

FREE

SHELTON *Life*

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS NEWS

SPRING 2023
VOLUME 29, ISSUE 1



SPRING ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

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SHELTON COMMUNITY & BUSINESS NEWS

Greetings From the Mayor

Welcome from the Editor



Welcome to this Spring 2023 edition of the *Shelton Life* publication. Hard to believe we came out of winter with barely an inch of snow here in Shelton. I think I only wore my

winter coat three days this past winter so it sure seems each winter is getting consistently warmer.

In each edition my 1-on One articles have featured some very interesting people who have had a significant, if not historic background and impacted here in the City of Shelton. Their stories have been awe inspiring, and I continue to be amazed to see how this city has roots going back hundreds of years whose impact is still with us today.

In keeping with this theme of innovators and community leaders here in Shelton, this month I talked with Marty Coughlin. For those of you that know Marty, you are certainly aware of his dedication and work he's done on a volunteer basis and for

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Front Cover: Pine Lake
Back Cover: French's Hill Open Space

Shelton Life Spring 2023 Community & Business News

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Economic Development Commission
c/o Shelton Economic Development Corporation
25 Brook Street, Suite 203
Shelton, CT 06484, (203) 924-2521
a.miner@sheltonedc.com • sheltonedc.com
www.cityofshelton.org

Editor

Bing Carbone, EDC Chairman

Associate Editors

Aleta Miner, SEDC; Kate Marks
Karen McGovern; Pat Carey

In Memory

Fred Musante, Sr., (1922-2009)

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Dear Shelton Residents and Businesses:

We are pleased to present the Spring 2023 edition of our *Shelton Life* newsletter. This citywide publication continues to be a terrific source of up-to-date business and city news delivered free-of-charge to our residents and businesses.

Our community continues to grow in many ways, and the city is committed to maintaining balanced growth in which housing, business, education and open space preservation are equally managed.

In recent news, the construction of the extension of Constitution Boulevard is underway. The extension of Constitution Boulevard has been part of the city's Comprehensive Plan of Development since 1990. The road project provides access to a city-owned, 56.32 acre, six-lot manufacturing subdivision. It is expected that as much as 600,000 sf of commercial or manufacturing space, generating 420+ employment opportunities with a value of \$80,000,000 in real estate, will add an estimated \$1,255,520 in new real estate tax revenue, based on the city's current mill rate.

Also, please note the new businesses that have made a home here in Shelton adding to the vibrancy of our community.

Finally, I commend all of our volunteers and the work, in particular, of the Economic Development Commission on the *Shelton Life*. I wish everyone a happy and healthy Spring.

Very truly yours,

Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton



Redistricting Voting Maps Major Project in 2023 for the Registrar of Voters Office

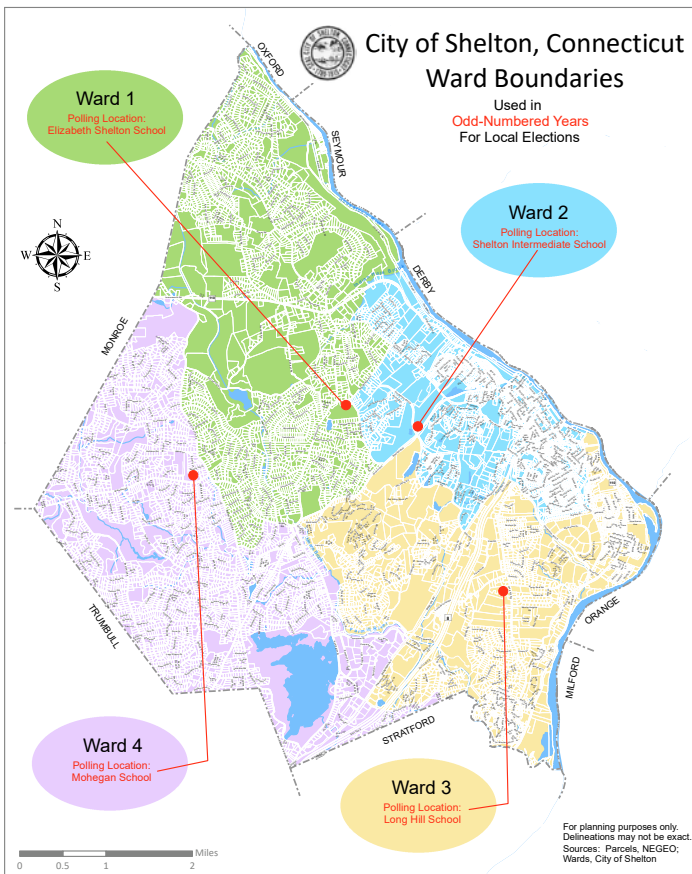
As a result of the 2020 population census, the lines for Congressional and State Assembly Districts have been redrawn in Shelton. This is a process that occurs every ten years after the census and is done to assure the population for all four districts is balanced.

The Republican Registrar Peter R. Pavone and Democratic Registrar Janet Sabovik worked together to restructure the voting districts in Shelton. Their goal was to minimize the number of voters who will have to change polling place locations from year-to-year.

The process of aligning voters to their proper voting districts entailed a detailed review of the nearly 810 streets in the city. This data was then entered into the state's Centralized Voter Registration database for the realigning of each of Shelton's 30,196 voters. The actual

lines that were drawn for the redistricting process were determined at the state level based on the population tracts from the 2020 Census. These lines resulted in some streets being split. These splits are sometimes in the middle of the street, usually resulting in odd/even house number splits, but sometimes splits may occur for streets that cross major intersections resulting in high/low house number splits.

Registered voters should watch their mailboxes 1-2 weeks before a primary or election for a red, white, and blue postcard from the Registrar's Office that will notify them as to where they will vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 7, 2023.



Shelton's District (Federal & State Elections) and Ward (Municipal local Elections) voting locations:

District/Ward 1
Elizabeth Shelton School
138 Willoughby Road
Shelton, CT 06484

District/Ward 2
Shelton Intermediate School
675 Constitution Blvd N
Shelton, CT 06484

District/Ward 3
Long Hill School
565 Long Hill Avenue
Shelton, CT 06484

District/Ward 4
Mohegan School
47 Mohegan Road
Shelton, CT 06484

The Registrar of Voters office is located at 54 Grove Street. The telephone number is 203-924-2533. ♦

Constitution Boulevard Extension Serving the Public Good

Constitution Boulevard is planned to extend six miles from Route 110 in Shelton's south end to Route 110 in White Hills. Constitution Boulevard South which extends from Riverdale Diner, across Long Hill Avenue and Route 8 to Bridgeport Avenue was developed over two decades ago and with it came expanded residential and business development.

The City of Shelton is now progressing with the project which will first extend the road into the city-owned Mas property and then further to Route 108. The Mas property which Shelton purchased in 1996 provided opportunity for the city to develop a 56.32 acre, six-lot subdivision. In January of 2022, the City agreed to sell 25 acres to Bigelow Tea which intends on developing a 300,000 sf manufacturing and distribution facility.

Upon the news of the Bigelow Tea expansion, Mayor Lauretti was quick to react and with the support of the city's legislators, successfully secured a \$5,000,000 grant from the State of Connecticut. The city matched the state's investment with a local share of nearly \$1,000,000.

Construction is now underway. Phase 1, which will extend the road approximately 1,400 linear feet into the city-owned Mas property, is slated to conclude in



Constitution Boulevard Construction Looking South Toward Rt. 8

October 2023. The completion of this section will provide access to the Bigelow Tea site so that the firm may begin construction of their facility. The John J. Brennan Construction Company began construction in December of 2022.

The construction of this section of Constitution Boulevard

should provide multiple benefits. First and foremost, it supports the growth of business and fulfills a long-term goal of business development for the site. It is expected that as much as 600,000 sf of commercial or manufacturing space, generating 420+ employment opportunities with a value of \$80,000,000 in real estate, will add an estimated \$1,255,520 in new real estate tax revenue (based on the current Mill Rate).

The City of Shelton has executed several contracts with various business entities committing to the proposed development.

In addition to the economic benefits, traffic flow will be greatly improved between Bridgeport Avenue and Route 108, as the northern end of this section of road will meet up with Nells Rock Road just south of the Shelton Dog Park at the corner of Nells Rock Road and Shelton Avenue (Rt 108).

All in all, the road serves many functions and brings the city one step closer to fulfilling its vision. ♦



Blasting and Excavation of Rock Materials



Road Extension North Toward Rt. 108



IS PROUD TO PRESENT THE 2ND ANNUAL
FLAGS FOR HEROES



**RAISE A FLAG IN HONOR
 OF YOUR HERO!**

Is there a hero in your life, past or present? Honor those you admire in this community event by sponsoring a flag in their name. From May 27th through June 15th over 300 flags with personalized medallions will be flown on the Shelton Riverwalk and neighboring Derby Green. It will be a stunning visual presentation and a significant way for people in the community to honor their heroes.

A ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 10, 2023 from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM at the Shelton Riverwalk, 100 Canal Street, Shelton. All are invited to join in the event to honor these heroes.

Individuals and organizations throughout the region are invited to sponsor one or more flags to honor their heroes. Heroes may be Veterans, current service members, first responders, teachers, coaches, essential workers, or family members. Heroes may also

be single moms or dads, special grandparents, and even neighbors. Heroes are those admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, noble qualities, or the way they practice random acts of kindness.

The flags will be displayed from May 27th until June 15, 2023. Sponsorship levels are available ranging from \$250.00 up to \$2,500.00. For \$60.00 one hero can be sponsored which will include the flag and one commemorative tag. Proceeds from Flags for Heroes will benefit the Derby-Shelton Rotary, a non-profit 501©(3), which supports the community through special projects and grants to local organizations.

Please visit the Derby-Shelton Rotary Club website to download an order form or purchase sponsorships online at www.derby-sheltonrotary.org or contact Rotarian, Linda Holmes-Hannon at (203) 650-2391. ♦

Shelton History Center Historical Society Holds Annual Meeting



Shelton Historical Society is busy all year, accomplishing all kinds of projects in the winter despite cold and unpleasant weather.

On a brisk Sunday afternoon in January, the Shelton Historical Society held its annual meeting at the Huntington Congregational Church. Members and friends were treated to a sampling of stories about the history of Jones Family Farms presented by Jean Jones and grandson Jackson, illustrated with photographs that dated to the 1930's. Remembrances and Recipes, a book compiled by Jean and daughter Gwyn, were available to purchase.

In addition to the program, the meeting served to kick off the 2023 membership drive. Membership dues (\$20 for individuals, \$30 for families) help to support the Society's efforts as caretakers of the community's past and to sustain the Shelton History Center, a community cultural destination. Opportunities to learn about local history through programs, special events, and research privileges are available for all ages. Please join to receive advance notice of activities and help create lasting and meaningful connections between Shelton's past, present, and future generations (sheltonhistory.org/join/).

If you've driven past the History Center at 70 Ripton Road lately, you may have noticed something happening on the roof of all places! Thanks to a technical assistance grant from Preservation Connecticut and the 1772 Foundation whose goal is to ensure the safe passage of historic assets to future generations, the two chimneys are being repaired and restored to their original appearance. That will help to ensure that the Brownson House, built circa 1820, will be standing for another 200 years!



The office at Shelton History Center remains open throughout the year with the part-time staff fielding inquiries from around the country; some answers can be found in our extensive files of news clippings, letters, manuscripts, diaries, cemetery records, photographs, and artifacts. Popular searches include genealogy information, inquiries about residences, and industrial products that were once manufactured along the Housatonic River. Recent donations of unique remnants of Shelton's past, such as a large walking wheel used to spin wool into yarn, need to be catalogued and properly stored.

The staff is making preparations to present enrichment programs for students in several grade levels when spring finally arrives. Lifelong learners who have a passion for history and a desire to pass along their knowledge to school groups or small groups of visitors, are encouraged to learn about local history and how to share it. Training will be ongoing. For further information, call 203-925-1803 or email shcdirector@gmail.com.

The Shelton Historical Society (sheltonhistory.org) is a non-profit organization that maintains the six historic structures that comprise the Shelton History Center. It depends on volunteers to accomplish its mission to preserve elements of the community's history in order to create lasting and meaningful connections between Shelton's past, present and future generations through education, maintaining a museum with its collections, and providing a voice in the community regarding matters of historical significance. ♦



Jean Jones presents the history of Jones Family Farms

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Hills: A Healthier Choice Opens at 202 Leavenworth Road

Sue Shuby says her new café, Hills, was borne out of her love of community. A lifelong Shelton resident, Sue remembers riding her bike to the Leavenworth Plaza to buy pizza slices with her brother and working at the pharmacy that once occupied the space Hills is in. Shuby, along with nieces Veronica and Jessie, aim to create a warm and welcoming space where people can come together. “For me, it isn’t about making money. It’s about making connections,” she said.



In addition to connecting with customers, Shuby says opening her business in the White Hills Plaza has felt like joining a friendly community of mentors. “Everyone wants to see everyone succeed,” she said, noting a partnership with Anything Goes Fitness and Salt and Ray’s, both located in the Plaza. On Wednesday nights, Hills offers Yoga with Marie. “I just want everyone to live in a happy little bubble, like me,” Shuby says.

Visit Shuby’s happy little bubble in White Hills Plaza, located at 202 Leavenworth Road, Monday-Thursday, 7:45am - 4:00pm, Fridays, 7:45am - 3:00pm, and Saturdays, 9:00am - 3:00 pm. You can find them on [Facebook at HillShelton](#). ♦



As a certified life coach passionate about nutrition with a corporate life by day, Shuby said her goal for Hills was to provide a little spot of peace and to be a larger part of the community. When she opened in November, she quickly adjusted her menu to meet the needs of her customers. “They told me what they wanted, and what they wanted was coffee.” Hills now features locally sourced, organic coffee from Great Minds Coffee Roasters in Oakville.

Hills menu still features protein teas that give a natural burst of energy without the crash, including the “George & Audrey” blend (green mojo and cherry) named after the owners of the White Hills Pharmacy, and the “Shub,” (elderberry, strawberry, and blue raspberry) named in honor of Sue’s brother and Veronica and Jessie’s late father.



Fun Paddling the River and Hiking Trails



By Jane Bakker, Housatonic Valley Association Special Projects Manager



Celebrate our Watershed with HVA

Come out and Celebrate Our Watershed with HVA! From Memorial Day to July 4th join this virtually managed event to celebrate the Housatonic River Valley and help protect our lands and waterways. Explore the outdoors through events, friendly competitions, or your own outdoor fun.

Read on for inspiration and more info. Register at hvatoday.org starting April 5th.

There are so many ways to explore this beautiful place where we live and work. Read on for a few ideas!

Follow boating safety guides

Before taking up a paddle, it's important to wear your life jacket (personal flotation device or PFD). State



law mandates that you wear one from October 1 through May 31. Children 12 and under must wear a life jacket at all times.

The distance from below the Derby Dam to Long Beach in Stratford is 15 miles. The entire trip in one

day will take about six to eight hours. Time varies with wind and tide. This section goes through Derby, Shelton, Stratford, Orange and Milford and it's flatwater with strong tidal influence.

Before starting your trip, check tide tables for Milford Harbor. (<https://www.tidetime.org/north-america/united-states/milford.htm>).

For those who prefer less strenuous paddling, Lake Housatonic (created in 1870 with the construction of the



Derby Dam) would be a better choice. Most of the lake is flatwater paddling. The boat launch in Shelton is at 400 Indian Well Road. Indian Well State Park is on the western side of the lake, 2.5 miles northwest of Shelton, off Route 110.

continued next page

COMMUNITY NEWS

Lake Housatonic has a 153-acre park that has a beach, restrooms, picnic areas, refreshment stand, boat ramp, hiking trails, and grass play areas. There is parking for 200 cars with trailers. Bicycling is fun within the park and north along Indian Well and Birchbank Roads. The Paugussett Trail begins there and runs up past Webb Mountain Park in Monroe.

Another paddling option north of Shelton is Lake Zoar. The four towns that border the lake are Monroe, Newtown, Oxford and Southbury.



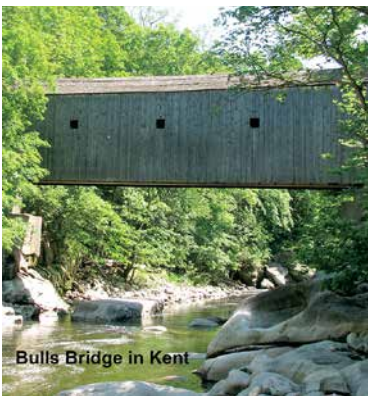
Each of the towns has a public access boat launch. The Southbury location is maintained by the state of Connecticut and is open to non-town residents.

There is canoe access from Kettletown State Park. Other access sites are Zoar Beach Boat Ramp in Monroe, Eichler's Cove in Newtown, Jackson Cove Park in Oxford and the end of Scout Road in Southbury.

Heading north

North of those towns access to the river can be found in Lake Lillinonah. Paddling here is all flatwater. However, this section of Lake Lillinonah is quite active with motor boats and water skiers. Exercise caution! An alternative put-in at Pond Brook Inlet State Boat Launch in Newtown affords a quieter place to begin a paddle of the lake. This is an easy put-in; it is an ideal place for beginning paddlers to test their skills. The distance is approximately 0.33 mile. The brook has very quiet water that also offers some excellent bass fishing.

Follow the inlet out to the Lake. About 0.3 mile south, the Shepaug River enters river left. A trip up the Shepaug River is well worth the paddler's time. It is navigable for 3.5 miles up to the falls and offers several delightful picnic spots along the way.



Boardman Bridge in New Milford

Further north is an easy 2.42 miles of lake paddling from Boardman Bridge in New Milford to Young's Field Road at Veterans Bridge.

North of that most of the river has some whitewater

and experience is recommended. Those sections include Bulls Bridge in Kent, Housatonic Meadows State Park in Sharon, West Cornwall and Great Falls Dam in Salisbury. The Housatonic Valley Association has published a paddling guide for the river. A copy is available to print at hvatoday.org/publications.

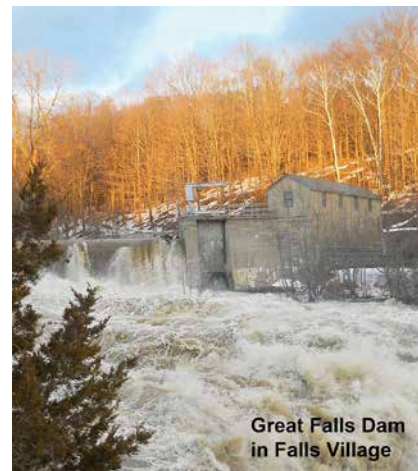
Trails in the Housatonic Watershed

There are many trails and parks in the watershed. Shelton residents may want to visit those close to home such as Indian Well State Park in Shelton, Osbornedale State Park in Derby, Naugatuck State Forest north of



West Cornwall Bridge

Shelton, Paugussett State Forest west of Shelton in Newtown. That town also shares Collis P. Huntington State Park.



Great Falls Dam in Falls Village

The Upper Paugussett State Forest, which offers a great six-mile round trip hike, is nestled along the banks of Lake Lillinonah.

Webb Mountain Park in Monroe is a 136-acre park on the Shelton/Monroe town

line overlooking the river. This is a quiet park that contains a portion of the Paugussett Trail and other trails, picnic areas, and camping sites (permit required).

The 153-acre Indian Well State Park has a boat ramp, beach, restrooms, picnic areas, refreshment stand, hiking trails, and grass play areas—everything a family needs to enjoy a sunny day outdoors.

Take the children too

There are so many wonderful outdoor places to

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HVA, continued from pg. 8

explore. But instead of being outdoors riding bikes and climbing trees children are staying indoors playing video games, surfing the web, watching TV and texting.



Break this trend and take them for a dip in the Housatonic River at Indian Well State Park. Grab your fishing rod and chase trout near the Derby Dam. Launch a canoe from

Sunnyside Park. Find a meadow or explore Shelton's 1,400 plus acres of public open space. Pack a picnic and walk along the Far Mill River. Find a creek and make a splash. Being stuck indoors is not good for kids. Playing outside and enjoying nature is.

Children who have positive, engaging experiences with nature in their formative years have a better chance of acting responsibly toward the environment as adults. These are the leaders we will depend on to ensure that we have enough clean water in the future. So grab your children and head outdoors. Go for a paddle. Explore the woods. Take a dip. Make a splash. Inspire your kids. And have fun.

Osbornedale State Park is one of the most charming and uncrowded parks in the state. The 350-acre park was formerly a prize-winning dairy farm that was donated to the People of Connecticut by Frances Osborne Kellogg in 1956. It contains the Kellogg Environmental Center; a small staffed nature center operated by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Osborne Homestead Museum describing the history of the park and its benefactors. There are hiking trails, open



fields, restrooms, two ponds, picnic areas, and other features. The Kellogg Environmental Center offers many programs on nature, photography, etc. for children and adults.

Celebrate our watershed with HVA

It's fun, free, and easy: just register online, create your personal page, and choose how you'd like to participate. There's something for everyone!

Registration opened April 5th and you can create your personal page and choose how you'd like to participate. To compete for prizes, you may register as an individual or a team, participate in a competition such as most miles hiked, biked, paddled, or most money raised.



Join us on a nature walk, guided paddle trip, family picnic, hike, paddle, go birdwatching, meditate, or take a photo—it's up to you!

We want to hear from you during this event! Use your personal page to share why you love the Housatonic Valley, your favorite spots, or photos of your adventures.

Post photos, tag us @hvatoday on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and use the hashtag #hvaexplore.

Invite your family and friends to support you through you or your team's personal page. Donate to help protect this beautiful place we love!

Welcome to the Housatonic River Watershed. Enjoy it all! ♦



The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) works to protect the natural character and environmental health of communities throughout the Housatonic River Watershed including Shelton. To learn more, please visit hvatoday.org and sign up for updates. Also follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

JJ Papiere & Co Stationery & Home Goods

JJ Paperie & Co is a stationery and home goods brand and creative studio founded by Johana Gutierrez-Griffiths in January 2020. After working seven years in NYC, Johana sought out to pursue her own creative business to tap into her latent entrepreneurial curiosity. After just three years in business, with the majority taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic, JJ Paperie & Co has blossomed into a loved paper and home goods brand that has worked with luxury brands including Lexus, prominent department stores such as Bloomingdales, and can be found in shops all across the US and Canada.

With the original intent of starting a calligraphy studio, JJ Paperie & Co evolved into a stationery & home goods shop that also offers on-site calligraphy and engraving services for luxury brands such as Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, Saks and Glossier. Most recently, JJ Paperie & Co. launched a series of beginner-friendly calligraphy workshops in the studio space at 415 Howe Avenue.

After relocating from Hoboken, New Jersey to Connecticut, Johana sought out to find a community of makers and entrepreneurs and came across the Conti building in Shelton, which she knew was a perfect fit for JJ Paperie & Co. Downtown Shelton has developed into a thriving business district, with new shops, restaurants and businesses popping up each month, while also staying true to its historical roots. Johana saw charm and joined the Shelton renaissance by establishing the JJ Paperie headquarters in the heart of downtown Shelton.

From humble beginnings in a spare room of her



Hoboken apartment, JJ Paperie & Co now calls 415 Howe Avenue home, where guests are invited into a welcoming and charming studio space, designed with muted pinks and floral arrangements to match the uniquely beautiful cards, tea towels and other products.

Johana is the creative behind all things JJ Paperie & Co and loves mixing in her admiration for florals, soft color tones, calligraphy and hand-designed patterns into her products. Being a non-traditional creative, she sought out to develop a brand that blended her love for home stationery with simple, colorful and charming goods, while also encouraging other non-traditional creatives to embrace their creative journey.

Johana's goal for her studio space is for it to become a place where people can find modern 'feel good' items that they'll love both for themselves or as a gift for someone special, and a space where everyone can get together with friends for a fun evening learning something new.

You can shop in person Monday-Thursday from 11:00am-4:30pm, select weekend dates or online at jjpaperieco.com. The studio is located at 415 Howe Avenue, Suite 725, in downtown Shelton.

For further information you can reach out to Johana at hello@JJPaperieCo.com. and follow along on Instagram [@JJPaperieco](https://www.instagram.com/JJPaperieco). ♦



French's Hill Open Space

Submitted by Teresa Gallagher, Natural Resource Manager



Hikers have been out exploring the French's Hill Open Space in the White Hills thanks to a new hiking trail built in 2022. Most people are not familiar with the 111- acre property, although it's been part of Shelton's open space inventory for nearly two decades. French's Hill can be seen across the road from East Village Park, but trail access is via a dedicated hiker parking lot located closer to the fire station.

The core property was purchased in 2003 for \$3,200,000, with the State of Connecticut DEEP contributing \$546,000 in the form of an open space grant. Because of the grant contribution, only passive recreation such as hiking is allowed. An additional six acres was added to the park a few years later as part of a required subdivision open space set-aside. This addition allowed for the public parking area off of East Village Road.

The property is forested except for several hay-fields licensed to Hubbell Farm and a powerline corridor that bisects the open space. The largest hayfield sits atop a classic glacial drumlin hill near East Village Road and is the highest point in the area. Drumlins are elongated hills made of compacted clay and glacial sediments molded in the direction of the glacier's flow. The east half of the property slopes gently down towards the Housatonic River.

The hayfield locations were chosen wisely by past farmers on the only portions of land that could be tilled. The rest of the property is rocky and poorly drained, suitable for pastureland only. The poor ground conditions are the reason a hiking trail had not been constructed earlier, and the trail system is not recommended during mud season. Bikes are prohibited due to the fragile trail tread.



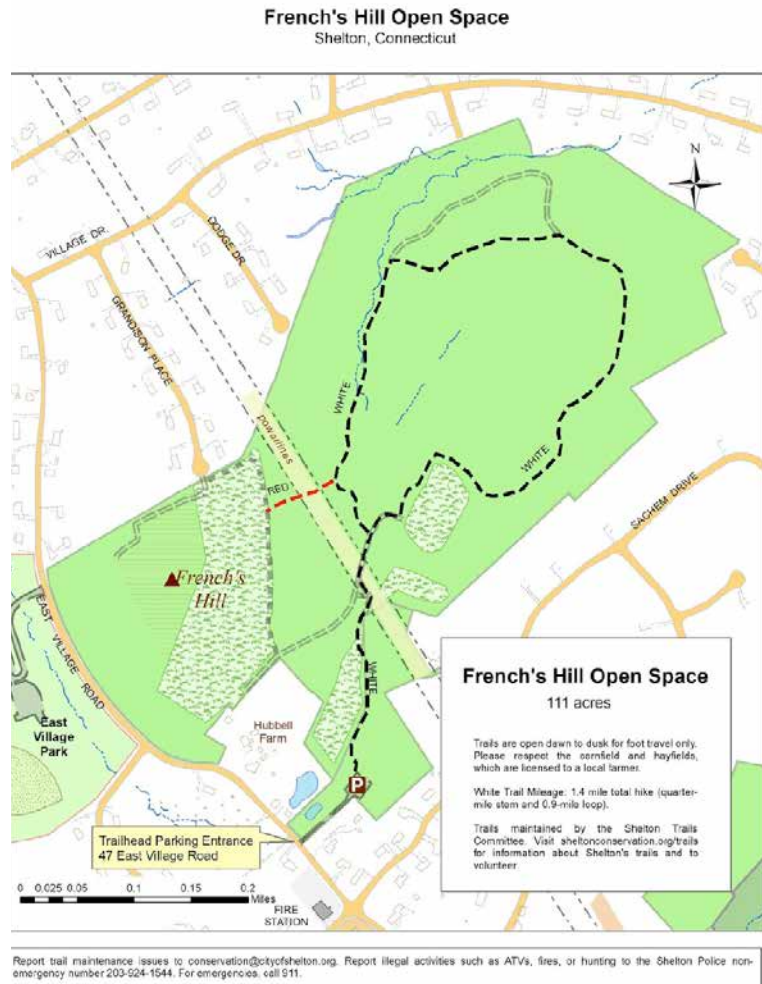
COMMUNITY NEWS

Stone walls are a prominent feature of this open space, typically built to keep in sheep. There are substantial walls around each of the four hayfields, walls that lined both sides of old roads, and other walls crossing the property.

Wildlife abounds at French's Hill. Turkey, deer, and coyote are frequently seen throughout the park, and hikers are advised to keep their dogs on leash. A concrete pond along the entry drive now functions as a vernal pool teaming with wood frogs and wood ducks. This same area hosts a number of Chinese chestnut and black walnut trees planted by the former owners.

Planning your visit

Parking for the trail is located at 47 East Village Road. The main trail is marked with white blazes and forms a "lollipop loop" with a quarter-mile stem and a 0.9-mile loop. Total hike length out and back is 1.4 mile. Be sure to wear waterproof boots during mud season. A red spur trail leads to the open-topped drumlin hill, which is covered in fields. Hikers are asked to stay off the fields during the growing season so as not to harm the crops. After the harvest, people can wander up the hill and enjoy seasonal views. Maps for all of Shelton's hiking trails may be downloaded from the Conservation Commission's website at sheltonconservation.org. ♦



Shelton
Going Green

Valley Community Foundation Shelton Residents Benefit From Gifts That Keep Giving



Shelton has a reputation for being a community that cares. It's not just about the charming streets and scenic landscapes of its Valley location, but the people who reside there are what truly make it a special place. The generosity of its citizens is evident in the dozens of legacy gifts, or bequeaths, left in their wills to start funds or scholarships at the Valley Community Foundation (VCF).

Sharon Closius, VCF's President and CEO since 2012, has seen firsthand the impact of these legacy donations.

"It's quite remarkable how generous Valley people can be and how much they care about their community," she said. "These legacy gifts have been a tremendous help in supporting libraries, students, schools, pet rescue centers and other causes that



Carol Ann Hyder

make Shelton a better place to live and uplifts our community as a whole."

One such person who left a legacy gift was Michael Hyder. When his beloved wife, Carol, passed away in 2019, he wanted to create a VCF fund in her name to honor her memory and make sure that Shelton would benefit from a final

gift in his will. Michael was a long-time resident of Shelton and had seen firsthand how the community came together to support each other during difficult times. He wanted to give back and ensure that his community would continue to thrive.

Michael worked with VCF to create the Carol Ann Hyder Memorial Fund, which will now forever provide support to Shelton organizations and scholarships to students. Michael passed away in 2022, but his legacy lives on through this fund. His generosity and dedication to his community will be felt for generations to come.

Legacy gifts can have broad impact on people and causes and some gifts have the same effect on institutions, like the Ritchie Fund for the Plumb Memorial Library.

Marjorie Ritchie was a lifelong Shelton resident who valued education and was deeply committed to preserving and protecting the Plumb Memorial Library. When she passed away in 2002, she left a portion of her estate to the library to support it and the community it serves forever. The Ritchie fund is just one of several managed by VCF that benefits the library.



"The impact of these legacy gifts is significant, and they provide a stable source of funding for community organizations and scholarships, ensuring that they can continue to provide valuable services and education to residents of Shelton," Closius said. "They also serve as a reminder of the importance of giving back to one's community and the power of philanthropy to make a difference."

Shelton is a shining example of a community that cares. The generosity of its citizens and their dedication to making a positive impact is a testament to the spirit of the town. Thanks to the legacy gifts left by its residents, Shelton will continue to thrive and be a beacon of hope for generations to come.

For more information about VCF, its funds, scholarships and how to create one, go to valleyfoundation.org or call 203-751-9162. ♦

House of Char Design Studio Relocates to 475 Howe Avenue

Charlene Matto, Interior Designer and Home Stylist, has spent years turning people's home interiors from outdated to chic, sophisticated and innovative interiors.

Now the Shelton resident is putting her love of design on display in a downtown storefront. On December 1, 2022, Matto moved her House of Char Design Studio, which she first opened two years ago downtown, to this first-floor space at 475 Howe Avenue. "When this opportunity came up, I made the move," Matto said. "I wanted a storefront for exposure, to get the foot traffic.

House of Char is where Matto meets with clients seeking her design skills. Matto said her primary focus is kitchen redesign. The kitchen is the heart of the home.

But, the space is also home to various house decor items, select furniture pieces, boutique gift items, candles to tea towels, lamps to artwork and baby gifts.

"I really wanted to introduce these kinds of home decor items and other unique gifts because I felt that there was a need for it and there was nothing like it in downtown," she said. I wanted something where people could buy a piece of furniture or a fun house-warming gift."

Matto began her interior design career alongside her husband, real estate agent Paul Ferreira. The pair would purchase homes in surrounding towns, redesign, fix and flip them. She soon established her own client base and started an interior design business out of her home studio.

She said it was COVID—when her children were home from school and her husband was working from home—that prompted her to move her operation out of the house.

She says her style is simple. Luxurious but not at a luxury price. Every home she designs is unique and custom to itself. "I love seeing the finished product and my clients happy. It is truly satisfying," said Matto.

Matto also has become an official retailer of Fabuwood Cabinetry, to add some variety for clients that decide against custom cabinets.



Charlene Matto at House of Char

"Having a storefront in downtown Shelton was what I wanted," Matto said. "Downtown Shelton has that old-school feel. It is wonderful seeing people walking, young couples walking dogs, and kids in strollers. It's nice to see that."

There is so much potential down here now," Matto said. It's beautiful to see all of these amazing restaurants and businesses opening. It's becoming a bustling downtown. I know it will just get better, and I am excited to be a part of it.

For further information you can call (203) 513-8456, email houseofchar@yahoo.com or visit www.houseofchardesign.com.

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FAIRWIND FINANCIAL

Drops Anchor at 1000 Bridgeport Avenue

When you think of Shelton, Connecticut, boating may not be the first thing that comes to mind. But don't tell that to long-time Shelton resident, Bob Dunford. "Shelton might not be a place boaters flock to like Newport, RI or Annapolis, MD, but it's definitely the place they come to, to find the money they need to buy those boats." Following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, former business owners and successful marine lenders, Bob Dunford opened Fairwind Financial Corporation, a financing company specializing in boat and yacht loans. The company, founded in the fall of 2022 has dropped anchor at 1000 Bridgeport Ave in Shelton.

"My dad started a similar financing company some 25 years ago in Shelton, and working there the last 20 years, I really grew to appreciate all that Shelton and Bridgeport Avenue have to offer" says Dunford. "Access to affordable Class A commercial space, a 3-mile commute from my home in Shelton, and a long list of quality restaurant choices all played a part in deciding to settle here. We have clients and business partners all over Connecticut and neighboring states, so the proximity to Route 8, the Merritt Parkway, and I-95 was a key selling point when deciding to lease here." Dunford estimates he assisted some 2000 clients with approximately 3000 transactions during his 20 years in Shelton. Dunford's business is customer service oriented, and time is always of essence to boaters in the northeast. So, whether he's traveling to visit clients or clients are visiting him, the easy on, easy off access of Bridgeport Ave provides for a quick and efficient closing. Joining Dunford, to head up all underwriting and back-office operations, is another life-long Shelton resident, Dawn Pastore. Dunford and Pastore had worked side by side some 20 years before joining Fairwind and Dawn brings a wealth of marine financing knowledge to the organization.

Fairwind Financial is a service company that specializes in assisting boat and yacht purchasers with their financing needs. They offer financing for both new & used boat purchases and refinancing or cash recapture transactions. The company, through an extensive network of both regional and national bank-



Bob Dunford and Dawn Pastore

ing partners, provides borrowers with a wide variety of lending options ranging in size from \$25,000 to \$5 million+. Although most of their clients originate on the eastern seaboard, they can assist buyers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. The company's primary focus is personal recreational use boats like center consoles, sailboats, bowriders, sportfish and motor yachts, but can also assist with limited charter vessels.

Another company Dunford has an ownership interest in, Tradewind Services LLC, also relocated to the 1000 Bridgeport Ave address. Tradewind Services is a boat and yacht documentation and title/registration service. "The financing and USCG documentation or state registration process go hand in hand. Moving the two companies in close proximity to each other was a no brainer. The boating season is short in the northeast, so anything we can do to reduce the time from application submission to closing, we aim to do" says Dunford.

The office is open the standard business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM and via appointment outside of standard business hours. For additional information on Fairwind Financial and the products and services it has to offer, please call 203-712-7204, visit fairwindfinancial.com/ or email dunford@fairwindfinancial.com. ♦

Dave's Gourmet Paletas

781 River Road

Dave Rock opened his paleta shop on 781 River Road this past summer—with the desire to pass on his love for the frozen Mexican treat on a stick to an even wider audience.

Rock, a Fairfield resident, opened his first shop, Dave's Gourmet Paletas, in his hometown in 2021. With the help of paleta chef and Shelton native Christina Schumacher, the brand enjoyed success, which prompted creation of a second location, and he says, Shelton was the perfect spot.

"People really like it," said Rock, a veteran of the tech industry who became a small business owner during the pandemic.

"I grew up in Shelton. I know how busy it can get," Schumacher added. "This was the perfect place to open. I said at the time, 'We need to get in there before there is no more space.'"

Once opened, he said the next goal was letting interested passersby know what "paleta" is.

Paletas are a Mexican frozen treat made from fresh natural fruits such as strawberry and mango or made from rich creamy ingredients such as chocolate and Sicilian pistachio. Rock said the homemade ice cream and fresh fruit treats on a stick are popular in Mexico, Brazil, and other parts of Central America. "Once people see and taste what we are making, the love it," he said.

The next step was immersing himself in the community — and for him that meant teaming with Plumb Memorial Library's Children's Department and another of his great loves, reading.

Children's Librarian Maura Gualtiere recently announced both Shelton libraries are offering a winter reading challenge for children through high school. Rock is helping co-sponsor the program which can attract hundreds of children. The program encouraged each child to read books and then complete a book review for each book to enter for a chance at a prize.

"When you start a business in a community, you expect them to support you, so you need to support the community," Rock said. "You must give back, and this is the best way. I have two kids myself, and I push them to read. 'What's a better reward for a kid than ice cream for the act of reading a book? It's per-



Chef Christina Schumacher lays paletas into a display freezer at Dave's Gourmet Paletas

fect for them, and it is great for us," he added.

Rock fell in love with the frozen treat during his frequent trips to Miami to visit his girlfriend, who is now his wife. "All the times I would go down (to Miami), I would come back, and I tucked it into the back of my head that this would be a cool thing to do in Connecticut," he added.

Rock said his frozen treats should be made daily with fresh ingredients. That is what led Rock to hire Schumacher, who earned a degree from Johnson & Wales. Rock's locations offer more than 20 different flavors and 20 toppings.

"We did research on the paleta and came up with our own recipe," Schumacher said. "We did not want it to be just like ice cream. We wanted it to be more of a gourmet experience, with traditional flavors, more Americanized flavors. There is something for everyone."

Christina had long been interested in menu and recipe development but was in a cake shop in Guilford when she connected with Rock. For her, this was a chance to focus on what she loves most — recipe creation.

"When people come in, we need to educate them," she added. "A lot do not know what a paleta is. That originated in Mexico."

You can call ahead at (203) 520-8346 for more information.

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Shelton Libraries Have Much to Offer

By Joan Stokes, Library Director

Thanks to the careful planning and direction of both past and present Library Boards, the renovation of the Plumb Memorial Library is nearly complete, and the staff of the library can get back to doing what we do best - providing informative and entertaining programs and services, answering your reference questions and offering the newest books, DVDs, magazines and streaming services available.



Maura Gualtiere and Volunteer Bob Wood at Storytime at Plumb

Currently, the Huntington Branch is without a Branch Librarian due to the retirement of Marcia Austin last December. Therefore, Adult programming at the Huntington Branch will remain limited until a new Branch Librarian is in place.

However, at present, adults can participate in a quarterly Book Bingo program, reading books of their own choosing that fit certain criteria in order to mark off specific bingo squares. Patrons that turn in their card with a BINGO are then entered into a prize drawing. The library's current Book Bingo ended on March 31st but the next session begins in April.

Jessica Prutting, Children's Librarian at Huntington, has a full calendar of events for kids and teens. These events include story times to craft programs for the all ages. There is always a lot going on.

The Huntington Branch is also offering Notary Services by appointment. Please call the Huntington Branch Library or email pmurphy@biblio.org to set up an appointment. There is no cost for notary services and more details are available on the library's

website at sheltonlibrarysystem.org.

At the Plumb Memorial Library, Maura Gualtiere, Children's Librarian, is making sure that the Children's Department is always busy. From story times to graphic novel book talks to Play Doh Playmates programs, there are a variety of programs, displays and new books to enjoy. Please check our calendars to get a full roster of the programs, crafts and book talks for children.

In the Adult Department, Tai Chi classes are offered every Wednesday morning along with special computer instruction classes on Tuesday afternoons. Also offered is "Tech Time", individualized computer instruction, with Teen/Tech Librarian, Joe Cappella, in the Reference Department on Wednesday mornings. Just bring your questions about devices, phones or laptops to Mr. Joe, and he will work to solve your questions.

With spring blossoming around us, we are also delighted to be partnering with the Olde Ripton Garden Club to begin a Seed Library at the Plumb

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Jessica Prutting and Megan Doyle at Huntington Spa Program

COMMUNITY NEWS



Joe Cappella

Library. Just stop in to pick up seeds and instructions, and let your growing begin! Thanks goes out to the Garden Club for their support.

With the Plumb Library almost completely functional again, staff has begun to accept clean, usable donations. The library will gratefully accept any gently used hard cover and paperback books, DVDs, puzzles and audiobooks on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM in the green book drop outside the Meeting Room doors.

Please note, however, that textbooks, encyclo-

dias, medical, computer or condensed books, magazines or newspapers, music cassettes, VHS Tapes, toys, games, stuffed animals or any materials that are damaged are not accepted. All donations become property of the Plumb Memorial Library to be used at the library's discretion.

Please visit the year-round book sales in the Reading Room of the Plumb Library and the Huntington Branch. The books and items for sale change on a weekly basis, and there are always good bargains available.

Hours have been extended at both the Plumb Memorial and Huntington Branch libraries. Please check the website for further details or call (203) 924-1580 for Plumb or (203) 926-0111 for the Huntington Branch. It is the intention to increase the hours after staff positions are filled and security cameras installed.

NOTE: Joan Stokes and the staff thank the library's patrons who have been so generous during the past few years. With a pandemic and a long renovation at Plumb, it has been an unprecedented time for all. The kind words, monetary donations, baked goods, patience, support and good thoughts have meant the world to the entire staff. They look forward to serving you in the future. ♦

DID YOU KNOW.....

The Shelton Library system subscribes to a variety of databases and streaming services. From information to entertainment, the library has it all! Some of the wonderful information offered includes:

Reference and Information

A to Z Databases: Is the Premier Job Search, Reference & Mailing List Database including 30 million business and executive profiles and 220 million residents.

Brainfuse Job Now: Covers all aspects of looking for the perfect job.

Advanced College Planning Solutions: One stop shopping that has a variety of college planning workshops.

Consumer Reports: A digital version of the CR magazine and buying guide.

Folio Med and Medline Plus: Medical facility and doctor information, as well as medical information in general.

Free Permit Drivers test: Test your skills before you take your driving test.

Newsbank: A database of CT Post and Shelton Herald articles from 2006 to today, along with magazines from around the world.

State Library: Offers too many databases to list. Visit their website for a plethora of information!

Entertainment

Hoopla: Download and stream your favorite movie, tv show, e-book, audiobook or comic book.

Libby: Offers ebooks, audiobooks and magazines from all over the world.

Palace Project: Download ebooks and audiobooks.



“The EDC Chairman Steps Out to Visit” By Bing J. Carbone

A Conversation with Martin “Marty” Coughlin

Bing Carbone, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, steps out to talk to Martin “Marty” Coughlin. Marty, who is a spry 82, has been active within the Shelton Community for over 40 years. This is the third in a series of 1-on One “The EDC Chairman Steps Out to Visit.”

Bing: *Marty, when did you move to Shelton?*

Marty: I moved to Shelton two months after the Sponge Rubber Factory blew up back in 1975. Not many people knew where Shelton was until that event happened. We moved from northern New Jersey where I lived most of my life up to that point. My wife and I were looking for a new place to live as the company I was working for ended up moving to Westport, Connecticut.

I called up a realtor in Trumbull. He said we can look in Trumbull, however, the realtor said a key word and that was Huntington. He didn’t say “Shelton” the realtors never took anyone to downtown Shelton; the reason being was that Huntington and the White Hills section of Shelton was a residential community. Downtown Shelton at that time was a mess.

It really was an old factory town. There was Huntington, and Shelton was never mentioned. “Shelton” never talked about Huntington - it seemed to be an adversarial relationship.

When I first ran for Alderman, Gene Hope was Mayor, and I served two years under him. It was interesting because Gene was sort of in the last phase of his mayoral term, and he came up with an idea to start something called the SEDC – Shelton Economic Development Corporation. Now the board was 4-4 (four Democrats and four Republicans) which meant that he needed 5 votes to carry it or if there was a 4-4 tie, he could then break the tie.

The Democrats wanted to have someone abstain –and they said what are you going to do? And I said well this is going to be a corporation with city people consisting of Government officials and business people to help rebuild the downtown.



Marty and Bing

Bing: *So that was the original concept of SEDC –the downtown area of Shelton.*

Marty: Yes. “I didn’t know if it’s going to work and they asked me, “so what’s the plan” and I said, “we don’t have a plan.”

“Well, one of the things I learned years ago and it was stated by the President of General Motors, “the second-best plan vigorously enforced and implemented is better, far better, than the best plan which never gets started.”

“I said, well let’s get started, and if it doesn’t work, we will go away and so I voted for it –and thus began the rebuilding of downtown Shelton.” The public/pri-

continued on next page

COMMUNITY NEWS

vate partnership saved the city an enormous amount of money.

Bing: *So my understanding of the SEDC is that it is a separate entity from City Hall. It also is my understanding that they work with the Mayor and the Mayor has the final say on things but it is basically a service to the City of Shelton. Is that still true?"*

Marty: Yes, it is. One project in all the years the SEDC has been around was the Shelton Community Center. The SEDC served as the "Overseer" and Jimmy Ryan was the President at the time and I served as President of the Board of Aldermen and Chairman of the Building Committee. When I no longer held an office, I joined the SEDC Board of Directors and have been a board member ever since.

Bing: *This is a volunteer position. What was your other job? Your career?*

Marty: My other job was that I compiled mailing lists, business to business. I worked at a company called Market Data Retrieval which originally moved to Westport, Connecticut, but relocated again to Shelton. Then eventually I ended up working for a similar type company in New Jersey commuting from Shelton daily.

I finally retired in 2002 and stayed active in the community. My wife and I remained in Shelton. We have two daughters. Wendy lives in New Jersey and has three children, Emma, Caroline and Peter. Debbie lives in Syracuse and has two children, Danny and Margaret.

Bing: *Tell me about raising two daughters because I have two adult daughters. It's not a sexist comment but I just think daughters somehow get over protected by their parents to a degree. I know I've done that for sure. Was it any different for you raising two daughters?*

Marty: Well, I always felt there were issues they should be raising with their mother. I had suggested to my wife for example, that if you've got one daughter who has a very messy room, if you close the door it disappears (laughter). Both my daughter's graduated from St. Joseph High School and both went to Holy Cross, as I did. I am very fortunate.

Bing: *Marty, where you born?*

Marty: I was born in Morristown, New Jersey, in 1940 and lived in New Jersey until I came to Shelton in 1975.

Bing: *Marty, let me understand, how did you get involved in politics?*

Marty: That's a very good question. When I came to Shelton, for recreation I played tennis. It turned out that there were three guys in the neighborhood that also played tennis and one of them was Jules Cayer whose family built a lot of homes in Shelton for years and in fact built Cayer Circle. Jules said to me "Would you be interested in joining the Shelton Conservation Commission" I said, well, yeah! I served under Scotty Harbinson - actually Tom Harbinson who works at Jones Tree Farm, that was his father - and he was a great conservationist. After a year Scotty resigned, and they made me the President.

So shortly after that there was an industrial spill in a creek, and I felt Mayor Hope didn't do much about it. So I yelled and kind of got some publicity on it -and then I was talked to by a conservationist who heard there were plans to build on swampland. So I went up there (and wasn't happy about it) and complained about that as well. Mayor Hope responded by cutting our budget to zero (laughter) so I got some publicity about fighting that decision as well.

Then one day I am sitting at home having dinner and I get a phone call from the Democrats and they asked "Would you be interested in running for Alderman for the City of Shelton?" I was kind of grumbling about it, and they said why don't you come down and have a beer and talk about it. They had me at "beer".

So I went down and they talked to me about it, and I talked to my wife and she said ok, and so I ran. Now if you know anything about politics in the 4th ward of Huntington, since 1958 until today, two Democrats were elected. That's it. I was on as an Aldermen for ten years and I think Tommy Zahornosky, who was my running mate, was also 10-years.

At that time Bill Curran was running against Gene Hope for Mayor, and Bill and Tommy were very well-known in Shelton. However, we needed an issue to appeal to the voters in the 4th ward.

Shortly thereafter, an acquaintance of mine whose daughter ran a dance studio wanted to expand it. So he talked to me about taking Huntington School and making it into a community center. I said, well, that sounds like a good idea.

And so I ran on that idea and it led me to what my mother called a landslide victory -most people don't call winning by 27 votes a landslide victory but....that was the issue I ran on.

Mayor Hope wanted to sell the property (the proposed Community Center site) so it was brought up

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to the Board of Aldermen to approve the sale. There was a 4-4 tie on the Board of Aldermen so one of the Democratic members abstained and the motion failed. It stayed dormant until Mike Pacowta got elected. We sat down and talked to him and said, "If you build a community center, you will be remembered." And so he went along with it, and we went out for a referendum to bond for the project and it passed. The Community Center was then built and it's been hugely successful.

Bing: *So, you were President of the Board of Aldermen is that correct?*

Marty: Yes, under Mike for three terms. The city hired Jimmy Ryan (SEDC), and the first project that this newly-formed organization oversaw was the successful completion of the Community Center. From a city-wide perspective, it worked out fine.

However, in retrospect, and I thought about this as I got older, I believe it contributed to the distancing of Huntington from downtown Shelton. You didn't have to go downtown to get a library book. You didn't have to go downtown to have a meeting. You had it up in Huntington because the community center had all this including a pool.

Bing: *While on the subject of Huntington vs. downtown Shelton, obviously there have been a lot of changes over the years, and I would concur with you while I have been in Shelton for 31 years. Going to downtown Shelton was not something I did a whole lot of over the years; however, I think you'd have to agree there has been a pretty remarkable turnaround in downtown. I love the farmers market and seeing people I know are not from the area. People are coming back to downtown. What other changes do you think are still needed?*

Marty: I think there needs to be compelling reasons for people to want to go downtown. One thing I would do is to make the river more accessible and part of the "Canal Locks Project", which I am involved in, is focusing on that. The Riverwalk needs to be completed as well which will allow additional access to the river.

Bing: *Long Hill Cemetery Association, I know you have had some involvement with that. What can you tell me about it?*

Marty: That is correct. But first may I mention my involvement with the Shelton Historical Society. My actual involvement came through my wife who

unbeknownst to me became a member and shortly thereafter was elected President. She was the force behind the success of the society for years. First thing she did was change the name from Huntington Historical Society to Shelton Historical Society and hired a staff, Tracey Tate, Ellen Kolesk, and Debbie Rossi, who remain the foundation of the organization today. She also undertook the renovation of the statute on the Huntington Green and received a grant to change the Wilson Barn into a historical museum. After my wife resigned, there was an opening on the board, and I was nominated and elected as President. I remained President for over 20 years and basically worked on the project to restore the Brownson House. The restoration still continues and has won several awards from the CT League of History Organizations.

With respect to the Long Hill Cemetery Association, I went home one afternoon and the phone rings, and it's a woman who is on the board of the Shelton Historical Society of which I was the President at that time. And she said, I am here at Long Hill Cemetery with Jeanette LaMacchia (she was the town historian at the time) who was President of the Long Hill Association. Do you know a painter? The sign needed to be painted. I along with a painter went down to the cemetery.

A couple of months later, Jeanette LaMacchia called and invited me to their Annual Meeting. There in attendance was Jeanette, three board members and another local historian.

Then they said to me we have two things to take care of, and the first was I am resigning as President of Long Hill Cemetery Association and secondly, Marty is the new President, the meeting is adjourned!, and Ms. LaMacchia literally bolted out of that meeting.

So, that's how I got involved and I came into the group as President and the cemetery was just in awful condition. Stones were dirty and knocked over and so forth. I reached out to Seccombe Brothers in Ansonia. They got involved and fell in love with the cemetery. So they started doing things such as fixing the stones and resetting monuments. We did some fundraising so things really started improving and coming together.

I got a map of the burial sites and shared a copy with the Shelton Historical Society. Someone called the Historical Society about Long Hill Cemetery

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COMMUNITY NEWS

and asked where their ancestor was buried? The individual was a revolutionary war soldier living in Stonington and married in Derby. So from that point on I started researching through ancestry.com and other similar resources.

Bing: *If you had to pick both on a personal and professional level one or two of your favorite accomplishments, what would they be?*

Marty: Building the Community Center and having worked on several other building committees. Shelton started facing a problem and that was overcrowding. Another school was needed. The school on River Road was being used as a Senior Center and BOE offices. So these offices were moved and a Senior Center was built. The school was reopened. All positives for the city. Also, I am active with the Boys and Girls Club, serving on the Building Committee and in the role of Secretary for decades. I was involved with the construction of the Emergency Services Medical building on Meadow Street. After I ended my term as Alderman, I was appointed to EMS commission. I served on the commission when we negotiated the first contract with the City of Shelton and the EMS providers which unified the relationship between the volunteers and the City of Shelton.

Bing: *What super power would you like to have?*

Marty: To make other countries act civilized with each other.

Bing: *If you were stranded on an island... what two items would you like to have with you?*

Marty: Margaret and someone who can start a fire.

Bing: *If you could travel anywhere on earth, where would you go or where would you go back to?*

Marty: To the Holy Land, Petra and Egypt.

Bing: *Looking back what things would you have done differently in your life? If anything.*

Marty: I don't think I would have done anything differently.

Bing: *White Clam Pizza or sausage and mushroom?*

Marty: White Clam

Bing: *Marty you have children, you have grandchildren what recommendations would you have for them and this younger generation. What things would you want them to be conscious of?*

Marty: First, find a career that you like and are really happy with and find someone that you can establish a lasting, enduring and happy relationship with. I was married for 52-years.

Bing: *Thank you Marty for your time. ♦*



Four Shelton Schools Ranked Among State's Best

Four of Shelton's public schools have earned high marks from the State of Connecticut.

Sunnyside School, Booth Hill School, Mohegan School and Long Hill School were each tabbed as Schools of Distinction in the state's most recent Next General Accountability System. The Board of Education honored the schools during its meeting.

The grading, which showcases the 2021-2022 school year, had not been done since 2018-19, the year before the pandemic forced school districts into hybrid or full remote learning.

"I think coming out of the pandemic, it was a great surprise and honor to earn this recognition," said Booth Hill Principal Dina Marks.

Connecticut schools are named Schools of Distinction when their performance and/or growth, as measured by the Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System, places them within the top 10 percent of all schools across the state, according to a news release.

Overall, the state number slipped coming out of the pandemic, which forced students to hybrid or full remote learning for months at a time.

Looking at a dozen indicators – everything from academic growth to chronic absenteeism to access to the arts – the system gives the state's public schools a combined grade of 69.7 out of 100 for the 2021-22 school year, compared to 74.2 percent for the last school year recorded, 2018-19.

Sunnyside School finished with a score of 90.0, a jump from 82.1 last year, while Long Hill School finished at 81.9, a drop from last year's 85.5 but still enough to grab another School of Distinction honor.



The Shelton Board of Education honored four elementary schools for each being named a School of Distinction this past year. Pictured, from left, are Superintendent Ken Saranich, Sunnyside Principal Darla Lussier, Long Hill School Principal Andrea D'Aiuto, Booth Hill Principal Dina Marks, Mohegan School Principal John Coppola and Board of Education Chair Kathy Yolish.

"It really is something that the entire school community works together to achieve," Marks said, "The teachers and staff are involved in keeping the students motivated and learning. The kids are working hard and striving to learn new things, and the families are making sure that the students are continuing the learning at home and getting the students to school when they are healthy enough to attend."

Marks praised her teachers, saying that, coming out of the pandemic, they implemented a rigorous curriculum and extended the students' learning with technology, when possible.

"The value of great staff and access to technology cannot be understated," Marks said.

Long Hill Principal Andrea D'Aiuto praised staff, students and parents for her school's success.

"It was truly a collaborative effort," she said. "I am beyond proud of our students and our staff for achieving this recognition."

"It is through the hard work and dedication of our staff that accomplishments like this happen," she added. "Academic and social-emotional success continues to be at the forefront of all we do."

Principals cited Wit and Wisdom and Eureka Math programs, which they said provided for a new, challenging curriculum. "The growth we saw in the students was amazing," Marks said.

For example, she said, teachers commented on the difference between typical writing ability before Wit and Wisdom and present levels.

"The students seemed to be writing at a higher level earlier in the year, which extended through the

continued on next page

**SHELTON PARKS AND RECREATION
SUMMER CONCERT SERIES
KICKS OFF WITH A FIREWORK SHOW ON
FRIDAY, JUNE 30th*
AT THE DOWNTOWN RIVERWALK**



**MUSIC PROVIDED BY DARIK AND THE FUNBAGS
(*Raindate Sunday, July 2nd)**

**All other concert series will be held on
Wednesdays at 7:00 PM at the Huntington Green through Wednesday, September 6th**

**SUMMER PLAYGROUND PROGRAM
CHILDREN AGES 6 – 14
BEGINS JUNE 26th**

The playground program will run for six weeks at four sites (Shelton's grammar schools). Games, crafts, special events. All information will be available at the camps. No fee to register. Several athletic camps will be held including basketball, football, conditioning, along with art and educational programs.

For more further information please visit sheltonparksandrec.recdesk.com or call the Park and Recreation offices at (203) 925-8422

School, continued from pg. 23

end of the year to challenge the student," Marks said.

In Shelton schools, online components reinforce math and language arts concepts that are being taught in direct instruction, and they were used with great success both in school and home last year, Marks said.

"Coming out of the pandemic, I refocused the school system back on instruction by meeting with school leadership to pinpoint the categories that the state requires for instruction, attendance, and educational access," Superintendent Ken Saranich said.

Saranich noted the four schools of distinction and the high school becoming fully NEASC accredited. This accomplishment is due to the collaborative hard work and dedication of the entire Shelton team," Saranich added.

The Next Generation Accountability System is the system that the Connecticut State Department of Education uses to measure overall district and individual school growth. According to the state, the system "has 12 indicators that schools are assessed on; these 12 indicators aid in telling the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. This accountability system moves beyond test scores and graduation rates to provide a more holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance and student growth over time."

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Welcome to the Shelton Senior Center

81 Wheeler Street • Shelton, Connecticut 06484 • Monday – Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm

ABOUT

Established in 1991, the Shelton Senior Center (SSC) provides programs and services geared toward older adults in the community. Membership is open to anyone age 55+, which includes access to the facility, offerings and monthly newsletter distribution. All programming is offered onsite. As a department of the City of Shelton, the Senior Center operations are financially funded by the City and participation fees.

MISSION

SSC's mission is to enhance quality of life by creating opportunities to support wellness, social connections, community engagement, lifelong learning for a diverse and growing older adult population. Our vision is to extend social involvement and wellbeing to seniors.

OUR STANDARD

To purposefully embrace inclusion by creating a more equitable, accessible, safe, welcoming Senior Center where differences are recognized, respected and valued.

OFFERINGS

- Lunch is served daily and is \$5.00 per meal. All meals are cooked on premises in our commercial kitchen and served from 11:45am-12:15pm. Reservations must be made the day before by 4:00pm. A monthly lunch menu is provided in the newsletter.
- An array of fitness classes for all levels offered daily.
- Health screenings are offered monthly. The screenings included are hearing, blood pressure, foot care, vision, balance, vaccinations, and pharmaceutical needs.
- Educational programs offered monthly range between computer, photo, nutrition, driver safety, medical, crime safety and elder law.
- Wide range of travel opportunities; local, national and international trips offered.
- Seasonal themed fun social events and dances offered all year round.
- Gaming and card groups meet many times throughout the week.
- Assistance with benefit programs. Examples include ConnPace, Medicare, Agency of Aging, Choices and Renters' Rebate.
- A billiard room with four pool tables is on site and accessible all day. Lessons are available, as are specific group gathering times.
- A large bingo room is on premises. Bingo is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1:00pm. On occasion, weekend and night bingo available. Prizes are awarded for each individual game played.
- A beautiful library with fireplace is fully equipped with books, puzzles and movies for lending or a nice quiet area to play games.
- A fully equipped computer lab is available with multiple computers and printers.

- Free transportation funded by the City is available to and from SSC for all Shelton residents on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, provided through Valley Transit. Please contact Valley Transit directly at 203-735-6408 the day before to utilize this service.

TAKE A TOUR OF THE SENIOR CENTER

Let us show you around the Senior Center so you can easily access all that it has to offer. Join a SSC team member for a warm welcome and guided tour!

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all those age 55+ and older. Membership cards are valid each calendar year and expire December 31st. Membership renewals begin in January and can be purchased throughout the year. New Non-Resident memberships are limited. At this time, we are honoring all existing Non-Residents members who renew membership before March 1st. New Non-Residents interested in joining, please add your name to the waitlist. This may be subject to change at any time. Shelton Resident: \$4.00 per year Non-Resident: \$10.00 per year

REGISTRATION

You can register for your membership, classes, events, workshops and trips in person at SSC. Current SSC membership is required for all activities. Most programs are offered without charge. Those that require payment, please submit cash or check. Registration fees vary. All detailed information will be noted in newsletter.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A copy of our monthly newsletter with calendar of offerings and lunch menu is mailed out each month to all active members. It can also be viewed online for public viewing on the City of Shelton main page. www.cityofshelton.org.

BECOME A SENIOR CENTER VOLUNTEER

Lend a hand. Take the lead. Pitch in. Give Back. No matter what you call it, volunteering is good for our community—and good for you! If you have time, spend it wisely as a Senior Center volunteer. Our volunteers of all ages are skilled, dedicated, and passionate about giving back. Volunteers help SSC achieve its mission to improve quality of life by facilitating opportunities for older adults to stay active, curious, and connected.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As avid supporters of the community, we outreach to all ages and organizations. Through the recent years we have gained partnerships with Shelton Board of Education, Shelton Youth and Family Services, Boys and Girls Club of Lower Naugatuck Valley, T.E.A.M Inc., Valley United Way, St. Vincent de Paul, Connecticut Veteran Affairs, Shelton Police Department, Echo Hose Ambulance Corp., Griffin Hospital, neighboring Assisted Living Communities and local businesses.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT RENTERS' REBATE PROGRAM

The Connecticut Renters' Rebate Program provides once-per-year rebates to older adult or disabled renters whose incomes do not exceed certain thresholds and who meet residency requirements. Between April 1st and October 1st, qualified Shelton residents may call for an appointment or to obtain details of the program. The Renters' Rebate Coordinator is onsite to assist between 10:00am-2:00pm.

SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is funded and administered by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to provide low income seniors who are 60 years of age or older with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets. Coupon distribution usually begins in July and lasts until supplies are exhausted. Complete details of the program can be obtained by calling the Renters' Rebate Coordinator, located at SSC.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Commission is compiled of Shelton senior residents appointed by the Mayor. Commission Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 3:30pm. The Membership Council is compiled of volunteers elected by our senior community. Membership Meetings are held the 2nd Friday of every month at 10:15am. All are welcome to attend.

STAY CONNECTED WITH US

Phone: 203.924.9324 • Daily Information Line: Ext. 1550 • Visit: www.cityofshelton.org

Luzara Sweets Opens at 7 Riverside Drive

Sarah Luz Laffitte-DePalmer is living the sweet life as the owner of Luzara Sweets, a new bakery in Riverside Retail Center. Her passion for baking has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. "I get it from both sides," she says, with her aunt having owned Giselle's Bakery in Bridgeport and her grandmother sharing a contagious passion for baking. DePalmer's love of family is evident even in her cooking, as she includes some of her aunt's original recipes on the menu at Luzara's.

She's always had a desire to turn her passion for baking into a business, but it wasn't until the pandemic hit that she decided to take the leap. In 2020, with the state in lockdown and her job in the restaurant industry uncertain, DePalmer started baking from home in Milford. Her friends and family started making custom orders for her pies, cookies, and holiday baked goods, and soon she had outgrown her home. "It was definitely time to expand the operation, and this is the perfect spot to do it," she said.

Luzara Sweets offers special-order custom cakes for birthdays and special events, and their daily menu offers a rotation of cupcakes, cheesecakes, cookies, cake pops, muffins, flan, and cannolis available all day. Working with customers is one of DePalmer's favorite parts of the job, and her desire to meet their needs led her to expand her menu to include classic and delicious breakfast items and coffee. Luzara Sweets now features breakfast burritos and quesadillas, a breakfast grilled cheese, bacon egg and cheese, and French toast sandwiches.

The influence of DePalmer's interior design background is apparent in the welcoming and vibrant aesthetic of Luzara Sweets. As bright and inviting as the owner herself, DePalmer's artistic eye has manifested itself in the shop's design and her exquisite custom cakes. Despite not finding her place in the design industry after completing her BS in 2017, DePalmer's talent for design is evident in every aspect.

Luzara Sweets is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00am to 2:00pm. To check out DePalmer's cakes, or to place a custom order, follow them on Facebook at Luzara Sweets, or stop in the shop in the Riverside Retail Center. ♦



Owner Sarah Luz Laffitte-DePalmer



BAGEL BROS & Co.

Making dough is second nature for Ali and Flamur Nasufi. The brothers – with a combined three decades of restaurant experience – have been doing it since their childhood, thanks to their father, Remzi, himself a restaurateur for some five decades. Now the pair will be boiling and baking dough for bagel lovers in downtown Shelton.

“Restaurants are in our blood. We basically grew up in a breadbasket,” Ali said about himself and his brother, who honed their craft under the wing of their father, who has owned and operated numerous restaurants from Torrington through the Valley to Stratford over the years.

“It has always been our dream to open an ice cream shop and a bagel shop, now we will have both,” Ali said.

The brothers got into the ice cream business two years ago, opening Sugar Rush USA at 908 Bridgeport Avenue. Now the pair have opened Bagel Bros & Co. at 350 Howe Avenue.

“We saw the opportunity,” Ali said about opening

the bagel business, adding that the downtown has “no shop dedicated solely to bagels.”

The Nasufis will be making fresh New York style bagels, “crispy on the outside and chewy on the inside,” Ali said, plus inhouse created cream cheese blends and a menu with some 15 gourmet deli sandwiches, assorted pastries, donut and coffee.

The shop will be a “grab-and-go” operation in a spot the brothers feel will only continue to thrive as downtown revitalization continues in earnest.

“We love the downtown area. The redevelopment is impressive,” Ali said. “Downtown is up and coming, and this space was perfect for us.”

Ali said the family has enjoyed having the ice cream shop along Bridgeport Avenue, which is a business hub for the city. But moving downtown allows for the pair to tap into what will only be more foot traffic from the ever-increasing number of apartments coming online.

“What we have seen here is that people in Shelton, support local, small businesses,” said Ali,

referring to what he has seen with Sugar Rush USA. “We love dealing with the customers in Shelton. They have become like family, that’s why when we wanted to make the move on opening a bagel shop, we felt the best move was to stay here in Shelton.”

Before opening Sugar Rush USA in 2021, the brothers owned and operated Juliano’s in Stratford. Their father is known for owning multiple restaurants, including Stella’s in Stratford, and Vinny’s in Naugatuck and Torrington.

Stop in and say hello. Bagel Bros. & Co. will be open Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM, weekends 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM. You can call ahead at (203) 513-2024 or visit bagelbrosandcompany.com.

Excerpts reprinted with the kind permission of brian.gioiele@hearstmediact.com. ♦



Shelton Farmers Market 2023 Season May 20th Through October 28th

The Shelton Farmers Market is located at 100 Canal Street in downtown Shelton (across the street from the beautiful riverwalk and Veterans Memorial Park).

Starting on May 20th, 2023 the market will run every Saturday from 9:00 AM to 12 Noon through October 28th, 2023. The outdoor market offers a variety of produce and goods from local farms and vendors. All local vendors are verified growers. All of the produce is grown directly by the hands of the farmers selling it.

Some of this season's market vendors will be:

- Bell's Shellfish
- East Village Farm, LLC. (Vegetables, Plants, Eggs, Soaps, Wool Products)
- Laurel Glen Farm, LLC. (Vegetables, Fruits)
- Lilus Customized Catering (Croissants, Cookies)
- Oronoque Farms (Pies, Cookies, Doughnuts, Flowers)
- Red Clover Farm (CBD products, Local Honey, Honey Jelly, Pickles, Jams)
- The Healing Herb Garden (Elderberry infused tea,



honey, jam, syrup, soap, candles & herbal cosmetics)

The Valley Sprouts Program will be held again this year. The program is open to children of all ages. Membership comes with a Valley Sprouts Gift Bag and access to programs and activities. (See schedule.)

If you're interested in supporting the market, hearing more about the Valley Sprouts in general or have any other questions, please go to sheltonctfarmersmarket.com.

Valley Sprouts Club 2023 Schedule

JUNE

June 3rd - Flowers

Craft: seed bombs (pre-made paper mix, cheese-cloth, water jug, soil, wildflower seeds)

June 10th - Chickens

Craft: pom pom baby chicks (pom poms, googly eyes, markers, tiny colored feathers, paper for beaks and feet)

June 24th - Pollinators

Craft: coffee filter butterflies (clothespins, coffee filters, markers, pipe cleaners, water to dilute color)

JULY

July 8th - Berries

Craft: strawberry/blueberry scented playdough (flour, berry scents, food coloring, salt, warm water, cream of tartar, olive oil)

July 15th - Herbs

Craft: herb sensory play (exploring rosemary, basil, oregano, mint, etc.)

AUGUST

August 12th - Summer Veggies

Craft: veggie stamps (painting with cut veggies:

celery, broccoli, okra, potato)

August 26th - Watermelons

Craft: watermelon fan (paper plates, paint, markers, popsicle sticks, green, red, pale yellow construction paper, glue)

SEPTEMBER

September 9th - Apples

Craft: apple stress ball (red and green balloons, flour, apple scent, green felt, brown paint)

September 23rd - Corn

Craft: native dried corn (pipe cleaners and beads) and corn hole game

OCTOBER

October 14th - Leaves

Craft: leaf art (construction paper, leaves, glue)

October 28th - Pumpkins

Craft: mini pumpkin volcano (pumpkins, dish soap, vinegar, baking soda, food coloring)

Note: The City of Shelton's Farmers Market and the Valley Sprouts Program are made possible with the help of a grant from the Valley Community Foundation. ♦

Community Calendar

PARKS & RECREATION

Community Center Hours:

Monday-Friday 6:30 am - 9:30 pm

Saturday 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

Pool Hours:

Monday-Friday 6:00 am - 8:45 pm

Sunday 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

Saturday 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

Information is posted on the city website: www.cityofshelton.org.

Information/Cancellation Hotline
203-331-4120 • 41 Church Street

SHELTON SENIOR CENTER

The Center provides a wide range of social, educational, health, financial, and recreational programs for residents 55 years of age and older. The Center sponsors parties, BBQ's, special events, day/overnight trips and casino trips.

Transportation to the Center is provided for Shelton residents (FREE MWF) including free shopping bus to local stores for members on Wednesdays. For more information regarding any of these programs, please call the Center at (203) 924-9324.

SHELTON YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

The Youth Service Bureau was established in 1988 by the City of Shelton for the purpose of developing, planning and coordinating services for the youth of the city and their families. The Youth Service Bureau works cooperatively with the schools, police, youth, parents and other community resources to encourage our youth to strive for their full potential. The Bureau provides programs for both youth and parents on issues of importance in today's society. It also provides information and referrals for parents and youth in need. For more information, please call the Youth Service Bureau at 203-924-7614 or email: SYSB@cityofshelton.org

SHELTON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Plumb Memorial Library
65 Wooster St. 203-924-9461

Huntington Branch Library
In the Community Center,
41 Church St. 203-926-0111

CONTACT INFORMATION

Shelton City Hall (203) 924-1555

Shelton Board of Education
(203) 924-1023

Shelton Community Center
(203) 925-8422

Shelton Highways and Bridges
(203) 924-9277

Shelton Animal Control
(203) 924-2501

Shelton Libraries:

Plumb Library (203) 924-1580

Branch Library (203) 926-0111

Shelton Police Dept. (203) 924-1544

Shelton Probate Court
(203) 924-8462

Shelton Registrar of Voters
(203) 924-2533

1ST WARD ALDERMEN

Anthony Simonetti (203) 926-0922

Porter C. McKinnon
portermckinnon32@gmail.com

2ND WARD ALDERMEN

Eric McPherson (203) 924-5862

Kevin Kosty (203) 513-9344

3rd WARD ALDERMEN

John Anglace (203) 929-1515

Cris Balamaci (203) 922-1639

4th WARD ALDERMEN

Lorenzo Durante (203) 623-3060

Bernie Simons (203) 925-8499

STATE LEGISLATORS

State Senator Kevin Kelly

(860) 240-8826

State Representative Ben McGorty

(800) 842-1423

State Representative Jason Perillo

(800) 842-1423

CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro

(New Haven office) (203) 562-3718

Congressman Jim Himes

(Bridgeport office) (866) 453-0028

U.S. SENATORS

Senator Richard Blumenthal

(Bridgeport office) (203) 330-0598

Senator Chris Murphy

(Hartford office) (860) 549-8463

Welcome, continued from page 1

those of you are not now familiar with Marty and his contributions, be prepared to be enlightened just as I was.

The City of Shelton has been built on people like Marty and so many others dedicating their time and good intentions to help make our city one of the most desired places to work and do business within the entire State of Connecticut.

As for many of us, myself included, I am enjoying spring and looking forward to our glorious summer months coming soon. We have so many things to enjoy here in Shelton such as our wonderful hiking trails, our summer concerts series in Huntington and downtown, our big annual fireworks show, the Riverwalk, car shows, food events, visiting our farms and the downtown farmers market on Saturdays.

The Biennial Report on the City of Shelton will be out in mid-summer so we will visit back with you in the fall for another edition of Shelton Life.

In the meantime, enjoy everything this great city of ours has to offer, and I'd love to hear from you on who else you would like me to interview for our fall edition of Shelton Life.

You can reach me at bcarbone@modernplastics.com or on my cell at 203.414.1559

Cheers,

Bing ♦

SHELTON COMMUNITY & BUSINESS NEWS

Economic Development Commission
City of Shelton
54 Hill Street
Shelton, Connecticut 06484

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Standard Mail
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
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