

Hartford Courant

Thursday, January 4, 2024

‘Unique,’ new coffee and cocktail lounge opens



Yellow King Bristol is a new coffee bar in Bristol. Courtesy
BY PAMELA BROWN SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

Coffee, local brews, and specialty cocktails in Connecticut.

This trifecta forms the combination for Yellow King Bristol, a new coffee bar in Bristol.

“It’s a unique place that caters to everybody. We have a passion for coffee, and after learning how to craft different types of coffee we added it to the bartending world,” said Rob Vitale who, along with co-owner Shama Khan, opened their second location at 67 Race St. in Bristol, next door to The Bristol Bazaar.

Yellow King also has a location at 920 South Colony St. in Wallingford.

“The success of our business the first year in Wallingford was something we didn’t expect. It exceeded expectations,” he said.

The new 700-square foot shop has a separate entrance and will be accessible through the Bazaar.

The 38-seat coffee shop will offer a diverse menu featuring coffee, beer, cocktails, and light bites.

“On weekends, you’ll see mom and dad come by with their kids, people can get a cup of coffee, dad can get a beer or a martini. We have specialty hot chocolates for the kids, too,” said Vitale. “But everything comes back to the coffee – we’re a coffee shop first. Everybody loves coffee, but our specialty is cold brews.”

The 12-page menu showcases 15 special cold brews with sauces and syrups made in-house. Flavored cold brews and lattes are shaken with specialty flavors to create extraordinary cocktails.

“It’s pretty fun. Other places don’t have that,” said Vitale.

A signature drink is the Nuzilla, a blend of Nutella, marshmallow sauce, and other ingredients. Most popular is Cookie Monster made of cookie butter topped with a blue foam.

Also known for its specialty martinis, the shop will have nine on the menu with three new Espresso martinis every season in addition to non-coffee cocktails, including four seasonal and 10 to 15 different spiked lemonades, teas, and a variety of margaritas. Beer is on the menu, with the shop kicking off with five local craft brews, including an IPA, a Pilsner, and a Stout.

“We never do anything that’s not in Connecticut. We’re always changing up our tap list to see what’s new out there and support new breweries.”

Recently, Vitale collaborated with Armada Brewing in New Haven on a new stout and with Litchfield Distillery created a specialty bourbon infused with Yellow King’s organic coffee beans for the base of a coffee old fashioned.

To complement the drinks, food is also available. Yellow King is known for its egg sandwiches, made fresh daily. A pastry case will be filled with local doughnuts and sweet treats. On the bar side is pizza from a local business and light bites, including hot pretzels, nachos, and buffalo bit sandwiches. Once settled in, there's plans for trivia night, live music on the outdoor patio, and a collaboration with The Bristol Bazaar on group events.

More on the coffee

Coffee has always played an important part in Vitale's life.

After he and Khan met while working at a grocery store and a well-known coffee chain, they embarked on a learning experience to hone their skills.

"We both had a love of coffee and wanted to learn more about it so I got a job at Willoughby's Coffee and Tea in New Haven while working at their roasting plant in Branford. From there, we always talked about one day owning our own coffee company because the passion was there. We began roasting our own coffee and selling to local farmers markets and breweries," said Vitale who noted he appreciated the atmosphere of breweries and how they offered less of a bar feel.

"I love coffee shops, but I wanted to be able to stay open later to cater to everyone."

The rest is history and they opened their first brick-and-mortar cafe in 2021.

The coffee shop's name was inspired by *The King in Yellow*, a book of late-1800 horror short stories by Robert W. Chambers.

"We both have this love for New England Goth horror. We put our own spin on it and made our own logo and character. It's a pretty cool concept," said Vitale, of the character that factors into the shop's lounge-like, speakeasy feel.

A vibrant hand-painted purple and yellow mural on the exterior welcomes patrons.

Created by local artist Michael DeAngelo, it features the Yellow King logo, along with tentacles holding the shop's name. Some of the interior details include dark wood-beamed ceilings, rope lights with vintage Edison bulbs, a sleek bar with a copper top and a galaxy mural on the bottom with LED lights. A 30-foot maple back bar, with a live edge that runs the length of the establishment, was custom-designed and made by Dusty Dude Woodworks of Bristol.

"We have some cool craftsmanship here. It doesn't have a bar feel to it."

A second hand-painted mural adorns an interior wall. “Our Yellow King character is kind of spilling a cup of coffee onto the bar. It’s pretty cool. We added a little bit of that artsy dynamic to our coffee shops over what you’d get in a normal coffee shop,” said Vitale who will feature different local artists every month.

The location of the Bristol location came about when Carolyn Verikas, owner of The Bristol Bazaar, reached out to Vitale.

“The Bristol Bazaar’s core concept is to help small business owners grow their business. We’re here to act as a hub for anyone looking for a way to get connected to someone or another business without needing to use Google,” said Verikas.

“Yellow King is the final piece to the puzzle. When we created The Bristol Bazaar, we wanted to offer a three-part experience for customers: shopping small, the event/classroom space, and a place where folks can enjoy a coffee, coffee cocktail, or grab something to eat,” Verikas said. “Rob and Shama are supporters of the arts and as small business owners they truly fit right in with everything we’re working on here at the bazaar. We’re excited to have them here with us.”

Vitale appreciates Bristol’s vibe.

“Mayor Caggiano is really going out of his way to get small businesses to come to this town. We want to add something that they don’t have already,” said Vitale, who’s looking forward to a soft opening in January. “We’re very excited and anxious,” said Vitale. “To build something really nice, it takes time. It’s going to be incredible.”

Porch pirate caught stealing iPhone Page 2

New Star Wars movie is finally here Page 12

The Bristol Press

Serving the Communities of Central Connecticut



Lexie Mangum, NAACP

Greater Bristol NAACP hosts MLK Day event

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The Greater Bristol NAACP will hold their annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day scholarship breakfast Monday, Jan. 15 at Bristol Eastern High School.

The breakfast will be held starting at 8 a.m. at the school, at 632 King St.

Deborah Dorsey, chair of the Greater Bristol NAACP's "Freedom Fund," said that each year the organization tries to give out a couple of scholarships to local students, as funds raised allow.

"We try to get the community involved,"

See MLK ON PAGE 4

Four Chaplains Day ceremony

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — American Legion Post 209 will hold a memorial ceremony Feb. 3 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

The ceremony will be held Feb. 3, at 4 p.m. at the church at 355 Camp St.

It will honor the memory of four U.S. Army chaplains who gave their lives

so that others might live. A small reception with light refreshments will be held following the ceremony.

The event will honor the memory of four chaplains, each from different religions, who lost their lives when the USAT Dorchester was sunk by a German U-boat making its way for Greenland on Feb. 3, 1943.

The SS Dorchester was a civilian liner that was

converted into a War Shipping Administration troop transport.

The chaplains, George Fox, Methodist, Alexander Goode, Jewish, Clark Poling, Dutch Reformed, and John Washington, Roman Catholic, gave up their life preservers so that others could live, and sang hymns to keep the men in the freezing water calm.

regardless of their religious See CHAPLAINS ON PAGE 4



Submitted by American Legion Post 100

The four chaplains bravely gave their lives so that others might live during World War II.

New Bristol Biz



FILE

City and chamber officials were on hand to welcome Precise HVAC Home Services, whose interests lie in forming relationships in the community.

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Business celebrates grand opening

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — City and chamber leaders celebrated the grand opening of Precise HVAC Home Services Monday.

The company, located at 35 Wooster Court, Unit D, is owned by Jose Crespo and employs three

people. They are a full-service HVAC company which provides residential services to a third of Connecticut, within roughly a 50-minute radius of their Bristol location.

Crespo has 17 years of experience in the HVAC field and decided that he wanted to open his own business in the city where he lives. He

started Precise HVAC Home Services in August.

"I worked for HARP Home Services for 11 years and ran the company for three or four years," said Crespo. "I got to the point where I had a lot of my own clients and decided it was time to try it. I've been living in Bristol for the past 15 years; we moved here

when my daughter was two years old."

Crespo said that city leaders, especially Justin Malley, economic development director, were very helpful throughout the process of getting his business established.

"I knew that I wanted to be in my hometown," he said. "Finding the right

spot was hard, but the one we found was perfect."

Crespo said that the advantage of going to Precise HVAC Home Services is that they are "very affordable, respectful and trustworthy."

"We are highly skilled, with many hours of training, so you know that you'll

See GRAND ON PAGE 4

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An after-effect of the deadly storm system that ravaged the nation Tuesday into Wednesday.

Flooding and high winds pummel the Northeast

KATHY MCCORMACK AND SCOTT MCFETRIDGE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONCORD, N.H. — A major storm drenched the Northeast and slammed it with fierce winds, knocking out power to hundreds of

thousands following a bout of violent weather that struck most of the U.S.

The storm, which started Tuesday night and was moving out Wednesday, washed out roads and took down trees and power lines. Wind gusts reached 45 mph to 55 mph (72 kph to 88

kph) and more windy weather was expected throughout Wednesday.

It followed a day of tornadoes and deadly accidents in the South and blizzards in the Midwest and Northwest.

In New Jersey, where Gov. Phil Murphy declared a state See WINTER ON PAGE 4



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Winter storm aftershocks

Continued from Page 1
of emergency in advance of the storm, many streets and roads were flooded and rivers were rising after some areas got up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of rain since Tuesday night. The storm knocked out service on some train lines in New York City and flooded a highway in the Bronx, upending thousands of commuters on Wednesday morning.

Lou DeFazio, 65, of Manville, New Jersey, lives steps away from the Millstone River that flooded disastrously in 2021 after the remnants of Ida slammed into the state and swerved riverbanks. He said the river was expected to crest later Wednesday.

"It's getting worse and worse," he said.

In Maine, Gov. Janet Mills delayed the opening of all state offices until noon Wednesday due to the storm, which began as snow and later turned into rain in parts of New England. Heavy snow was hitting parts of northern Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine on Wednesday morning.

As high tide neared closer on Long Island on Wednesday morning, parts of the southern shore were already inundated by coastal flooding. In Nassau County, video showed cars sloshing through water that had collected on the streets of Freeport. Further east, near the Hamptons, the National Weather Service reported major flooding out

of Shinnecock Bay. Several schools across Long Island said they were either canceling or delaying classes as a result of the storm.

The wild weather came as portions of the Northeast were still digging out from a nor'easter that dumped more than a foot of snow in some areas over the weekend.

In Danbury, Connecticut, officials said the snow that melted in the overnight rain had overwhelmed the city's drainage capacity, leaving a dozen intersections flooded. At least one motorist was rescued from a vehicle.

Powerful winds gusted to 95 mph (153 kph) at Maine's Isle au Haut, an island in Penobscot Bay, and to 83 mph (134 kph) off the coast of Rye New, Hampshire, said Jon Palmer from the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine.

Tens of thousands of homes and businesses were in the dark, mostly in coastal areas that were lashed by wind and rain. Farther inland, heavy wet snow blanketed the region.

On Tuesday, the same weather system brought heavy rain, hail and at least three reported tornadoes to the South before moving eastward.

Rain and high winds extended into the nation's capital Tuesday night, forcing Vice President Kamala Harris' aircraft to divert from Joint Base Andrews to Dulles International Airport near Washington when it encountered wind shear — a sudden shift in wind direction or speed.

Chaplains honored

Continued from Page 1
backgrounds. "Of the 902 men on board, 230 survived," said Brian Avery, commander of American Legion Post 209. "The four chaplains sacrificed themselves for others and created a legacy of brotherhood. The Four Chaplains are referred to as 'The Immortal Chaplains' or 'The Dorchester Chaplains,'" Avery said. "The sinking of the SS Dorchester has been referred

to as "the second-worst sea disaster of World War II. The impact of the chaplains' story was deep, with many memorials and extensive coverage in the media. Each of the four chaplains was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. The chaplains were nominated for the Medal of Honor, but were ineligible as they had not engaged in combat with the enemy. Instead, congress created a medal for them,

with the same weight and importance as the Medal of Honor," said Avery. Avery said that Post 209 is proud to be one of the few American Legion posts to honor the four chaplains. "We cordially invite everyone to attend a service at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church that will be provided to you by members of the American Legion pPost 209," he said. "Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to attend this ceremony."

MLK Day breakfast

Continued from Page 1
added Lexie Mangum, who serves on the executive committee for the local branch of the NAACP. "It's really about trying to help the students in our community to further their education. These scholarships help to prepare young

minds for the future." The scholarship breakfast will also have a guest speaker this year, 2019 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Sheena Graham. Dorsey encouraged people to come out to the breakfast, celebrate the legacy of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

and help to support local students. "The Bristol NAACP is for everybody, no matter the race, religion or color of their skin," she said. Admission to the breakfast is \$20 per adult. Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-269-0822 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.

Grand opening celebration

Continued from Page 1
be dealing with genuine people," he said. "Customer service and satisfaction is our priority. We want to make sure that our customers are happy with our work before we leave. When you call us, you're not just calling another company. We want to build a relationship with our customers."

Crespo currently employs two field employees and an office employee. They

are taking care of a lot of heating systems and hot water pumps, to make sure that customers stay warm through the winter. He hopes to hire two additional workers during the summer, when demand for air conditioning will be high. Attending the grand opening and ribbon cutting celebration Monday were Central CT Chambers of Commerce staff, Precise HVAC staff and family members and

city officials including Mayor Jeff Caggiano, Justin Malley, economic development director and Mickey Goldwasser, ECD Board Commissioner. For more information on Precise HVAC Home Services, visit precisehvac.com or call 860-222-9907.

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-269-0822 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.



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The Bristol Press

Serving the Communities of Central Connecticut



Terryville Fish & Game Club holding annual supper

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANMJOHNSONBP

PLYMOUTH - The Terryville Fish & Game Club is offering its annual Game Supper Saturday, Jan. 27.

The menu includes assorted hors d'oeuvres including mussels provencal, pheasant marsala, stuffed mushrooms, beaver stew, and chili.

Patriots, Belichick end historic run

KYLE HIGHTOWER ASSOCIATED PRESS

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. - Bill Belichick had a vision of building the kind of sustained, championship football team that had rarely been seen before in the NFL when he was hired by the New England Patriots.

the coach of the Patriots, ending his 24-year tenure as the architect of the most decorated dynasty of the league's Super Bowl era.

ward, excited for the future." Neither Belichick nor Kraft took questions, though Kraft scheduled an availability for later in the day.



Patriots team owner Robert Kraft, left, and former Patriots head coach Bill Belichick embrace during news conference.



Members of the Carrier Realtor team and Gino Carrier (third from left), along with Mayor Jeff Caggiano and city staff, visited the construction site.

Centre Square project on the move

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANMJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL - Progress is continuing on the Centre Square Village construction site, which will ultimately bring four dedicated sit-down restaurants, 104 apartments and 16,000 square feet of retail space to downtown Bristol.

Mayor Jeff Caggiano toured the 76,000 square foot site on N. Main and Hope Street Tuesday with city staff, Gino Carrier and his team.

During the groundbreaking, Ryan Carrier, owner and construction manager with By Carrier, spoke of how his family has been in Bristol for multiple generations.

project to work on than this one, here in his hometown. "I thank the city for their faith and ability in us," he said.

from his office. That part, he said, should be completed by the end of the week. The tour, he said, was focused on the interior space - the first floor of dedicated retail space.

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Engine maker Cummins involved in \$2B scandal

ALEXA ST. JOHN ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Department of Justice released new details of a settlement with engine manufacturer Cummins Inc. Wednesday that include a mandatory recall of 600,000 Ram trucks, and remedying the

environmental damage it caused when it illegally installed emissions control software. The engine manufacturer is accused of trying to cheat on emissions tests and will pay \$1.675 billion civil penalty to settle claims, which the AP reported in December, in

addition to \$325 million on remedies. Officials called the settlement - which is the largest Clear Air Act settlement to date - "landmark," and vowed to go after any automaker who tries to cheat emissions tests. Volkswagen and Fiat See CUMMINS ON PAGE 4





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Patriots part with Belichick

Continued from Page 1 ceded respect for the media "even though we don't always see eye to eye."

He also thanked the fans for "the sendoffs, the parades, the Sundays." But most of his time was spent thanking the people throughout the organization, especially the more than 1,000 Patriots players he coached in his time here.

"Players win games in the NFL," Belichick said. "I've been very, very fortunate to coach some of the greatest players to ever play the game."

Kraft called the relationship a marriage that had required work and had come to an end.

"I'm very proud that our partnership lasted for 24 years," Kraft said. "Bill has taught me a lot over those years, and we had high expectations for what we could achieve together. I think we were the only ones who had those expectations, and I think it's safe to say we exceeded them."

"We did," Belichick agreed. "Thanks to you," Kraft said.

Belichick, 71, became just the third coach in NFL history to reach 300 career regular-season victories earlier this season, joining Hall of Famers Don Shula and George Halas. With 333 wins including the playoffs, Belichick trails only Shula (347) for the record for victories by a coach.

But the Patriots ended this season 4-13, Belichick's worst record in 29 seasons as an NFL head coach. It

supplanted the 5-11 mark he managed in his last year in Cleveland in 1995 and again in his first year in New England in 2000. Including the playoffs, he ends his Patriots tenure with a 333-178 overall record.

Belichick is expected to resume his pursuit of Shula's record elsewhere.

With his cutoff hoodies and ever-present scowl, Belichick teamed with Tom Brady to lead the Patriots to six Super Bowl victories, nine AFC titles and 17 division championships in 19 years. During a less successful stint with the original Cleveland Browns, Belichick earned 37 of his career victories.

Reaction to Thursday's announcement poured in across social media. It included one from Brady, who responded with three heart emojis to a post on ESPN's Instagram page which had photos of Belichick and Kraft embracing during Thursday's news conference.

It's not immediately clear who Kraft will tap to replace the future Hall of Famer.

Patriots linebackers coach Jerod Mayo has interviewed for multiple head coaching vacancies since becoming a New England assistant in 2019. Mayo turned down a few interviews last offseason before signing a contract extension to remain with the Patriots.

Mike Vrabel, who was fired earlier this week by the Titans and won three Super Bowls with the Patriots, is expected to be a candidate for the head coaching job.



An architectural rendering of Centre Square shows the project upon its completion.

Centre Square build

Continued from Page 1 ing is exposed steel, which is designed to look modern and cool.

The spaces inside are open to design. By Carrier

is helping restaurateurs who come in to reduce the cost of upfront expenses. They won't front the entire 250,000 or so to outfit a kitchen, but by starting with

a blank slate space it will cost people a lot less money to come and invest."

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-269-0822 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.

Fish & Game Dinner

Continued from Page 1 sole, game hen, and game sausage creole."

Bread and butter, coffee, tea and soda will also be available. Dessert will be apple crisp.

"Beer, wine, and other

beverages will be available for a slight donation," Orsini added.

The cost of the supper is \$40. The menu is subject to change.

For additional information, or to purchase tickets,

call Tommy Markwica at 203-802-4263 or Eileen Klimanowski at 860-309-7267.

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-269-0822 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com.

Cummins recall suit

Continued from Page 1 Chrysler were also found to have previously done so.

The Department of Justice released new details of a settlement with engine manufacturer Cummins Inc. Wednesday that includes a mandatory recall of 600,000 Ram trucks, and that Cummins remedy environmental damage it caused when it illegally installed emissions control software in several thousand vehicles, skirting emissions testing.

That can bypass or defeat emissions controls. The engine manufacturer will pay a \$1.675 billion civil penalty to settle claims previously announced in December and the largest ever secured under the Clean Air Act - in addition to \$325 million on remedies. That brings Cummins' total penalty for the violations to more than \$2 billion, per Wednesday's announcement, which officials from the U.S. Justice Department, Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board and the California Attorney General

called "landmark" in a call with reporters Wednesday.

"Let's this settlement be a lesson: We won't let greedy corporations cheat their way to success and run over the health and wellbeing of consumers and our environment along the way," California AG Rob Bonta said.

Over the course of a decade, hundreds of thousands of Ram 2500 and 3500 pickup trucks - manufactured by Stellantis - were equipped with Cummins diesel engines that incorporated the bypassing engine control software.

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\$1.1B in new assets are now in the state retirement coffers

ERIC RUSSELL STATE TREASURER

HARTFORD - On Wednesday afternoon, Connecticut's Investment Advisory Council (IAC) convened their first meeting of 2024 at the State Office Building in Hartford.

State Treasurer Erick Russell opened the meeting by announcing more than \$1.1 billion in investment commitments in the private credit and real estate portfolios of the Connecticut Retirement Plans and Trust Funds (CRPTF).

In private credit, the Treasurer committed \$125 million to ICG North America Credit Partners Fund III LP and \$200 million to ICG Liquid Credit Strategies, including ICG Global Loan Fund and ICG Global Total Credit Fund.

Treasurer Russell also announced two European credit investment commitments. He will direct \$150 million to ICG Europe

Mid-Market Fund II SCSp and \$150 million to a customized co-investment program. This equates to approximately \$328 million total, at the current exchange rate.

In the state's real estate portfolio, Treasurer Russell announced his decision to commit \$125 million to Penzance DC Real Estate Fund III LP, \$200 million to Stonepeak Infrastructure Fund V LP, and \$125 million to Homestead Capital USA Farmland Fund IV, LP.

These investment decisions were based on input and feedback the Treasurer received during the November 2023 meeting of the IAC.

"I'm pleased to kick off 2024 with this slate of investment commitments," said Treasurer Russell. "These European opportunities, in particular, represent prudent diversification of our private credit portfolio. I'm grateful to the IAC for their collab-

oration and input in these decisions."

Also in Wednesday's meeting, the IAC received several updates from the Treasurer's investment team. These included an update on Global Equity positioning and outlook, the currency overlay strategy for the Public Markets, a review of the Short-Term Investment Fund (STIF), and a presentation of the CRPTF rebalancing process.

Additionally, Principal Investment Officers Mark Evans and Denise Stake provided an overview of the recommended pacing plans for the Private Equity, Private Credit, Real Estate, and Infrastructure/Natural Resource Asset Classes.

The IAC is comprised of volunteer members who are responsible for providing advice to the State Treasurer on performance benchmarks, investment and shareholder policy, and institutional investment procedures for the CRPTF.

Hartford Courant

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Bristol theater creating ‘a buzz’

Renovated Rockwell has drawn thousands of patrons of all ages



The Downtown Live at the Rockwell Theater is creating a buzz in downtown Bristol. The newly renovated 100-year-old theater is inside the Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School. courtesy

BY SEAN KROFSSIK SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

It's a theater that might just have something for a lot of people, if not everyone.

And so far, the Downtown Live at the Rockwell Theater is creating a buzz in downtown Bristol.

The newly renovated 100-year-old theater is located inside the Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School and it has entertained more than 17,000 patrons since it opened in September.

The theater has booked talent from a wide range of entertainment for the coming months.

On Jan. 20, for example, there will be a free community conversation called 1 Degree of Separation which is a comedy show aimed at ending the stigma of mental illness.

The February show is “Animatics” in Concert. There will be two shows in March, including Funny Women of a Certain Age, a comedy show, will be on stage on March 9 and The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System, a musical adaptation, will be there on March 20. The Drifters will be performing on April 20.

“We are excited for what the year is going to bring,” said Arianna Therriault, the City Arts & Culture supervisor.

“We have something for adults, very young children or older generations. We are getting a feel for what Bristol and the surrounding areas want to see,” Therriault said.

Following the pandemic, several businesses were shut down in the downtown and the Rockwell has been a positive in the rebuild.

“We’ve had a lot of positive feedback and there’s a buzz going on that something is going on in downtown Bristol,” Therriault said. “We are trying to drive business and keep business down here.”

The Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School opened for the 2022-23 school year. Prior to that, it was Memorial Boulevard Middle School until closing in 2012. The building was initially built in 1923 as Bristol High School and used for that until 1967.

“The theater and school have been a decade long process,” said Josh Medeiros, Bristol’s Superintendent of Parks & Recreation Youth and Community Services. “The city debated what to do with the building and a task force and it was decided that a magnet school could be successful.”

Bristol received a state grant and the school opened in the fall of 2022 and the school has made the theater available for community productions on the weekends.

“We want to keep building downtown and the arts culture in Bristol,” Medeiros said.

“The response we’ve had so far has been excellent. We’ve had great attendance and have had thousands of people come through,” Medeiros said. “We are trying to keep the prices down to make it as affordable as possible and bring in some high-caliber names. We hope to become a regional destination over the coming months.”

The theater seats 620 and is over 100 years old. The theater also relies heavily on its seven volunteers and is always seeking more.

Therriault said the theater is working on selling alcohol to add to revenue.

“We are on a dawn for great things for Bristol,” Therriault said. “We haven’t had anything like this here for a long time.”

If interested in volunteering, contact Therriault at 860-584-6120 or at AriannaTherriault@bristolct.gov.

Barnes Group to sell off two businesses for \$175M



COSTAR

Barnes Group's Main Street headquarters in Bristol.

By Skyler Frazer

Barnes Group has agreed to sell two of its businesses to a private equity firm for \$175 million in a move that company officials said will help pay down debt.

Barnes, a Bristol-based advanced manufacturing company in the aerospace and industrial sectors, is selling its Associated Spring and Hänggi businesses to One Equity Partners in a deal expected to close early this year, subject to regulatory and other customary closing conditions. The two brands are part of Barnes' motion control solutions business unit within its industrial segment, which serves the automotive and other markets.

According to Barnes, net proceeds from the sale will help the company pay down debt incurred from its acquisition of MB Aerospace in Aug. 2023. At the time, Barnes purchased U.K.-based MB Aerospace for \$740 million, one of Barnes' largest acquisitions ever.

Barnes President and CEO Thomas J. Hook said the sale, paired with the recent acquisition of MB Aerospace, are examples of the company's commitment to simplify its industrial segment, an effort that began more than a year ago.

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"Over the past year, we have been executing a comprehensive business transformation strategy based on three key pillars — Execute Core Business; Scale Aerospace; and Integrate, Consolidate & Rationalize Industrial — to generate improved growth, profitability, and cash flow at Barnes. Informed by a comprehensive strategic review of our business by independent advisors, we have continuously shared progress updates on our journey. Today's announced divestiture demonstrates a leap forward in rationalizing our Industrial business and rebalancing our portfolio toward our industry-leading aerospace business," Hook said.

The two businesses had about \$200 million in revenues over the last 12 months and have more than 800 employees worldwide, Barnes said.

To read more, please
[login](#) or [register](#) (free)

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, First Bristol Federal Credit Union seek merger

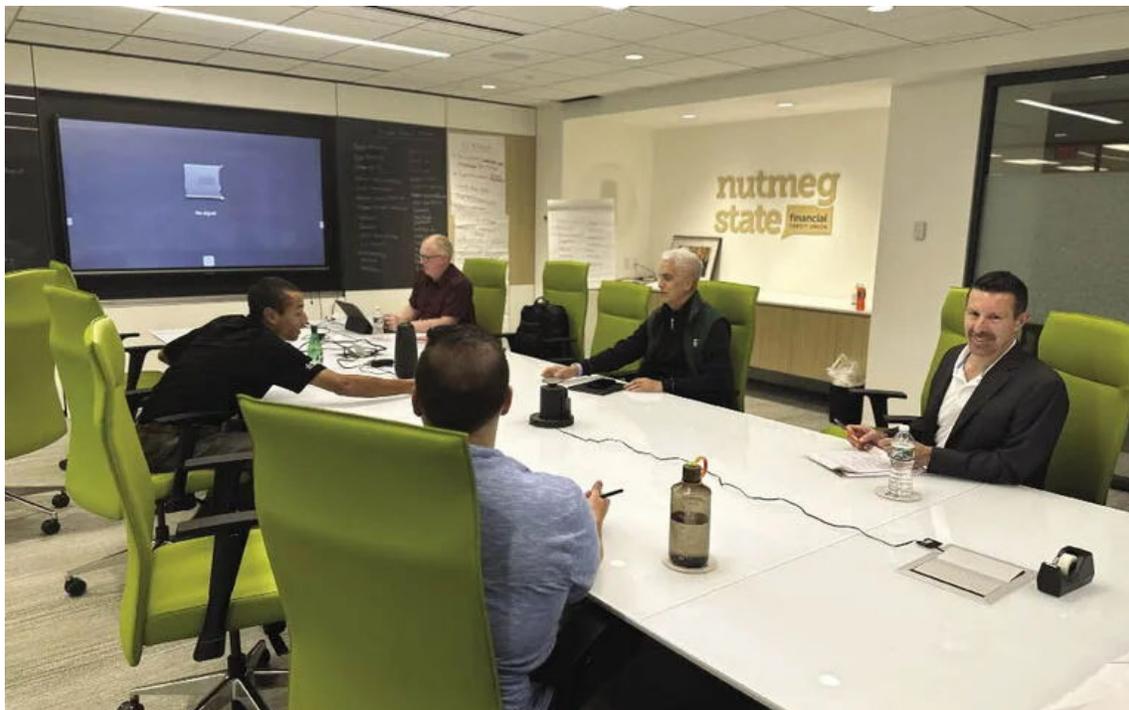


PHOTO | CONTRIBUTED

John Holt (far right), CEO and president of Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, with his leadership team at the organization's Rocky Hill headquarters.

By Michael Puffer

Rocky Hill-based Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union and First Bristol Federal Credit Union have applied to merge under the banner of Nutmeg, the larger of the two institutions, according to the state Department of Banking.

In an application filed Jan. 8, the credit unions set a June 1 target date for the merger of the 10-branch Nutmeg Financial with First Bristol, which has two branches in the city for which it is named. The merger needs approval from the Department of Banking and National Credit Union Administration.

The two institutions have set a target of January 2025 for putting the Nutmeg name on the Bristol branches and merging all core data systems and online member-facing platforms, Nutmeg CEO John D. Holt said.

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, chartered in 1935, has 42,900 members and assets of \$565.57 million, according to the NCUA. It has branches in Manchester, Milford, Rocky Hill, Orange, New Britain, Stratford, Glastonbury, Norwalk and North Haven, as well as one for students, parents and faculty at Rocky Hill High School.

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The Bristol-based credit union, also launched in 1935, has 5,762 members and assets of \$108.5 million.

The merger will retain all branches and staff from both institutions, Holt said. After the merger, Nutmeg will have nearly 130 staff – including the entire First Bristol management team – and more than 50,000 members and over \$700 million in assets, Holt said.

Holt said the merger will bring growth with new efficiencies and lower overhead costs, for a stronger institution able to provide an array of new products and services to First Bristol members.

To read more, please
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“It’s going to give a lot of the members of First Bristol a lot more options, a lot of technology that we have, more branch locations,” Holt said. “We have a bigger product offering for loans and deposit accounts.” Nutmeg also doesn’t charge overdraft fees, Holt said.

“We are going to be able to bring a lot to the table for first Bristol,” Holt said.

ADVERTISEMENT

The merger of First Bristol into Nutmeg would continue a long-running trend of consolidation that has dramatically reduced the number of Connecticut credit unions over the past two decades, even as the overall number of credit union members and assets have grown considerably.

Holt said First Bristol has excellent management and a strong membership base, but it is difficult for small institutions to keep up with the adoption of new regulations and rapidly evolving technology. Nutmeg will shortly launch a new online platform with improved mobile apps and remote deposit features, he said.

“Credit unions and even banks often merge to provide members with more options, more value to being part of an organization that is bigger,” Holt said.

Holt stressed the merged organization will still be a “medium-sized, locally run” financial institution.

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Redevelopment would bring 100 apartments, commercial space to Hartford’s Parkville neighborhood



Hartford mayor announces City Hall veteran to head new small business office



Peruvian restaurant coming to Hartford

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Bristol City Hall

Bristol launches 'CivicPlus' to provide easier access to residents

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL—Bristol will launch a new "CivicPlus Agenda and Management Select Solution" Feb. 1, which city leaders say will "enable transparency and convenient access to public meetings."

The city has partnered with CivicPlus and will use its software to streamline the automation of its agenda and meeting minutes management processes.

In addition to improving access for residents, the software allows board members to participate in live meetings remotely anywhere from any Internet-enabled device.

"This upgrade to the City's agenda and See CIVIC ON PAGE 4

Income tax program at United Way

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is being offered at United Way of West Central Connecticut on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The VITA program is presented by United Way of West Central Connecticut and HRA of New Britain. People can schedule

appointments for tax assistance between 4 and 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Saturdays at the United Way of West Central Connecticut at 440 N. Main St.

Nancy Micloskey, community impact coordinator with United Way of West Central Connecticut, said that the program reflects United Way's mission to promote health, education and financial stability.

"Most of the community members who participate in this program realize cost savings and then, ideally, get a refund," she said. "That stays in the community and helps the local economy."

Those who earned less than \$65,000 may be eligible for free tax preparation services through the VITA program, including e-file and direct deposit.

Additionally, if they See INCOME ON PAGE 4



United Way Citizens may be eligible for free tax preparation services.



The 19th annual Sloper Plunge will be held next month at the YMCA Camp Sloper at 1000 East Street. Proceeds go to local children attending camp.

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Sloper Plunge helps those in need

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

The 19th annual Sloper Plunge will be held Feb. 24 at 1 p.m. at YMCA Camp Sloper, located at 1000 East St., with an inclement weather date of March 2. "In just under six weeks, members of our community will plunge into

the icy waters of Sloper Pond," said Mark Pooler, chief executive officer at the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA.

"Whether you have been part of the Sloper Plunge in the past, or want to check this off your bucket list, we hope you're able to jump with us this year." Pooler said that each

year, hundreds of families, community leaders and volunteers from Southington and Cheshire form teams and participate in the Sloper Plunge.

"Proceeds," he said, "will be used to provide local children in need with the opportunity to have 'a magical camp experience' in the summer."

Participants must be a minimum of 16 years of age as of Feb. 24 and they must obtain a scholarship for themselves, totaling a minimum of \$100 per participant. They must also sign a waiver prior to taking the Plunge. 16- and 17-year-olds must have a parent or guardian sign the waiver.

Participants must also register with one of the team captains, who can be found on the Sloper Plunge webpage: scycymca.org/sloperplunge.

From the webpage, they are encouraged to edit their donation page, include their fundraising goal and include a bio about them- See SLOPER ON PAGE 4

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Attorney General Merrick Garland toured murals of shooting victims on Wednesday in Uvalde, Texas.

DOJ reports 'cascading failures' in Uvalde shooting

ACACIA CORONADO AND JAKE BLEIBERG ASSOCIATED PRESS

UVALDE, Texas — Police officials who responded to the deadly school shooting in Uvalde, Texas "demonstrated no urgency" in setting up a command post and failed to

treat the killings as an active shooter situation, according to a Justice Department report released Thursday that identifies "cascading failures" in law enforcement's handling of one of the deadliest massacres at a school in American history.

The Justice Department

report, the most comprehensive federal accounting of the haphazard police response to the May 24, 2022, shooting at Robb Elementary School, identifies a vast array of problems from failed communication and leadership to inadequate technology and

See UVALDE ON PAGE 4





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Bid by meatpacker to join New York Stock Exchange faces opposition over Amazon deforestation

FABIANO MAISONNAVE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRASILIA, Brazil — In recent weeks, lawmakers in the United States and the United Kingdom have sent letters to the Securities and Exchange Commission cautioning against the listing of JBS, the world's largest meatpacking company, on the New York Stock Exchange.

Trading on the world's largest exchange would give JBS, which applied in July, access to more capital and enhance its credibility.

But the lawmakers, along with environmental groups, argue that expanded capital would allow the company, responsible for much deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, to do even more harm.

The company has made repeated claims that it will eliminate deforestation but has not taken meaningful steps to do so, said the letter from 15 U.S. senators, released last week.

The U.S. letter, signed by Democrats and Republicans, comes days after a similar letter from 11 British lawmakers that said letting JBS raise capital from shareholders "contradicts global efforts of governments and businesses to take action to mitigate climate change" and to "preserve essential natural habitats."

A spokesperson for the SEC, which has regulatory oversight of the NYSE, said that they don't comment on individual filings. JBS and the NYSE did not respond

to questions. Many companies listed on the New York and other stock exchanges have had, or still have, questionable environmental records.

But often they have been listed for decades, having gone public when there was much less scrutiny of ecological impacts from business operations.

The dispute surrounding JBS' bid highlights the connection between finance and various drivers of climate change, such as deforestation.

It also raises questions about gauging claims that a company is committed to improving its environmental record.

Two-thirds of Amazon deforestation results from conversion to pasture for livestock, according to the Brazilian government. JBS, which has the largest slaughter capacity in the region, buys thousands of cows raised illegally every year, according to audits by federal prosecutors.

In December, The Associated Press and Brazil's Agencia Publica revealed that Rondonia state is suing JBS for purchasing cattle raised illegally in a protected area that has been damaged to the point of near total destruction.

According to court papers, the company accepted documents that showed cattle going straight to the slaughterhouse from land that is legally protected.

The company has declined to comment.

'CivicPlus' launched

Continued from Page 1

meeting management system will allow for a more streamlined and consistent process for City staff to better manage meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and agenda packets, which are posted to the meeting calendars on the City's website," said Erica Cabiya, City of Bristol Town & City Clerk. "It will be more user-friendly for the community as well with the ability to watch meetings live on demand from any internet-enabled device."

With this new system, residents can utilize a mobile-friendly public portal with email subscription capabilities, view or download PDF files for agendas, meeting minutes, agenda packets, and other documents, access a meeting calendar, and watch live/on-demand meeting videos.

Dawn Nielsen, marketing

and public relations specialist for the City of Bristol, said that those who currently receive email notifications through the new system will have to re-sign-up for these notifications through the new system. They can do so by creating an account at notifications.civicplus.com/CT-Bristol/ and clicking on "sign in to manage subscriptions" at the top right of the page.

Mayor Jeff Caggiano said that the implementation of the new system will "create uniformity for all agendas and meeting minutes."

"We hope this will foster better engagement with the public as the new format should make finding all documents for meetings more convenient and easier to follow," he said. "I encourage the public to sign up to receive email notifications for meetings as soon as agendas and other documents are

posted to CivicClerk in order to stay engaged in City government."

CivicPlus has more than 12,000 customers, including municipalities, counties and municipal departments.

"CivicPlus is built on designing innovative solutions for local governments," said Megan Asikainen, solution manager with CivicPlus. "We continually invest in our products to strengthen and transform the way local governments serve and communicate with their citizens. We are proud to partner with the City of Bristol to help its leaders accomplish their transparency and document management goals."

For more information on CivicPlus, visit CivicPlus.com.

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-769-0822 or bjohnson@bristolpress.com

Uvalde shooting findings

Continued from Page 1

Wednesday ahead of the training that federal officials say contributed to the crisis lasting far longer than it should have.

Even for a mass shooting that has already been the subject of intense scrutiny and in-depth examinations, the nearly 600-page Justice Department report adds to the public understanding of how police in Uvalde failed to stop an attack that killed 19 children and two staff members.

Uvalde, a community of more than 15,000, continues to struggle with the trauma left by the killing of 19 elementary students and two teachers, and remains divided on questions of accountability for officers' actions and inaction.

The shooting has already been picked over in legislative hearings, news reports and a damning report by Texas lawmakers who faulted law enforcement at every level with failing "to prioritize saving innocent lives over their own safety."

In the 20 months since the Justice Department announced its review, footage showing police waiting in a hallway outside the fourth-grade classrooms where the gunman opened fire has become the target of national ridicule.

Attorney General Merrick Garland was in Uvalde on

Wednesday ahead of the release of the report, visiting murals of the victims that have been painted around the center of the town. Later that night, Justice Department officials privately briefed family members at a community meeting in Uvalde before the findings were made public.

Berlinda Arreola, whose granddaughter was killed in the shooting, said following Wednesday night's meeting that accountability remained in the hands of local prosecutors who are separately conducting a criminal investigation into the police response.

"I have a lot of emotions right now. I don't have a lot of words to say," Arreola said.

The review by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services was launched just days after the shooting, and local prosecutors are still evaluating a separate criminal investigation by the Texas Rangers. Several of the officers involved have lost their jobs.

Uvalde County District Attorney Christina Mitchell said in a statement Wednesday that she had not been given an advance copy of the Justice Department's report but had been informed it does not address any potential criminal charges.

How police respond to mass shootings around the country

has been scrutinized since the tragedy in Uvalde, about 85 miles (140 kilometers) southwest of San Antonio.

In Texas, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott initially praised the courage of officers' response and blame was later cast heavily on local authorities in Uvalde. But an 80-page report from a panel of state lawmakers and investigations by journalists laid bare how over the course of more than 70 minutes, a mass of officers went in and out of the school with weapons drawn but did not go inside the classroom where the shooting was taking place.

The 376 officers at the scene included state police, Uvalde police, school officers and U.S. Border Patrol agents.

The delayed response countered active-shooter training that emphasizes confronting the gunman, a standard established more than two decades ago after the mass shooting at Columbine High School showed that waiting cost lives. As what happened during the shooting has become clear, the families of some victims have blasted police as cowards and demanded resignations.

At least five officers have lost their jobs, including two Department of Public Safety officers and Uvalde's school police chief, Pete Arredondo, who was the on-site commander during the attack.

'Sloper Plunge' for charity

Continued from Page 1

themselves and why they are taking the Sloper Plunge. Participants must also turn in their pledge form and waiver form to the YMCA in Southington at 29 High St. or in Cheshire at 967 S. Main St. on Feb. 23 between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

People can also bring the pledge form and waiver forms with them on the day of the Plunge.

The Sloper Plunge is sponsored this year by Maximum Sound & Security, Hartford HealthCare, East Coast Mechanical, Inc., The Fire

Place, All Waste, Inc., Matrix and J. Mongillo Concrete Construction.

For more information, visit scycymca.org/sloperplunge, call YMCA Camp Sloper at 860-621-8194 or email Mark Pooler at mpooler@scycymca.org or Doug Levens at dlevens@scycymca.org.

Income tax program

Continued from Page 1

earned less than \$63,398, they may be eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

If people are filing a joint return, both spouses must be present. Tax assistance cannot be done with rental or Puerto Rico income.

People should bring the following items to their VITA appointments:
Driver's license or photo

identification
Social security or individual taxpayer ID cards for all household members

. Birthdates of themselves, their spouses and their dependents, . Records of all income.

. Interest and dividend statement forms
. Last year's tax return if they have one

. Child care provider name, address and tax ID or

social security number
. Education expenses and student loan information

. For direct deposit, a checking or savings account number and routing number.

To schedule an appointment, call 860-356-2000 or visit HRANBCT.org/VITA and select United Way of West Central Connecticut as the location.

For questions, call Micoskey at 860-582-9559.

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Barbara Coleman-Hekeler, President & CEO, Southington Chamber of Commerce

Southington Chamber of Commerce Power Hour luncheon series continues

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

SOUTHINGTON — The Southington Chamber of Commerce's "Power Hour" luncheon series is continuing with a discussion on succession planning for businesses Jan. 25.

The upcoming Power Hour luncheon will be held Jan. 25 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at Flair Restaurant at 98 Main St.

Guest speakers will include Amanda Mongillo, vice president of Ion Investments, and Sean Garvey, regional vice president of Midland National Life Insurance Company.

The program will include lunch, an opportunity to see POWER ON PAGE 4

Republican Legislators to speak

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — Local Republican legislators will be speaking at public forums at Bristol Public Library on Jan. 25 and Plainville Public Library on Feb. 1 ahead of this year's legislative session.

The events will be opportunities for residents to share concerns with the legislators and learn about proposed legislation. The "short" legislative session begins on Feb. 7 and ends on May 8.

The legislative forum at Bristol Public Library at 5 High St. will be held Thursday, Jan. 25 starting at 6 p.m. Sen. Henri Martin, Rep. Joe Hoxha and Rep. Cara Pavalock-D'Amato will participate.

The legislative forum at Plainville Public Library at 56 E. Main St. will be held the following Thursday, Feb. 1, at the same time. Martin will also attend this forum, along with Rep. Francis Rexford Cooley.

"As the Legislative Session approaches, stay informed about the latest developments at the state level and let us know the policies you want to see passed by attending our updates," said Martin. "Your participation and See REPUBLICAN ON PAGE 4

The legislative forum at Plainville Public Library at 56 E. Main St. will be held the following Thursday, Feb. 1, at the same time. Martin will also attend this forum, along with Rep. Francis Rexford Cooley.

"As the Legislative Session approaches, stay informed about the latest developments at the state level and let us know the policies you want to see passed by attending our updates," said Martin. "Your participation and See REPUBLICAN ON PAGE 4



FILE State Sen. Henri Martin, above, Rep Joe Hoxha and Rep Cara Pavalock-D'Amato will be part of the Bristol forum.

Rebranding & Giving



Price Chopper is upgrading to Market 32, and part of its reopening celebration includes a donation to the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol.

Jeremy Daniels

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Bristol's Price Chopper rebranding

BRIAN M. JOHNSON @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — As part of Price Chopper's rebrand into Market 32, the store will be making a donation to the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol and Zion Lutheran Church's Meals for Neighbors.

On Nov. 11, 12 and 13, the

local Price Chopper/Market 32 at 121 Farmington Ave. gave customers 5% off of their orders and announced that they would also be donating 5% of the proceeds from said orders to the two local organizations.

"Price Chopper is upgrading to Market 32," said Jon Rulkowski, director of resource development at the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol. "They are phasing out the name Price Chopper and rebranding the store. They are making this donation as part of the grand re-opening of their store."

Rulkowski expressed appreciation to Price Chopper/Market 32 for the support.

"We're glad that they're supporting the children who need it most in the Bristol community," he said.

Price Chopper/Market 32 President and CEO Jerry Golub announced the rebrand on Nov. 11 of last year. He said that, as part of the rebrand, the stores would be "modernized."

All of the changes, he said, will "support an even greater focus on delivering value to our customers throughout the store."

"It will have a completely new look and feel with a distinct personality that will help make shopping more interesting and enjoyable," said Golub as part of See PRICE ON PAGE 4

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AP Mayor Joe Ganim said his supporters broke the law but denied any knowledge or involvement in the scheme.

What to expect in city's do-over mayoral primary

ROBERT YOON ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — There may be a collective feeling of déjà vu among Democrats in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on Tuesday, when they head back to the polls for a court-ordered

do-over of a mayoral election they thought they had decided months ago.

Last November, a state judge threw out the results of the Sept. 12 Democratic mayoral primary in Bridgeport and ordered a new primary to take its place.

At issue was evidence that supporters of Mayor Joe Ganim had stuffed multiple absentee ballots into outdoor ballot collection boxes. Ganim said these supporters broke the law but denied any knowledge or involvement in the

See MAYORAL ON PAGE 4



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CT DOT advocates for passenger safety

JESSICA FONTANE
 @JESSICA1983

National Passenger Safety Week is Jan. 21 to Jan. 28

NEWINGTON — The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) will participate in National Passenger Safety Week from Jan. 21 to Jan. 28 to remind passengers to be empowered to speak up about unsafe drivers as reckless behaviors, speeding and impaired and distracted driving are increasing.

CTDOT announced it is joining over 60 traffic safety and advocacy groups across the country to remind passengers to SPEAK UP during National Passenger Safety Week. Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner Garrett Faucitano, "If a driver is being unsafe in any manner, passengers should SPEAK UP. Doing so could help prevent crashes and save lives."

The National Road Safety Foundation launched the National Passenger Safety Week campaign two years ago to remind and empower passengers to be safety advocates so it becomes acceptable and expected for passengers to SPEAK UP when confronted with an irresponsible driver, according to CTDOT.

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Mayoral election re-do

Continued from Page 1

The winner will once again face Republican David Herz and independent candidate Lamont Daniels in a do-over of the general election scheduled for Feb. 27.

Ganin is seeking an eighth term as mayor. He previously served from 1991 to 2003 before spending seven years in federal prison for corruption and extortion charges stemming from his time in City Hall.

Herz returned him to office in 2015 and 2019. Ganin served in Ganin's second administration as the city's acting chief administrative officer until he was demoted in 2016 and later as an assistant chief administrative officer until his termination in July 2022. Ganin has suggested that his ouster was in retaliation for being

a possible mayoral hopeful. Ganin previously faced a primary challenge in his 2019 reelection bid, when he narrowly defeated state Sen. Marilyn Moore by 270 votes. That result was also challenged in the courts, but a judge ultimately upheld the victory.

Here's a look at what to expect on election night:

The special do-over Democratic primary for mayor of Bridgeport, Connecticut, will be held on Tuesday. Polls close at 8 p.m. ET.

The Associated Press will provide coverage for the special Democratic mayoral primary in Bridgeport, Connecticut has a closed primary system, meaning that only registered Democrats may participate in Tuesday's special primary. The deadline to register is Friday by noon ET.

Turnout for regularly scheduled mayoral primaries in Bridgeport has been relatively modest.

It was 17% of registered party members in the Sept. 12 Democratic primary, down from 21% in the 2019 primary. As a late addition to the election calendar, Tuesday's

do-over primary may be a particularly low-turnout event, especially considering voters already weighed in on this contest just four months ago. As with any low-turnout election, a competitive race could hinge on just a handful of votes, which would slow down the race-calling process.

Ganin eked out his disputed win in the September primary with 51.5% of the vote, compared with 48.5% for Gomes. Gomes was the vote leader on primary night, but Ganin pulled ahead once the absentee votes were counted.

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Price Chopper rebrands

Continued from Page 1

The announcement "We'll offer an increased variety of locally sourced products."

There will be an even greater focus on health and wellness, combining food, non-food, and pharmacy to create a destination that serves all our customers' needs to live a more healthy life. We'll have more information throughout the store to help our customers find solutions for their many needs. And Market 32 will deliver a more customer-friendly shopping experience, including a more convenient and intuitive store layout."

Golts said that the name Market 32 "reflects our long heritage as a family led business."

"The new name is a reflection of the fact that our company was founded by Ben and Bill Golts back in 1932," he said. "It's also a name that we feel will be memorable, and can evolve with our company and brand over time."

As each store is changed over to our new design, its name will also change to Market 32."

Republican legislators visit

Continued from Page 1

engagement are so important to our success."

Hoxha also invited community members to attend the forum.

"This Pre-Session Legislative Forum is open to anyone who has an issue related to state government that they would like to discuss, is interested in proposed legislation, or who wants to know more about state budget issues and other similar topics," he said.

Pre-registration for these events is not required.

For more information, call Kyla LoPresti at 860-240-8878 or email Kyla.LoPresti@ga.ct.gov

Power Hour series returns

Continued from Page 1

business when you retire? How do you value your business?"

Coleman-Hickler said that the Power Hour Luncheon series will focus on topics that impact business and employees. This event is open to the community, but

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Families still await the return of illegally retained loved ones.

U.S. bringing home overseas jailed citizens

ERIC TUCKER
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — By any standard, the past 18 months have been remarkable for getting wrongfully detained Americans home.

There were major swaps with adversaries like Iran and Russia, including one that secured the freedom of WNBA star Brittney Griner, and a large prisoner exchange just last month with Venezuela.

But Harrison Li has had little to celebrate.

Despite the succession of high-profile releases, jubilant family reunions and triumphant photos on government airplanes, his father, Kai, remains detained in
See JAILED ON PAGE 4

Bristol Historical Society dinner

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
 @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — Tickets are on sale now for the Bristol Historical Society's annual Scholarship Dinner. It will be held Feb. 15 at Parkside Cafe, 224 N. Main St.

This fundraiser will support the Bristol Historical Society's annual scholarship, which awards \$1,500 to a graduating, college-bound Bristol senior.

Maya Bringe, president of the Bristol Historical Society, said that applicants must include an essay about local, Bristol history as part of the application. "It's part of our mission to preserve Bristol's past for its present and future."

We are glad to support kids learning about Bristol history. It's always great to read the essays that they submit each year." Parkside Cafe offers take-

out and gluten free options. Reservations are required by Feb. 10 to attend the dinner. Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$20 for children under 10. To make a reservation, call 860-583-6309. Those who are unable to attend, can still make a donation to the Scholarship Fund by making checks payable to: Bristol Historical Society, P.O. Box 1393; Bristol, CT. 06011-1393 or donate online at bristolhistoricalsociety.org.



Tickets for the annual Scholarship Dinner are on sale now.

70 years in the biz



Brian M. Johnson

Bristol city and Chamber leaders congratulated Rowley Spring and Stamping and presenting a plaque to President John Dellalana and his team.

Rowley Spring celebrates milestone

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
 @BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — Rowley Spring and Stamping was recognized by Bristol city leaders and the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce for 70 years in business this Thursday.

The City and Chamber leaders met with President

John Dellalana and his team at their headquarters at 210 Redstone Hill Road.

There, Mayor Jeff Caggiano presented Dellalana with a congratulatory plaque on behalf of the city.

Rowley Spring & Stamping, a manufacturer of springs, stampings, assemblies, wire forms and

custom designs, was founded by Stanley P. Bitel.

Originally located in Berlin on Rowley Street, the company moved to Federal Street in Bristol within a year.

From there, it moved to the former Bristol Technical High School on Riverside Avenue before relocating again in 1994 to

its present, 150,000 square foot facility.

Dellalana took up leadership of Rowley Spring and Stamping around 10 years ago.

Today, the company employs 100 people.

Rowley Spring and Stamping have supported the Bristol Adult Education program since its incep-

tion, with the first class graduating in 2014.

Rowley also has an annual Stanley P. Bitel Memorial Golf Tournament, which raises money for a scholarship fund.

As he presented the plaque to Dellalana, Caggiano thanked him for "all that you do."
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Supporters say the bill is needed to combat incidents against Jews, opponents say it could be used to censor criticism of Israel.

Georgia passes a bill that defines antisemitism in law

JEFF AMY
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Georgia lawmakers passed a bill Thursday that would define antisemitism in state law, with Republicans uniting in support of Israel's war on Hamas and some

Democrats splitting over fears of suppressing support for Palestinians.

"Today we can fight a pervasive and escalating threat in our state and fight it together," said Senate President Pro Tem John Kennedy, a Macon Republican who guided

the bill to Senate passage, 44-6. The measure had stalled in a Senate committee in 2023.

The House later agreed to changes, voting 129-5 for passage. Republican Gov. Brian Kemp said he would sign the bill, saying
See GEORGIA ON PAGE 4



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Yemen Houthi rebels fire missile at U.S. warship

JON GAMBRELL AND TARA COPP ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Yemen's Houthi rebels launched a missile Friday at a U.S. warship patrolling the Gulf of Aden, forcing it to shoot down the projectile, the U.S. military said Friday.

The attack on the destroyer USS Carney marks a further escalation in the biggest confrontation at sea the U.S. Navy has seen in the Middle East in decades. It represents the first time the Houthis directly targeted a U.S. warship since the rebels began their attacks on shipping in October, a U.S. official said on the condition of anonymity because no authorization had been given to discuss the incident.

That contradicted a statement by the U.S. military's Central Command, which said the Houthis fired "toward" the Carney. As it has in previous strikes, the Pentagon has said it was difficult to determine what exactly the Houthis were trying to hit.

Ever since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, the U.S. has tried to temper its descriptions of the strikes targeting its bases and warships to try to prevent the conflict from becoming a wider regional war.

Acknowledging Friday's assault as a direct attack on

a U.S. warship is important, said Brad Bowman, a senior director at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

"They're now finally calling a spade a spade, and saying that, yeah, they're trying to attack our forces, they're trying to kill us," Bowman said.

Tempering the language, while aimed at preventing a wider war, has had the opposite effect of further enabling the Houthis, he said.

In Friday's attack, an anti-ship ballistic missile came near the USS Carney, an Arleigh-Burke class destroyer that's been involved in American operations to try and stop the Houthi campaign since November, Central Command said.

"The missile was successfully shot down by USS Carney," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."

The attack was the latest assault by the rebels in their campaign against ships traveling through the Red Sea and surrounding waters, which has disrupted global trade amid Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels did not immediately acknowledge the attack, though they typically take several hours afterward to claim their assaults.

Jailed returning home

Continued from Page 1

China on espionage-related charges his family says are bogus and politically motivated.

Li, a Stanford University doctoral student, says though he feels "so much joy and happiness" for the other families — many of whom he's become friendly with over the years — "I'd be lying if I didn't say that then the next thought is, you know, where's it our turn?"

He added, "When you see so many folks come home but then you still see your loved one not, then, yeah, there's definitely an element of frustration."

Li is not alone. For all the releases of wrongly detained Americans, many more remain either locked up or missing in countries including Russia, Syria and Afghanistan — often held by a hostile foreign government.

In some instances, there have been few signs of progress, and families have sometimes seen the countries that are holding their loved ones release other

detainees but not yet their relatives.

Those sensitivities are not lost on Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs and the Biden administration's public face for matters related to hostages and wrongful detainees — the label applied to Americans jailed in foreign countries for what the government considers legally specious allegations or for improper motivations.

He handles negotiations with foreign governments and once the deal is done flies out to bring the released American back, routinely telling them that on behalf of the U.S. government, "I'm here to take you home."

"There's always a very short-lived celebration because we still have a lot of work to do to bring other people home," Carstens said in an interview.

The Biden administration has been notably aggressive in cutting deals, signing off on prisoner exchanges and other con-

cessions that would once have been unthinkable.

They achieved releases at what advocates say is a historically high level.

U.S. officials have called bringing home wrongfully detained Americans a core administration priority, even when it collides with other foreign policy or law enforcement interests, though in all cases, the ability to achieve a deal depends on negotiators reaching mutually agreeable conditions. It's no small thing when countries otherwise have little they agree on.

Last month, Venezuela freed 10 Americans and returned to the U.S. for prosecution and indicted Navy contractor known as "Fat Leonard" in exchange for the U.S. releasing an ally of President Nicolas Maduro who was charged in a money-laundering conspiracy. In September, five Americans jailed for years in Iran walked free in a deal that saw the release of nearly \$6 billion in frozen Iranian assets.

Rowley anniversary

Continued from Page 1

"Bristol Adult Education has helped to change countless lives," he said. "Between that and the Stanley P. Bitel Memorial Golf Tournament, you have shown the values that we love and cherish as a community."

We hope that you continue to make your home in Bristol and that Rowley Spring and Stamping con-

tinues for at least another 70 years."

Dellalana said that Rowley Spring and Stamping has enjoyed an "unbelievable" relationship with Bristol. He said that he is proud to carry on the company's legacy.

"I'm just a part of it," he said. "Our team has upheld the values that Stanley set in place since day one. Now, 70 years later, we are

still going strong."

Economic and Community Development Director Mickey Goldwasser said that Bristol has a reputation of having a good relationship with local businesses.

Rowley Spring and Stamping, he said, is exemplary of that.

For more information on Rowley Spring & Stamping, visit rowleyspring.com or call 860-582-8175.

Georgia antisemitism bill

Continued from Page 1

it "builds on our commitment to protect Georgians from criminal acts, including those based on hate."

Sponsors say adopting the definition put forward by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance would help prosecutors and other officials identify hate crimes and illegal discrimination targeting Jewish people.

Georgia has a hate crimes law that allows higher criminal penalties for crimes motivated by certain types of bias.

The definition, which is only referred to in the bill, describes antisemitism as "a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews."

Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. "The First Amendment guarantees our rights as citizens to criticize any government, foreign and domestic," said Sen. Nikki Merritt, a Lawrenceville Democrat. "Does our Constitution not mean anything?"

But supporters say the definition will only come into play after someone has committed a crime.

"This legislation is not about stifling free speech," Kennedy said. "Nor is it about the government stopping someone from simply sharing their views. It is

about safeguarding the dignity and the safety of our Jewish friends and neighbors."

In at least eight states nationwide, lawmakers are working on measures to define antisemitism, part of an upsurge of legislation motivated in part by the Israel-Hamas war. Arkansas passed such a law last year. New bills are pending this year in Indiana, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey and South Dakota.

The measure grew only more fraught with the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Some protesters chanting "Free Free Palestine!" were dragged from a committee room by police Monday, prompting one arrest.

That came after some Jewish residents of Georgia testified they had experienced a surge of bias incidents, including an antisemitic group that hung a Jewish person in effigy outside a Macon synagogue over the summer. Ghada Elnajjar, a Palestinian mother from the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta, said she was concerned the bill could embolden those seeking to stifle criticism of Israel.

She was particularly worried about her sons, saying they have been posting social media messages criticizing Israel for civilian deaths in Gaza. The sons have also worn keffiyehs, the black and white checkered scarfs that symbolize Palestinian solidarity.

The bill "might take a simple thing as wearing a keffiyeh or a social media

post and take it a step further and criminalize it and jeopardize my boys' future," she said.

State Rep. John Carson, a Marietta Republican who sponsored the bill, told the House the bill shows "Georgia stands with our friends in the Jewish community." Rep. El-Mahdi Holly, a Stockbridge Democrat and one of Georgia's handful of Muslim lawmakers, retorted, "I wish that was true of Palestinians as well."

Some opponents said Thursday that they didn't want to choose sides in the Israel-Hamas war.

"We can mourn the loss of both Israeli and Palestinian lives," said Sen. Kim Jackson, a Stone Mountain Democrat. "We can both condemn the unacceptable acts of antisemitism that are plaguing the Jewish community around our state and acknowledge that our citizens have the right to voice their dissent about the tremendous harm being visited upon Palestinian civilians."

Some Democrats said that if Georgia moves to define antisemitism, then it should also define what prejudice against Muslims, African Americans or LGBTQ+ people looks like.

"If we're going to define antisemitism in the law, then there a lot of other groups that experience racism, and they should also have definitions," said Sen. Sally Harrell, an Atlanta Democrat who didn't vote on the bill.

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