

# East Haddam News

AN INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER COVERING MOODUS, LAKE HAYWARD, HADLYME AND EAST HADDAM

March 5, 2020

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Free weekly



Ira Sakolsky, shown in his recording studio, has been an actor, a musician and composer, a producer, and director. Photo by Nancy Thompson.

## The multi-talented Ira Sakolsky: musician, composer, producer etc.

By Nancy Thompson

Ira Sakolsky, known to many as the owner of Riverway Studio in East Haddam, is an accomplished musician, composer, producer, director and an expert in the high technology of today's recording business. Far fewer realize that he started as an actor, a profession to which he plans to return.

Sakolsky was born in Brooklyn and spent his early years in Queens. In high school he was part of a rock 'n' roll band, playing the drums. He also enjoyed acting, and when the time came to enroll in college and

pick one career path over the other, a trusted advisor encouraged him to choose acting.

He studied at the State University of New York's Conservatory of Theater Arts at Purchase, where he was one of 30 in a class that was modeled after Juilliard's drama department. His college mates included Stanley Tucci, known for his roles as the art director in "The Devil Wears Prada" and as a child murderer in "The Lovely Bones" and Edie Falco, best known as Tony Soprano's wife on "The Sopranos" and as "Nurse Jackie."

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Ira Sakolsky working with actor John Lithgow to produce a CD of music and spoken word, based on Ogden Nash's "The Christmas that Almost Wasn't." Photo courtesy of Ira Sakolsky.

## Budgets set to be sent to Finance on Saturday

By David Holahan

A proposed East Haddam operating budget of \$34,479,731 for fiscal 2021 is set to be submitted to town's finance board this Saturday, March 7, at 9 a.m. The school portion of the total is \$21,151,374 and the town government side is \$13,328,357, representing increases respectively of 3.56 percent and 6.9 percent.

Increase in the removal costs of dead trees along roadways, from \$150,000 in the current fiscal year to \$500,000 in the proposed budget, account for 41 percent of the rise in the town budget, according to Cindy Varricchio, East Haddam Finance Director.

She added that the percentage of increase in expenses doesn't correlate to the amount taxes will go up because the figure doesn't reflect various revenue sources, including grants, a nearly two percent rise in the Grand List, and payments to the town, such as an anticipated \$15,000 the East Haddam Ambulance Service. The budget projects that the state of Connecticut will provide \$4 million to East Haddam in FY 2021.

Last year the town approved an overall (town and school) operating budget for the current year that ends on June 30, 2020 that had a 3.4 percent increase over the previous year.

The budget will be scrutinized by the East Haddam Board of Finance (BOF) at a series of public meetings, workshops, and a public hearing before

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**Two Great Events are Coming Your Way!**

✓ **April 18 2020**  
**It's The Chicken Chat!**  
**Saturday**  
**10 AM -11 AM**

✓ **Chick Day**  
**Saturday April 18th**  
**10 AM -2 PM**  
**Hot Dogs Soda Fun!**

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SCHOOL SPORTS



A Unified Sports Basketball tournament was held recently at Westbrook High School and Nathan Hale-Ray High School was among the teams along with North Branford, Westbrook and Coginchaug. Hale-Ray had 16 students participate and won all three games played. The next event for Unified Sports is a basketball tournament on Friday, March 6 at Nathan Hale-Ray High School. The event runs from 3 to 5 p.m. The following high schools will be in attendance for the event: Old Lyme, Cromwell, Haddam Killingworth Middle School and both Hale-Ray high school and middle school students. All student/athletes will enjoy a pizza party following the event. The athletes and coaches are anticipating a big turnout to enjoy the wonderful example of competition and sportsmanship.

CLASS OF 2020

Signs of support for 2020 grads

Project Graduation will be selling lawn signs for parents, families and businesses to show their pride in Hale-Ray's graduating class of 2020. You can purchase a generic lawn sign for \$20 or personalize your sign for just \$5 more. If you order your sign prior to March 30, you will receive personalization for free!

- There are two ways to order
1. Use this link (<https://bit.ly/2Tm6bBK>) and fill out the form online and make payment via venmo or paypal. Venmo payments can be made to @tricia-rafala and paypal payments can be made to PayPal.Me/rafala1. No orders will be processed without payment.
  2. Fill out the form below and mail the form and payment to

Project Graduation, PO Box 317, Moodus, CT 06469 (checks can be made out to EHYFS Project Graduation)

Raffle supports Project Graduation

A raffle sponsored by East Haddam Youth & Family Services will support Project Graduation 2020 for Hale-Ray seniors. Tickets at \$5 each offer a chance for a dozen prizes, including two tickets to a Red Sox game, four pre-season game tickets to the New England Patriots, two tickets to "South Pacific" at the Goodspeed, , a Samsung 55 TV, a \$100 gift certificate from Grandview Camping & Cottages, and a \$100 gift certificate from Shagbark Lumber and Farm Supply.

For tickets contact [nhrhspg@gmail.com](mailto:nhrhspg@gmail.com) or Melissa Nichols at [mel1291968@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mel1291968@sbcglobal.net)  
Drawing is March 20.



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**Save the Date:**

**Presentation for Parents**

**“Internet Safety Concepts”**

**March 31, 2020**

**7:00 – 8:30 pm**

“With the constant surge of new information, programs and apps, the world is just a click or text away.

This program shows parents the positives and potential pitfalls of today’s most popular programs.”

For more information go to [www.ehyfs.org](http://www.ehyfs.org) or call 860-873-3296



Deadline for East Haddam Visitors Guide is March 27

The East Haddam Economic Development Commission is putting together the 2020 East Haddam Visitors Guide. This annual guide will be distributed to various locations both in East Haddam and tourist locations around the state. With over 90 listings of places to see, and things to do, this guide is a very useful tool in attracting tourists to the East Haddam area.

To be included in the guide you must be a local East Haddam Business with an interest to support-

ing tourism in the area. Each applicant for inclusion into the guide must provide us with their business name, address, business phone and website along with a brief description of their offerings, in 25 words or fewer. A picture, 300dpi or better, or digital logo need to be submitted in addition to the listed information.

For businesses who have been included in the past Visitors Guide you may submit updates to your cur-

rent information found in the 2019 Visitors Guide.

Deadline for submissions will be March 27 by 5 p.m. It is anticipated the new 2020 East Haddam Visitors Guide will be out by the end of May in time for the beginning of the tourist season.

For additional information, please contact Irene Haines EDC Administrator at edcadmin@easthaddam.org or by calling (860) 891-8503 or (860) 885-9670.

COMMUNITY

SCOUTS PASTA DINNER



East Haddam Boy Scout Troop 22 is holding its annual Pasta Dinner on Saturday, March 14 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the East Haddam Senior Center. The entertainment for the evening will be provided by the scouts themselves. This is a fundraiser for the troop. The cost for dinner and dessert (and entertainment) is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and children 12 and under. Tickets are on sale at the door and take out is available.

Safe Graduation Dinner set

A Safe Graduation Spaghetti Dinner hosted by East Haddam Youth & Family Services will be held on Saturday March 28 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 35 Neptune Avenue in Moodus.

Dinner includes pasta, meatballs, salad, bread and dessert. Dinners-to-go are available on request. Tickets are available for pre-purchase at the Legion Hall and Dutch Oil Company. Diner is \$10 per person, \$8 for seniors and children under 12.

Proceeds to support the Nathan Hale-Ray High School class of 2020 Project Safe Graduation.

Program on Internet safety is March 21

East Haddam Youth & Family Services will host a program on “Internet Safety Concepts” on Saturday, March 27 from 7 to 8:30 in the Municipal Building. This program shows parents the positives and potential pitfalls of today’s most popular programs. For more information: go to [www.ehyfs.org](http://www.ehyfs.org) or call (860) 873-3296.

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TO THE EDITOR

Debate on Climate Change continues

I found Chet Slabinski’s rambling letter about climate change to be rather odd. At first he denies any human involvement, then at the end recommends human solutions.

The idea of praying to God to come in and solve this problem is laughable. Whether God does or does not exist is a question for another time, but thinking that divine intervention will come and make our planet whole again is very imaginative thinking.

Why is it such a reach for so many Americans

to acknowledge that human beings have been very destructive to our planet? Would acknowledging that mankind has played such a role throw into question our own actions on a personal level? Perhaps a need to go through life without any feeling of guilt?

We can attempt to put the planet back to a better stage, just as we can put back a forest that has been chewed thoroughly by gypsy moths. It involves effort and a willingness to sacrifice individual needs for the betterment of all. An intense focus of money and resources, as was done by our government to get to the Moon, would go a long way. The push for mass use of electric cars would be a start. I am a car

enthusiast, but acknowledge that fossil-fuel powered vehicles belong in a museum.

Man has evolved a great deal, though not as much as many hoped mankind would. The use of our creativity and brains is needed now, not later. Government involvement is a good thing, not something to be afraid of. The existence of environmental regulations is to protect us, in many cases from harming ourselves in pursuit of financial gain. We have created this problem, we need to fess up and fix it.

Jonathan Basil Wilder  
Old Lyme

LOCAL BRIEFS

Unplug East Haddam fun is set March 6

East Haddam Youth & Family Services is hosting a night of unplugged fun on Friday March 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. This community event is free.

Unplug East Haddam will feature five separate events that evening, including:

- Bingo at the Grange Hall
- Ice Cream Social at First Church of Christ
- Games at the East Haddam Free Public Library
- Disc Golf at the Municipal Building Gym
- Acoustic Open Mic Night at Two Wrasslin’ Cats

EHYFS urges residents to:

“Join us for a night of unplugged fun. Take time away from you electronic devices and reconnect with family, friends and the community.”

For more information: go to [www.ehyfs.org](http://www.ehyfs.org) or call (860) 873-3296.

Wall of Honor scanning for March

A Wall-of-Honor display to memorialize the military service of our residents is located in the Municipal Building. As more and more residents come forward the display’s digital monitor is frequently updated. Over 290 men and women are presently remembered on East Haddam’s Wall-of-Honor.

All residents who have served, or are serving, are entitled to have their service recognized. A brief military history will be collected and a picture or two, in uniform, will be digitally scanned this month on:

Monday, Mar. 16, 9am to noon, at the Senior Center on Great Hillwood Rd., Moodus

Tuesday, Mar. 17, 3pm to 6pm, at the Rathbun Library, on Main St, East Haddam

Wednesday, Mar. 18, 3pm to 6pm, at the EHFP Library, on Plains Rd., Moodus

If it is more convenient, you may e-mail military

bio. information and digital photo/s directly to [forrest.l.anderson@mac.com](mailto:forrest.l.anderson@mac.com). Other appointments may be made by calling 860-873-8712.

**Team Trivia Night**

Team Trivia Night hosted by East Haddam Youth & Family Services is set for Friday March 20 at 6:15 p.m. at the American Legion Hall on Neptune Avenue in Moodus. Proceeds from the event (\$10 per person) support the Nathan Hale-Ray High School Project Safe Graduation 2020. Participants can create teams of 6 to 8 people. Play begins at 7 p.m.

Talk of prevention

East Haddam Youth & Family Services is hosting a talk on “Your Power of Prevention as a Parent” featuring Alicia Farrell, Ph.D. on Monday March 9 from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Municipiap Building. RSVP to (860) 873-3296. The talk is full of practical tips and resources that are relevant for parents with children or young adults.

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CALENDAR

Upcoming and ongoing

The American Legion is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose includes making charitable contributions to the local community. Post 156 on Neptune Avenue in Moodus hosts **Bingo Night** every Monday night. Come have fun with your family and friends—refreshments, easy parking, and lots of fun for all.

**Monthly Stop The Bleed (STB) courses** will be held at the East Haddam Municipal Office Complex meeting room 3 on the second Tuesday of every month this year. Next classes are March 10 and April 14. Each class, which will have a maximum of 16 participants and two instructors, will be held in MOC Meeting Room 3 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Register at stopthebleeadeasthaddam@gmail.com or at (203) 687-3036.

**East Haddam Art League Members Spring Show**, April 2 to June 3. Rathbun Library, 36 Main St. Opening reception Friday, April 3, from 6 to 8 p.m. featuring music by Ray White from the Locomotives,

March 6

East Haddam Youth & Family Services is hosting a night of unplugged fun on Friday March 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. This community event is free.

**Unplug East Haddam** will feature five separate events that evening, including:

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- Games at the East Haddam Free Public Library
- Disc Golf at the Municipal Building Gym
- Acoustic Open Mic Night at Two Wrasslin’ Cats

EHYFS urges residents to: “Join us for a night of unplugged fun. Take time away from you electronic devices and reconnect with family, friends and the community.” For more information: go to [www.ehyfs.org](http://www.ehyfs.org) or call (860) 873-3296.

March 13

Start your spring with tunes from the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll! Goodspeed Musicals in association with Artists Lounge Live present “**Elvis My Way**” starring Brandon Bennett. This dynamic concert will pay homage to the incomparable icon Elvis Presley in a hit-filled, rockin’ evening of storytelling and song, March 13 – 15 at The Goodspeed in East Haddam. Performances will be Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, March 14 at 3 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Tickets, \$40-\$50, are available through the Box Office (860) 873-8668), open seven days a week, or online at [goodspeed.org](http://goodspeed.org).

March 14

East Haddam Boy Scout Troop 22 is holding its annual **Pasta Dinner** on Saturday, March 14 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the East Haddam Senior Center. The entertainment for the evening will be provided by the scouts themselves. This is a fundraiser for the troop. The cost for dinner and dessert (and entertainment) is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and children 12 and under. Tickets are on sale at the door and take out is available.

March 15

The Knights of Columbus Annual **St. Patrick’s Day corned beef and cabbage dinner**—with carrots and potatoes, appetizers, homemade Irish soda bread, dessert, coffee and drinks—is on Sunday March 15 at 5 p.m. at St. Bridget of Kildare in Moodus. Enjoy raffle prizes, music and fun for all. All are welcome. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased after masses at the church or by contacting Ralph Nichols, (860) 873-2732. Takeout meals are also available. All proceeds benefit the charitable works of the Knights.

March 20

**Team Trivia Night** hosted by East Haddam Youth

& Family Services is set for Friday March 20 at 6:15 p.m. at the American Legion Hall on Neptune Avenue in Moodus. Proceeds from the event (\$10 per person) support the Nathan Hale-Ray High School Project Safe Graduation 2020. Participants can create teams of 6 to 8 people. Play begins at 7 p.m.

March 21

East Haddam Youth & Family Services will host a program on “**Internet Safety Concepts**” on Saturday, March 27 from 7 to 8:30 in the Municipal Building. This program shows parents the positives and potential pitfalls of today’s most popular programs. For more information: go to [www.ehyfs.org](http://www.ehyfs.org) or call (860) 873-3296.

March 27-29

NHRHS Drama Club will perform the Broadway Junior production **The Pirates of Penzance JR.** on March 27 and 28 at 7 p.m. and a matinee on March 29 at 2 p.m. at Nathan Hale-Ray High School at 15 School Drive, Moodus. Tickets are \$7 and \$5 for students and senior citizens and may purchased by at the door. For more information please call/email [rosemarie.evans@easthaddamschools.org](mailto:rosemarie.evans@easthaddamschools.org) or alex.lattanzi@easthaddamschools.org.

March 28

A **Safe Graduation Spaghetti Dinner** hosted by East Haddam Youth & Family Services will be held on Saturday March 28 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 35 Neptune Avenue in Moodus. Dinner includes pasta, meatballs, salad, bread and dessert. Dinners-to-go are available on request. Tickets are available for pre-purchase at the Legion Hall and Dutch Oil Company. Diner is \$10 per person, \$8 for seniors and children under 12. Proceeds to support the Nathan Hale-Ray High School class of 2020 Project Safe Graduation.



Communication from the Board of Finance

Transfer Station Information

The East Haddam Board of Finance is committed to providing transparency on all financial matters for the Town. A financial item of particular interest is the current cost to operate East Haddam’s Transfer Station. In response to questions from citizens, the Board of Finance has written this article in order to help answer the questions. There has been much discussion about the Transfer Station over the past several years in Study Committee Reports, Board of Selectmen Meetings and articles in the *East Haddam News*. These discussions have shown that there is much opportunity and need for improvement in the facilities and operation of the Transfer Station. The First Selectman and the Public Works Department are continuing to develop an improvement plan for the Transfer Station that would both enhance the services and provide better control on the cost of operation. In order to assist the townspeople with the understanding of the finances for the Transfer Station, the Board of Finance believes that it is very important for everyone to know the current costs and revenues for the Transfer Station (tipping fees, hauling costs, recycling payments, facilities, equipment, manpower, etc.). By knowing the sources of the current costs and revenues, we can see the challenges and appreciate the need for improvement. The Transfer Station is a complicated facility and therefore, several sets of numbers are needed to better describe the situation. We will start with the total expenditures and revenues for the Transfer Station for the past five years and the current year as follows:

Fiscal Year	Actual 2014-2015	Actual 2015-2016	Actual 2016-2017	Actual 2017-2018	Actual 2018-2019	Budget 2019-2020
Total Expenditures	\$552,961	\$576,366	\$582,096	\$603,496	\$618,626	\$617,683
Total Revenues	\$49,347	\$36,354	\$38,342	\$50,736	\$59,694	\$60,000

Refuse Removal (RR) costs are approximately 70% of the total expenditures and are shown below:

Fiscal Year	Actual 2014-2015	Actual 2015-2016	Actual 2016-2017	Actual 2017-2018	Actual 2018-2019	Budget 2019-2020
Total RR Expenditures	\$372,654	\$392,512	\$406,071	\$417,834	\$431,467	\$420,000

Hauling costs and tipping costs are almost 90% of the refuse removal costs. Recycling payments help reduce the total cost. However, they are a variable dependent on a shrinking recycling market. The actual variation over the past years and to-date for this fiscal year is shown below:

Fiscal Year	Actual 2014-2015	Actual 2015-2016	Actual 2016-2017	Actual 2017-2018	Actual 2018-2019	Jul-Dec 2019
Municipal Solid Waste Tipping Fees	\$199,147	\$199,144	\$208,155	\$217,599	\$215,598	\$125,020
Municipal Solid Waste Hauling Costs	\$41,270	\$41,370	\$44,333	\$45,812	\$44,592	\$24,288
Bulky Waste Tipping Fees	\$47,695	\$49,711	\$55,798	\$55,645	\$57,242	\$27,448
Bulky Waste Hauling Costs	\$13,111	\$15,340	\$17,420	\$17,729	\$16,860	\$8,691
Payment from the Recycling Processor	\$4,659	\$4,628	\$4,832	\$4,673	\$4,071	\$2,131
Recycling Hauling Costs	\$26,633	\$29,645	\$36,477	\$40,555	\$37,061	\$19,527

- Summary:**
- ◆ The historical record shows a steady trend where the tipping fees and hauling costs are the principal drivers for increasing total expenditures.
  - ◆ The Transfer Station is experiencing an expense increase in the current fiscal year due to increasing tonnage and new contracts with higher hauling rates and tipping fees.
  - ◆ Recycling is becoming all cost with no longer any revenue. As of March 1, 2020, the Town will no longer receive payment for recycling, instead the Town will be charged. We were receiving a payment from the recycling processor of \$5 per ton for recycling and we will now be paying \$30 per ton for recycling.
  - ◆ The primary concern is the potential for further cost increases.
  - ◆ The First Selectman along with the Public Works Department will continue to be challenged to develop and execute an improvement plan that makes the entire Transfer Station operation more efficient and less costly to the taxpayers while providing acceptable services.



# East Haddam News

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## SCHOOL SPORTS



The Nathan Hale Ray Middle School Unified Sports Team attended the Youth Leadership Summit recently at the Newton Youth Academy. The team had the opportunity to listen to Aric Jackson, a youth leadership motivational speaker. The athletes participated in team building exercises with other unified sports teams from Connecticut. The summit was an enriching experience for the athletes.

## LEGAL NOTICES

### TOWN OF EAST HADDAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF ACTION

The East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission, at its regular meeting and public hearing held February 25, 2020, took the following actions:

Approved - #19-15 – 49 Main Street, Charles Dutch (agent), Robert & Marcia Reynolds (owner), Site Plan Review for an addition to the existing house in the EHVD zone. Assessor’s Map 26, Lot 3.

Withdrawn – Proposed amendment change to the floating zone regulations for the Planned Recreational Development/Resort Zones. Proposal is to allow more than four units in a building that existed prior to the floating zone application.

Dated at East Haddam, CT this 27th day of February, 2020  
Crary H. Brownell - Chairman

### DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS TOWN OF EAST HADDAM

The Town of East Haddam and the East Haddam School District are seeking a highly qualified individual to serve as the Director of Operations. At least five years of experience in building construction, facilities and grounds management; engineering and/or maintenance; supervision and organized labor relations; planning & budgeting. Salary commensurate with experience in the range of \$100,000-\$120,000. Competitive compensation/benefits package. Detailed job description and application available upon request or online at [www.easthaddam.org](http://www.easthaddam.org). Application with resume and cover letter are required. Send application package to Selectmen’s Office, 1 Plains Road, P.O. Box 385, Moodus, CT 06469 by April 1, 2020.

The Town of East Haddam shall endeavor to post its Legal Notices with the East Haddam News publication. In the event that the weekly publication cannot meet the Town’s statutory requirements, the Hartford Courant shall be utilized to meet said statutory deadlines. Courtesy copies will be published to *East Haddam News* that may or may not be timely. The Town’s website is: [www.easthaddam.org](http://www.easthaddam.org).



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**Indoor Corn Hole Play:** Ages 21+, Tuesdays, February 4-March 31, 7:15-9 p.m., Municipal Gym, \$5 drop-in.

**Safe Boating Course:** Saturday, March 28, 9 to 5 p.m., Parks and Rec Activity Room, \$95. Ages 12+. Boat Safe Connecticut is offering a One-Day certification class. They will focus on the student to make sure each one has the knowledge and ability to pass the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) provided final class exam and thus be qualified to apply for a Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation (CPWO-boating and personal watercraft operators 'license') issued by the DEEP. We provide the in-class technology to allow students who successfully complete the course to pay for and print their actual CPWO. certificate from the DEEP. website at the conclusion of the class.

**American Red Cross: When I'm in Charge:** While parents should determine if their child is ready to stay home alone, this class teaches students how to

be responsible and safe. Topics include internet safety, sibling care, and basic emergency care. Classes are taught by a certified American Red Cross instructor. Ages 9-11, Wednesday, March 18, 5:45 – 7:15 p.m., Parks and Rec Activity Room, \$40.

**Qigong Workshops with Amalia Shaltiel:** These workshops teach movement, meditations, visualizations and breathing exercises that help us sense and train our life energy (Qi). When there is an abundant flow of Qi we are vital and harmonious and can navigate the continuous changes in our life with grace. All ages welcome, but we ask that children under 12 be accompanied by an adult. Our February class, Spring Starts Under the Surface, will focus on regeneration. This is a time to start a slow, but persistent movement outward and up. We will encourage this movement with Qigong exercises, breathwork and meditations for the end of winter and beginning of spring. Saturday, March 21, 2-5 p.m., Parks and Rec Activity, \$45.

**Youth Open Gym** for Grades 7-12: An opportunity for teens to get exercise and have fun with their friends in a safe environment. Majority rules when deciding what to play and they are encouraged to work it out together. Kids who are registered may go to the main office of the middle school or Ms. Sweet's office at the high school to get a bus pass. The transfer bus will drop them off at the front of the

Municipal Building. I will provide both schools with the roster of registered kids. A bus pass will only be issued if you are registered and on the roster. Tuesdays 2-4 p.m., February 25, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31, \$15.

**Crochet Club Gathering with Sabrina:** Relax and enjoy spending time with others that share your interest in crochet. Bring your hooks and some yarn. Sabrina will help you learn, enhance your knowledge or just plain share in the enjoyment of the creative process. All welcome! Thursdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Parks and Rec Activity Room. Free!

**Gentle Yoga:** This program is appropriate for all levels of fitness or yoga experience. Wear loose comfortable clothing; bring a yoga mat and water to drink. Call the office for financial aid. New session begins March 6-April 26. Ages 16+, Sundays and Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. Senior Center, Fridays: 10:30 a.m. at The Grange, \$65/session (1x/week) or \$10 Drop-in.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Non-commercial classifieds are free: We will run them for four weeks or until you tell us to stop. Email them to: [Editor@easthaddamnews.org](mailto:Editor@easthaddamnews.org).

Missing

**Orange and white short haired tabby cat,** 10-pound neutered male, about 4 years old. No collar. Call or text (860) 491-0188. (3/19)

Wanted

**Jazz & Rock LP records:** I have been a collector for 35 years. I do not resell. Call Mike, (860) 573-8678. (3/5).

Lost and Found

**Found: Workman's belt with tools** in Killingworth. Call to identify. 860-638-8614. (3/5).

For Sale

**Firewood:** 1 cord of recently cut (16" length) and split white oak. \$210, if you pick up. Call or text (860) 877-0831 (3/26)

**Large dog crate/kennel.** For training, etc. 4 feet long, 2 1/2 feet wide, 3 feet high. For dogs like collie, german shepherd, etc. Like new. Asking \$25. Call (860) 874-8968 between 4-7 p.m. (3/26)

**Household items** including Lounge suite, blue/grey in colour, very light usage, no smokers, no pets, no children. Three or four seater sofa and two arm chairs. \$100 but buyer must pick up. Set of 5 Coussance/Le Crueset cast iron pans with wooden handles (no suitable for the oven). \$75. Pine headboard suitable for a full size bed. \$35. (860) 873 2758. (3/26)

Collection of classic blue/grey Hadley Hand-

**crafted American Stoneware Pottery** in various patterns including farm animals, barns, little whales and ships. Plates, bowls, mugs, casserole dishes and more. Asking \$300 for the collection. Email: [haydenhill687@gmail.com](mailto:haydenhill687@gmail.com) or call 860-538-4298. (3/5).

**Neutral beige/grey contemporary sofa** 36" deep, 78" long, 33" high; excellent condition; no pets, non-smoker, removable back cushions, roomy to sleep on; used approximately 40 hours. Must pick up but it's not heavy. \$275; email [haddamite@proton-mail.com](mailto:haddamite@proton-mail.com) for photos. (3/5).

**Optimus karaoke amp and mic,** \$50. **Minolta zoom 90c camera,** \$15. **Sharky party fog machine,** \$65. **Chavez party club labor,** \$30. **Pioneer pro DJ set,** 2 cd drives, mixer, etc. in Odyssey travel case, \$900. (203) 537-3131. (3/5).

**Everett Piano for sale,** studio upright, very good condition, tuned annually. \$450. Great piano with matching bench. Contact Thomas at (860) 267-7515. (3/5).

**Kenmore Washing Machine:** Older agitator style, top load. Works fine. \$50, Call or text Mike (516) 445-1851. (3/5).

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# Town budgets

*Continued from page EH1*  
being voted on by town residents in early May.  
East Haddam First Selectman Rob Smith pointed out that some of the increase spending will be offset by savings: for example, a new position in public works is expected to decrease the amount the town pays outside contractors for snow removal, he said.  
Contracted salary raises for town employees are estimated to increase by two percent or more, depending on current contract negotiations. Vehicle replacement costs include a police cruiser, a truck for public works and a backhoe at the Transfer Station.  
Other expense hikes include paying for more town employees availing themselves of the town's fringe benefit program and increased fees for such things as 911 service and technology services for both the town and the schools. "This week instead of getting \$5 a ton for recyclables the town starts paying \$30 a ton for them," he said.

The first chance for the public to weigh in on the proposed budget is this Saturday, March 7 at 9 a.m. at the Board of Finance's first workshop. The next regularly scheduled BOF meeting is Monday March 9 at 7 p.m. Two additional public workshops are scheduled for Saturdays this month, March 14 and March 21, both at 9 a.m. All of the meetings are held in the Municipal Building.  
The public hearing on the budget is set for Tuesday April 7 at the Nathan Hale-Ray High School auditorium. The annual town meeting on the budget is on Tuesday April 21 in the Old Town Hall and the referendum is Tuesday May 5 in Municipal Building.

In related news that also will impact the mill rate, which determines what property owners pay in taxes, the town's grand list increased nearly two percent this year.  
In addition to the operating budgets, the school board and the town board of selectmen submit sep-

arate requests for funding of capital projects, such as a new track for the Nathan Hale-Ray High School. If these are approved, the cost can be spread out over several budget years or paid for over a longer time period through bonding.  
In an interview last week, East Haddam Board of Finance Chair William DiCristofaro said, "There are two things I have my eye on right now: one I'll call public works in general, and that includes removing dead trees. If you think of the challenges public works has faced, it was also the serious damage we had to roads from the washout a couple of years ago [from a 2018 rain storm] and the coordination with FEMA. There are a number of factors in play there that are uncharacteristic or an anomaly. We're working through all that and we making great progress and we have to keep our eye on that."  
"The other thing is some of the good news that I'm starting to see," he added. "I noticed today [last week] that Gov. Lamont released some funding for roads and municipalities [Gov. Lamont released \$625 million to cities and towns that includes \$60 million for roads]. That is always a concern, what will happen with the state. Good, bad or indifferent, the state is our partner and releases money to us each year. We can look at the money we get one year and the next year it can be problematic."

DiCristofaro also said that the town has improved how it scrutinizes and prioritizes capital expenditures through the creation of a Long Range Capital Improvements Committee. "Last year we put a concerted effort into anticipating our capital expenditures," he said. "We're not only looking at them but projecting them through [the new committee], putting some of these projects on the radar and coordinating with finance on them to determine which ones we can do first. We don't have the funding to do it all at once. We're a small town. This focus on capital spending analysis is a positive change, how we're going to do them, when we're going to do them or whether we do them at all."

The new capital improvements committee is made up of the first selectman, two members of the BOF, three members of the board of education, and one member of planning and zoning commission. It will work with the BOF at its three workshops this month to develop a combined school/town capital plan.  
In an interview last week, Brian Reas, Superintendent of East Haddam Public Schools, said that a 2.8 percent increase is required just to cover contracted school salaries for fiscal 2021. He cited an increase in special education tuitions and the need for a fourth third grade teacher because of a bump in enrollment for that class.  
He also addressed the four top projects in the schools' proposed capital budget: upgrading the envelope around the East Haddam Elementary School, a new track for the Nathan Hale-Ray High School, additional air conditioning for the town's three schools, and irrigation for high school and middle school playing fields.  
He said, "The envelope project would cost about \$1.7 million and the cost to the town would be about \$970,000 we expect, depending on the state reimbursement rate, which changes from year to year."  
He said the track project, which is not reimbursable, would also cost about \$1.7 million. On the irrigation request, he said, "We have fields that drain immediately and dry out or we have fields that collect water. The track project would fix the field that sees the most collection of water."  
The air conditioning project would extend the current partial coverage at the three schools. The elementary school is two-thirds air conditioned, as are school offices, the high school auditorium, and the libraries at the middle and high schools. "With warmer springs and falls, this is something we have to look at," he said.  
"Those are the big things and the question is the timing," he said. "Is it possible to schedule them in a way that has the minimal impact on the town's budget. We want to keep the budget as stable as possible."



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—ISAIAH 59:1-2

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## COMMUNITY

### Community Lions to host shredding party April 18

The East Haddam Community Lions are holding a paper-shredding event on Saturday April 18 from 9 to noon in the Municipal Office Parking lot.  
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additional cost, computers and hard drives can be dropped off and destroyed (computers \$10, hard drives only, \$5).

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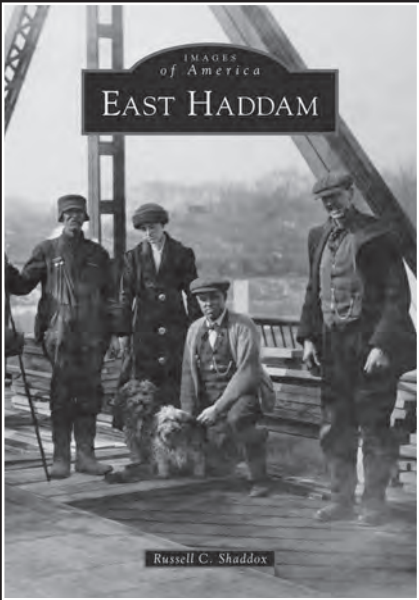
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# SCHOOL SPORTS



The Nathan Hale Ray Middle School Unified Sports Team attended the George Synott Bowling Tournament on recently at the Sparetime Bowling Lane in Vernon. Unified sports teams throughout Connecticut attended the event. George Synott was the former Director of Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference Unified Sports. He was admired for his dedication to the unified sports athletes. The Nathan Hale Ray Middle School Team appreciated the opportunity to participate in the event.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## ‘Elvis My Way’ to play at Goodspeed

Start your spring with tunes from the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll! Goodspeed Musicals in association with Artists Lounge Live present “Elvis My Way” starring Brandon Bennett. This dynamic concert will pay homage to the incomparable icon Elvis Presley in a hit-filled, rockin’ evening of storytelling and song, March 13 – 15 at The Goodspeed in East Haddam.

The electrifying Brandon Bennett, who starred in “Chicago’s Million Dollar Quartet,” delivers a spine-tingling Elvis tribute with authentic southern charm, glorious voice, and powerful moves.

Bennett was named “Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist” by Elvis Presley Enterprises at Graceland. His breathtaking retrospective traverses the King’s career: from the Rock n’ Roll nativity of the 50s, to the iconic comeback of the 60s, to the legendary lounge acts of

the 70s. Hits include “Blue Suede Shoes,” “Can’t Help Falling In Love,” “Suspicious Minds,” and many more.

Performances will be Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, March 14 at 3 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Tickets, \$40-\$50, are available through the Box Office (860) 873-8668), open seven days a week, or online at [goodspeed.org](http://goodspeed.org).

# EDUCATION

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# HONOR ROLL

## Local students excel

The following students from East Haddam made the honor roll at Mercy High School in Middletown for the second quarter of the school year: Isabella Saraco earned High Honors and Honors went to **Abigail Goff, Sarah Hughes, Mia Lawrence, Brooklyn Libera** and **Ava McGrath**.

**Hannah DiMartino** of East Haddam was named to University of Hartford President's List, signified by a 3.75 GPA or higher.

Moodus resident **ReAnna Jean Adams** was named to the Northern Vermont University Dean's List. Students who achieve between a 3.50 and 3.99 semester average are honored.



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## The multi-talented Ira Sakolsky

*Continued from page EH1*

After he graduated from college, Ira spent 24 years working as an actor, including a stint on Broadway, where he understudied for the late Bruce Adler, who was nominated for a Tony Award for his starring roles in “Those Were the Days” and “Crazy For You”, and had a singing role in Disney’s “Aladdin” and “Aladdin and the King of Thieves”. Sakolsky was also Woody Allen’s and Al Pacino’s stand-in on four feature films.

So how did he end up in East Haddam?

“What got me up here was an audition for the National Theater of the Deaf,” he said. He was hired in the mid-1990s to both ‘voice’ for the deaf actors, who signed their lines, and compose and perform the music underscore for the production. “I had never written an underscore before, but I heard it in my head,” he said. He toured with the theater for three years all over the U.S. and continued to write for them. While there, he and one of the sign language interpreters, Monica Gaudio, fell in love. They married and lived here until her death in 2009.

In 2003, Sakolsky earned a Grammy nomination for “The Christmas that Almost Wasn’t,” based on an Ogden Nash poem in collaboration with Will Rhys, the artistic director of the National Theatre of the Deaf. Actor John Lithgow narrated the musical play, which featured rock and blues, in addition to more traditional symphonic music.

“It was so, like, fate,” he said of the project, which was recorded in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Florida and Canada. “All these recognition things were kind of happening at the same time.”

About 16 years ago, Sakolsky got a call from the Valley Railroad Company, which runs the Essex Steam Train and Riverboat. The company wanted him to create a production for their North Pole Express and other special events. Rob Bradway, a town resident, is the company’s vice-president for track and property and has known Sakolsky for about 15 years. “Ira is one of those people you find yourself fortunate to meet at least once in your lifetime. Creative, kind, brilliant, talented, from-the-heart. He’s a person who can take vision and fantasy and



Ira Sakolsky and Steve Stevens, Billy Idol’s guitarist, grew up together and their mothers were best friends. *Photo courtesy of Ira Sakolsky.*

turn it into reality. He’s a unique dude, and I’m lucky to find myself in his orbit,” Bradway said.

He continued, “We reached out to him for help with our North Pole Express holiday trains back then, and I can’t imagine Christmas on the train without him. Ira is the creative director and works with the 50 or so actors who host each train car, helping them create unique North Pole characters, come up with backstories, connecting one actor to the next. He has created the “arc” of the on-board show with the actors, the original music. His goal is to bring the 30 to 60 individuals in each train car into a sense of commu-

nity by the time they disembark and head out on their way. As the production manager, it is my pleasure to work elbow-to-elbow with Ira to bring the actors into concert with Santa and Mrs. Claus, the elves and Sleepy Servers, the train crews, the technical/stage manager. We have a lot of sleepless nights, phone calls, emails, texts, talks to keep the show on the railroad. With nearly 240 sold out departures on-board three different trains, Ira and I have our work cut out! I can’t imagine a better person to do this with!”

He said Sakolsky is active in the community as well. “Around town, Ira has been a huge supporter of youth

music. He operates a studio, which in addition to the professional work done there, is a right-of-passage stop for a first recording session for aspiring local musicians. He’s been Grammy-nominated for his work. He plays nearly every instrument available. He’s a nucleus guy—beautiful people surround him. The guy’s just brilliant, what else can I say? Yeah, I’m a fan. I’ll bet it’s not too well known that East Haddam has such a person within the town lines.”

Casey Carle, an East Haddam resident who performs throughout the U.S. and internationally with bubbles in his “Bubblemania” productions, met Sakolsky when they and Carle’s wife, Kandie, were cast members at the National Theater of the Deaf.

“I got to know Ira through Kandie’s work, and eventually through our shared creative endeavors in local theater and through hiring of his specialized skills as voice-over talent and sound engineer for audio and music recordings related to my touring stage shows,” he said. “It was easy to become close friends because of his patience, professionalism and authenticity. He genuinely cares for the person as much as the process. This innate ability to allow creative people to feel comfortable in his presence allows them to do their best work. And allows his friends to be themselves.

Sakolsky is working on a couple of writing projects. “The Mark”, is a play about the people who frequent an old restaurant on the Lower East Side of Manhattan; he hopes it will make it to Broadway. He has also written a play with music, “Methuselah’s Guide to Online Dating” with Todd Little. The play was initially produced at the Deep River Town Hall Theater and at the Third Avenue Playhouse in Wisconsin.

He taught himself the ins and outs of music production and runs the high-tech hardware and software in his studio. “I’ve been very blessed,” he said. “I’ve been given a lot of gifts. My goal is to uplift people, and in order to do that you have to lift yourself. The more you do it, the more wonderful things happen.”

To contact Ira Sakolsky, send an email to [ira@riverwaystudio.com](mailto:ira@riverwaystudio.com) or call him at 860-614-2112.



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