Chase	The Midnight Hour
Kiran Desai	The Loneliness of Sonia & Sonny
Nathan Harris	Amity
Elin Hildebrand	The Academy
Karin Smirnoff	The Girl with Ice in Her Veins
Danielle Steel	A Mother's Love

ADULT NON-FICTION

Ray Dorsey	The Parkinson's Plan: a New Path to Prevention & Treatment
Jake Morrissey	The Genius in the Design: Bernini, Borromini (Rome's architecture)

DVDs

Jurassic World Rebirth, Superman, The White Lotus (season 3),
The Art Detectives (series 1)

MANDOLIN CONCERT AT COMMUNITY CENTER

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra will perform on November 16 at 3PM in the Community Center, a wide repertoire of music for its unique instrumentation of mandolins, guitars, and bass. The Orchestra was formed in 1913. This community group currently under the direction of Grammy-nominated mandolinist/guitarist Mark Davis has gained a reputation for excellence through its many local concerts, international tours and recordings. Known for its dedication to the performance of both traditional and contemporary music, the orchestra has performed in Spain, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Orchestra sections include first and second mandolin, mandola, mandocello, classical guitar and string bass. The varied repertoire for this concert will include: *The City Awakes* (Netherlands) – E. Stopler; *Lieder ohne Worte* (German) – K. Wolki; *Grooves* (USA) – O. Hartford; *A Lament for the Loss of Polite Language* (Aus.) – R. Schulz.

This concert is co-sponsored by the Hampton Recreation Commission. Tickets will be available at the door: Adults \$15, seniors \$10, students \$5.



LIBRARY EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Top Shelf Gallery: The October show is likely a continuation of Janice Trecker's *Recent Works*, a variety of acrylic paintings on Masonite as well as some digital drawings

Special Programs:

November 12 **Second Wednesday Story and Craft** 4—5PM

This activity is for children ages 3-5 along with a caregiver presented in partnership with Hampton Elementary School. An HES staff member will read a story and lead a related activity.

November 12 **Book Discussion Group** 6—7PM The group will be discussing *Wishin' and Hopin'* by Wally Lamb. We have copies of the book available to borrow at the library.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Wednesday Knitting Group Noon

Informal fiber arts group meets most Wednesdays. Please contact the library to make sure they are meeting.

Thursday Mah Jongg 101 10AM – NOON

Join us in the Community Room for free classes on Mah Jongg, an ancient Asian game played with tiles. All skill levels are welcome!

Thursday or Friday Tai Chi 8:30 – 9:30AM

Tai Chi takes place in back of the Community Center or in the Pavilion at the Town Hall, depending on the weather. Call the library for updated information and current day.

Friday Baby Story Time with Miss Deb

10:30 – 11:30AM Join us for an interactive program for birth to three-year-olds using a variety of musical instruments, rhymes, songs, finger plays, as well as a story or two. Our goal is to encourage a lifelong love of reading and learning. *No Registration Required for Listed Programs*

Senior Delivery Service The library is happy to provide a delivery service, please call or email the library.



APPAQUAG, from the Nipmuck “swampy area”, also known as Cady Hill and Grow Hill, for the families who farmed there, is one of the oldest sections of town. Though Appaquag had its own one room school house, from 1774 to the early 1900’s when the seven schools consolidated into three, it was without some of the amenities common to the other sections, such as stores, mills, depots, and post offices. Situated in the northeastern corner of the town, Appaquag was the smallest of the seven districts, and according to the 1869 map of the town, the most sparsely populated, due in large part to its industry: farming.

Appaquag’s “Grow Farm” is one of the oldest in town, the home built between 1730 and 1748. Like several of our earliest settlers, Thomas Grow was from Andover Massachusetts, arriving in Hampton in 1730 and purchasing 100 acres in the portion of town that was originally part of Pomfret, later incorporated into Hampton and designated as the school district called Appaquag.

Upon his death in 1755, Grow deeded half of the land to his son, Joseph, and the other half to his son Thomas, Jr. who would become known as Deacon Thomas Grow. Though the Grow Farm is described as “prosperous”, much more is written on the Baptist Church that was established there. Born in 1743, Deacon Thomas Grow, according to Susan Jewett Griggs’ *Folklore and Firesides*, welcomed parishioners to his home for services prior to constructing the Grow Meetinghouse on the property, a wall of which, reportedly, is still visible. His son, William, would continue as the first ordained pastor, from 1776 to 1783, and a Grow cousin, James, a farmer and a schoolmaster, continued as pastor from 1788 to 1805.

Along with a church, the farm also had its own cemetery, the Grow Burying Grounds, circa 1740. Here, on a small hill along Carter Road, members of the Grow family rest in peace, flags marking the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers Deacon Thomas and Ebenezer, who served under General Israel Putnam. A few of the gravestones are still legible, and Deacon Thomas, identified as “a prosperous farmer and leader of the Grow Hill Baptist Church”, is inscribed thus:

**DIED
JUNE 5, 1824,
AGED 81 YEARS
EVERY SEA AND LAKE AND RIVER
SHALL RESTORE THEIR DEAD
TO VIEW
SHOUT FOR GLADNESS
O BELIEVER
CHRIST IS RISEN AND
SO SHALL YOU.**

Our Rural Heritage THE DAIRY FARM

The ministers and veterans of the American Revolution were not the only members of the Grow family of renown. According to Janet and Jim Robertson’s *All Our Yesterdays*, “In the 1860’s, the speaker of the House, a representative from Pennsylvania who sponsored the Homestead Act, was Galusha Grow – who had been born on what is now known as Grow Hill on the northern edge of Hampton, Connecticut.”

In 1876, the Stone family purchased the Grow Farm, operating it for over a hundred years. Harold Stone, a life-long resident, described growing up on the farm in several entries of *Hampton Remembers*, illustrating an industrious, and simple, life.

We always put up ice at home. Everybody did. Now today if people had to depend on ice you couldn’t do it – ‘cause we don’t have the season for it! Dad made an icebox for the house, lined it with zinc and filled in the space with sawdust. It was a chest type – you lifted up the top to put the ice in and your ice was on one side and your food on the other. It was out in the back room and for when it melted, it had a hole down through and pipes down underneath so the water went right down under the building...You set your milk in these tin pans about ten to twelve inches across the top, smaller across the bottom. And up home we had what you called a milk, butter, and cheese pantry known as a butt’ry...We used to pick huckleberries in the summertime and Mr. Clapp at Elliot store would give us ten cents a quart the first week, nine the next and when it got down so he was giving us three cents a quart, then we picked to preserve for our own use...We had, as a rule, somewhere around twenty cows...When I was a small boy my day started about ha’ past five or a little earlier than that because we had to have our milk cooled and down to Elliot station by seven o’clock. We had the stables to clean and the milking and we had to pitch out the silage after we got a silo and pitch down the hay, and feed ‘em the grain...We had to pump the water and turn the cows out into what was the horse barn there because that’s where the pump was and one boy could pump and keep pumping, steady if two cows were drinking...In the summer, you had your haying and those days you didn’t kill weeds with pesticides. You had to work. Vacation? I don’t think they





knew what the word meant...Well, say, I don't think the children today have anywhere near the fun that they had those days. They worked hard but of course they enjoyed their time off more.

Harold's sibling, Elmer, ran the farm until he retired in 1954, when the operation was purchased by his sons, Clarence and Walter, and became known as the "Stone Brothers." The farm grew during their ownership to a hundred cows, some pigs, lots of chickens, and many buildings to accommodate the daily operations, two large barns, a tool and oil shed, a garage for vehicles, a pig pen, and a pole barn.

Many of the changes through those years were the result of growth and of legislation. While Elmer still milked the cows the old-fashioned way, Walt and Clarence machine-milked. Laws required the equipment that was always cleaned in the house to be washed in its own room in a larger barn. Milk sold directly to customers or brought to the train station was now sold to Cumberland Farms. Previously stored in cans placed in a large container chilled with water, milk was now poured into a bulk tank hitched to a milk truck and hauled away.

The work load didn't change. The farmers worked from sunrise to sunset, the children milked the cows before school started, and brought the cows in after school, and their mothers cooked a breakfast every morning of "fresh juice, cereal and fruit, eggs, bacon or sausage, fried bread, pancakes, milk, coffee, and sometimes homemade donuts," Phyllis Stone recalled.

The major changes, however, occurred during the last century when the number of dairy farms dwindled down to three in the last half, all in the Appaquag part of town, and eventually to only one.

Allan Cahill came to Hampton in 1975 at the age of 18. His widowed mother and her husband, a generational farmer, searched for farms from Georgia to New Brunswick before finally settling on what was then the Postemski farm, the northern most portion of the original Grow Farm. For the next 25 years, the Geers ran the dairy operation Raydongeo Farms named for members of the Geer family – Raymond, Donald and George.

In 1999, Al and Clark Woodmansee started the partnership known as Woodhill Farm. Al became the sole proprietor when he bought the business in 2013, and on September 29 of this year, he and partner Kevin Burnham created Grow Hill, LLC, the real estate holding company. Today the farm

encompasses what was known as the Geer farm, a portion of the Albro farm on the Pomfret line, the Stone farm, much of the Polom farm, and half of the Loew farm -- five farms into one.

Farming, Al says, is not just a vocation; it's a way of life. He's "on call" 24-7 in this capacity, and in the other role he serves, as First Selectman. Following in the footsteps of one of his predecessors, on the farm and in the town -- Walt Stone -- Al says he watched and listened closely to Walt and many of those he admired who preceded or worked with him, becoming the town's Chief Official in 2011. Running unopposed this November, he will start his 14th year as First Selectman, but, out of respect, he won't break Walt's record of 20 years.

On average, twelve people work on the farm all year, with sub-contractors and bartering with area farms during the harvest season. The farm exports 12 to 15 tons of milk per day, sold to Guida's Dairy. Residents might notice a tank truck drive daily through town between eight and ten every morning on its way to New Britain.

There are 800 cattle who call the farm "home", and only two dairy barns. "We'd all rather be outside, right?" Al asks, explaining that several shelters provide protection from the weather when needed and accommodate the philosophy of "lose free choice housing", which allows the cows to roam free.

The goal, Al says, is animal comfort. "We treat them like children, with age and size appropriate groupings, and a lot of freedom." We're stewards, he says, of the land, keeping it in open space and protecting it from development, and of the animals. "We take excellent care of the cows. They pay the bills."

The cows and the farm are also celebrated with a wine called "Woodhill", produced and bottled here in Hampton at Quiet Corner Winery. "Why a cow on a wine bottle?" the label asks. "Quiet Corner Winery is nestled in a part of Connecticut rich in farming history. We chose to feature a cow on our Sauvignon Blanc label as a tribute to the hardworking farming community, particularly honoring the dairy farms of Hampton. Our goal is to craft a wine that not only stands the test of time but also celebrates the heritage and dedication of this agricultural region."

And so -- a toast. Here's to our town's dairy farm, conservator of land, protector of animals, preserver of history.

Kitchening!

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

My classmates and I are beginning to see each other on a regular basis again, often—sadly, at our parents' and their friends' memorials. At our age (60 somethings) they are not often weepy affairs. The recent passing of Sylvia Curry was one such. A grand event for a *grande dame*.

Sylvia, Syl, or "Mrs. Curry" as some still call her, was one of those "hip" moms of Hampton.

- She was a working mom (like mine) of which there were few, then.
- She was a domestic goddess (as in, she could do ANYTHING waaaay before Martha Stewart).
- She was the first to have a Diane von Furstenberg "Wrap Dress". We were in awe.
- She could stop us dead with a look (and an eyebrow higher than John Belushi's—you know what I mean).
- She was smart and saavy and wasn't afraid to tell people what she thought. No holds barred.
- "She didn't take crap" (from her grandson Josh's eulogizing).
- She loved her family and community fiercely.

Syl adored the home she and Fred built to raise their wild and wonderful "boys". It seemed like we were in and out of each other's houses a lot, and there was definitely a conspiracy between Syl, my mother, and Sunny Peterson as to where we were, where we might be going next, or what trouble we might be up to.

We were welcome anytime in their house on upper Main Street, after college, and moving into our grown up lives. "What are you doing now?" she would query with *that* look. And she was really interested. And really listened. Maybe not agreeing with everything, but honoring who you were in that moment.



One day, while visiting from Vermont, I stopped by for a chat. We sat in the kitchen. Syl mentioned she was frustrated with the small space and wanted to do something different. Looking at the wall with cabinets on the north side, I casually suggested a window facing her garden. Again, she gave me *that* look.

The next time I visited she pulled me into the kitchen to show me the new view of her garden. She was so tickled with her new window. It was, she realized, where she stood in the quiet of every morning: to think, to pray, ponder the next creative dinner, rapt in wonder at her garden, to have her own moment.

We're missing the moments with you already, Syl; Godspeed.

Mary Oliver



A Birthday Poem for Sylvia Curry

Sylvia Curry you're a dear friend of mine.
Throughout many years our friendship has been fine.
You're committed and capable and in the top rank.
I've seen over the years your remarkable strength.
You have a fine home with remarkable treasures,
But possessions come second to traits that you measure.
We all have our challenges with our inner voices,
But with purpose and faith you have made the right choices.
You have known what's best,
that's what you're about.
And never would you take the easy way out.
I envy you Sylvia having four handsome sons,
When I have been blessed by having just one.
I think of the places and roads that you see,
I remember our walks when you shared time with me.
Our good years of friendship span a very long time,
Time of much sharing that I call very fine.
I can summon up both your laughter and smile.
I recall them with ease every once and a while.
I then sit on your deck, on your lawn, or at table.
There you are facing Fred both smiling and able.
And again, it's your birthday and I can't be there,
but I want you to know that I really do care.
So I send you good wishes to stay strong and be bold,
And know in my mind's eye you will never grow old.

Elizabeth Milner

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: SYLVIA'S SPINACH "SOUFFLÉ"

This was one of Syl's "go-to" recipes for church suppers or a nice side with something special.

2 boxes frozen spinach	2TBS butter
2 eggs, beaten	1 package cream cheese
1/2 cup parmesan	Buttered bread crumbs for topping

Heat the butter in a skillet and add the frozen spinach breaking it up with a spatula until soft. Add the cream cheese and eggs continuing to stir quickly so the eggs do not scramble. Fold in shredded parmesan. Pour into buttered baking dish. Cover with buttered bread crumbs. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes (until bread crumbs are golden) and the dish has risen a bit (like a soufflé).

JOSHUA'S TRUST

November 9 **Guided Hike at the Church Farm** 10AM -- NOON

Church Farm Preserve, 29 Varga Rd, Ashford, CT

This 3-4 mile hike includes a rocky scramble up the blue trail followed by a woody hike along the ledges at Church Farm Preserve in Ashford, with beautiful views and historic sites, including a home that was built in the 1700s and a barn built in the late 1800s.

November 28 **Post-Thanksgiving Walk at Utley Hill Preserve**

10AM -- NOON Join Laurie Gypson for a walk at Utley Hill Preserve in Columbia. The loop is approximately 2.5 miles long and will take us roughly 1 and 1/2 hours to complete.

Be sure to visit joshuustrust.org/events/ for details, updates and cancellations.

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY

Center at Pomfret

November 8 **Saw-whet Owl Banding Demonstration** 7PM

Join Andy and his fellow banders as they capture and band migrating Saw-whet Owls. Registration is required at 860.928.4948 or via email: arzeknikiewicz@ctaudubon.org.

November 29 through December **Holiday Nature Store** NOON – 4PM

The Center will be packed with gifts for all ages -- bird houses, holiday decorations, children's books and games, works by local artists, something for everyone.

Center at Trail Wood

November 1 **Last Light of Fall Walk with the Sierra Club** 2 – 4:30PM

Join Sierra Club members for a late afternoon autumn walk on the final day of daylight saving time for this year. Weather dependent, register with Trail Wood, trailwood@ctaudubon.org or the Sierra Club's Susan Eastwood, sce4321@gmail.com.

November 5 **Trail Wood Troubadours** 6-9PM

Join a group of acoustic music lovers to play popular songs written when the Teales lived at Trail Wood, 1959-1993. Registration is required at trailwood@ctaudubon.org.

Fridays in November **Trail Wood Walking Club** 1-3PM

Weather and trail conditions permitting, join us for this weekly walk at Trail Wood.

GOODWIN CONSERVATION CENTER PROGRAMS

November 7 **Women's Suffrage --The Yellow Roses** 2PM

Travel in time to the 19th and 20th centuries, when James L. Goodwin was at Pine Acres, to learn about women's attempts to gain voting rights.

November 8 **Water Cycle Wonders** 11AM

Join us to learn about Earth's water cycle and its different stages, play the interactive Water Cycle Game and make your own Water Cycle Bracelet.

November 15 **Astronomy and Earth History Nature Trail Walk** 2PM

Learn about our solar system, the history of the earth, and Goodwin State Forest with an interactive, half-mile scale model of our Solar System!

November 22 **Young Geologists!** 2PM

Hunt for various Connecticut rocks and learn how to identify them, what minerals they are made of, and how they formed.

November 29 **Fairy House Fun** 2PM

Spot fairy homes along an enchanted forest trail and gather natural treasures to build your own to bring home to invite fairies to your own yard.



NOVEMBER 11. *I come back from the village post office this afternoon bringing a package and a story. The package contains books; the story concerns the teamwork of two unusual pets that once lived at the 1740 colonial home of the postmaster. After I have signed for the package, Charlie Fox recalls the two, a tabby cat and a yellow bantam hen. In another of those odd friendships, the hen kept close to the cat. It followed it around the yard. It settled down beside it when it curled up to sleep. But it was during one particularly cold winter that the most curious aspect of this friendship came to light. Then the hen and the cat cooperated in catching mice.*

During the bitterest days, the two found a warm nook in a corner of the kitchen. There, at times, they dozed together side by side. But the bantam hen, less given to daytime naps, was always the first to become active. It would wander off on an inspection tour of the other rooms of the house. During that particular winter, the mouse population in the Hampton region reached one of its periodic peaks. The little animals kept finding their way into the house. Whenever the bantam, on its tour of the other rooms, spied a mouse, it would set up a loud, peculiar clucking sound, reminiscent of a hen that has scratched up a worm and clucks to call its chicks. In an instant, the dozing cat would be wide awake. It would come racing and pounce on the mouse: This teamwork between the hen and the cat was repeated a dozen times or more before the winter was over.

It occurs to me that we have a somewhat similar situation at Trail Wood. Nellie and I take the place of the bantam hen; downy woodpeckers the place of the cat. It is our custom on cold winter mornings to hammer pieces of suet into knotholes on the trunk of the apple tree below the terrace. The far-carrying noise of the pounding always brings the same results. Woodpeckers come flying from the woods. The sound of our hammer calls "suet" to the birds just as the clucking of the hen called "mouse" to the dozing cat.



COMMUNITY POEM

Each year, residents contribute to a Community Poem at our Harvest Fest. Here is this year's.

Fall is...

Migration.

Formations of geese,

Insects singing at night.

Chipmunks and squirrels scrambling.

Harvest,

Apples and pumpkins.

Loving the sun as it fades.

*Leaves changing to red,
orange and yellow,*

The annual fashion show of colors,

The mustiness of the fallen leaves.

Walking the airline trail,

Hooking a salmon,

Crowds cheering young athletes --

Running, kicking, blocking.

A horse bouncing in the cool air.

Trick-or-treating,

Spooky season!

AUNTIE MAC
Dear

I'm debating whether or not I should remain friends with some old friends I've known most of my life whose "politics" differ so greatly from mine on matters of race, gender identity, immigration. I'm all for free speech and diversity of ideas and have prided myself on my wide circle of friends, but I don't think I can maintain friendships with those whose ideology I find, frankly, inhumane. Am I wrong to do this, and should I tell them why on the way out the door?

No Longer Able to Put Politics Aside

My Dear Neighbor,

The people we have known most of our lives know things about us that no one else ever will. They remember the way your house smelled of cinnamon. They remember that the ratty old armchair that you still have was ratty even when it was in your parents' living room being used as a pincushion by your grandmother when she visited twice a year. They remember your father's voice. They've seen the little cemetery where you buried your parakeet, and they helped you come up with naughty names for your 7th grade science teacher. Time passed and you acquired more friends, some perhaps more refined, more *avante garde*, more intellectual. But there are reasons you have clung to these precious people. Try to remember them now. A lifelong friendship is forged in mutual interests, shared experiences, and more than a few trips down memory lane. Experiences along the way pull us in this or that direction. It's perfectly permissible to ask one of these friends, when a subject comes up on which you disagree, to say, without anger or accusation, "That just doesn't sound like you. I remember when we both agreed on this. What happened to change your mind?" The response may not be what you had hoped, and in fact, as passions about so many things are running high these days, it could be met with a torrent of semi-intelligible sputtering directed not at you but at the futility of presenting a cogent argument despite a conviction of being in the right. This happens to all of us, dear, and you can assure your friend that you didn't mean to cause any anxiety but are truly interested in their take on this issue and their personal reasons for this position. If you still reach an impasse, fall back on what has connected you to this person for all these years, and re-explore common interests and activities.

More frequently these days, Auntie Mac and Lars have found themselves quite on opposite sides of a current issue, and as we both peer across the shrubbery at each other wondering who this person is with whom we have shared so much through the years and yet apparently know so little, we wisely revert to the topics at hand, namely, what are we to do with the climbing roses this fall, however did the privet grow so tall this season, and will the cobblestones hold up for another winter under the punishment of a meticulous gardener with a new snow blower. All subjects dear to both our hearts, and about which we find much communal joy discussing. Every so often, apropos of nothing, remind your friends how much you treasure them, and how much they have meant to you over the years.

We are not our politics. We may stray onto unfamiliar paths and try on new belief systems, much as one would try on different hats. We may find ourselves reveling in the feeling that we are now part of an inclusive group and are no longer alone. We may be fearful of any number of things and are comforted by having articulated for us a way to explain that our fears are grounded and that our current reality is unfair and unjust and not our fault. Our fear may make us strident and close-minded. And we need, especially in these times, to be reminded that we are loved, and respected for our many good qualities, and cherished for the long road we've walked with our friends that still has many twists and turns left in it. Abandoning the past, dear, because the present is uncomfortable, is a sure way to lose faith in the future.

Your Auntie Mac

MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT SAMPLE

Sample Ballot

State of Connecticut
Official Ballot
Voto Oficial Papeleta

Hampton, Connecticut

Municipal Election
Eleccion Municipal

November 4, 2025
4 Noviembre 2025

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Pagina 1 de 1 Paginas

Office Cargo	1 First Selectman Director Municipal	2 Selectman Concejal	3 Selectman Concejal	4 Town Clerk Secretario del Ayuntamiento	5 Town Treasurer Tesorero del Ayuntamiento	6 Board of Finance Junta de Finanzas	7 Board of Finance Junta de Finanzas	8	9 Board of Education Full Term Junta de Educacion Termino Completo	10 Board of Education Full Term Junta de Educacion Termino Completo	11	12 Board of Education To fill vacancy for two years Junta de Educacion Para Llenar la vacante por dos anos	13 Board of Education To fill vacancy for two years Junta de Educacion Para Llenar la vacante por dos anos
Party Partido	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Four Vota por hasta Cuatro	Vote for up to Four Vota por hasta Cuatro	Vote for up to Four Vota por hasta Cuatro	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos
Democratic Party	1A	☐ 2A John Tillinghast	☐ 3A Bob Grindle	☐ 4A Kaye Johnson	☐ 5A Ellen M Rodriguez	☐ 6A Frances Gustavesen	☐ 7A Kate Donnelly	8A	9A	10A	11A	☐ 12A Elizabeth Lindorff	☐ 13A Stephanie Bora
Republican Party	☐ 1B Allan R Cahill	☐ 2B John Russell	3B	☐ 4B Kaye Johnson	5B	☐ 6B Kathy Donahue	7B	☐ 8B Laura K Barrow	☐ 9B Juan B Arriola	☐ 10B Timothy L Studer Sr.	11B	12B	13B
Petitioning Candidate	1C	2C	3C	4C	5C	☐ 6C Matthew B Rivers	7C	☐ 8C Adam Bryant Sheridan	☐ 9C Matthew B Rivers	☐ 10C Nicholas E Brockett	11C	12C	13C
Write-in Votes Votos por Escrito	☐ 1D	☐ 2D	☐ 3D	☐ 4D	☐ 5D	☐ 6D	☐ 7D	☐ 8D	☐ 9D	☐ 10D	☐ 11D	☐ 12D	☐ 13D

Be sure to complete your vote on the reverse side of this ballot.

Asegurese de completar su voto en la parte de atras de la papeleta

Sample Ballot

State of Connecticut
Official Ballot
Voto Oficial Papeleta

Hampton, Connecticut

Municipal Election
Eleccion Municipal

November 4, 2025
4 Noviembre 2025

Sheet 1 of 1
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Office Cargo	14 Board of Assessment Appeals Full Term Junta Apelativa de Asesoramientos Termino Completo	15 Board of Assessment Appeals To fill vacancy for two years Junta Apelativa de Asesoramientos Para Llenar la vacante por dos anos	16 Planning and Zoning Commission To begin 2025 Comisionado de Planificacion y Zonificacion Para empezar en el 2025	17 Planning and Zoning Commission To begin 2026 Comisionado de Planificacion y Zonificacion Para empezar en el 2026	18 Zoning Board of Appeals To begin 2025 Junta de apelacion de las zonas Para empezar en el 2025	19 Zoning Board of Appeals To begin 2026 Junta de apelacion de las zonas Para empezar en el 2026	20 Constables Alquaciles	21 Constables Alquaciles
Party Partido	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for One Vota por Uno	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos	Vote for up to Two Vota por hasta Dos
Democratic Party	☐ 14A Kate Donnelly	15A	16A	☐ 17A Kevin Grindle	☐ 18A Marc Cardwell	☐ 19A Lisa K Siegmond	☐ 20A Jeffrey E Smith Jr.	☐ 21A Adam Sheridan
Republican Party	☐ 14B John Berard	15B	☐ 16B Gary DeCesare	17B	☐ 18B Zachary Burdick-Chapel	☐ 19B Shirley J Freeman	☐ 20B Ralph Brand	☐ 21B Wanda L Willard
Petitioning Candidate	14C	15C	☐ 16C Matthew B Rivers	17C	18C	19C	☐ 20C Patrick J Navin	21C
Write-in Votes Votos por Escrito	☐ 14D	☐ 15D	☐ 16D	☐ 17D	☐ 18D	☐ 19D	☐ 20D	☐ 21D

Be sure to complete your vote on the reverse side of this ballot.

Asegurese de completar su voto en la parte de atras de la papeleta

Democrats for Hampton

Working for a Positive Future



Kate Donnelly for Board of Finance & Board of Assessment Appeals

Marc Cardwell for Zoning Board of Appeals

Lisa Siegmund for Zoning Board of Appeals

Ellen Rodriguez for Treasurer

Kaye Johnson for Town Clerk

Kevin Grindle for Planning and Zoning Commission

Frances Gustavesen for Board of Finance

John Tillinghast for Board of Selectmen

Elizabeth Lindorff for Board of Education

Bob Grindle for Board of Selectmen

Stephanie Bora for Board of Education

Not pictured:

Adam Sheridan & Jeffrey Smith Jr. for Constables

Herlande Castillo-Reyes pictured above has moved out of town and is no longer running for town office

Please VOTE November 4

Endorsed Candidates by Hampton Democratic Town Committee
Approved and paid for by Hampton Democratic Town Committee,
Lisa Siegmund, Treasurer

Thanksgiving Dinner
Hosted by
Believers Mennonite Church,
November 22, 4:00-6:30

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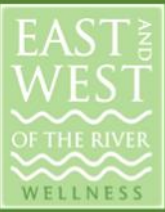
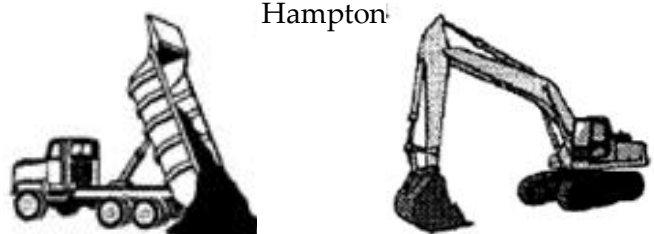
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