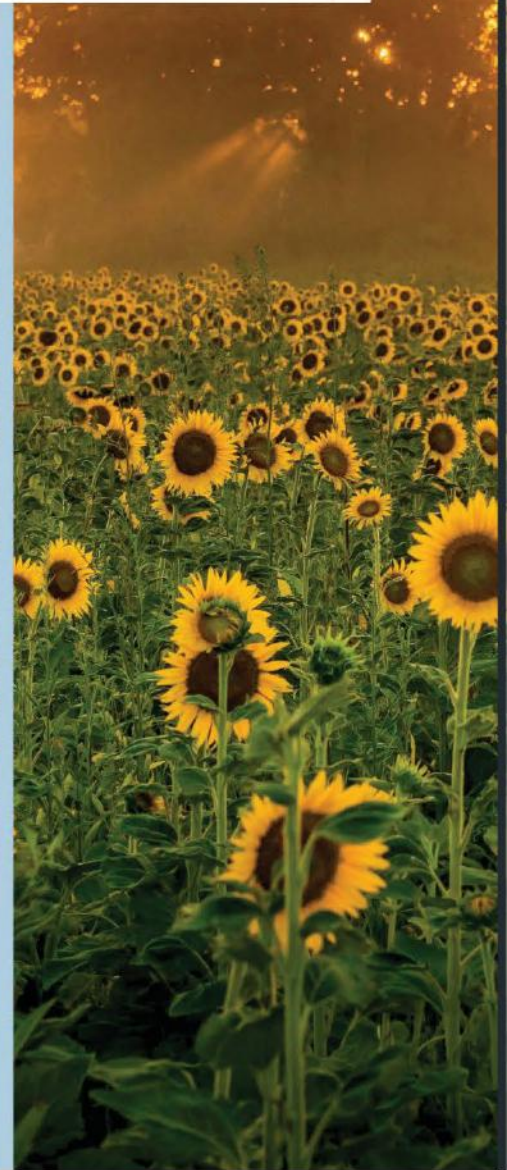
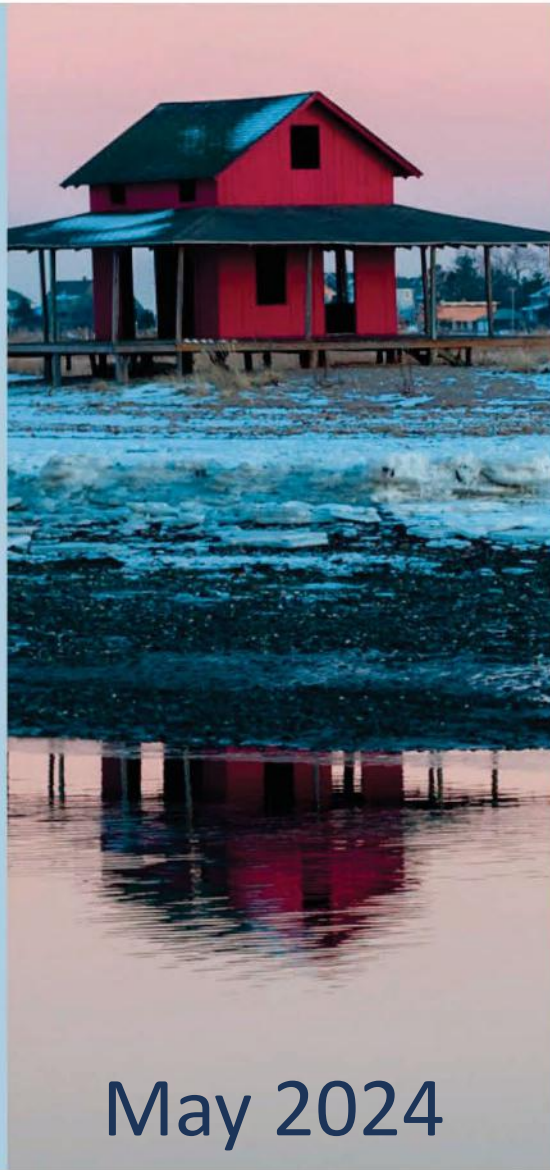


SHORELINE CONNECTIONS

A Magazine About Events, Businesses and
People Along the Shoreline

Branford, Guilford, North Branford



May 2024

 SHORELINE
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Our Towns



SHORELINE CONNECTIONS

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NET 90

Ninety minutes of power networking.



The Net90 was a success! Members met casually over a lovely breakfast and presented their organizations and offerings.

Thank you **Evergreen Woods** for hosting us!

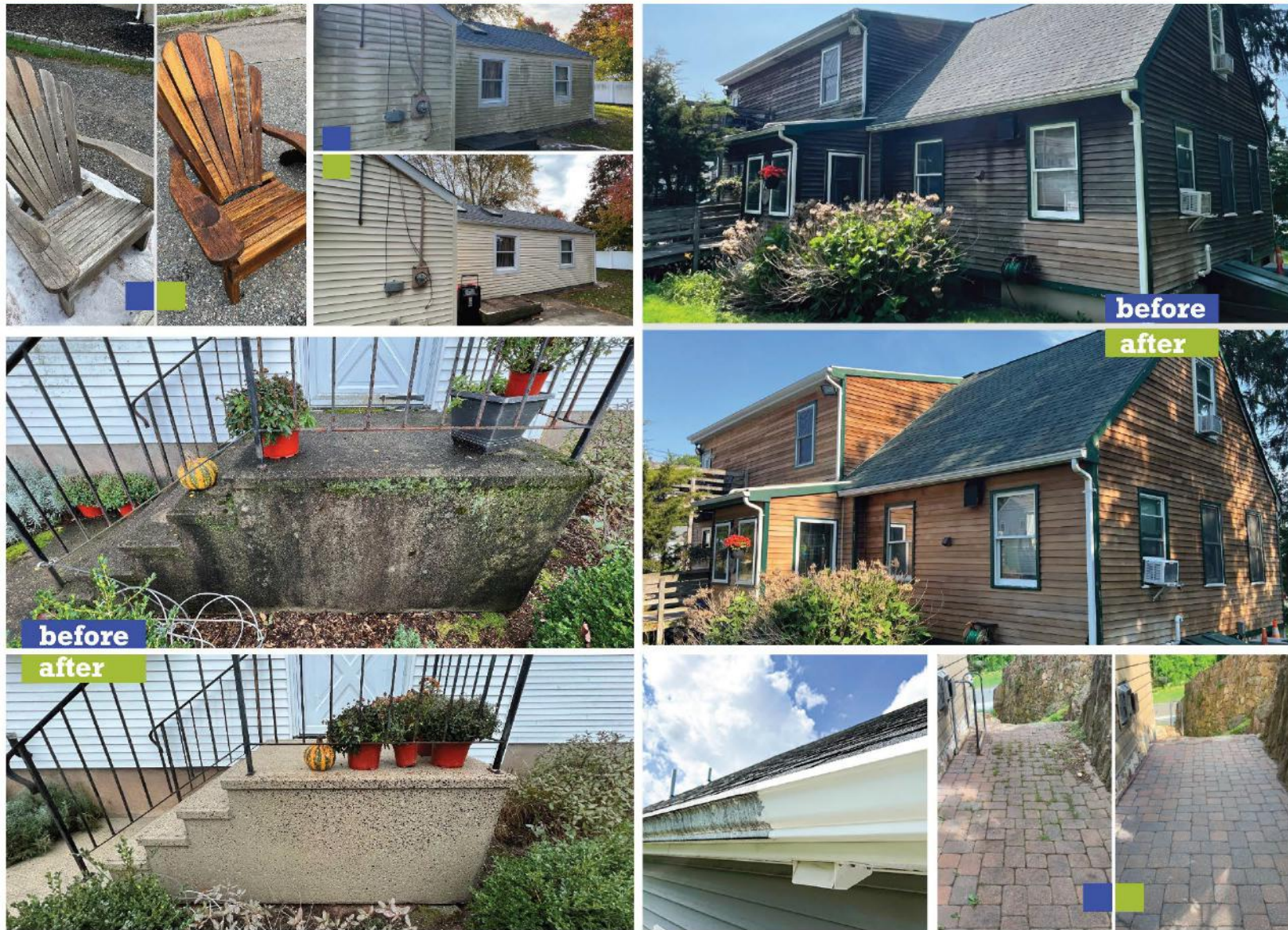
Do you know the difference between a Net90 and a Business After Hours (BAH)?

A Net90 is a networking event, hosted by a member, where members not only socialize with one another over food and beverage, but are also given time to address the group as a whole (elevator speech) to share information about their business.

A BAH is also a networking event, hosted by a member, where members socialize over food and beverage, but must share their story one on one. It is an opportunity to solidify relationships.



Branford, CT



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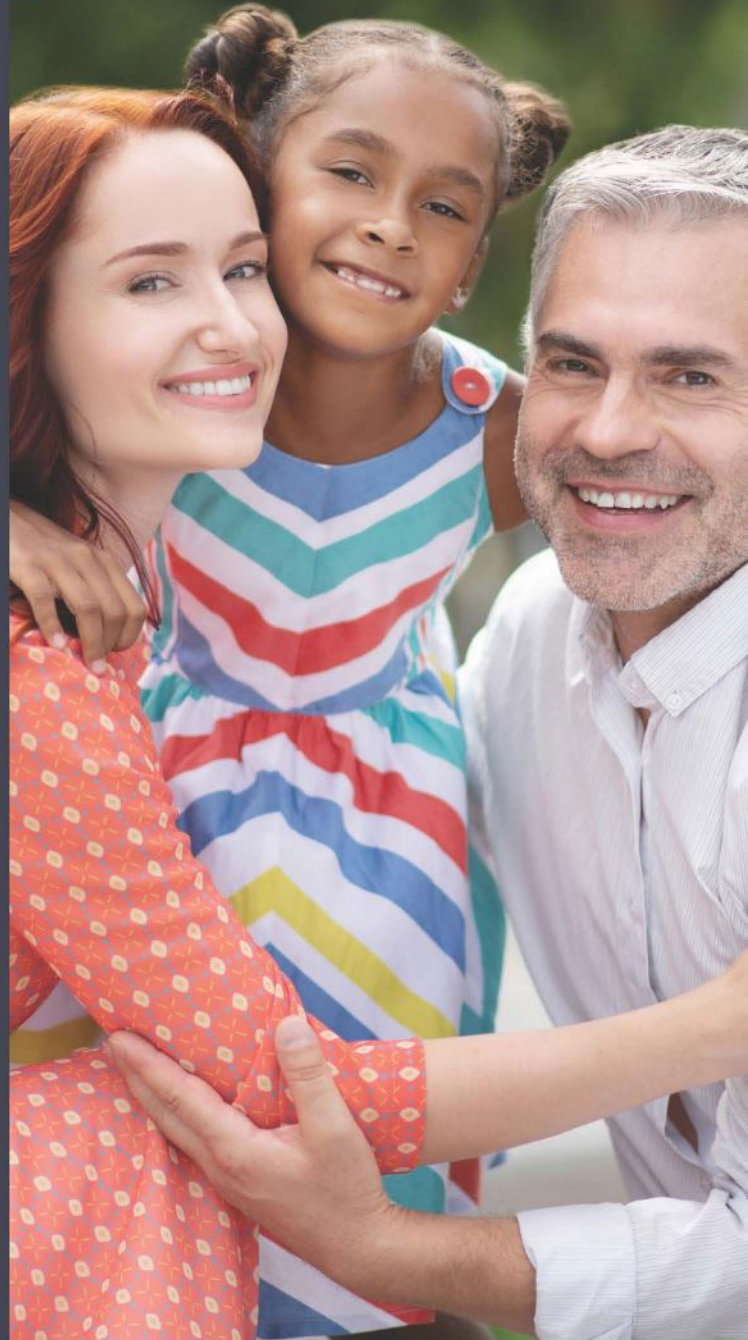


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State Senator

CHRISTINE COHEN

**Representing Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford,
Killingworth, Madison, Middlefield, North Branford.**



Dear Shoreline Chamber Members,

The 2024 Legislative Session has come to an end and I am excited to share with you a major win that I was able to secure for our district - restoring \$5 million in funding for Shore Line East!

My colleagues and I voted to allocate \$372.5 million in soon-to-expire American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The limited ARPA dollars were largely allocated to higher education, nonprofit and social services, early childhood education, mental health – all programming with tremendous need. I am pleased that I was able to negotiate \$5 million for Shore Line East in addition to items, and this small but significant win establishes a strong footing for me and my shoreline colleagues to come back next session and continue fighting for more dollars for this essential service. I am pleased to share that we were able to make all these investments into much needed services in our state while remaining under the spending cap, making historic payments to our pension debt and maintaining a robust Rainy Day Fund.

I know that funding Shore Line East was a major priority for our local chambers of commerce and while I am certainly disappointed that this won't result in 100% restoration, I remain committed to continuing to fight for the dollars necessary to bring fast, efficient connectivity to the region. Fully funding Shore Line East is expected to carry a \$35 million price tag, though still, the \$5 million is intended to add back two peak service trains both in the morning and the evening. Public comment will be sought to determine the best time for each train and I will certainly keep you all updated on how you can participate in discussions.

Additionally, as Chair of the Transportation Committee, I led passage of HB 5330, which requires that the Department of Transportation come back to the Committee with at least five alternatives for restoring service to the line and the cost of each possibility. I am hopeful that this report will lead to further progress next session.

Connectivity is essential to growing our businesses, workforce development, as well as arts, culture and tourism. Please rest assured that while full service has not yet been restored, the fight is far from over. So, for now we can celebrate in this win and together advocate our more connected future.

I look forward to meeting with you all to discuss the legislative session in more detail, and I wish you all a successful start to the summer season!

Stay safe. Be well.

Christine

The Hyland House Museum



at the Guilford Fairgrounds...



Shoreline Antiques & Retro Market

June 1 & 2, 2024

Saturday 9 to 4

Sunday 10 to 4

- live music
- food & drink trucks
- tickets \$10 per day

State Representative
VINCENT CANDELORA
House Republican Leader
86th District
North Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford



The legislative session ended on May 8, and the state budget took center stage in the final days. My Democrat colleagues passed a "stabilization" bill instead of ensuring the second year of the budget remains balanced. This unusual move, I believe, shirked legislators' constitutional duty to balance the budget that starts on July 1. Despite knowing the budget was \$30 million over the spending cap, the majority chose to keep it unchanged and use \$370 million of federal covid relief money outside the usual budget process.

While their "stabilization" plan has positive aspects, such as funding for nonprofit community service providers, I voted against it. The use of one-time revenue to support ongoing expenses, particularly in higher education, will create future fiscal gaps that taxpayers will have to fill in the near future. Additionally, the bill includes numerous new policy decisions and revenue transfers, making it more of a budget adjustment than the simple stabilization bill they claimed. The lack of scrutiny through the Appropriations Committee and the emphasis on higher education funding over fulfilling the state's promise to fully fund local excess special education costs was a significant point of contention.

I'm also deeply disappointed in the legislature's failure to pass legislation authorizing association health care plans to aid small businesses. This critical measure would have provided essential support to local entrepreneurs and their employees. Instead, an anti-business bill, the new paid sick days mandate, was passed, placing additional burdens on small businesses still recovering from the pandemic.

There were other harmful proposals that narrowly missed passing, such as the proposed elimination of the tip credit for restaurant waitstaff and the extension of unemployment benefits to striking workers. These measures would have further strained the business community and our already fragile state economy.

The decisions made in this session reflect a troubling trend of prioritizing short-term fixes and ideological agendas over sustainable, responsible governance and support for small businesses. Moving forward, it's crucial to focus on creating a stable economic environment that supports all citizens, particularly the small business owners who are the backbone of our economy.

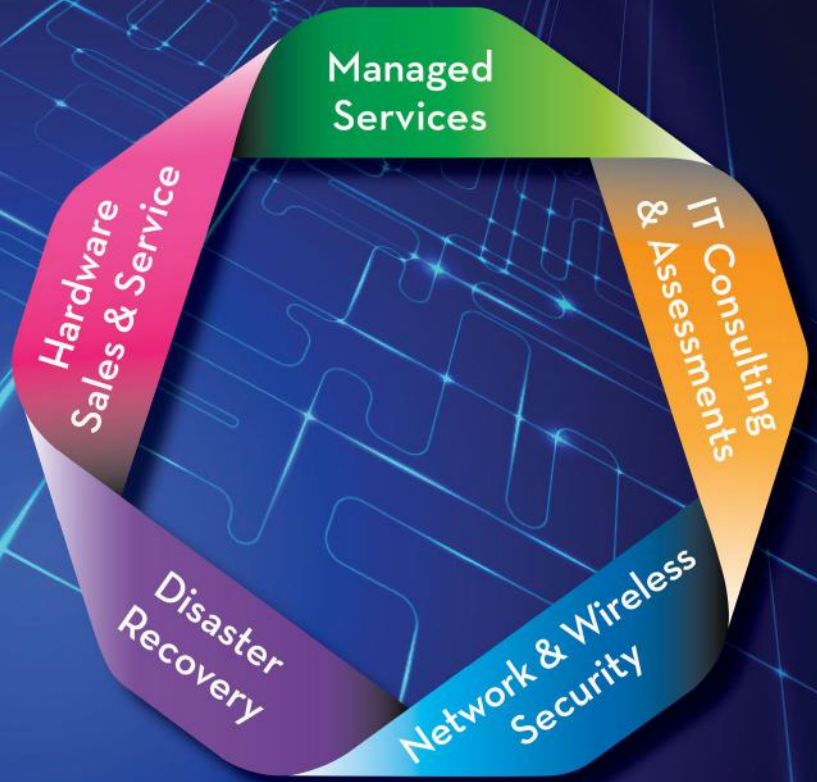
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State Representative
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Too many families and businesses are struggling in Connecticut to find quality and affordable childcare. Early childhood education and childcare is essential infrastructure for our economy, workforce, and families to thrive. During the 2024 session, Connecticut has taken significant steps to address the challenges parents face with childcare costs through several new laws that relate to early childhood care and education. Early Start CT will be a framework of coordinated and efficient delivery of early childhood care through the Office of Early Childhood.

Another important piece of legislation was passed with a bipartisan group of legislators, establishing the "Early Childhood Care and Education Fund" created in the FY 24-25 budget act. This fund establishes a framework for the fund's deposits and investments and the state treasurer's authority and powers on behalf of the fund. An Advisory Commission ensures transparency and accountability in the allocation of resources.

Importantly, this bill also invests in teachers and assistant teachers by supporting a wage supplement payment program to further benefit the early childhood education workforce to retain teachers in this field. It also studies available space in state-owned properties for childcare facilities demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing infrastructure needs.

Working with the business community, we have identified one area of the state that is currently a childcare desert and is hurting workforce availability. Together Connecticut will develop a pilot initiative, the Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program, in New London County, offering a promising solution to alleviate the financial burden on parents by involving both employers and the state in sharing childcare expenses.

Overall, these initiatives reflect a holistic approach to tackling the challenges of childcare affordability and accessibility, ultimately benefiting both parents and children while contributing to the state's long-term economic and social well-being. Connecticut is showing a commitment to investing in the development and education of our youngest learners. These are sound investments in our state's future and will go a long way toward helping parents earn a living and provide for their children's care and education.



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State Representative

MOIRA RADER

Representing Branford and Guilford

Moira.Rader@cga.ct.gov



As the legislative session wrapped up in early May, there were both hard fought successes and equally disappointing losses. But, the collaborative work among my legislative colleagues enabled some very important legislation to pass. In particular, I thought it would be laws that will impact education, our environment and public health.

A new law extends eligibility for the state's debt-free community college program (Pledge to Advance CT (PACT) to transition program students who are state residents, have not graduated from high school, are enrolled in a transition program under their individualized education program, and enroll in one or more courses at a regional community-technical college. The law will afford our differently-abled students this wonderful opportunity for higher education.

In an effort to update the teaching certification process, the legislature made important changes to the teacher certification laws. The legislation also expands those eligible for the alternate route to certification (ARC) program. These changes were supported by various education advocates and will ensure that Connecticut continues to have the best and most qualified educators in our schools.

While the diligent work of myself and several fellow legislators to extend the universal free breakfast program in our schools for another year did not succeed, we were able to secure ARPA funding to support those students who currently qualify for reduced-price meals to receive meals at no cost for the '24-'25 next school year. I consider this a small but impactful win for families struggling to make ends meet and insure their children have the nutrition they need to succeed.

I was extremely proud to be part of the team that brought forth (and passed in the House) an expansive bill to address climate change (HB5004). Unfortunately, the Senate did not bring a vote. This bill is extremely important and the work will continue next session. We did succeed in passing a law regulating the sale and use of certain products containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a class of man-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil and are persistent in the environment and the human body (i.e., they bioaccumulate and do not break down).

This session, the Public Health committee (of which I am a member) put forth an expansive bill (SB-1) to address the safety and welfare of patients and health care workers. This new law includes a section that I am extremely proud to have brought forth, inspired by Ethan's law. It will require primary care providers (inclusive of pediatricians) to make materials on gun safety available to patients annually. Inspired by the tireless efforts of Ethan's parents, this legislation will keep more families safe and responsible gun ownership a continuing priority in Connecticut.

COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Chamber events are highlighted in Green

MAY 30-JUNE 1, THURS-SUN	23rd Annual Friends of Hammonasset Plant Sale	9:00AM - 5:00PM	near Hammonasset Beach	details
MAY 30-JUNE 16	The Legacy Theatre Presents: The Diaries of Adam and Eve	<i>click on details for times</i>	Legacy Theatre, Branford	details
JUNE 1, SATURDAY	A Chance to Shine, annual event to benefit all BHcare programs	10:00AM - 3:00PM	Quarry Walk, Oxford	details
JUNE 1-2, SATURDAY - SUNDAY	Hyland House Shoreline Antiques & Retro Market	June 1 - 9 - 4 June 2 - 10 - 4	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 2, SUNDAY	Fairy House Workshop at Spectrum Art Gallery	1:00PM - 3:00PM	Spectrum Art Gallery, Centerbrook	details
JUNE 6, THURSDAY	Farmers market at the Guilford Fairgrounds	4:00PM - 7:00PM	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 8, SATURDAY	The SongStrong 5K: Keep Kids Safe! (in Guilford)	9:00AM - 12:00PM	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 8, SATURDAY	Shred Event at Blackstone Library	9:00AM - 12:00PM	Blackstone Library, Branford	details
JUNE 9, SUNDAY	Flowers and Flourishes - Painting on Glass Vase Workshop at Spectrum Art Gallery	1:30PM - 4:00PM	Spectrum Art Gallery, Centerbrook	details
JUNE 13, THURSDAY	Farmers market at the Guilford Fairgrounds	4:00PM - 7:00PM	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 13, THURSDAY	Outdoor Yoga for A Cause	5:00PM - 5:50PM	Women & Family Life Center	details
JUNE 15, SATURDAY	2024 Artisan Marketplace at the Branford Festival	8:00AM - 3:00PM	Branford Green	details
JUNE 18, TUESDAY	Spring into Summer BASH at Bishop Orchards	5:30PM - 8:30PM	Bishop's Orchards, Guilford	details
JUNE 20, THURSDAY	Farmers market at the Guilford Fairgrounds	4:00PM - 7:00PM	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 22, SATURDAY	The Legacy Theatre Presents: The Princess and the Pauper	10:00AM - 1:00PM	The Legacy Theatre, Branford	details
JUNE 23, SUNDAY	Drawing a Summer Still	12:30PM - 4:30PM	Spectrum Art Gallery, Centerbrook	details
JUNE 27, THURSDAY	Farmers market at the Guilford Fairgrounds	4:00PM - 7:00PM	Guilford Fairgrounds	details
JUNE 30, SUNDAY	The Legacy Theatre Presents: Kate Baldwin with John McDaniel at the Piano!	2:00PM - 3:30PM	The Legacy Theatre, Branford	details

[Click here for full list of events.](#)



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BRANFORD FESTIVAL

By Mairi Bryan

The Branford Festival celebrates its 40th anniversary this year! Make plans to be on the Branford Green from June 14-16 to enjoy the three day festivities. Held every year, since 1985 on Father's Day week-end, this three day event brings together family, friends, colleagues to enjoy the food, music, artisan marketplace on Saturday, the Road Race on Sunday and to many "the festival is the unofficial kick off to summer in Branford".

More than 40 years ago, then First Selectman Judy Gott, and Ray Figlewski, a long time Branford resident and local business owner wanted to encourage residents to enjoy the town of Branford, and its revitalized downtown. During their discussions the idea of a town festival tied around the already Branford Road Race was born. Roger Shaffer, another town resident, and local business owner was recruited to chair the event. Shaffer developed many of the ideas that continue today – the annual print, the newly designed each year t-shirt as well as music on Friday and Saturday nights. Many may remember the first performer of the Branford Festival was Arlo Guthrie.

After Roger retired, Branford resident Bill O'Brien was asked to step in and chair the 1990 festival. He agreed and under his leadership a corporate board was founded incorporating the festival into a non-profit 501c3 with the late John Moss elected as the first chairman. The Festival Corporation now oversees financial management of the event while the committee is responsible for the three days on the Green.



The Shoreline Chamber is proud to be a part of the festival and on Saturday the Chamber will present an Artisan Marketplace on the Town Green. The Artisan Marketplace is always a well-attended activity on Saturday on the Town Green between 8am and 3pm. This year there will be over 100 exhibitors including local artists showcasing their unique and handcrafted items of textiles, wood,

syrops, paintings, beads and stonework. Yes, Vaiuso Farms will be there for all the planters to purchase their spring plantings. Branford non-profits and community resources will also be a part of the Marketplace. View some of the latest car models from local car dealerships on Main Street.

Food is a key part of the Branford Festival. Visit the Festival Food Court and enjoy everything from sausage and peppers at the Italian-American Club to Spuds Your Way Baked Potatoes, to ice cream and more. Of course, the Food Court would not be complete without Festival favorites returning once again including the Branford Rotary Club's pancake breakfast and lobster rolls, the Branford Historical Society's strawberry shortcake and the Branford Festival Committee's Fried Dough.



Live music on all three days is the mainstay of the festival, and friends and family gather early to make sure their blankets are set for the evening entertainment. On Friday night the Branford High School Choir under the direction of Mike Martone kick-off the weekend of musical entertainment. The main act on Friday night is LoVeSeXy – a Tribute to Prince. Opening activities on Saturday Night are the presentation of the John Moss Scholarship to two graduating seniors and the Father of the Year award. The main act “Live and Let Die” is a Paul McCartney Tribute Band.



The youngest of Branford residents are certainly not forgotten. There are rides, face painting and activities all three days for children to enjoy. All this, together with multiple activities and entertainment for children makes the Branford Festival a “must do” activity.

On Sunday morning the Green will be filled with runners, walkers and families for the annual Father’s Day Branford Road Race. Some may not know but the Road Race began before the festival in 1979 under the direction of Ray Figlewski and Dick Wainman. The Branford Road Race includes a 5-mile race, a 2-mile health walk, and a 1-mile kids fun run, all starting and finishing on Branford Green.

In 1997 Branford resident John Bysiewicz, owner of JB Sports joined the team as event organizer to help grow the road race while at the same time maintaining the high caliber national reputation the Road Race had and still has to this day. As every runner crosses the finish line they wait to hear those all familiar words “Thank you for running the Branford Road Race.”



It's an event that for 40 years has brought laughter and joy and memories to generations of Branford residents. This year will be no different. It is because of the work of the corporate board, the committee, with the support of the Branford First Selectman, the Branford Police and Branford Fire Departments as well as the Public Works and Park & Recreation departments who give their time so willingly to this important community event. For them we say “thank you.”

So, come and enjoy the festivities and celebrate the Town of Branford and the 40th anniversary of the Branford Festival a fabulous community event. As the committee says, “we”ll see you at the Fest.”

The Branford Festival will be held June 14-16 on the Branford Town Green. For more information visit their website www.branfordfestival.com.

Photo Credit: Bill O’Brian, Branford Festival Corporate Board

A FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND TRADITION

BRANFORD FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS



JUNE 14 - 16, 2024

LOCATION

1011 Main Street
Branford, CT
06405

FESTIVAL HOURS

Friday, June 14: 5 - 10:30 pm
Saturday, June 15: 8 am - 11 pm
Sunday, June 16: 8 am - 4 pm

WHAT'S THE HYPE?

All weekend long, thousands of families and friends gather on the historic town green to enjoy live music, food vendors, local talent, kids activities, crafts and more.

Shop dozens of local artisans and businesses at the Artisan Marketplace on Saturday, June 15 from 8 am - 3 pm on the green.

On Sunday, June 16, run or walk in the Branford Road Race including a 1-mile Family Fun Run, 2-mile Health Walk and 5-mile Road Race.

Learn more at branfordfestival.com

LIVE MUSIC!

Friday, June 14 @ 5:30 pm
Branford High School Concert Choir, Phoebe Merrill, Red Light, National Anthem by Stephanie Stiefel Williams, LoVeSeXy Tribute to the Music of Prince

Saturday, June 15 @ 5:30 pm
Bob Crelin, The Mediums, Sunset Drive, National Anthem by Keely Baisden Knudsen, "Live and Let Die" A Tribute to Paul McCartney

Fundraising for The Fest's Future

The Branford Festival is a volunteer-run, 501c3 non-profit organization. Without donations from community members and sponsors, the event would not be possible. In celebration of our 40th anniversary, we have set a fundraising goal of \$40,000.

MAKE A DONATION:
Help ensure the Branford Festival can continue for years to come.



venmo 

Member Recognitions and Milestones

For the fifteenth consecutive year, **Pat Munger Construction Company, Inc.** is proud to announce its recognition as one of the Top 100 North American Metal Builders by **Metal Construction News** for 2024. This accolade highlights our commitment to quality, innovation, and leadership in the industry.

GSB has promoted Bryan Mierzejewski to the role of SVP, Technology Officer. In his new role of SVP, Technology Officer, Bryan's responsibilities have expanded to now include oversight of the Business Analyst team which will facilitate closer collaboration between the Business Analyst and Technology teams.

Albertus Magnus College and the United Collegiate Hockey Conference announce the Falcons men's and women's Division III ice hockey programs are joining the league, effective with the 2025-26 season. Albertus Magnus College has competed at the NCAA Division III level in men's ice hockey since 2019-2020. The 2023-24 season marked the inaugural campaign for the women's ice hockey program.

Branford Dental Care welcomes Dr. Elizabeth Banister. A graduate of Tufts University School of Dental Medicine Dr. Banister is a native of Arkansas.

The Farmers Market hosted by the **Guilford Agricultural Society** at the Guilford Fairgrounds returns on Thursdays from May thru October from 4-7PM. Rain or Shine.

Continued



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A GIFT SHOP FEATURING
LOCAL ARTISANS AND UNIQUE GIFT FINDS

Member Recognitions and Milestones

Congratulations to **The Grey Goat Farmtique** for celebrating their One Year Anniversary. Located at the intersections of Routes One & 139 The Grey Goat Farmtique, a retail café, offers guests a unique shopping experience.

Congratulations to the **Arthur Murray Dance Center of Guilford** celebrating 10 years in Guilford on June 1.

The Branford Arts & Cultural Alliance (BACA) celebrates their 3rd Anniversary of the opening of the BACA Art Gallery on Main Street, Branford.

Congratulations to the **Branford Festival** for celebrating 40 years of the Town Green being “the place to be” Father’s Day Weekend.

The North Branford Rotary Club will honor as one of their 2024 Service Above Self Award Winners **North Branford Assistant Director and Recreation Supervisor Kerry Haynes** at the June 27 Dinner at Woodwinds.

If your organization or a staff member of your organization has received recognition or you are celebrating an important anniversary please send to Mary Grande at mary@shorelinechamberct.com so that we can celebrate the accomplishment with others in our monthly Chamber Connections. Information must be received by the 20th of each month to be published in the next issue.



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By David Chmielewski
Direct Media

Today, video, reels and live feeds are part of our mainstream.

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Let's start by answering those questions.

Are there lighting elements behind the subject that are part of the scene?

Sometimes having bright lights or other bright elements behind the subject can be useful. The bright spot tends to emphasize the illusion of depth in the scene and give the scene dimension. Windows, lamps, reflections, and possible signage are some examples of what could be in the background. One rule of thumb I like to use is if there is a lamp in the background it should be turned on.

Are the lights a distraction?

Lights in the background may be a distraction if they are overexposed or don't look natural. In this case move the light or change the framing. If there is a window, try using blinds or curtains to modify the light.

What looks like the proper balance of light?

This sometimes can be a subjective answer. In other words, do you like it? This question can also be answered in terms of what mood you are trying to emphasize. For something happy and fun, most likely you will want a clean, evenly balanced light with no bright brights or dark darks. If you are trying for something more dramatic, having a bigger light to dark contrast might work better.

In general, when creating video content there will most likely be time constraints involved. It is important to quickly find your scene and adapt your look to the light that is already in the room or in the space you are using. Scan the space to see what lighting is available and where the light is coming from. Is there sufficient sunlight? What type of lighting fixtures are in the room? Are there overhead lights?

I usually opt for using sunlight when available. Most of the time sunlight offers a softer, bigger light source which will have a more flattering look on your subject. Place your subject so the light source is slightly off to one side. The light will have a modeling effect and give your subject some depth and not look flat on camera.

If sunlight isn't an option and you are working with overhead lights in an office environment there are a couple of things to remember. Do not put your subject directly under a light. This will cause shadows and create an unflattering image. Move the subject in front of the light to create a backlight and give the subject depth. The ambient light in the room will fill in the rest.

Finally, I find it important to pay attention to your everyday life of how light falls on different subjects whether that light be the sun or your table lamp. Creating proper lighting comes down to practicing and doing. The more you do something the better and more confident you get in your decisions. But there is nothing wrong with breaking the rules every once in a while, if the scene allows.

Now get out there, go for it, and most of all have fun!





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WHAT IS LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE? DO I NEED IT?



By: Chris Weiler
Guilford Insurance

Long term care insurance pays or reimburses policyholders for services that are not covered by Medicare, health insurance, or disability insurance policies. An aging individual may require assistance with routine “Activities of Daily Living” such as eating, bathing, using the toilet, and moving in and out of bed. Long-term care encompasses a range of services that support aging individuals and help them meet their personal care needs. Common types of long-term care include:

- **Home Care/Personal Care or Home Health Care:** Home or personal care includes assistance with personal hygiene, dressing, and feeding. Home health care includes skilled nursing care, speech, physical, or occupational therapy, and home health aide services.
- **Nursing Homes & Assisted Living Facilities:** Licensed, inspected, and certified by the Department of Health & Senior Services.
- **Adult Day Care:** For elderly people living at home. Provides daytime supervision when family members are not home. Offers social, recreational, and sometimes health services.

How costly are long term care services? The cost of long-term care services continues to rise. According to a survey conducted in 2021 by CareScout, a Genworth company, the average cost of a semi-private room in a skilled nursing facility in CT is \$165,000 per year. A average cost of a private room is \$182,000 per year. The average cost of home health care is \$62,000 per year. The cost of home healthcare is expected to rise 9% annually through 2030. For nursing homes, the price is expected to rise 4.5% annually, according to government forecasts. One of the primary factors driving these cost increases is basic supply and demand. The growth of the U.S. senior population in the U.S., longer life expectancies and the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on labor markets have all contributed to increased demand for caregivers.

Won't Medicare cover care like this?

It is important to note that Medicare typically only covers shorter-term services. Medicare will only cover the first one hundred days in a skilled nursing facility. While personal savings, pensions, and investments are helpful, they often do not meet the full need. With that in mind, seniors and their families purchase long-term care insurance to protect their savings and investment portfolios. There are several options:

- **Opting for a hybrid life insurance policy or annuity** that includes long-term care coverage.
- **Adding living benefits to a life insurance policy**, allowing policyholders to access the death benefit in case of long-term care needs or certain health conditions.
- **Qualifying for Medicaid**, depending on asset and income criteria.
- **Leveraging long-term care insurance**, which covers costs associated with long-term care that are not covered by health insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid.

The best path forward ultimately depends on your situation and preferences, but it is important to be proactive. As one ages, qualifying for long term care coverage becomes increasingly difficult since older individuals are more likely to file claims. Premiums for long term care insurance also become progressively higher with age.

If you do not qualify for Medicaid, and you haven't saved enough money to cover future care costs, a long-term insurance policy might be a good fit for you. Bear in mind that your eligibility declines and your premiums increase as you age, so it is best to explore coverage options before you need them. If you would like to explore long-term care insurance options, call Guilford Insurance at (203) 689-5260. It costs nothing to work with a broker, as brokers are compensated by the insurance carriers.





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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MATTHEW LAPRINO

Matt LaPrino is the Executive Director at Central Connecticut Coast YMCA and has been on the board for 3 years.



Where are you originally from?

I'm originally from California. My family moved to CT when I was 3 years old. My father was a professional swim coach at Yale. We also lived in Hamden for a while. At a very young age, my parents got divorced, and my dad moved to Branford, where I spent a lot of my time growing up. I've always thought of Branford as the place where I grew up. I swam with the Branford Sting Rays, which are now the Soundview YMCA Sting Rays. I graduated from Branford High School in 1999 and attended Southern CT State University. I was part of the swim team there and the captain as well.

Where do you live?

I currently live in Madison.

Tell me about yourself and what you do.

I was a competitive swimmer all of my life and swam at the New Canaan YMCA while commuting from Branford in high school. It was one of my best experiences. Through that I got a job at the Greenwich Country Club as a country club assistant when I was 17 years old. I was going to swim practice in the morning at the New Canaan YMCA and then driving to Greenwich to work as a life guard which turned into an 8 year journey. Later, I became the Aquatic Director and swim coach at Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich. They are a phenomenal organization and do so much for so many people. In 2008, I joined Woodruff Family YMCA as the Aquatics Director. My career has taken many different turns within the Central CT Coast YMCA. This year will be my 16th year with the Central CT Coast YMCA association. I've been the Aquatics Director, Operations Director, and I am now the Executive Director of the Soundview YMCA. My first day was back on March 23rd of 2020 which was the day the governor told everyone to stay home due to Covid. I was overseeing 2 YMCAs at that point. I was in Trumbull and came up to Soundview to put together a quick game plan and that's how it all started. I get to serve in a very unique role as someone who grew up in the community of Branford. I love to give back to what was given to me. I get to do it through 5 service towns - East Haven, Branford, North Branford, Guilford and Madison.

What was your earliest involvement with Chamber and why?

Dee Jacob, approached me about joining. She and her husband have been longtime supporters of the YMCA. They reached out to me about the opportunity to join the board as a nonprofit and to learn more about the board. Hearing about the networking opportunities for businesses in our area, I saw it as a chance to connect with the community and serve in a volunteer capacity.

How has your business benefited from the Chamber?

The YMCA is a nonprofit, so I'm not sure I can quantify the impact. I just know my goal is to make sure the YMCA serves all and if my involvement builds awareness, that's success to me. Last year we partnered with the Chamber to do a Health and Wellness Fair which was a huge success. We want to ensure that we provide an experience beyond the facility for anyone, from infants to those celebrating their 100th birthday.

How many years have you been on the board?

I believe I'm entering my third year and entering my second term as the chamber's treasurer.

Why did you step into a leadership role?

I was happy to step into this role and be able to report to the board and share the impact that our chamber makes.

Fun fact/something people should know about you?

I grew up as a competitive swimmer. Outside of this role I'm a public address announcer for collegiate swim meets. I announce for 3 universities: Southern CT State University, Yale and Sacred Heart University. I'm the guy doing play by plays during the meets. It's allowed me to travel a little bit and it's morphed into getting to know a swim coach at Howard University who invited me to do a special swim meet called "Battle at the Brrr."

What's your favorite spot on the shoreline?

That's tough. Now that I live in Madison, I do love our local town beach, The Surf Club. I grew up in Branford near Lennies, and I still enjoy going there. When I was a kid they had the burning fireplace there. It's a great local spot.

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