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Anthony Esposito Thanked for Service as Interim Fire Chief

At their Tuesday meeting the North Branford Town Council recognized Anthony Esposito for his service as Interim Fire Chief for the Town of North Branford. He served as Interim Chief for over three years until the Board of Fire Commissioners' recent appointment of Richard Lennon as Chief in September.

Esposito, who is also the Finance Director and Treasurer for the Town of North Branford, is continuing to serve as a Deputy Chief of the Fire Department.

Thank you for your service Anthony!

Photo: Mayor Rose Angeloni presents Anthony Esposito with a plaque recognizing his service as Interim Fire Chief from 2022-2025 at the Town Council meeting October 21, 2025.

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TOTOKET TIMES

Deadline	Publication Date
November 14	November 21
November 28	December 5
December 12	December 19
January 2	January 9
January 16	January 23
January 30	February 6
February 13	February 20



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Support Dan Seden

Dear Editor

I am proud to support Dan Seiden for North Branford Town Council, and I encourage everyone in our community to do the same. Dan is exactly the kind of leader North Branford needs—honest, compassionate, and deeply committed to our town and its people.

I first met Dan years ago when I asked him to be my assistant coach for our Little League softball team. Coaching 8-, 9-, and 10-year-old girls takes incredible patience, empathy, and understand-

ing—and Dan showed all of that and more. He connected with every player, built their confidence, and always found the right words to encourage them. That's when I saw his true character: steady, thoughtful, and deeply caring about others.

Those same qualities are what will make Dan an outstanding Town Council member. He listens. He thinks before he speaks. He seeks solutions that bring people together rather than divide them. He's a man guided by strong morals and family values, and he makes decisions with both heart and wisdom.

Dan is not running for personal gain or recognition—he's running because he genuinely wants to make North Branford the best it can be for every resident, especially our children. He believes in supporting families, strengthening our schools, and ensuring our town remains a place we are all proud to call home.

North Branford needs leaders who care, who listen, and who act with integrity. That's why I'm voting for Dan Seiden—and I hope you will too.

Sincerely

Amy Farotti



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State Representative Vincent Candelora Connecticut's Middle Class Deserves Real Tax Relief



Property taxes are crushing Connecticut's middle class. Across our state, hard-working citizens are watching their tax bills go up—not because their towns are spending recklessly, but because revaluation has driven property values through the roof. These homeowners need relief now.

That's why my House Republican colleagues and I recently proposed the largest expansion of Connecticut's property tax

credit in state history. Our plan would increase the maximum credit from \$300 to \$1,000, expand eligibility, and provide more relief to 800,000 residents. Every qualifying taxpayer would see an increase in their credit, with a minimum of \$400 for eligible filers.

This isn't complicated. We have the money. The state treasurer is delaying the transfer of \$1.9 billion in volatile revenue beyond our already-substantial \$4.3 billion Rainy Day Fund. The legislature's majority Democrats plan to meet in special session on Nov. 12 and 13 to intercept at least \$500 million of that money into yet another off-budget fund they control—a slush fund built on speculation about federal funding changes that won't be fully understood until next year. That's unacceptable.

If Democrats won't use that volatile revenue for pension debt—its primary intended purpose—then it should go back to the taxpayers. When residents see the size of our state reserves, they understandably feel overtaxed. They're right. This isn't the Democrats' money to raid and then use in an opaque process. It belongs to the people of Connecticut.

The House Republican plan would increase income eligibility thresholds for the maximum credit by about \$20,000 for single filers and \$30,000 for most joint filers. The plan particularly benefits joint filers by raising the eligibility threshold from \$130,500 to \$200,000. Under current law, thousands of these filers receive only the minimum \$30 credit—or nothing at all. How does that make sense when property revaluation is hitting them hardest?

Republicans fought for fiscal guardrails that created the measure of financial stability Connecticut has today. Our \$4 billion reserve exists precisely to address unexpected situations as they arise. We don't need another government fund that Democrats control. We need to trust the systems already in place and deliver relief directly to taxpayers.

Consider the contrast: Governor Lamont proposed a mere \$50 increase to the property tax credit in 2025. Democrats in the legislature ignored even that modest gesture in their \$55 billion budget adopted back in June. Now they want to take \$500 million and lock it away in an off-budget fund rather than provide meaningful relief to families struggling with property tax bills.

Meanwhile, Democratic policies continue increasing costs across the board—higher electric bills, unfunded mandates that drive up local taxes, and regulations that squeeze family budgets tighter. Municipal leaders from Bristol to Wallingford to Seymour joined us at our news conference to unveil our plan to confirm what we already know: residents are being crushed by rising property values beyond anyone's control.

Again, our proposal is straightforward. Take \$501 million from that \$1.9 billion in volatile revenue Democrats want to redirect, and invest it in the largest property tax credit expansion in state history. More than 800,000 filers would see increased relief—many for the first time.

That's how you help people. Not by speculating about federal funding changes. Not by creating new political slush funds. But by returning money directly to the taxpayers who need it most.

Connecticut's middle-class citizens have carried this state through good times and bad. They deserve better than to watch the legislature play games with their money while their property tax bills keep climbing. They deserve real relief, and they deserve it now.

Rep. Vincent Candelora - House Republican Leader
86th Assembly District -North Branford, Durham, East Haven, Guilford

"If Elected, I work for YOU"

To the North Branford community

My name is Vince Mase. I have lived in town for 41 years. I have observed this town grow from two grammar schools, two intermediate schools into a merged one school system with a grammar school, middle school, intermediate school and a new High School. That new system really improved our town. All three of my children have gone through the North Branford School System.

When my family first moved into town we spent Saturdays going to the Town Dump because North Branford did not have trash collection. Cars had to line up on Ciro Road from the dump and many times all the way to route 80. It was not a pleasant trip. If you did not go to the dump a resident had to hire a private trash hauler to pick up their trash once a week and it could be costly. Finally, North Branford provided trash collection and the trash containers for the convenience of our voters and tax payers.

In a nutshell we got something for our taxes which was okay with me.

I have previously served North Branford on the Board of Education for several years serving in the interest for our students, teachers and staff members. A challenging position but I truly enjoyed my time on the BOE.

I then decided to run for and was elected to the Town Council for the 2021-2023 session. During my two years on the town council I enjoyed working with the other members in striving to improve and provide the necessary equipment for the school system, police department, fire department and EMT department.

One area of concern for me was working on a tax program for senior citizens on fixed incomes and for disability citizens on a fixed incomes to qualify for some tax relief. They need some relief in order to stay in their homes without the worry that taxes will continue to climb each year. I want to be able to find a program to assist these citizens if elected back to the Town Council.

You the voter has the choice to select who you want to represent your interest for the next two years. Keep in mind that political parties do not

elect your Town Council representatives but only INDIVIDUAL voters and tax payers who have read all the campaign material elect us for two years.

My position is simple and to the point. If elected I work for you no matter what your political affiliation. I will listen to your concerns and will be accountable and responsible as a member of the North Branford town Council. **I truly would appreciate your vote.**
Vince Mase



Vincent J. Mase, Sr.
ATTORNEY AT LAW

The Law Office of
Vincent J. Mase Sr. LLC
ATTORNEY & COUNSELOR
AT LAW

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The publisher assumes no responsibility for typographical errors. In the event of an error, the publisher will issue a credit adjustment on only the incorrect portion of the advertisement, as well as a retraction in the next issue.

Letters to the editor...

This paper encourages all readers to voice their opinions and comments.

The Totoket Times is not responsible for erroneous information or statements in letters to the editor. Letters should be as brief as possible.

All letters must be signed. A telephone number should be included and no personal attacks.

This paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

All letters should be addressed to :

The Editor

P.O. Box 313, Northford, CT 06472



“I wholeheartedly support Marcey Onofrio”

Dear Editor:

I am proud to enthusiastically recommend Marcey Onofrio for re-election to the Board of Education. Throughout her years of service, Marcey has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the success of our schools, the well-being of our students, and the support of our educators and staff.

Her decision-making is guided by a clear and balanced understanding of what is best for children, teachers, and the school community as a whole. Marcey is known for her willingness to speak her mind thoughtfully and respectfully, ensuring that every perspective is considered. At the same time, she is a fair and collaborative board member who works diligently with colleagues to find solutions that move our district forward.

Marcey’s experience and dedication are evident in the many ways she has contributed to strengthening our schools. She is approachable, transparent, and deeply invested in creating an environment where all students can thrive. On a personal note, she has also been an invaluable mentor to me as I navigated my own journey as a new board member, offering guidance, insight, and encouragement.

I wholeheartedly support Marcey Onofrio and am confident she will continue to serve our community with integrity, fairness, and vision. She is exactly the kind of leader we need on the Board of Education.

Sincerely,
Judy Bannon

“I am asking for your vote...”

Dear North Branford community

I am asking for your vote in this election for the Board of Education. I am one of four choices you will have for the Board and I hope to earn your trust and support.

I am a 23 year educator whose career has spanned two states, many communities, and diverse levels of education-from K-12 to adult learning. I am not attached to any political party, which allows me to ask the hard questions that others may avoid because of party pressure. I believe in service, transparency, and accountability, and I am fully ready to represent you.

Disagreement doesn’t scare me- **avoidance does.** We need to hear each other and find common ground. We all “know” education because we experienced it, but do we all put the students first in our decisions? I will work collaboratively with all Board members to ask: *How does this decision move our students forward into the 21st-century? How do we ensure that our children have more opportunities than we did- the ultimate American dream.*

We can’t do that divided into tribes. So please don’t vote a row vote for *We the People* for candidates who are North Branford-centered, transparent, and willing to own mistakes and move forward. That’s how I’m voting and that’s how I’ll lead.

Thank you for reading, and I look forward to seeing you virtually and in person.

With gratitude
Kara Papa

“...a letter in Support of Marie Diamond”

Dear Editor:

I am writing a letter in support of Marie Diamond’s re-election to the North Branford Town Council. I have known Marie for over 20 years, and although I am a lifelong Republican, I will vote for Marie. She has been a resident of North Branford since 2004 and is a person who believes in service to the community. Her extensive experience in leadership roles in education enhances her ongoing commitment to help others. Marie was the first President of the North Branford Education Foundation, served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and on the Board of Education, and has been a member of the Town Council for 10 years.

As a member of the Town Council Marie serves as the Council liaison to the Police Commission and the Inland Wetlands Agency. She is also a member of the finance committee of the Town council and is the Chair of the Public Safety Communications Committee. It is obvious that Marie cares deeply about the community and works tirelessly to provide necessary services and programs for the town and its residents.

I know that Marie is concerned about the results of the re-evaluation and how the taxes this year have affected all homeowners. I also believe that if re-elected, Marie’s mission will be to promote equity in program funding to reduce the burden on the taxpayers. She is committed to thoughtful long-term planning, problem solving, and collaborating with other town council members to tackle those issues and challenges that North Branford faces now, and in the future, as well as to find creative, smart solutions for those challenges.

Please join me in keeping Marie on the North Branford Town Council.

Sincerely, Patricia Velleca

**Gives me great pleasure to endorse
...the Republican team**

To the North Branford Community:

It gives me great pleasure to endorse Mayor Rose Angeloni and the entire Republican team for town council and board of education. These individuals volunteer countless hours on behalf of our community. This recent year of revaluation has posed a difficult challenge for towns throughout the state from the rising values of residential property along with the correlating decline in commercial property. In Hartford, my colleagues and I are proposing a \$1,000 property tax credit for homeowners in order to offset these impacts. Communities like North Branford cannot continue to carry the disproportion cost of education, and the state needs to do more. I am proud to work with this current town council and board of education as we navigate these difficult times, and I hope you join me in supporting Angeloni, Goad, McMillan, Pellicia, Whitworth, and Zampano.

Truly yours,
Vinny Candelora
State Representative

**Before you vote, make sure you know
WHOM you’re voting for.**

Dear community members,

I urge you to take time to learn about the candidates in a way that you can make an informed voting decision. Don’t vote by party, don’t vote because of friendships, don’t vote because you heard this or you heard that. Learn about the candidates and make your decision based on facts.

I am a lifelong resident and a former police officer in town, I spent most of my career working with the Board of Education, school administrators, the children, and their parents. I know what parents look for in a school system, what teachers and administrators need to make the learning environment a positive and productive place for our children to learn and develop.

Over the years I have watched the school district take steps to make positive changes. These changes all happened during some of the worse budget years.

These changes happened because there were people on the Board of Education that were there for the right reasons....OUR CHILDREN. They were there because they want our children to strive in the classroom and beyond. They want our teachers to have the tools and the support to be able to teach our children to be productive. They want our children to be safe and most importantly to FEEL SAFE when coming to school.

I can speak specifically about one of these members, Marcey Onofrio. Marcey has been a member of the BOE for five terms where she has held the position of Chair and is currently the Vice-Chair. She is a member who makes herself available to anyone at anytime. I have witnessed her on the phone at all hours talking to parents and teachers who need to ask questions or who want to make suggestions. I know that she takes the calls to heart because she will spend time writing down what was talked about and notes on how to address the situations. She’s made it to nearly every single meeting during her tenure. Marcey has completely dedicated her time and energy to the Board of Education. Marcey’s experience and dedication is invaluable.

Marcey’s love for children is obvious. She has owned and operated a home daycare for over thirty (30) years and the majority of the children she has cared for, have gone through, or are currently in, the North Branford School District. She has been there to hand out diplomas to many of the same children she cared for. These are children whose parents put all their trust in Marcey when their children were daycare age. These are the parents that you can and should talk to in order to find out WHY Marcey is seeking another term as a Board of Education member.

Marcey is there for the right reasons.... not to be a puppet for the party, not for a personal agenda, not for anything other than what is best for our children and our district.

Please take the time to really learn about the candidates.

Thank you,
Ron Onofrio

Let your voices be heard.
Cast a vote on
November 4th.

ELECTION WARNING

The electors of the Town of North Branford are hereby warned to meet at their respective polling places in said Town on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, for the following purpose:

To cast their votes for Town Council and Board of Education.

Notice is hereby given that the location of the polling places is as follows:

- District 1:** Jerome Harrison Elementary School
335 Foxon Road – Route 80
- District 2:** Stanley T. Williams Community Center (Gymnasium)
1332 Middletown Avenue – Route 17
- District 3:** Stanley T. Williams Community Center (Board Meeting Room)
1332 Middletown Avenue – Route 17

Voting tabulators will be used. The polls will be opened at six o’clock in the morning (6:00 a.m.) and will remain open until eight o’clock in the evening (8:00 p.m.). During the 14-day early voting period before said election, the hours and location of early voting will be as indicated below. Each early voting location will also offer Same-Day Registration (SDR).

Remaining Early Voting Day: Hours	Early Voting / SDR Location
November 1-2, 2025: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	North Branford Town Hall Council Chambers, 909 Foxon Road – Route 80
On Election Day, the hours and location of SDR will be as follows:	
Election Day: Hours	SDR Location
November 4, 2025: 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	North Branford Town Hall Council Chambers 909 Foxon Road – Route 80

Dated at North Branford, Connecticut, this 23rd day of October, 2025.
Lisa A. Valenti, MMC
North Branford Town Clerk



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Council Recognizes Palladino For Service

At a recent meeting, the Town Council recognized Councilor Nick Palladino for his service to the town, as he decided not to seek re-election this year.

Nick has served on the Town Council since 2022, and often brought his experience and knowledge from a distinguished career in law enforcement to the table as a member of the Council.

Thank you for your service Nick and Congratulations!

Photo: Mayor Rose Angeloni presents Councilor Nick Palladino with a plaque commemorating his three plus years of service on the Town Council.

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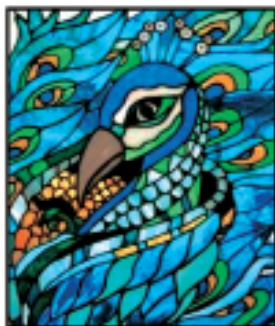
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Jonathan R. Boughton Scholarship Fund announces 3rd Annual FundRaising Event.

On Thursday, Nov 13th The Jonathan R. Boughton Scholarship Fund will hold its 3rd annual fundraising event at Branford Cue-N-Brew, 131 Commercial Parkway Rd. (Behind Walmart) Branford, CT.

Since it's inception, the Jonathan R Boughton Scholarship Corp has raised over \$100,000 and has been providing scholarships for the last four years to gifted High School students, who have excelled in the Automotive and related Technical Trades. This year, with the help of supporters and friends, we hope to meet our goal of raising another \$20,000 For additional information, please visit our site at www.jobs.org To purchase tickets or make a general donation, please visit www.jobs.org/donate See the flyer below for additional event details.

Jonathan R. Boughton 3RD ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER EVENT

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St. Ambrose Parish – Roman Catholic Parish with two church buildings, St. Augustine, located at 30 Caputo Rd. North Branford and St. Monica, located at 1321 Middletown Ave. Northford.

The pastor is Rev. Robert L. Turner. All are welcome and invited to join us for Mass! Summer Mass times include: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 9:00 AM at St. Augustine. Weekend Masses are celebrated on Saturday at 4:30 PM at St. Augustine (English Ordinary no incense used), Sunday at 9:00 AM at St. Monica (English Ordinary, no incense used) and on Sunday at 11:00 AM at St. Augustine (Latin Ordinary with use of incense). The sacrament of Reconciliation is offered a half hour before all Masses, excepting Sunday, and on Monday evenings from 5-6 PM during Adoration. The parish office is located at St. Augustine Church and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-1. You can access the bulletin and staff emails at NBcatholics.org. If you are new to the area and looking for a wonderful parish or homeschool co-op to join, please visit us or give us a call!

Hope Christian Church (we are an Assemblies of God affiliated church) 211 Montowese Ave., North Haven CT www.hopeag.com. Sunday Service 10:00 AM, Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM. Follow us on Facebook. “realpeople realhope reallife” (203) 234-7328

Community Baptist Church. 53 Hopson Avenue, Branford, CT. Pastor Jon Bickel. Sunday Bible Classes 9:30 a.m. and Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Nursery is provided. Adult bible study and prayer meeting, and children’s clubs on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. For more info.: 203-488-8581; info@cbcbranford.org; www.cbcbranford.org

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, the White Church on the Hill in the Heart of Northford, has been an integral part of Northford since 1763! Worship services are held Sundays at 10:00 a.m. Refreshments and fellowship always follow. Please join us - we’d love to get to know you! All are always welcome!! The church is also open to all in the community for individual prayer, Tuesdays from noon to 2 p.m. St. Andrew’s supports many community programs, and contributes regularly to the North Branford Scholarship Program; North Branford Social Services (NBSS) Thanksgiving Basket Share and Christmas gift and food basket share programs; NBSS Back-To-School Backpacks; clothing donations (donation shed located at the back of the church parking lot); and more. A number of fundraising events are held throughout the year to help us help our neighbors, such as an Annual Rhubarb Fest, summertime Ice Cream Socials, and the annual Harvest Supper. Please join us for the events, and help us help our neighbors! Additionally, the church’s Parish Hall is available for rent for birthday parties, showers, receptions, etc. The Rev. Bryan Spinks is St. Andrew’s priest; Nan Monde is Sr. Warden. For more information please contact Nan at 203-710-7005

Northford Community Church. Church is located on Old Post Rd. (Corner of Rte 17 and Rte 22), PO Box 191 Northford. Phone (203)-484-0795, Fax (203)-484-9916. Email: northfordcc@gmail.com. Office Hours: Tuesday 9am-1pm; Other days by appointment. John Vigneri, Pastor. Catherine Klouda, worship leader. Worship service 10am. Join us for coffee hour following worship. Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. Like us on Facebook. Our website is www.northfordcommunity.church.

The North Branford Congregational Church, NACCC, 1680 Foxon Road, North Branford CT. Join us for meaningful worship and Bible based teaching every Sunday at 10 am. Sunday School for children during service. Communion on the first Sunday of the month. We offer Bible study, choir, lunch bunch, 2nd Sunday brunch, charity work, book club, praise team, men’s fellowship and more. Our pastor is the Rev. Wendy Tarry. To contact our church: Office hours are Wednesday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Phone: 203.488.8456, email: nobdcong@sbcglobal.net, website: www.northbranfordcongregational.org Come grow in faith with us!

Shoreline Community Church located at 9 Business Park Dr., Units 1-4, Branford, CT. Call us at 203.481.8919. Sunday Services at 8:30 and 10:00 AM (Children and Jr. High activities meet during our 10 AM service). For more information, check out our website www.sccbranford.org. SCC is a diverse community that is dedicated to Making the Invisible God Visible.

Please join us for worship at **St. John’s Episcopal Church** at 129 Ledge Hill Road in Guilford, CT 06437. Our services are at 10 am each Sunday with Youth Spiritual Foundation for ages 5 and up every first and third Sunday. Coffee hour after our service in our parish hall. See our Facebook page St. John’s Episcopal Church, Guilford CT. 203-457-1094. check our website at www.saintjohnsguilford.org

United Methodist Church, Branford 811 East Main St, Branford (Route 1, across from Bill Miller’s Castle). www.umcbranford.org or (203) 488-0549. Sunday service 9:30am - both in-person and live on our website. “The Church on the Rock,” led by Pastor . We invite you to discover the power of faith in Jesus Christ bringing God’s love to the world. Join us to worship, experience God’s word, and stay connected.

Zion Episcopal Church, 326 Notch Hill Road, North Branford. While we are in transition, we continue to hold services of Morning Prayer following Rite 2 in the Book of Common Prayer, and do have services of Holy Eucharist when we are fortunate to get a supply priest. At this time, we have a single service at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday morning. Refreshments and fellowship to follow service in the parish hall. Please visit our Facebook page or our website zionepiscopalchurch.org. Zion is an open and affirming congregation for those seeking a safe place to worship and grow in Christ. 203-488-7395

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish will be having their Christmas Bazaar on Friday, November 7th from 5-8pm and Saturday, November 8th from 9am-3pm at St. Therese Church Hall, 555 Middletown Ave., North Haven. We are currently looking for vendors for our Bazaar selling giftable Christmas merchandise. If interested in being a vendor call Sharon at 203-239-5378 M-F 9am- 4pm or 203-234-0215 evenings for a vendor application or for more information.

ST. AMBROSE PARISH

Craft Fair

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025

9 AM TO 3PM

ST. MONICA CHURCH HALL

FEATURING HANDMADE CRAFTS FROM
LOCAL ARTISANS, BAKED GOODS,
BEAUTIFUL RAFFLE BASKETS, GIFTS
CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES AND
A VISIT FROM , AND PICTURES WITH, SANTA!

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
WILL BE AVAILABLE.

TO CHECK FOR TABLE AVAILABILITY,
CALL THE PARISH OFFICE 203-484-0403

All are welcome to a free
Community Breakfast the last
Saturday of every month
9 – 10 a.m.
Beginning October 25

Zion Episcopal Church
326 Notch Hill Road, North Branford

St. Pio Ladies Guild

Christmas Fair

Saturday Nov.15th - 9am-3pm

Sunday Nov. 16th - 8:30am-1pm

Our Lady of Pompeii Church

355 Foxon Rd. East Haven

FEATURING:

Homemade: Candies, Baked Goods

Breakfast/Luncheon Menu

Raffles

Costume Jewelry

Handmade Christmas Crafts

Face Painting & Kids Games

Visit With Santa

An Emotional Homecoming to my Ancestral Village in Italy

By Mark Hehl

Below is an edited chapter from the book – An Immigrant’s Dilemma, which shows some of the differences and similarities between family and social events in Italy and North America.

My wife and I arrived at Santa Margherita di Belice (AG) on April 24, 2017 so that final research for *An Immigrant’s Dilemma* could be completed. I was interested in connecting with the Sicilian descendants of my great-grandfather and finding out why he left America without all but one of his children. My plan was to interview some older family members who could answer my questions, then perform some research at the town hall. Shortly after arriving, my cousin Peppino indicated that the following day was a holiday and consequently, the town hall would be closed. April 25 is Liberation Day, a national holiday in Italy. It marks the fall of Mussolini’s Italian Social Republic and the end of the Nazi occupation of Italy in 1945.

At first, I was disappointed because of losing valuable research time; however, this proved to be a bonus for me. On this day, Sicilians have large family gatherings usually outside their town, at small villas owned by family member or friends. Peppino built one such villa and hosted the event at his villa. He did not give us any advance information on what was to occur or where we were going. He just said to be ready at 11 AM and that he would come to fetch us. We followed him and were surprised to discover the bonus that was planned.

We entered the complex and began to meet those already there, mostly my relatives. My wife, Olga, had the task of being my interpreter that day. Her Italian was a bit rusty, but it improved as the day progressed.

The complex contained a swimming pool, lemon trees and three outdoor wood ovens (no gas grills here). One oven was built just for pizza. There was a wind turbine; Peppino sells the excess generated power to the electric company. The hot water was solar-heated. He had a well and cistern, all of which made the villa self-sufficient. We Americans can learn from this.

Upon our arrival, the intense preparations were under way. The men were attending to the outdoor woodburning ovens. The women were in the kitchen washing and chopping the vegetables and fruits. My wife Olga also began to help by preparing some strawberries. This was an opportunity for her to learn more about Sicilian cooking.

The first thing I noticed was that the pizza oven was already going, along with one other outdoor oven. The pizza oven had some grape vine wood burning just to heat it up for use later that day. The group was preparing the first course, cipollini con porchetta (pork strips wrapped in scallions), cooked over a wood fire in the other outdoor oven. The smell of the cooking pork and charred wood told me that I was in for some delightful food. I was right.

We then had a spaghetti course with a tomato-tuna-basil sauce, where the sauce was not cooked (a bit different to what I was used to growing up in an Italian-American household). It would not have been an Italian meal without at least one pasta course. Later, the men cooked some sausage and eggplant slices on the same open fire, with a slightly different delightful aroma of pork, spices and burning wood. These tasted very much like the Italian sausages in the USA, with the wood fire giving it some added smoky flavor. They also served caponata, an eggplant based salad, which took me back to my childhood. I had not eaten caponata since my childhood and said to my wife: “This tastes like Brooklyn”. It caused me to think about my youth spending many Sunday afternoons at my great uncle Edward’s (born Ignazio) house at Brooklyn’s Halsey Street, where the extended family gathered. This trip back in time was one of the many emotional moments of that day. All of this went well with some local white wine produced in the neighboring town. The Belice valley is known for their wines. Note: Very little wine was consumed as Sicilians drink the least wine per capita in Italy.

A few hours later (dinner time) the women began to assemble six pizzas in rectangular pans (Sicilian style), all with different toppings. Mushrooms, sausage, eggplant, porchetta were some of the toppings that I remember. The wood that was burning in the pizza oven all day was removed by the men, and all six pizzas were then cooked in the outdoor brick oven using only the retained heat. Again, the intense aromas permeated the air. I could not eat enough and enjoyed every bite. The women prepared the food and the men cooked it. The only item that the women cooked on the inside stove was the pasta.

All during that day different people came in and out. I believe we met about fifty, mostly relatives. The most important person that day was my great-aunt Laura Tardi (in Italy, women do not change their names when

they get married). She was 94 at that time, mentally astute and just stopped driving the prior year. She is my grandmother’s half-sister from my great grandfather’s third marriage. This amazing woman was a wealth of information and answered most of my questions about my great grandfather’s life. She mentioned that she was named after her father’s first wife (my great grandmother) who died in America, due to complications of childbirth. One of Aunt Laura’s daughters assisted with recording this vital information.

Peppino also called another one of my cousins who lives in Argentina. My great-grandfather’s brother emigrated there around 1900. I spoke with him a bit, as my Spanish is much better than my Italian. We agreed to establish more communication upon my return home. I may even visit him in Argentina sometime in the future.

The gathering ended in the early evening. When I left, I was in an emotional state. My head was spinning. It seemed like a wonderful dream, not reality. I only believed it the next day when I woke up and verified it with my wife. The experience allowed me to increase my understanding of Sicilian family culture, taste authentic Sicilian food, meet relatives, and gather some important family history for the book *An Immigrant’s Dilemma*. Another bonus was seeing how similar my family gatherings as a child were to this event.

This day I will never forget. Grazie mille, Peppino

About Mark Hehl

Mark Hehl is an Italian American engineer, consultant, and public speaker. He is the author of the books: An Immigrant’s Dilemma, Amusing Confessions of an International Consultant and Ameri-Sicula: Sicilian Culture in America. He has conducted educational programs for various Italian American Organizations, been a guest on various Italian American radio shows and has had multiple articles published.

Mark is the 2025 recipient of the Italian American Ambassador Award from Italian Charities of America.

Mark is the son of a Sicilian mother and spent his early years around his Sicilian relatives and was immersed in that culture.

North Haven Sons & Daughters of Italy
Lodge 2805

**MARDI GRAS,
MASKS,
MURDER!
Mystery &
Dinner**

Menu: Lasagna, Salad, Dessert
\$20.00 for Members - \$25.00 for non-Members
Friday November 14, Doors open at 6:00 pm. Show starts at 6:30.
Seating is Limited! All Acting Roles are taken.
All guests can participate in solving the mystery.
For Tickets come to Lodge meeting
or Contact Lenny or Sharon at
203-507-6509 or Lric56@yahoo.com
Held at Hope Christian Church



Recycling News

Important Dates for the Fall

Electronics collection at Public Works – Saturday 11/1/25
Bulky Waste Pickup – week of November 3rd.

Electronics Drop Off will be on Saturday November 1st. The event will be held at Public Works from 9am to noon. Take2 Recycling will be collecting electronics such as TVs, computers, small appliances and almost anything that has a plug. They cannot accept smoke detectors, A/C’s or dehumidifiers. We will also be taking MATTRESSES (clean and dry), BATTERIES and USED OIL for FREE. There might be a small fee for recycling PROPANE TANKS (in reusable condition) and TIRES.

When you bring us your mattress, you are creating jobs for those who take them apart to recycle the components.

North Branford Fall Leaf Collection is open on Saturdays.

North Branford residents can bring their leaves to the leaf drop off center located to the left of the old police station, around Wall Field on Route 22 from 9:00am to 3:00pm. Just follow the signs. No brush or grass clippings. The leaf drop off will be open on Saturdays, November 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd. Please place leaves in biodegradable leaf bags (no tape please) or empty them loose onto the ground.

There will be a curbside pickup of leaves in untapped biodegradable paper bags the weeks of December 1st – December 12th.

You can find a home for your used furniture and other items before Bulky Waste!!

Help someone else out, unclutter your house and save the cost of sending items to the landfill.

You can post on the Facebook page: North Branford & Northford Free Items.

Or, post on the New Haven, East Haven or Milford Freecycle.org site. Or, you can look up furniture in the New Haven Downsizing Donation Guide. It lists multiple organizations that want your stuff! Just Google ‘New Haven Downsizing Donation Guide’. Some places even pick-up large items.

Happy Halloween!

Please remember that most of those candy bar wrappers and bags go into the trash. They are not plastic film and they are not recyclable. When your pumpkin has lost its decorating use, you can throw it into the woods or backyard to feed the wildlife. Make a squirrel very happy. Be sure to remove any non-organic features. Dead potted plants are compostable. You can put them into your backyard compost pile.

For more information about recycling in North Branford you can check out North Branford’s Recycling Committee’s website: https://www.northbranfordct.gov/245/SolidHazardous-Waste-Recycling-Committee or our Facebook page: North Branford CT Hazardous Waste & Recycling Committee

Thank You for Your Participation

TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD
OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DECEMBER HOLIDAY BASKET SHARE

The December Holiday Basket Share will take place on Thursday, December 18, 2025. For those that need some assistance with their Holiday dinner and/or gifts for children, you only need to contact the Office of Social Services and request to be a recipient in the December Holiday Basket Share.

The requirements are that you are in need and a resident of North Branford or Northford. Your information is protected, and your name will not be disclosed. You must be able to pick up your basket or arrange for someone to pick it up for you. We are unable to deliver or bring it to your car. Pick up is at the Stanley T Williams Community Center 1332 Middletown Ave. Northford. For those wishing to donate a basket, you only need to call or email the Office of Social Service and express your desire to donate a Holiday Dinner Basket or a grocery store gift card, with or without children’s gifts.

You may choose the family size you would like to adopt. You may choose to do this alone, or as a group, with neighbors or co-workers. For those wishing to include children’s gifts, this Office will provide you with the children’s wish list. Although names are not disclosed, a number will be given to both the recipient and the donor. This is used to identify which family is the recipient. All commitments by the donors and recipients will receive written confirmation. Last Day to be part of the Program as a recipient: Friday, November 14, 2025

lbreen@northbranfordct.gov 203-484-6006 Luisa Breen
ksperry@northbranfordct.gov 475-655-0412 Kathy Sperry

Northford-North Branford Women’s Club, GFWC
Dutch Auction, Tuesday, November 18th

The Northford-North Branford Women’s Club, GFWC will be holding a holiday Dutch Auction on Tuesday, November 18th at 6:30pm at the Stanley T. Williams Community Center. The community center is located at 1332 Middletown Avenue in Northford. The public is cordially invited to attend. There will be food, refreshments, raffles and of course our auction items! Please come and enjoy a fun night and do some holiday shopping at the same time! We hope that you are able to attend.

Please rsvp to maryellen.nfwc@gmail.com by Friday, November 14th. We look forward to seeing you there!

Introduction to Marine Batteries

New Haven Sail & Power Squadron, part of America’s Boating Club, will hold a two-hour seminar for boaters who need information about marine batteries. Class will be held from 9 to 11 a.m. on Sat., Nov. 15, at Indian Neck Yacht Club, 87 Harding Ave., Branford.

Boat batteries are easy to forget – until they conk out and ruin your adventure. Learn the ins and outs of marine batteries before leaving the dock. This seminar covers how to: choose the best battery for your boat, maintain your battery for longer life, get the best performance from your charging system, and work safely with batteries. Get tips on both lead-acid and lithium batteries, plus upgrade considerations.

All students must sign up by Wed., Nov. 12. People can sign up online and charge it to a credit card. The class costs \$10 per person. To register and pay online, use the Zeffy link that follows. www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/introduction-to-marine-batteries

There is no processing fee. Or, contact Squadron Education Officer Peter De-Pascale at 203-671-2420 and leave a message, or email him at bathworksinc@gmail.com.

New Haven Sail & Power Squadron (NHSPS), is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization dedicated to making boating safer and more enjoyable by teaching classes in boat handling, navigation, and related subjects. For information on NHSPS, go to: www.nhsp.org.

North Branford Office of Social Service
and Agency on Aging
Presenting

MEDICARE EDUCATION CLASS 2026
Thursday November 6th at 12:30 pm
Stanley T Williams Community Center
Board of Education Media Room

Please join us for information about Medicare

- The Different Parts of Medicare A, B, C and D
- Changes in Costs and penalties that could affect you this year
- Prescription Costs and Changes
- The importance of reading the ANOC Letter

NORTH BRANFORD PARKS AND RECREATION & SENIOR CENTER

NORTH BRANFORD PARKS, RECREATION, AND SENIOR CENTER

STW COMMUNITY CENTER • 1332 MIDDLETOWN AVE NORTHFORD

WWW.NBRECREATION.COM • CALL (203) 484-6017

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK! @NBPARKSANDRECREATION AND INSTAGRAM! @NBPARK.REC.SENIOR

Annual Tree Lighting
Friday, December 5th
Town-owned Augur Property 290 Forest Road, Northford • 6:30 - 8:00pm
Snow or Shine!

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTH BRANFORD ROTARY CLUB

Ice Sculpting	Hay Rides	Hot Chocolate & Cookies
Marshmallow Toasting	Stage Performances	And Santa!

Marshmallow toasting sticks provided by: **SMORSTIX**
The Perfect Marshmallow Roasting STIX

FOOD TRUCKS:
ARCHER MOORES **Reptech**

LETTERS TO THE NORTH POLE
Mail a letter to Santa, Mrs. Claus, or your favorite elf or reindeer!
Find the template On our website nbcreation.com

Gifting Tree

Year after year, our Gifting Tree program helps bring extra holiday cheer to Senior Citizens in our community. Kindly remove an ornament tag from the tree and purchase a gift card to either Big Y, Walmart, Walgreens, or Dollar General and return the tag with the gift card to one of our Gifting Tree locations by 12/12/25. Recommended denominations, \$20-\$40

Find our Gifting Trees at:
STW Community Center -1332 Middletown Ave. Northford
Atwater Memorial Library -1720 Foxon Rd. North Branford
Edward Smith Library - 3 Old Post Rd. Northford

GENTLE YOGA

Join instructor Brienne Barrett for a gentle yoga class designed to softly open tight areas of the body while strengthening muscles and reinforcing balance. Much of this class is taught on the floor with very little transitioning between standing and sitting. This class is supportive of people working with injuries or chronic conditions.

STW Yoga Room

Fridays Nov 7 - Dec 5 11:15-12:15pm

Ages 18+ (no class 11/28)

Cost \$45 res/ \$50 nr

SOUND HEALING

Wednesday November 12, 2025

6:30-7:30 pm - Ages 16+

STW Yoga Room - \$30

Experience this incredible workshop with Toni McGovern. Balance your mind, body and spirit with sound healing instruments to heal, reset & promote deep rest.

*Blankets & mats are available, however you may choose to bring your own pillows.

Registration Required by 11/7

— SENIOR CENTER —

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Nutrition Through the Holidays

with East Shore District Health Department

November 18, 2025

STW Senior Room

12:45-2:00pm

Register by 11/14

UKULELE CLUB SING A LONG

November 13, 2025

1:00pm—2:00pm - FREE

The Wallingford Ukulele Club is a relatively new group, established in January 2024 and is coming to share their music with us! The Wallingford Ukulele Club members are ukulele enthusiasts who meet to share the joy of music. They are comprised of members from neighboring towns with varying levels of experience. Register by 11/11

AQUA TURF

Holiday Classics with the Cartells!

At Aqua Turf Club

December 9, 2025- \$58res/\$63nr

Featuring a sing-a-long with The Glamour Girls, Santa & Mrs. Claus!

Menu: Roasted Turkey & Baked Cod

Departs 10:15 am Returns: appx. 5:00 pm

Register by: 8/22 Payment is due at time of registration



IVORYTON PLAYHOUSE

Playhouse Holiday Jamboree

At Ivoryton Playhouse

December 17, 2025- \$58res/\$63nr

Lunch (on your own) at Lenny & Joe's then we're off to the theater to celebrate the holiday season at the Playhouse Holiday Jamboree!

Celebrate the holiday season with a lively, festive evening of music and storytelling!

This joyous show, features a captivating selection of classic and contemporary holiday favorites performed by world-class entertainers.

Departs 10:30 am Returns: appx. 5:00 pm

Payment is due at time of registration

TURKEY SHOOT FREE-THROW CONTEST

Saturday November 22, 2025
North Branford High School

Details on nbcreation.com!

MARY'S HOLIDAY COOKIE BAKE!

Join Mary Amter for a festive, hands-on baking workshop for Adults/Adult and child where you'll make (and take home!) a holiday-inspired tray of 5 different cookie varieties.

* Candy Cane Shortbread * Ricotta Anginettes
* Oreo Truffles * Lemon Crinkle * Cream Cheese Snickerdoodles

December 14

9:00am-12:00pm

STW Kitchen - Ages 12+

\$65res / \$70 nr



CLASSIFIED AD RATES

Personal, For Sale, Help Wanted, Tag Sale, and all non-business classified
1 issue \$9.00 2 issues \$12.00 3 issues \$15.00
20 words or less, not including phone #. \$.05 per word, per run, after 20 words
Lost and Found FREE
Business Classified Ads & Real Estate
3 issues \$35.00, 6 issues \$60.00, 12 issues \$100.00
\$.10 per word, per run, after 20 words
Payment MUST accompany all ads. The advertiser must notify this newspaper of any errors.

Send ad along with your check to:
Totoket Times P.O. Box 313 Northford, CT 06472
For more information call 203-410-4254

ELECTRICIAN

TJC Electrical Services - No Job too small or big. Service upgrade & Generator Specials. Call Tom Cassella at 203-619-2823. Licensed & Insured.

PLUMBING

John DiMaggio Plumbing - Residential/Commercial repairs/remodeling. Big or small. Water Heater Specials! Licensed & Insured. Call 203 - 627 - 6826. References available.

Public Stargazing at Young’s Park

The Astronomical Society of New Haven is hosting a free stargazing event on Saturday November 8th starting after 6 pm at Young’s Park, 60 Blackstone Ave. in Branford. Admission and parking are free. All are welcome, including children and grandparents.

We should have a nice view of Saturn and a few of its moons. Our moon rises a little later so we might be able to see a comet, Neptune and Uranus. The telescopes will also be pointed at the Andromeda Galaxy along with other deep sky star clusters and nebulae. Learn where to find some constellations. If you have a telescope, you are welcome to bring it. Directions and cancellation due to weather (including clouds) will be posted to our website, www.asnh.org or call 866-808-ASNHN.

The Astronomical Society of New Haven, Inc. is a non-profit, scientific and educational organization which fosters new and continuing interest in amateur astronomy.

Crafters Care Events Presents ...

A HOLIDAY ARTISAN MARKET @ Millpond

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025
11 am to 4 pm
Millpond Gatherings
1565 Middletown Ave. Northford, CT

\$5.00 Cash Only Entry Fee Benefits The Food Pantry of North Branford

Support local small business
Holiday shopping from handmade artisans and crafters
All from CT!

Celebrate Life!

KEENAN FUNERAL HOME, INC.

238 Elm Street
West Haven, CT 06516

330 Notch Hill Rd
North Branford, CT 06471

Every life is unique.
Every goodbye, special.

Cremation Burial

Veteran Services

PREPLAN AND SAVE!! CALL NOW: (203) 933-1217
EMAIL US: WeCare@KeenanFuneralHome.com

★★★★★

"Keenan Funeral Home was truly amazing and very attentive to all of our needs. Thank you Keenan, for being there in our most painful time."

"I truly cannot say enough how grateful my family and I are to Keenan for their exceptional service. From the moment we met to make arrangements to the actual service, they were great. There was no financial pressures, our limits were respected, and everything was said outright."

"Beautiful and peaceful space, staff was very kind and sympathetic... Their kindness will not be forgotten."

Scan below to visit our website!!

NARFE Meeting and Speaker

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association monthly meeting will be held Monday, November 3, 1:00 PM, at the North Haven Congregational Church, 28 Church St. All active and retired federal workers are invited to attend.

The guest speaker will be Debbie Herget, Blue Cross/Blue Shield Federal Health Benefits Account Executive who will discuss the 2026 Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan and the Postal Service Health Benefit Plan; brochures will be available.

NARFE is dedicated to protecting and preserving the earned benefits of federal workers and retirees. Info: <http://www.Narfe.org>

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

North Branford Rotary

Fall Fling & Auction Presents

Dancing through the DECADES

Join Us as We Step Back in Time:
And Dance Through the Decades!

Get ready to groove, twist, moonwalk, and shuffle your way through the ultimate throwback celebration! We're hosting a Dance Through the Decades, where every era gets its moment in the spotlight. From the roaring '20s to the electric '80s, the grungy '90s, and beyond—each decade will be celebrated with the music, vibes, and energy that made it unforgettable.

Come dressed in the attire of your favorite decade—whether it's poodle skirts and leather jackets, bell-bottoms and tie-dye, leg warmers and neon, or flannel and denim. Or just wear what makes you feel ready to dance!

No matter when you were born, there's a beat for you.
Let's dance through the decades—together!

Friday November 14, 2025
6:00pm to 11:00pm
Woodwinds, 29 School Ground Rd, Branford CT
Early Bird \$60.00 per person on or before October 31st
\$65.00 per person as of November 1st
Includes: open bar from 6-8,
Dinner and music & Auction
For tickets scan the QR
Questions can be directed to
northbranfordrotary@gmail.com or call Melinda at 203-988-0883