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Town News from...

David Cohen

North Haven Third Selectman



Third Spaces

During the summer of 2024 I did something unexpected - I bought a gym. To be clear, I had no business buying a gym. I am not a professional trainer, nor did I have any experience running a small business, and I definitely did not have the hours in the day to devote to running the operation. I just loved my gym, and when the owner told me he was moving away and going to close up shop I could not imagine waking up every morning and not starting off my day without my gym crew. The gym is my third space - it's not work and it's not home, it's just a separate space that I can be myself and fully present, without the noise of the outside world getting in the way.

I convinced another member to be my partner in this adventure, cajoled a longtime trainer to work the morning classes, and off we went. When we announced to the gym community that we were stepping in as new owners and going to keep the gym open, many members shed tears of joy and relief. We saved the gym, a third space for all of us, and for a time that's all that mattered.

Before long, however, we realized we were in way over our heads, and the gym, always thin on margins and members, was on life support. Our trainer had to reduce his hours and I stepped in to teach the morning classes. My partner and I were making monthly deposits in the wrong direction to keep the business afloat, and I was quickly running out of instagram workouts to use. Eventually, we hired a few more trainers, started to use the space more thoughtfully and began to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

This column is not about the trials of owning and operating a small business, which are many - it's about community, and the lengths we will go to protect and preserve it. People come to our gym because they want to improve their physical health and well-being or to feel and look better, but they end up staying because they find a community of like-minded people who view the world through the lens of self-improvement. We are black, brown and white, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Atheist, Republican, Democrat and Independent, straight, gay and trans, cops and teachers, nurses and lawyers, doctors and plumbers, stay-at-home moms and retirees. But none of that matters inside the gym. We have a deep connection to each other, and our commitment to our community is stubborn and steadfast. We come early to class and stay late after the workout to chat and check in on each other. We learn about each other's families and worlds, and cheer each other on for our triumphs and lean on each other during times of loss. The identities we blanket ourselves in outside the gym cease to exist inside the gym - they aren't lost, they are just paused.

I imagine this to be the case in many third spaces, places where people come together because of some underlying similarity which over time evolves into something deeper and more meaningful. I view these spaces as an antidote to the division and dislocation many of us feel about our broader world - it is these communities of choice that sustain us, nourish us and remind us that we are not alone, and perhaps, more importantly, that we are all in this together. Whether your third space is the 7:00 am lap crew at the Rec Center, 12:00 pm bingo at the Senior Center, the garden club, Rotary, Bible study or model airplane club (yes we have a model airplane club here in North Haven!), I encourage you all to find your third space in our community or, better yet, create one, and I guarantee your connection to North Haven, and the larger world around you, will be stronger, healthier and lasting.

North Haven Lions Club

Third Saturday Event Planned for May 16th

We were unable to hold a Second Saturday event on May 9th, as the North Haven Church is holding a Tag Sale that same day, but instead are having a Third Saturday on May 16th from 10am-1pm.

We are asking the public for FOOD for the Food Bank, PET supplies for animal shelters, DIAPERS for the Diaper Bank and recycled eyeglasses.

We will be holding a Third Saturday event on June 20th from 10am-1pm at the North Haven Church at 28 Church Street across from the Green as The PRIDE is having an event on June 12th and they will be using the NHCC parking lot and expect a large attendance during their event.

Again, we will be asking for Food for the Ecumenical Food Bank with requests for canned vegetables, fruits and soups. Your generous donations help so many in our community. We thank you for all you can give.

• • • •

WANTED: Collector buying any Connecticut Brewery items for Wehle, Hulls, Wiebel, Largay or any other CT Breweries, signs, cans, bottles, etc.; call (203) 915-7662 •

FOR SALE: MTD 20" lawn mower, one pull starting, serviced, oil changed, blade sharpened $100; (203) 214-5232

Express yourself in our Letters to the Editor

To submit a letter: Letters to the Advisor should include the writer's name, address and phone number. The writer's signature should appear at the end of the letter. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters will be accepted through Wednesday at 5pm. We will extend the deadline if circumstances allow and providing we have space available. Letters must be no longer than 400 words due to space limitations. The Advisor does not edit letters which are published as they are received. If a letter is questionable, the writer will be contacted for verification. The Advisor reserves the right to not publish letters that may be personally offensive.

A Community Conversation on Senior Housing

To The Editor: May 6, 2026

As our community continues to grow and evolve, one thing is certain, planning for housing as we age is becoming increasingly important for individuals and families alike. With rising costs making it more difficult for many older adults to remain in their homes, these conversations are no longer something to put off for "someday."

Navigating these choices can feel overwhelming, especially when decisions are often made during times of stress or urgency. At the North Haven Senior Center, we strive to be more than just a place for programs, we aim to be a trusted community resource, especially during challenging times. Providing access to information, support, and meaningful connections is at the heart of what we do.

The North Haven Senior Center along with The Commission on Aging will be hosting a Senior Housing Forum on Thursday, June 4th from 3:00-6:00pm at 189 Pool Road in North Haven. This event is designed specifically to help older adults, as well as their families and caregivers, better understand the wide range of senior housing options available. From subsidized housing and market-rate apartments to assisted living and long-term care, attendees will have the opportunity to hear directly from knowledgeable representatives and ask questions in a welcoming, informative setting.

In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to tour the Senior Center and learn more about membership, programs, and services available. I would like to encourage the community to take advantage of this opportunity to become informed, prepared, and confident about the future. These conversations are not always easy, but they are essential, and they are best had before decision need to be made.

Sincerely,

Paulette DeMaio, Town of North Haven Senior Center Manager

Wallingford Garden Club Annual Plant Sale



Pictured Top: Kim Dennis, Linda Brr, Donna Joyce Margaret Kitson. **Bottom:** Sign by Tessmer Mailbox, and Memorial Day decorated boxes.

Wallingford Garden Club will hold the Annual Plant Sale on Sunday, May 17, 2026 from 10:00 to 1:00 at the Wallingford Park and Recreation Department, 6 Fairfield Boulevard off of Barnes Rd. This will be an indoor event. Doors open at 10:00 am.

The chair person for this event is Donna Joyce. There will be plants from members' gardens: perennials, herbs, shrubs, trees, houseplants as well as garden treasurers, and new this year: Decorated Memorial Day Boxes. There was a recent workshop where some garden club members filled the boxes with red, white, and blue flowers.

There will be available members/UCONN Master Gardeners to answer gardening questions. For more information, please call 203-269-2653.

Wallingford Garden Club is a member of The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, New England Garden Clubs, Inc and National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Photos by Ellie Tessmer and Linda Burr.

FOR SALE: John Deere trailer, 3'x4' fiberglass with wood sides $75; (203) 804-3719 •

FOR SALE: Power XL air fryer, 5.3 quart, black, "new" in sealed box $75; call (203) 530-1045 •

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Scout Troop 811 Food Drive

North Haven: Friends and neighbors, the North Haven Food Pantry needs our help. Scout Troop 811 is asking you to be on the lookout for our food drive bags, delivered to you the weekend of May 9th. Please fill the bag(s) with non-perishable food items and leave your donations on your porch or by your mailbox between 9am-12 noon on Saturday, May 16th.

If you prefer delivering directly to the Food Pantry, it is located inside the North Haven Congregational Church at 28 Church St.

For more information about the Pantry, go to: https://northhaven ucc.org/food-pantry/.

We understand that donations may be difficult at this time, but the Food Pantry needs our help. It is more than a community service, it is a community necessity. Thank you, in advance, for your help.

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