

## ABSENTEE/EARLY VOTING

*Continued from front page*

New Fairfield and have filled out an absentee ballot application.” Absentee ballot applications are available in the Town Clerk’s office and for download online at [myvote.ct.gov/absentee](http://myvote.ct.gov/absentee). This link is also available on the home page of the Town’s website [Newfairfield.org](http://Newfairfield.org) in the red banner. Beckett-Flores clarified, “If you are voting Absentee, get your request in sooner than later if it is being mailed out and returned by the Post Office. They have to travel very far sometimes. If you know now that you will need an Absentee Ballot, get your application in now.”

Once they receive the application, the Town Clerk’s office will process it, ensuring that the voter is eligible to receive an Absentee Ballot and enter the voter’s information into the Central Voter Registration System (CVRS). “At that point, a unique serial number is created for each ballot to ensure only the voter who requested it can vote with that ballot,” Smith said. The Town Clerk’s Office will issue Absentee Ballots until November 2 during regular business hours. She shared, “The number of people who typically vote by absentee will vary depending on the type of election. This year is a State Election; in the past we have seen an average of 600 plus Absentee Ballot requests. With No Excuse Absentee Balloting and Early Voting options, it’s difficult to estimate how many absentee ballots to expect this year.” The No-Excuse Voters Amendment of 2024 allows all registered voters in the state to choose to vote by absentee ballot.

The ballots should be carefully completed by the voter, following all the included instructions, and can be returned through the United States Postal Service, in person in the Town Clerk’s office, or via the secure election drop box, which is located outside the front of Town Hall. Smith noted, “By law, only the voter, an immediate family member who lives with the voter (such as a spouse, child, parent, or sibling) or a designee caring for a voter with an illness or disability – such as a doctor or nurse – can return an absentee ballot. The only other legal designees are a town police officer, Registrar of Voters, Deputy Registrar of Voters, or Assistant Registrar of Voters.” All Absentee Ballots must be received by the close of polls – 8:00pm on Election Day.

Smith detailed the steps the Town Clerk follows after receiving the ballots, which involves checking “that the serial number and barcode match the voter who returned the ballot, and then they secure the absentee ballot, still sealed in its envelope, until Election Day. For absentee ballots that are received prior to Election Day, the Town Clerks pre-mark the Election Day checklist to indicate that the voter has returned an absentee ballot. Voters who return their absentee ballot prior to Election Day will not be allowed to vote in a polling place on Election Day unless they have gone to their municipal clerk’s office before 10:00am on Election Day to request their absentee ballot be withdrawn and received an affidavit certifying that the absentee ballot has been withdrawn.” She went on to describe the check and balance measures that are taken, “If an absentee ballot arrives on Election Day, it is held until after 8:00 p.m. when the absentee ballot is compared to the official Election Day checklist. If the voter who returned the Absentee Ballot on Election Day has voted in person in a polling place, the Absentee Ballot is not opened and is rejected. This procedure ensures that no voter can vote twice, even by mistake.” If anyone has any questions regarding the Absentee Ballot process, Smith encourages them to please reach out to the Town Clerk’s Office at 203-312-5616.

### Early Voting

Registrar of Voters Dan McDermott explained that Early Voting will begin on Monday, October 19 and ends on Sunday, November 1 at Town Hall. Hours are daily, 10:00am-6:00pm with extended hours on October 27 and October 29 when polls will be open 8:00am-8:00 pm. When heading to vote, Beckett-Flores suggested that, if it’s convenient, come to vote “when Town Hall hours are usually closed. We have less traffic after 5:00pm weekdays or 12:00pm on Fridays and the weekends. The first and last days can also be busier.” She also noted, “The best practice is to safely cross the street by Town Hall, and be aware of the Town Trick-or-Treat event on October 29, when it will be harder to travel around Town with the trick-or-treaters.”

McDermott wanted to remind voters, “Early voting is still relatively new for Connecticut and likewise New Fairfield. Although we have not been through a complete 4-year cycle of voting, which would give us a good idea on what the turnout will be like at different types of elections, we are prepared regardless of how individuals chose to vote. We know that early voting was very popular during the Presidential election; New Fairfield saw approximately 50% of the voter turnout cast their ballots during early voting.” He went on, “Early voting draws mixed opinions, some voters love the convenience and flexibility while others feel that this is what Election Day is for and would rather cast their vote in person at the polls.” In the end, he says, “it really comes down to personal preference.”

With the extended election periods in recent years, help is needed more than ever. Beckett-Flores said, “We have just begun staffing the upcoming Elections and Early Voting. We encourage anyone interested in learning about becoming an Election Worker to reach out to our office at 203-312-5613.” If prompted to leave a message, give your name and contact information. “We staff the Election just like our office with a balance of party affiliations. Depending on who is available we sometimes need more new staff from certain parties,” Beckett-Flores added, saying, “We also have Community Service Hours available for High School students needing hours for graduation, Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts who need service hours or working on Democracy Badges or other students needing to volunteer (they must be 16 years old to be at the polls).”

Watch for a follow-up article on voting on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, in late October.

## GROOVIN’

*Continued from front page*

right here in the Northeast, Matt Nakoa and Caroline Cotter, just so appropriate.



Caroline Cotter

Opening the night (doors open at 6:45pm; show starts at 7:00pm) will be Caroline Cotter, whose smooth, yet compelling voice, coupled with her poignant storytelling just draws the listener in. Her lyrics often explore connection, nostalgia, gratitude, loss, and wanderlust inspired by her travels. And travelled, she has. Caroline has performed in dozens of US states and multiple countries throughout the world. And with that she has gained an insight into what people experience in far away lands as well as how she has herself reacted to those very experiences. I have a few favorites (albeit, they’re all really good) that I’ll request she play while she’s tuning up in the green room.

And sure, that may certainly have been worth the \$15 you paid for a seat, but the night doesn’t stop there. Taking the stage as our featured performer, Matt Nakoa returns to the Groovin’ Coffee House with his amazing repertoire of compositions blends pop, folk, soul, and classical piano chops, of which The Boston Globe described as “jaw dropping”. This kid who grew up on a goat farm in New York State, then trained as a classical concert pianist, attended the prestigious Berklee College of Music on a vocal scholarship. Now a multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter, Matt tours as both a soloist as well as performing with the likes of folk icon Tom Rush. Expect to sit back and be thoroughly entertained by this more than amazing musician.

*Continued on next column*

Show starts at 7:30pm sharp, but did I mention the doors open at 6:45pm? That gives the time to grab your seat (you’ll be sitting comfortably at tables) and even grab a generously priced plate of food (in collaboration with Bruno’s restaurant), a volunteer’s homemade dessert, and, of course, a cup of coffee (free). We also have bottled water (\$) but bring your own re-usable vessel and its “sustainable” free.

With this, we acknowledge our partnership with NF Parks & Rec and the NF Senior Center (where it’s held at 33 CT-37) and all the volunteers who make it happen. If you’re interested in joining us, talk to one of us at the show or contact us thru the web at [www.groovin-newfairfield.com](http://www.groovin-newfairfield.com) or [grcoffeehouse.com](http://grcoffeehouse.com)

See you at the show!

-Jeff Main

### The Barn Gallery

*Custom Framing since 1979* & Frame Shop

- Conservation Custom Framing
- Shadow Boxes
- Needlework
- Frame & Glass Repair
- Matboard Color Changes
- Re-Use Your Frame

Original artworks in acrylics, oils, pottery, signed & numbered prints, calligraphy, photography, jewelry & crafts.

*Sue Newton • Owner/operator*  
82 Route 37 • Creative Corners

**Since 1990 • 203.746.4502 • [barngalleryframeshop.com](http://barngalleryframeshop.com)**

Hours: Tues. Wed. Fri. & Sat. 9:30-6 • Thurs. 12-6 • Close Sun. & Mon.

## Pet Hotel

**Deluxe Lodging For Cats & Dogs**

Family Owned & Operated Since 1968

Tails are Waggin’ for a Vacation at Holiday Tyme

- Knowledgeable Staff
- Individual Care
- Heat and Air Conditioning
- Large Outdoor Play Area

Call for more information

**(845) 878- 6655 • 311 Rte 292, Patterson NY**  
**HOLIDAYTYME-PETHOTEL.COM**

## SHOP LOCAL

SHOP. EAT. ENJOY.

Support Local Small Businesses

## Superior CLEANERS & TAILORS

**OUR MOBILE APP IS HERE.**

NEW FEATURES

- Schedule contactless FREE Pick Up and Delivery
- Continuous Discounts & Promotions
- Manage your Account & Profile
- Receive Alerts & Much More!

Download our app today!

Sign-up on our website today!  
[SuperiorCleanersAndTailors.com](http://SuperiorCleanersAndTailors.com)

**Shirt Special!**

**\$5 OFF** Shirt Laundry  
5 Shirt Minimum

With this coupon - Expires 10/1/26  
Not To Be Combined With Other Offers

**\$8 OFF** Dry Cleaning of \$25 or More

With this coupon - Expires 10/1/26  
Not To Be Combined With Other Offers

**\$3 OFF** Dry Cleaning of \$15 or More

With this coupon - Expires 10/1/26  
Not To Be Combined With Other Offers

**Tailoring Special!**

**10% OFF** All Tailoring!  
Tailor on Premises

With this coupon - Expires 10/1/26  
Not To Be Combined With Other Offers

**STORE HOURS**

Monday - Friday 7:30am - 6:30pm  
Sat 8am - 5pm

**FIELDSTONE PLAZA**  
88 Route 37, New Fairfield  
(203) 746-4073