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# First Selectman's Corner

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

We are in a crisis, the likes of which many have never experienced. This has been a difficult time but also an opportunity for the community to come together and look after one another. Even small gestures of kindness can make a big difference. If you are well and able, please think of family, friends and neighbors who might need help. If you have the means, please support our local businesses through online purchases, to-go orders and gift certificates. We will get through this together.

Residents age 62 and over are invited to participate in a new program where you will receive a weekly check-in call while we are practicing social distancing. Please reach out to Social Services Director, Mary Ellen Barnes at: 860-767-4340 x201.

The Shoreline Soup Kitchen, the Estuary, and Region 4 schools are offering meals. If you are in need of a meal, you can refer to our website: [www.essexct.gov](http://www.essexct.gov) under News and Announcements or call Social Services Director, Mary Ellen Barnes at: 860-767-4340 x 201.

For real-time alerts on events happening in Essex, the Town will be offering a new community engagement platform through Everbridge NIXLE. NIXLE keeps you up to date

with relevant information as it's happening. In order to receive this information, you must opt-in. To sign up for a specific event text 888777 and type in the mobile keyword that will be created for that event. Instructions on how to sign up are on the [essexct.gov](http://essexct.gov) homepage.



Norm Needleman  
First Selectman

Please continue to take steps to protect those around you: wash your hands often and thoroughly, avoid touching your face, disinfect surfaces routinely, cough into your elbow, and stay home whenever possible. The CDC recommends wearing masking in public settings where social distancing is difficult. I can't stress enough how important following these recommendations is for your own safety and those around you.

The budget approval process for fiscal year 2020-2021, like so many other aspects of our lives right now, has been impacted by COVID-19. The Governor has issued a number of Executive Orders that direct the modified process for this **continued on page 5**



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# events

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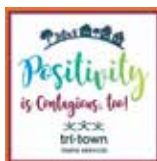
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## Neighbors Helping Neighbors



### SOCIAL SERVICES NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Each Town's emergency relief fund allows them to provide food and financial assistance to local residents who are struggling to cover basic needs during this difficult time. The number of residents seeking support has DOUBLED in a few weeks and is expected to continue to grow. Let's work together to keep these resources available for our unemployed neighbors.

Chester Community Fund  
 c/o Chester Town Hall  
 203 Middlesex Ave.  
 Chester, CT 06412

Deep River Community Fund  
 c/o Richard H. Smith  
 Town Hall  
 174 Main Street  
 Deep River, CT 06417

Town of Essex Social Services  
 Assistance Fund  
 c/o Essex Town Hall  
 29 West Avenue  
 Essex, CT 06426

## First Selectman's Corner... continued from page 3

year. Executive Order 7B temporarily suspends the in-person requirement for municipal public meetings. Executive Order 7I builds on this by suspending the in-person budget adoption requirement for municipalities and regional school systems and transfers the authority to adopt the budget. These orders do not suspend the requirement to provide public access to the meetings. The objective is to proceed in a manner as consistently as possible with our standard process.

### LOCAL IMPACT

Meetings have been and will continue to be accessible to the public remotely. Posted agendas on the Town website include the information necessary to listen and participate in the meetings via Zoom Meeting. Additionally, the meetings are recorded and are available to the public. The public hearing for the Selectmen's budget and the Essex Board of Education budget, originally scheduled in the Town Hall Auditorium, will be held via Zoom Meeting on its original date of April 16th at 7:30 pm. In place of the Town Budget Meeting, the Board of Selectmen will authorize the Board of Finance to adopt a budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 as allowed by Executive Order 7I. The Board of Finance will hold a remote meeting, accessible by the public, on May 11th at 7:30 pm to consider and potentially vote on the budget. Budget materials

are available on the Town's website at: [www.essexct.gov](http://www.essexct.gov) via a quick link on the homepage.

The proposed fiscal year 2020-2021 budget for the Town and education totals \$24,653,577 which represents an increase of \$458,427 or +1.89% over the current fiscal year. Major budget drivers include contractual wage increases, a rise in debt service costs as well as support to our public safety services including fire and ambulance.

Due to COVID-19 the Essex Town Hall will remain closed to the public. Please call for an appointment: 860-767-4340

I want to thank residents, the Health Director, the Police Department, Fire and Ambulance Departments, First Responders and the Town Hall staff for their resilience, calm, generosity and cooperation during these most difficult times.

We are blessed to live in such a wonderful community and I am hopeful for better days and months ahead.

Norm Needleman,  
First Selectman

## Publisher's Note

As of press time, our country is still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. These are, indeed, difficult times for all. Included in this issue of Essex Events Magazines is information regarding various programs and activities that span the upcoming quarter. Given the circumstances, some dates and times are subject to change. Please check with the applicable organizations for any potential changes and/or cancellations.

We hope that the situation resolves as quickly as possible and that we can all get back to some sense of normalcy!

Please also take note of our The Last Word feature (on page 30). The array of pictures celebrates the strength of our community in persevering through hard times.

Thank you to all!

We are pleased to be able to continue to provide you with Essex Events Magazines. Please stay safe and healthy.

We look forward to celebrating better times ahead!

William McMinn,  
Essex Printing and Events Magazines



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# Essex Board of Trade

COMMUNITY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Essex is a town with a long history, deep roots, and a fortitude built to last. The coronavirus pandemic, no matter how long it lasts, will send lasting effects throughout our community and country. During these challenging days, our grit can and will be tested.

As a town that has stood the test of time, Essex has become a great place to live, eat and drink, play, educate and grow. Now, more than ever, our community needs to come together and support our local businesses. It's of dire consequence that I ask you to forgo the online shopping realm - please fight that urge for convenience. It's up to all of us to decide what we want Essex to be - a preserved memory of times past, or an energetic and iconic town of the state.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community more than most. We do not house big corporations and chain stores that sell cookie cutter products. Our unique brick and mortar stores represent the heart and soul of Essex, they are you and they are me. If you truly believe in the future of our town, I implore you to stand up and speak with your almighty dollar. Take action and



## Experience Essex

THREE VILLAGES

Essex Board of Trade is proud to launch its new Experience Essex logo. The red, white and blue color scheme reflects Essex's history and nautical location on the Connecticut River, while the fresh font expresses the vitality of our community.

patronize our shops, restaurants, galleries, and all of our small businesses. Yes, the price tag might be higher than Walmart, but that dollar will stay in our town, stabilize our community, and ultimately help Essex to rebound and thrive.

The pride and joy of Essex is the serene beauty and community spirit. I hope that you all feel like you can and will be a part of everything great coming.

Experience Essex,  
Chef Colt Taylor | President, Essex Board of Trade  
<http://essexct.com>



### 33 Prospect Street, Essex CT | \$1,295,000

The much admired, iconic historic former circa 1850 renovated church property at the crest of Methodist Hill with stunning views of the Connecticut River & Essex Village; now available for the first time publicly in over 50 years. Completely rebuilt architect designed for contemporary living with soaring interior spaces and natural light through custom windows. Energy efficient with the very best materials from a 1985-96 renovation including marble, stone, wood. Soaring ceilings on the main level (formerly the sanctuary) spill natural light throughout.

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## Town Clerk's Office - Dog License



### ATTENTION

Considering the recent events surrounding COVID-19, we will only accept mailed in dog license renewals for 2020-2021. We apologize for any inconvenience. We are considering your safety and those of us in the Town Hall.

*(There will be no early renewals prior to June 1st.)*

Up-to-date rabies vaccine information will also be required as well as any current spayed or neutered procedures.

### Dog Application link:

[https://www.essexct.gov/sites/essexct/files/file/file/28683\\_-\\_doglicapp\\_0.pdf](https://www.essexct.gov/sites/essexct/files/file/file/28683_-_doglicapp_0.pdf)

### PLEASE NOTE

Keeping dogs licensed is required by State Statute 22-338 and not just a way to identify lost dogs, it is also a matter of safety, for pets and their owners.

Our Animal Control Officer is Caitlyn Sikora. She may be reached at: 860-767-4340 ext.160. When a dog is impounded it must be licensed before it's released. The fine for an unlicensed dog is \*\$75.00; the fine for failure to have an updated Rabies Certificate is \*\$136.00; and the fine for a roaming dog is \*\$92.00.

Thank you for your consideration.

*\*Fees Subject to Change*

## Essex Community Fund

### ABOUT US

Created in 1949, Essex Community Fund is one of the oldest and most unique programs in the Essex Community that raises and distributes funds to our local non-profit organizations that focus on: food and meal programs, health services, education, supporting our senior citizens, fuel assistance, public safety, arts and culture. Thank you to our donors, with your donations we are able to continue to support these vital organizations that help to keep our community healthy and thriving.

### 3RD ANNUAL CHEERS FOR CHARITY HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED TO JULY 25, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 virus, we have rescheduled our 3rd Annual Cheers for Charity Event to July 25, 2020. Held at the historic Essex Steam Train in Centerbrook from 1:00 - 4:00 pm, there will be over 4,000 square feet dedicated to this special afternoon event of beer tasting from a wide variety of small and craft breweries. Special VIP access begins at 12:00 pm. If you have tickets for the March 21st event, they will be honored on July 25th.

### Tickets for the July event are on sale at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/3rd-annual-cheers-for-charity-to-benefit-the-essex-community-fund-tickets-85910050273>

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and how you can help improve it for you, your family, your neighbors, and even future generations; plus, it's a great way to give back to your community. ECF has many opportunities to volunteer. Please contact us to learn more; we welcome our time and talent. For more information visit: [www.essexcommunityfund.org](http://www.essexcommunityfund.org).

## FISH (Friends in Service Here)

FISH was founded locally in 1970 to provide free rides to medical appointments for residents of Essex, Deep River and Chester. The officers for 2020 are: Henry May, President; Stuart Warner, Vice President; Mary Samburg, Secretary; Barbara Ryan, Treasurer, Dana Hill, Driver Recruitment, Leo Zavatone and Jack Frost, Directors. Dispatchers are John Heiser and Tony Carrano.

With the onset of the coronavirus, and after much reflection and discussion, the FISH Board suspended driving. That began on March 17, 2020. With the help of 1st Selectman Norman Needleman, we have been fortunate to have some other driving services take on some of our more frequent riders. We will resume driving when it can be done safely.

The modest FISH budget is funded by grants from the Essex Community Fund, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, the Essex Rotary Club, the Essex Savings Bank, the Deep River Community Health Committee, the Town of Chester, the Town of Essex, Smith Brothers Insurance and other organizations, as well as by contributions from our drivers, riders and friends.

Henry May,  
Driver and President

## 9th Annual Run for Chris 5K with the Y

June 27, 2020, in Essex, CT

JOIN US FOR A GREAT FAMILY-FUN EVENT!

Proceeds from the Run for Chris 5K with the Y supports the Chris Belfoure Memorial Fund at Community Foundation of Middlesex County. This run honors the memory and vision of Chris Belfoure, a 2005 graduate of Valley Regional High School. Influenced by his own life altering experiences traveling and living abroad, Chris was passionate about encouraging others to broaden their own horizons. The fund benefits foreign language study abroad programs at local area high schools.

continued on page 10



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## Run for Chris 5K... continued from page 9



On December 10, 2019, Community Foundation of Middlesex County was excited to give a grant to the YMCA to support them.

- **Great Raffles** including a Family membership to the Westbrook Y.
- **Race information and registration at:** [www.chrisbel4mf.com](http://www.chrisbel4mf.com).
- **Note: until June 7** ages 14 and under free, group rate discounts (online only)
- **Awards include...** under 20 age group awards (<10, 10-14, 15-19)
- **Food for runners** include a generous donation of bagels from Cohen's.
- **Race starts at Essex Town Hall:** 8:15 am Kids Fun Run, 8:45 am 2 mile walk and 5k run.

Friends of Chris Belfoure Memorial Fund @CFMC are excited to see everyone on June 27, 2020. Please email: [robinc83@gmail.com](mailto:robinc83@gmail.com), if you would like to be a volunteer, sponsor or donate a raffle item.

## Hearts & Hope for Haiti

SISTER CITIES ESSEX HAITI REMEMBERS THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE OF JANUARY 12, 2010 Celebrates 10 years of "hope" building



At 4:53 pm on January 12, 2020, the bells of St. John's Church, Essex, rang 35 times in remembrance of

the massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, Haiti exactly 10 years ago; 35 times as the earthquake shook the ground for an endless 35 seconds. Various estimates report that approximately 100,000 to 200,000 people lost their lives, and about 3 million lives were impacted. Sister Cities Essex Haiti respectfully remembered the 10th anniversary with a special ecumenical service, and also celebrated 10 years of a very successful Sister Cities relationship with Deschapelles, Haiti. Reverends Benjamin Straley and Linda Spiers, and SCEH co-founders Dr. Dan Taylor-Stypa, and David Evangelisti

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planned a solemn, but joyful, music and poetry-filled service with Haitian poet and photographer, Marc-Yves Regis; organist Darlene James; singer Phred Mileski, and readers: SCEH co-founder Jenifer Grant; Reverend Judith Alexis; SCEH Board member Robert Lamothe; Pastor of First Baptist Church, Essex, Reverend Joy Perrett, and SCEH President, Susan McCann. One of the more poignant moments included Marc-Yves Regis' reading of his poetry aside Reverend Alexis, who translated his words into Creole.





In the last 10 years, SCEH, with their partners in Haiti, have built a community library, with architectural design by Essex resident, Hope Proctor. The library is extremely important to the community as students in Deschapelles, Haiti used to study standing under street lamps; now, they have a beautiful library in which to study. SCEH has also collaborated on successful music, tennis, robotics, and cross-cultural programs. SCEH won an innovation award from Sister Cities International for their Early

Education Teacher training program. Our library and programs have served as a source of stability for the children and families of Deschapelles... and "hope" keeps on building. Please view: FB@sistercitiesessexhaiti website at: [www.sistercitiesessexhaiti.org](http://www.sistercitiesessexhaiti.org).

Susan K. McCann,  
SCEH President

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We hope you will find our website to be a useful tool to find updated information and explore our wonderful community.





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# Spring & Summer at Essex Historical Society



Just because we are all safely practicing social distancing, does NOT mean you need to be a stranger to local history. Essex Historical Society (EHS) offers plenty of opportunities to connect lifelong-learners with our dynamic past. As we stay safe this spring, please continue to connect with us to receive firm dates and times.

## COME SEE THE PRATT HOUSE WITH NEW EYES, AS WE OPEN JUNE 5TH!

EHS welcomes all ages to visit (or revisit) Essex's only historic house museum, Pratt House, 19 West Ave. Open weekend afternoons, 1:00 - 4:00 pm. June through September, Pratt House offers free guided tours by trained, knowledgeable guides. Learn what life was like in the 18th and 19th centuries for an Essex family in a seaport town. New guides welcome!

EHS, Sustainable Essex, the Essex Land Trust, the Essex Garden Club, and River COG are collaborating on the design and planting of a 'Pollinator Pathway' garden behind the Pratt House, to be planted in the spring. To get involved with this community project, we're happy to have you join the Pollinator Garden team to help with planting, light weeding, watering and or funding. Please send us an email at: [sxpollinators@gmail.com](mailto:sxpollinators@gmail.com) to let us know how you'd like to get involved.



Pratt House opens for tours on June 5th.  
Photo courtesy of Essex Historical Society.

Look for our popular walking tours, pop-up programs and the many ways we continue to Celebrate Centerbrook in 2020, including an elegant Lobster Bake, a detailed and richly illustrated Centerbrook booklet (both in print and online) and a new online, feature - a virtual 'flyover' of what this historic village looked like

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Main Street, Centerbrook, Conn.

Celebrate Centerbrook in 2020 with a new online history booklet (print, too), walking tours, a lovely Lobster Bake, and more! This postcard captures Centerbrook's lovely Main Street, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Essex Historical Society.

in 1910. EHS thanks presenting sponsors Overabove and Centerbrook Architects, printing support from Guilford Savings Bank and ongoing "Follow the Falls" project sponsor, Essex Land Trust.

For the latest info, please visit EHS's website at: [www.essexhistory.org](http://www.essexhistory.org) or follow us on Facebook.

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## Boots & Bowties to Benefit Tri-Town Youth Services

PLEASE HELP TRI-TOWN YOUTH SERVICES GIVE EVERY CHILD A LEG UP!



On October 10th TTYSB will be hosting Boots & Bowties, a fun, horse-themed fundraising event to support early childhood programming. The party will be held at Incarnation Center's newest lodge and will feature great music by Red Supreme Productions with a fun Square-Dance Demonstration and Lessons by Sound Steppers!

We'll be serving tasty samplings of your favorite comfort foods, and an array of donated beer and wine. Our silent auction baskets and prizes will be sure to feature items that everyone - especially families - will love. Best of all, the funds raised at Boots & Bowties will enable an Early Childhood Specialist to work directly with families of young children in Chester, Deep River and Essex.

This new part time position will help Tri-Town partner with our preschools more and host playgroups and parent nights that build community and offer support.

- What:** Boots & Bowties  
**When:** October 10 from 5:30 - 9:00 pm  
**Where:** Incarnation Center/Bushy Hill, 253 Bushy Hill Road, Deep River.  
**How much?** Childcare is available thanks to the Nature's Playground team (must pre-register, online.) For more information or to purchase your tickets, please visit: [tritownys.org](http://tritownys.org) or call: 860-526-3600.

## Town Clerk's Office

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Anthony & Marion Consolo	14 Essex Glen Unit #1	Essex
Joseph J. Carfagno	63 Comstock Ave.	Ivoryton
Joyce Pillion	24 Ebony Lane	Ivoryton
Anthony & Nicole Atwood	23 Lynn Road	Ivoryton
Charles & Katherine E. Brashears	50 West Hills Road	Ivoryton
Scott M. Sweeney	36 Gates Road	Essex
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George & Deborah Ross	7 Budney Hill Road	Ivoryton
Stephen J. Burack II	14 Brooks Lane	Ivoryton
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Thomas G. O'Neill Margaret M. Snyder  
James Sant'Andrea

**March**

**February** Nancy S. Bateman  
Natalie W. Weikart Elspeth J.M. Woodward

Respectfully submitted,  
Yvonne Roziak, Assistant Town Clerk



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*To make a donation to the Live Local Give Local Emergency Fund, go online to [www.MiddlesexCountyCF.org](http://www.MiddlesexCountyCF.org) or give us a call at (860)347-0025.*

# ESSEX TOWN HALL

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is open Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

Norman Needleman, First Selectman	x114	nneedleman@essexct.gov
Maria Lucarelli, Assistant	x112	mlucarelli@essexct.gov
Betsy D'Amico, Alyson Finnegan	x145	afinnegan@essexct.gov

## ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

Caitlyn Sikora	x160	csikora@essexct.gov
----------------	------	---------------------

## ASSESSOR

Jessica Sypher, Assessor	x124	jsypher@essexct.gov
Betsy D'Amico, Assistant	x123	bdamico@essexct.gov

## BUILDING DEPARTMENT & FIRE MARSHAL

Dave DeLeeuw, Building Official	x117	ddeleeuw@essexct.gov
John Planas, Fire Marshal	x146	jplanas@essexct.gov
Darcy Roper	x144	droper@essexct.gov

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Kelly Sterner, Director of Finance	x122	ksterner@essexct.gov
Dana Novorio, Assistant	x116	dnovorio@essexct.gov
James Francis, Treasurer	x127	jfrancis@essexct.gov

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Lisa Fasulo, Director of Health	x118	lfasulo@essexct.gov
Kerry Berardinelli	x119	kberardinelli@essexct.gov

## LANDFILL/RECYCLING CENTER

Mike Birner, Supervisor	860-767-1926	
Bill Armstead		

## PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Mary Ellen Barnes, Director	x110	mbarnes@essexct.gov
Tim LaChance	x148	tlachance@essexct.gov

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

	x150	planner@essexct.gov
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## PUBLIC WORKS

Ryan Welch, Director	860-767-0715	
Richard Gallacher, David Martin, David Massey	x161	rwelch@essexct.gov

## REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Caitlin Riley	x142	registrar@essexct.gov
John Heiser	x142	criley@essexct.gov jheiser@essexct.gov

## RESIDENT STATE TROOPER

ESSEX POLICE	860-767-1054	
Mark Roberts, Resident State Trooper		mroberts@essexct.gov
Paul Kenefick		jkenefick@essexct.gov
Todd Belcourt		tbelcourt@essexct.gov
Christopher McCarthy		cmccarthy@essexct.gov
Karen Reilly		kreilly@essexct.gov
Robert Hart		rhart@essexct.gov
Judson Howes		jhowes@essexct.gov

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Mary Ellen Barnes	x201	mbarnes@essexct.gov
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## TAX COLLECTOR

Megan Haskins, Tax Collector	x120	mhaskins@essexct.gov
Lynne Skinner, Assistant	x121	lskinner@essexct.gov

## TOWN CLERK

Joel Marzi, Town Clerk	x129	jmarzi@essexct.gov
Yvonne Roziak, Assistant	x128	yroziak@essexct.gov

## TOWN HALL OPERATIONS

Maintenance	x136	maintenance@essexct.gov
Andrew Harrington	x136	aharrington@essexct.gov

## ZONING ENFORCEMENT

Joe Budrow, Enforcement Agent	x115	jbudrow@essexct.gov
Kerry Berardinelli	x119	kberardinelli@essexct.gov

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# Cappella Cantorum - 50th Anniversary Celebration

After hundreds of performances on stage, in churches and cathedrals all over Connecticut and Europe, and several at Carnegie Hall, the singers of Cappella Cantorum were rehearsing with gusto for their 50th anniversary concert on May 3rd at Valley Regional High School in Deep River. Unfortunately, that has been put on hold to hopefully be performed in the fall. Although we are on hiatus, we're still able to sing in our kitchens, showers, and backyards. We can even rehearse as individuals online at learning websites or with YouTube performances, giving us the chance to continue doing what we love best - performing great choral music.

Cappella, as most everyone calls this amazing chorus, was the brainchild of Old Saybrook resident Barry Asch, who was conductor and musical director for 47 years, and Phillip Zimmerman, the first president. In December 1969, following a performance of Britten's Ceremony of Carols by choir members and friends of the First Congregational Church in Essex, CT, Phil approached Barry with such enthusiasm for this gathering of choristers that he hoped they could continue the fellowship of singing major choral works, and thus Cappella was born.

The other singers in that augmented chorus felt the same way - the fellowship, the coming together to perform magnificent music has contributed to the longevity of this group for 50 years. Barry's idea of a non-auditioned chorus would allow ordinary singers the opportunity to learn and perform major pieces.

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This concept remains today and is Barry's crowning achievement - "the joy of conducting and bringing all those people together."

Watch for future notices of our 50th Anniversary celebration and our performance of Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle on our web site: [www.cappellacantorum.org/](http://www.cappellacantorum.org/).



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# ESSEX LIBRARY

## ASSOCIATION

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Though we expect circumstances and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have continued to evolve, as of this writing at the end of March, the Essex Library is still closed for an indefinite time. We are very much looking forward toward the library's reopening and welcoming patrons and community members back! In the meantime, library staff have been working remotely on delivering virtual services and programs to our patrons.

Our free OverDrive downloadable eBook and audiobook service offers more than 38,000 titles to choose from with something to delight every reader and in many foreign languages as well. Essex residents with a library card also have free access to downloadable magazines through the Zinio service and more eBooks,

audiobooks and AcornTV through the RBDigital service. If you don't have a library card, we can issue one. Instructions for getting a card are located at the top of our Homebound Library Resources page.

Each of the library's five book groups have transformed their meetings into video chat groups using Zoom software. These groups are always open to new members. For more information on what's being read, the meeting schedules and login information, see the Book Groups page on our website.

Library programming has shifted to the Zoom video conferencing arena. Check the library's calendar and our Adult Events and Children's Events pages for complete information on accessing programs from home.

We are committed to continuing to provide as many of the library's services as possible during the closure. We offer virtual reference services Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Call the library at: 860-767-1560 and leave a voicemail or email us at: [staff.essexlib@gmail.com](mailto:staff.essexlib@gmail.com) and we will get back to you as quickly as possible. Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for news updates, reader's advisory and library fun.

## Essex - Community Listings

### HOUSES OF WORSHIP

- All Saints Episcopal Church..... (860) 767-1698
- First Baptist Church..... (860) 767-8623
- First Congregational Church ..... (860) 767-8097
- Ivoryton Congregational Church..... (860) 767-1004
- Our Lady of Sorrows Church ..... (860) 767-1284
- St. John's Episcopal Church..... (860) 767-8095
- Trinity Lutheran Church ..... (860) 767-0228

### CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Ancient Order of Weeders..... (860) 767-2700
- Democratic Town Committee..... (781) 483-2021
- Community Foundation of Middlesex County..... (860) 347-0025
- Essex Board of Trade..... (860) 767-3904
- Essex Boy Scouts of America ..... (860) 304-9027
- Essex Community Fund..... (860) 304-2751
- Essex Cub Scouts of America ..... (860) 790-0681
- Essex Garden Club ..... (860) 388-7209
- Essex Historical Society ..... (860) 767-0681

- Essex Lion's Club..... (860) 767-8072
- Essex Land Trust..... [info@landtrust.org](mailto:info@landtrust.org)
- Essex Little League..... [www.essexlittleleague.org](http://www.essexlittleleague.org)
- Essex Veterans Memorial Hall ..... (860) 767-8892
- F.I.S.H. .... (860) 388-2693
- Ivoryton Company of Fifers & Drummers ..... (860) 767-2237
- Ivoryton Village Alliance ..... [info@ivorytonalliance.org](mailto:info@ivorytonalliance.org)
- Lower Valley Visiting Nurses ..... (860) 767-0186
- Republican Town Committee..... (860) 262-0226
- SCORE Mentors ..... (860) 388-9508
- The Shoreline Soup Kitchens ..... (860) 388-1988
- Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau ..... (860) 526-3600
- 9 Town Transit ..... (860) 510-0429

### SCHOOLS

- Essex Elementary School..... (860) 767-8215
- John Winthrop Middle School..... (860) 526-9546
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In preparing its students and members for a life of greater independence in this social distancing reality, Vista has reimagined its programs and services. Virtual learners attend daily individual and small group lessons to develop their adult learning, but lessons expand beyond the classroom. Vista's staff also help students and members navigate the complexities of new social dynamics as well as health and safety guidelines.

Remote learning is a journey for everyone and the entire Vista community will continue to transition together. Vista is humbled and inspired to see students and members translate their coping and self-advocacy skills within this new platform.

*Vista Life Innovations is a 501©3 nonprofit organization with campuses in Madison and Westbrook. Vista's mission is to provide services and resources to assist individuals with disabilities achieve personal success. For more information about Vista, please visit [www.vistalifeinnovations.org](http://www.vistalifeinnovations.org).*



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## About the Cover - A Bright Spot for Essex



Thanks to The Essex Foundation's ongoing gateway beautification efforts, 20,000 daffodils enjoy their first bloom on Route 154 across from the Essex fire station. The bulbs were planted in November by Sullivan Lawn Service, which required several crew members and several days to cover the half-acre expanse. Funding for the bulb purchase and planting services came from a bequest to The Essex Foundation by the late Elizabeth Callender, with additional support provided by The Paul Foundation, Centerbrook Properties and individual donations.

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## The Sailing Masters of 1812

At the time of this writing we are almost through winter and the Sailing Masters or 1812 are very busy getting ready for 2020! Rehearsals started in mid-January and welcomed a few new members!



**A past Burning  
or the Ships  
Commemoration.**

Our season normally begins early, with the “Essex Ed Parade” and all the St. Patrick Day parades, which sadly did not happen this year.

We were looking forward to the annual “Burning of the Ships Commemoration” in May. This would have been the 52nd year the Sailing Masters has held this event. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of COVID-19 we will not be holding our Annual event.

Since 1968, the Corp has taken the time to remember the great loss that Essex endured during the War of 1812. Although there was no loss of life, it was a major economic blow to the town. The “Raid on Essex” was the largest naval loss our young country suffered until Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. The ships of Essex were privateer ships built specifically to harass the British. Needless to say, the British soon tired of the harassment which provoked the raid. Not only were ships burned and destroyed, the cordage and shipwright house, sail lofts and other structures that were an integral part of the building trade were also lost. It was a disastrous blow to the town. But the resiliency of the residents of Essex was strong and within a year they started building ships again and continued for many years thereafter.

The Sailing Masters will continue the tradition next May. As we roll into summer, and parades start picking up again, please make sure you come out and support all of the local Fife and Drum Corps. We are very fortunate in Connecticut to be the birthplace of traditional ancient martial music in the United States.

For more information, the Sailing Masters of 1812 can be contacted through our Facebook Page or at [info@sailingmasters.org](mailto:info@sailingmasters.org). We are always seeking new members and community support to carry on our rich history!



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# Connecticut River Museum News

This past quarter, we had quite an active speaker series. Both the mid-day and evening series were well attended; some presentations were standing room only! Discussions included Steam Power, an Ancient Burying Ground in Hartford, Votes for Women, Eagles in CT, and Jessie Hull Mayer - An Independent Artist! We eagerly anticipate another round of speakers in the fall.

The Town of Essex kindly hosted our Birds of Prey show with more than 200 on hand to see the beautiful raptors shared by A Place Called Hope. And, once again, the Privateer Bash did not disappoint! Privateers roved through our museum and were fortified with grog, grub, music, and dancing.

Our partnership with RiverQuest Cruises showed more than 1500 folks the winter river during our Eagle Wildlife Cruises. Students from Colchester, East Haddam, Glastonbury, Hartford, Hebron, Middletown, Portland, and Westbrook Schools participated in our Reaching Beyond the Classroom program and saw the winter landscape aboard Project Oceanology.



Privateers enjoying their evening!

**This spring we look forward to:**

- Authors and Artists Series -May 14
- River Fare -June 4
- Shad Bake -June 6
- Shanties and Sails -June 9, 16, 23, 30
- Connecticut Open House -June 13



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- Summer Adventure Camp -July and August

As always, please check our website: [ctrivermuseum.org](http://ctrivermuseum.org) and our Facebook (@ctrivermuseum) and Instagram (ctrivermuseum) posts for the latest news and updates on programs.

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## A New Pollinator Garden in Essex

Essex Historical Society, Sustainable Essex, the Essex Land Trust, the Essex Garden Club, and River COG are collaborating on the design and planting of a 'Pollinator Pathway' garden behind the Pratt House in Essex. The garden is scheduled to be planted in the spring. Since this is an outdoor activity, we're hopeful that COVID-19 won't delay this great initiative. The concept of a 'Pollinator Pathway' began in 2007 as a civic design project in Seattle to address the problems caused by fragmentation of the global landscape by rapid urbanization, industrial agriculture, and use of pesticides, resulting in disruption of native plant and pollinator interactions. Since pollinators are the reproductive strategy of 80% of the planet's plant life, they are the foundation of the ecosystem. What began as a civic design project in Seattle has spread across the country with many cities and towns doing what they can to improve pollinator habitat. For more information on this in the Northeast go to: [pollinator-pathway.org](http://pollinator-pathway.org).

The premise of the 'Pollinator Pathway' project is that by connecting green spaces across the world, biological life is supported in a fragmented landscape.

If you'd like to get involved with this community project, we're happy to have you join us to help with planting, light weeding, watering and or funding. Please email us at: [sxpollinators@gmail.com](mailto:sxpollinators@gmail.com) to let us know how you'd like to get involved.

We hope to have the garden installed and ready for viewing by June 1st. As an educational tool, seed packets of pollinator friendly plants will be available (free of charge) to encourage people to help the pathway grow by planting them in their own yards.

## Dams, Fishways & River Restoration

### THERE ARE AROUND 4,000 DAMS IN CONNECTICUT

Four thousand; large and small, most old and very old, few of them used for the purpose for which they were originally built. "We are one of the most densely dammed states in the country," says Steve Gephard, Supervising Fisheries Biologist with the state DEEP Fisheries Division. And, while many were used to power the colonization of the state and, later, its Industrial Revolution, their proliferation has meant major and, in many cases permanent, changes in the local ecosystem of countless streams and rivers.

These waterways are vitally important aquatic resources, providing a variety of habitat suitable for the different life stages and needs of a wide variety of aquatic organisms. "When rivers are dammed, they are no longer able to function naturally," says The Nature Conservancy's Sally Harold. "The habitats these species depend on for feeding, breeding and growth may no longer be accessible to them. Isolation from others of their species also results in a decline in the gene pool."

### DAM BUILDING IN CONNECTICUT

**Where did all these dams come from? What are those long-term effects and what is being done to mitigate them?**

It started with the European settling of North America. For the new colonists in the 17th century, one of the attractions of our area was a wealth of streams with a significant drop in elevation, says Gephard. Small dams built along these

waterways provided power for basic industries; milling corn, sawing timber, manufacturing iron and making ice. “Most towns had streams with enough flow to make it worthwhile,” Gephard says. “That worked well for a hundred years, into the middle 1700s.” In 1793, the Englishman Samuel Slater opened what’s considered to be America’s first textile mill, the Pawtucket, R.I., firm of Almy and Brown Co., using a dam he designed; the Industrial Revolution was on. Water would go a long way in powering the movement. “In our area, they were manufacturing ivory [goods] in Deep River, tools in Chester, twine in Moodus,” explains Gephard. “Local industry was everywhere, and every town had a specialty.”

**A NOD TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

People understood the impact these dams had on the local fisheries, even in the early 1800s. Most obvious was the disruption of fish “runs,” or migration patterns. In Maine, a primitive type of fishway was built for the alewife population. Dams in many states were supposed to have a gap for migrating fish, but they were seldom built. “These dams wiped out fish run after fish run,” says Gephard. “In the 1860s, they tried to restore salmon and shad to the Connecticut River by building fishways, but they didn’t work very well.”

continued on page 28



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## Essex Land Trust... continued from page 27

### THE END OF DAM BUILDING

This intensive, water-powered industry lasted through the 19th century in our part of the Valley, before tapering off. But dams were still being built for other purposes, including hydroelectric production (there was one on Salmon River in East Haddam) and industrial processing. There was a last flurry of dam-building right after World War II much of it for flood control.

### WHAT WAS LEFT

All those years the dams were being built, they were having a deleterious effect on the waterways they were built on. They didn't just block the fish migrations, they also led to a rise in water temperature and altered the depth and breadth of the stream, impacting the lives of the plants and animals that lived there. In short, a dam pretty much changed everything.

"Natural water falls blocked anadromous fish [which move naturally between fresh-and salt-water] migrations, but the dams downstream of the falls blocked and, in many cases destroyed, the runs completely," says Gephard. Even above the range of anadromous fish, there were trout and other native fish that were affected. "The Falls River would have been full of Brook trout, which prefer swift-running water," Gephard says. "Now, the trout are farther upstream at the preserves while the ["quieter"] Mill Pond area of the river is home to Large-mouth Bass, Bluegills and non-native minnows."

### RESTORING THE FISH RUNS

**Today's modern fishways can help restore those fish species' migration patterns.**

The new era of the fishway in New England began in the 1970s. Using technologies from the West Coast, where salmon runs were being restored, New Englanders got serious about restoring their own runs of Atlantic Salmon, Alewives and Bluebacks, says Gephard. "In Connecticut, we've built about 65 fishways through the Diadromous Fish Program of the Fisheries Division. We come to a town, look at a stream and discuss options with property owners."

The dam behind Centerbrook Architects, in Centerbrook, Connecticut, was just such a property, and removal was not an option. "A lot of people live around the pond [behind the dam] and Centerbrook Architects still uses the dam to generate electricity," says Gephard. "But there was an interest in fish restoration." Centerbrook Architects' Principal, Mark Simon, explains why. "Our former facilities director, Bill Rutan, suggested a fishway after removing his own dam, arousing our curiosity. Shortly after, we met Sally Harold of The Nature Conservancy, and Steve Gephard of [the Connecticut] DEEP, who explained the fishway's critical ecological benefits and how we could create a partnership."



The result is the newly constructed John T. and Jane A. Wiedherhold Fishway, located on the Falls River behind the architect's historic building, a former manufacturing company that used the dam for power. "We're all very pleased with the result and eager to observe the first run in spring," says Simon. "And we're looking forward to the DEEP's ongoing monitoring and maintenance, which makes our lives easier and offers ongoing scientific value to the project. And of course, we are proud to bring back fish that haven't been up our river for over 300 years."

That's the kind of synergy that can help restore and rejuvenate the state's waterways and the ecologies they represent. "Fish restoration projects can't happen without public/private cooperation," Simon says. "Since many dams are on private property, the participation of the landowner is necessary and yet, they are not likely to understand required steps. We found that The Nature Conservancy and the DEEP's involvement was essential to our participation: they instilled confidence and lead us through the process with ease in an informative and collaborative approach."

Steve Knauth

# Essex Land Trust OspreyCam Live Streams



The Essex Land Trust is pleased to announce that our website is now hosting two live OspreyCam streams, which are showing the nesting season progression at two locations: Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison and West River Memorial Park, New Haven. These live streams are courtesy of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society (website: [menunkatuck.org](http://www.menunkatuck.org)). To access these streams, logon to the Essex Land Trust website at: [http://www.essexlandtrust.org/11\\_ospreycam.html](http://www.essexlandtrust.org/11_ospreycam.html).

We have decided to suspend the live streaming of our Thatchbed Island OspreyCam. Over the last several years, we have seen our fledglings suffer the impact of predation, so we have decided to provide alternative Osprey camera streams from nearby locations in Connecticut.

Ospreys continue to make a remarkable comeback after having practically disappeared from our coastal region in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2019, the Connecticut Audubon Society's Osprey Nation Citizen Science Program identified 799 nest locations. Of these sites, there were 501 active nests producing a total of 650 fledglings. Ospreys are now occupying new nesting sites that are further inland than their historical range along the Connecticut coast.

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