

HUDSON HELPS OUT



Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters / Contributed photo

Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, a statewide youth mentoring organization serving adults and children in greater Middletown and throughout Middlesex County, recently received a \$15,000 donation from the Hudson Insurance Group of Avon. It will support new match relationships between mentors and mentees, while also enhancing existing matches. From left are Mike Cifone, senior operations officer at Hudson Insurance; Lauren Cutro Berry, senior vice president at Hudson Insurance; and Andy Fleischmann, president and CEO of Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters.

PORTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students make 1st-quarter honor roll

BY PRESS STAFF

PORTLAND — Portland Middle School has announced the honor roll for the first marking period of the 2021-22 academic year.

Grade eight

High honors: Aiden Burrus, Laila Coleman, Cole Coppolino, Brady Daggett, Lillian Gaetani, Gerry Hall, Rita Lin, Cade Modon, Ryan Modon, Patrick O'Rourke, Nathan Quesnel, Emelia Rowland, Andrew Sobieski, Grace Thrasher, Allison Tine, Mara Tuttle

Honors: Conor Adanti, Joseph Amendola, Joseph Angersola, Cristina Austin, Elizabeth Barr, Breckin Burke, Hayden Burke, Hailey Bustamante, Alexandria Carter, Aaron Ciarleglio, Dylan Cohen, Maksim Connolly, Made-

lene Davis, Lucas DeMatteo, Gracie DeRing, Tyler Dumais, Ryan Farley, Audrey Farmer, Jacob Gaudio, Evelyn Hair, Elizabeth Hanna, Natalya Holley, Theresa Hunter, Logan Kehoe, Daniel King, Jonah Lavallee, Cameron Lopez, Ryan McGrew, Dzejla Medunjanin, Leana Mierzejewski, Eunice Ngunjiri, Romeo Overton, Evan Piacente, Delaney Poach, Logan Prince, Brody Quinn, Kiley Scott, Shiloh Smith, Cate Stone, Jack Sundell, Chase VanDeventer, Madeleine Vardon, Ethan Wells, Hailey Yitchinski

Grade seven

High honors: Penelope Christensen, Kelsey Desmarais, Nathaniel Dietrichsen, Ava France, George Germaine, Avery Johnson, Nicholas Johnson, Ellery

Keoppen, Lucas Kirsche, Connor Libby, Lanayah Mandeville, Sierra Markham, Evan May, Audrey Morico, Evan Piascik, Kyla Porter, Piper Rettich, Jeremiah Rowe, Bryce Walsh

Honors: Madison Anzellotti, Max Bernard, Ryan McGrew, Dzejla Medunjanin, Leana Mierzejewski, Eunice Ngunjiri, Romeo Overton, Evan Piacente, Delaney Poach, Logan Prince, Brody Quinn, Kiley Scott, Shiloh Smith, Cate Stone, Jack Sundell, Chase VanDeventer, Madeleine Vardon, Ethan Wells, Hailey Yitchinski

MIDDLETOWN

Concert association to perform 'La Boheme'

BY PRESS STAFF

MIDDLETOWN — The favorite Puccini opera, "La Boheme" will be staged at the Santo Fragilio Performing Arts Center Nov. 20, courtesy of The Greater Middletown Concert Association.

This is the Connecticut Lyric Opera and Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra's production in its 2021-22 four-concert series, and will be held at the high school, 200 LaRosa Lane, according to a press release.

This is the 11th year GMCA has brought operas to the Middletown area as part of its annual concert series format, which has a history of over 50 years, the news release said.

The Italian opera's story takes place in Paris around 1830. It shows the Bohemian lifestyle of four struggling artist friends, a writer, painter, musician

and philosopher, according to GMCA.

Rodolfo, the writer, finds himself "deeply in love" with Mimi, a poor neighbor seamstress. His love is reciprocated, according to GMCA. Their life together is "portrayed by Puccini's emotionally attuned music to the couple's tragic love story," the news release said.

Jan Mason, associate artistic director for Lyric Opera, will direct. Adrian Sylveen, artistic director for the Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, will conduct.

The cast includes Jurate Svedaite, soprano, as Mimi; Daniel Juarez, tenor, as Rodolfo; and Steven Fredericks, bass, as Colline. Also featured are Samuel Bowen, baritone, as Schuarnard; Levi Hernandez, baritone, as Marcello; Maria Margiolakou, soprano, as Musetta; Stefa Skafarowsky, bass, as Benoit; and Alcindoro.

The creative team includes Joey Taylor, associative director; Lynn Porter, scenic designer; and Orianna Cruz, costume designer.

The show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 ahead and \$40 at the door. To attend, call 860-343-7555 or 860-346-3369. Send checks or credit card info to: Greater Middletown Concert Association, P.O. Box 2622, Middletown, CT 06457.

Attendees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and wear masks. Social distancing seating in the auditorium will be available at the performance.

This performance is partially supported by the Middletown Commission on the Arts, Community Foundation of Middlesex County, The Connecticut Office of the Arts, and local sponsors.

MIDDLETOWN

Rep. Phipps among finalists in 2021 Ideas Challenge

BY PRESS STAFF

MIDDLETOWN — State Rep. Quentin Phipps, D-Middletown, is one of five finalists in the 2021 Ideas Challenge by The NewDEAL — a competition among rising and innovative state and local policymakers to propose the most effective solutions on an array of issues.

Policy experts vote for the proposals that best improve Americans' economic well-being and overall quality of life, and that make government work more effectively to meet communities' needs, according to a press release.

Rep. Phipps' idea, Dignified Retirement For All, is a finalist among submissions for the category of Responding to Immediate Post-Pandemic Needs & Building a Stronger Safety Net, which includes concepts aimed at addressing Americans' short-term financial instability, joblessness, housing insecurity, and other needs, while also reimagining safety net systems.

"I am thrilled to learn that my conceptual submission has placed me as one of the finalists in this group of talented leaders across the country," Phipps said in a prepared statement. "We can't wait for theoretical debates and political rhetoric to solve our problems, and that's why these solutions proposed by state and local leaders across the country are so important."

"By building on what we have learned from best practices, our Dignified Retirement For All initiative takes concrete steps towards preparing everyone for retirement, and I'm excited to have the chance to share it as a template that can be replicated by NewDEALers and others," Phipps said.

"State and local leaders face enormous challenges as they work on the frontlines to rebuild from a persistent pandemic, close the long-standing inequities high-



Quentin Phipps / Contributed photo

State Rep. Quentin Phipps, D-Middletown, is one of five finalists in the 2021 Ideas Challenge by The NewDEAL.

lighted by COVID-19, and ensure our communities emerge with more economic opportunity for everyone," said NewDEAL CEO Debbie Cox Bultan.

The Challenge was open to the 178 members of the NewDEAL (Developing Exceptional American Leaders), an organization that supports state and local pro-growth progressive elected officials through the exchange of ideas and engagement with other top public, private, and nonprofit sector officials, the news release said.

NewDEALers are leading the response to COVID-19 and taking on critical roles in implementing the American Rescue Plan Act, recently signed by President Biden, which is sending hundreds of billions of dollars to state and local governments, the release continued.

The Ideas Challenge recognizes that these leaders, who represent diverse communities from urban centers to rural towns and in red, blue, and purple areas, have "powerful messages, experiences, and proposals that must be heard."



Sandy Alderi / Perceptions Photography / Contributed photo

The tournament championship game for the Prof Gallitto girls basketball league teams grades six through eight was in February 15 in Middletown. Prof Gallitto Girls is looking for more female athletes.

MIDDLETOWN

Prof Gallitto Girls Basketball League taking applications

BY PRESS STAFF

MIDDLETOWN — Parents whose daughters are looking to try a winter sport, such as basketball, may be interested in signing them up for the Prof Gallitto Girls

Basketball League.

Registration for the program will continue through Thursday.

Coaches are also needed in the grade six to eight division, according to a press release.

Masks will be required for players and parents at all times in the Beman Middle School gym, where all practices and games are held.

To register, call 860-346-6697. For information, visit pggbasketball.org.

Police: Alleged DUI driver nearly hit Branford officer

By Tara O'Neill

BRANFORD — After an officer's close call with an allegedly impaired driver last week, police are reminding drivers never to get behind the wheel after drinking.

Around 8 p.m. Nov. 8, an officer's dashboard camera captured the moment when an allegedly impaired driver nearly

hit the front of the officer's cruiser while driving the wrong way without lights on.

The driver swerved to avoid hitting the cruiser head-on as the officer lit up the vehicle's overhead lights, according to the dashboard camera footage shared by police.

Police said the officer's cruiser was "missed by only inches."

The driver was pulled over

nearby and charged with various offenses including illegally operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, police said.

Branford police posted the dashboard camera footage of the incident to its Facebook page, urging drivers to never drink and driver and to always be alert while driving.

"Make sure to plan for a so-

ber designated driver, Uber, taxi or ride share," police said. "This could have had an incredibly different ending; we are thankful no one was injured during this incident."

Mothers Against Drunk Driving's nationwide statistics indicate someone is hurt in a drunk driving crash every two minutes, while someone is killed every 51 minutes.

"Make sure to plan for a sober designated driver, Uber, taxi or ride share. This could have had an incredibly different ending; we are thankful no one was injured during this incident."

Branford Police in a Facebook post