





# New Britain readies for Polish leader

President Andrzej Duda's visit means long hours of security strategy meetings

By DON STACOM

Judging by all the preparations under way all week, the excitement in New Britain about Polish President Andrzej Duda's visit Sunday ranks somewhere between wildly big and flat-out enormous.

"It's the first the Polish president ever came here. It never happened before," said shopkeeper Krystyna Obara at Quo Vadis, a gift store in the Little Poland section that has stocked up on Polish flags, shirts, caps and more for the expected influx of visitors.

"This is making history," public works employee Walter Rivera said as he put up temporary security fencing at Walnut Hill Park, where Duda will speak.

For city police, Duda's trip means long hours of security strategy meetings with state troopers as well as the Secret Service and Polish national protection agents. More than 5,000 people have already registered online to attend Duda's afternoon speech at Walnut Hill Park, and New Britain police are gearing



MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Attorney Adrian Baron hangs a Polish American flag outside his law office on Broad Street in New Britain's Little Poland section.

up for even more.

"The Little Poland Festival got 35,000 this year, so we're preparing for a lot of people. There's certainly going to be a large police

presence," Chief Christopher Chute said Thursday.

For everyone going, organizers and police recommend doing a little extra planning and leaving plenty of extra time.

## Where to see President Duda

Duda and his wife, Agata Kornhauser-Duda, will be the guests of honor at Walnut Hill Park, where he is expected to speak to a crowd on the topic of relations between Poland and the United States. It is the main public appearance of his trip and the only one where he's expected to speak.

Organizers, including Darek Barcikowski, Poland's honorary consul in Connecticut, caution that registration is required to attend. Anyone interested can sign up online at [www.presidentduda.com](http://www.presidentduda.com).

That crowd could be big. About 10% of the state's 3 million residents have some Polish heritage, and organizers expect people to

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## GOVERNMENT WATCH

# Feds say repay \$38K in benefits



**JON LENDER**  
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Bill Small of Rocky Hill got a jolt in March when the Social Security Administration notified him in a letter that it had overpaid his wife, Bess, during two decades of disbursing her monthly benefit. And so, now that he and his wife are 85 years old and she has been diagnosed with dementia, the SSA is demanding that he repay a total of \$38,192 on her behalf.

"You have no idea how this happened, when they tell you, 'We've been overpaying your wife for 22 years, and now we want you to pay us back,'" Small said.

The retired Air Force colonel, who during a 28-year career piloted multiengine military aircraft all over the world and served in Vietnam, says the government admits it made a mistake and that he and his wife of 63 years are blameless. He asked in June that the SSA waive its demand for repayment.

But on Wednesday, an SSA representative told him during a personal conference in Hartford that his request is being denied.

Now his last resort will be an appeal to an administrative judge, also in Hartford. That hearing is yet to be scheduled.

Small said he still hasn't received an explanation of what specific error by the SSA resulted in the overpayment, as well how it happened and when it began. (He said he doesn't know how long the overpayments were

being made, but he said he would have been able to pay it back if he had known about it.)

Small said he is 85 and his wife is 84. They have two children and a grandchild.

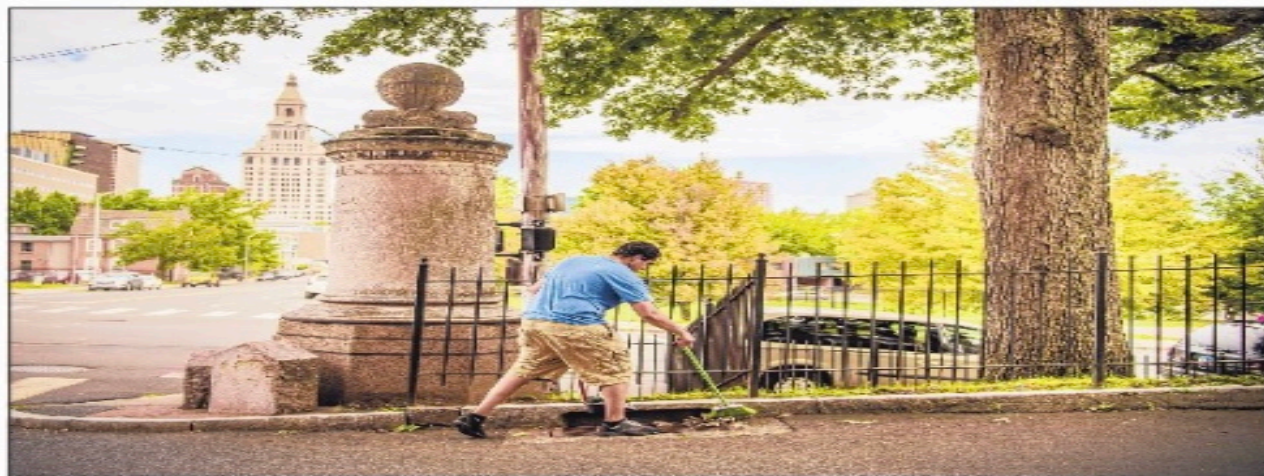
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MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS

Joseph Rivera cleans the street at the base of the monument to the famous Charter Oak.

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PETER MARTEKA/HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS

A large tree and the swath of the Atlantic Ocean provide a beautiful background at Enders Island.

## NATURE

# WHERE 'ALL ARE WELCOME'

Plan a visit to Enders Island on the Mystic shoreline



**PETER MARTEKA**  
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In this week's Nature column, Peter Marteka visits Enders Island in Mystic, a Catholic retreat facility where the picturesque shoreline grounds and gardens are open to the public.

**The Bottom Line:** An easy hike around the 11-acre Enders Island with commanding views of Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

**Difficulty Level:** Easy.

**Total Mileage:** Less than a mile.

**Directions:** Take Route 1 east of Mystic and take a right on Masons Island Road and take a left on Chippeaug Trail. Take a left on East Forest Road and left on Yacht Club Road to the island. Visitor parking is located on the left after crossing the causeway. There are plenty of signs showing the way to the island. Visit [www.endersisland.com](http://www.endersisland.com) for more information.

**Don't forget:** Enders Island is a beautiful place.



Much of Enders Island is fortified by a rock wall.

## Rockville student stabbed on trail

Three arrested after incident along Hop River rail path

By PETER MARTEKA

Two men and a teen were arrested Saturday in connection with the stabbing of a 17-year-old Rockville High School student along the Hop River rail trail in Vernon late Friday.

According to police, the student, who was not identified, was stabbed multiple times in his torso, legs and head during the incident that occurred at approximately 10:15 p.m. Police said the stabbing likely took place along the trail near the Ryefield condo complex. After being stabbed, the teen made his way to a Union Street home to report the stabbing.

The teen was brought to Rockville General Hospital and later transferred to Connecticut Children's Medical Center for more treatment. Police said the teen was in stable condition Saturday afternoon with non-life threatening injuries.

Shortly after the stabbing, officers located a vehicle in the Terrace Drive apartment complex that was believed to be involved. Officers searched the vehicle and found a hunting knife, a baseball bat, and a wooden pole that had knife blades taped to both ends.

Police arrested Haley Machholz, 19, of 77 Sunnyview Drive, Vernon; Jakvui Sosa, 20, of 277 Martin St., Hartford; and a 15-year-old Vernon teen who were in the vehicle. The trio were charged with possession of a weapon in a motor vehicle. Machholz posted a \$100,000 bond and will appear in Rockville Superior Court on Sept. 24. Sosa was held on a \$100,000 bond and will appear in Rockville court on Monday. The teen was detained in juvenile detention.

"It is believed the victim was known to the assailants and it was not a random act," Lt. William Meier III said.

Police are working with Vernon school officials about the incident, and anyone with information should call the police at 860-872-9126. Callers may remain anonymous.

Peter Marteka can be reached at [pmarteka@courant.com](mailto:pmarteka@courant.com).

## South Windsor library elevator to be replaced

By PETER MARTEKA

SOUTH WINDSOR — The South Windsor Public Library's





Cattails grow on the banks of a farm pond at Swendsen Farm Preserve in Bethlehem.

PETER MARTEKA/HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS

## NATURE

# BETHLEHEM FARMLAND

Swendsen Farm Preserve  
is a working farm,  
outdoor recreation area



**PETER MARTEKA**  
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In this week's Nature column, Peter Marteka explores Swendsen Farm Preserve, a working farm and outdoor recreational area in Bethlehem.

**The Bottom Line:** A series of trails takes visitors around a farm field, along the banks of a farm pond and through the woods at the top of a scenic ravine.

**Difficulty Level:** Easy to moderate

**Total Mileage:** The main trail around the farm field is about 2 miles long. But there are shorter trails around the pond and through the woods bordering the farm. Maps are available at the trailhead.

**Directions:** Route 63 to Route 132 into Bethlehem. Follow for several miles and look for the farm on the left shortly after passing Woodland Road.

**Pet Friendly?** Leash and clean up after your pets.

Bees and butterflies bounce and float from goldenrod to clover on the edge of a farm field. Pumpkins in various shades of orange ripen in a dusty field on top of a hill. A great blue heron, startled by an approach-



Trails wind through swaths of goldenrod and under huge oak trees at Swendsen Farm.



## Lamont: Don't touch surplus

By Keith M. Phaneuf  
CT Mirror

Gov. Ned Lamont used his monthly budget forecast Friday to send an unconventional message to the General Assembly: Please put requests to restore spending or repeal tax hikes on hold.

The \$84.3 million surplus projection issued by the Office of Policy and Management is hardly a sharp warning, even though the budget's General Fund was designed to run \$141 million in the black. It is not quite three months into the new fiscal year. Tax receipts and other revenues are on schedule.

The administration is projecting nearly \$57 million in cost overruns, including \$30 million in Medicaid, \$20 million in legal settlements and other adjudicated claims and \$6 million in the Department of Correction.

On the other hand, the fiscal year doesn't end for another nine months. The last few administrations rarely disclosed spending problems during the first quarter of the fiscal year, noting there was plenty of time to cut costs elsewhere before June 30.

"This month's revision reflects the reality of managing a state budget across the course of an entire fiscal year," said Melissa McCaw, Lamont's budget director. "We must and will remain vigilant to keep ourselves in balance."

So why is Lamont ringing the fiscal caution bell this soon in the fiscal year? The reason is talk.

Since the 2019 General Assembly session adjourned on June 5, lawmakers from both parties have talked about revising the new, two-year plan they adopted.

Some Democrats and Republicans have objected to a new Medicaid-rate-setting policy that reduces payments for nursing homes with largest numbers of vacant beds. This will cost a total of nine facilities an estimated \$5.3 million across this fiscal year and next.

Lawmakers also balked at a new 1 percent sales tax surcharge on meals and other prepared foods. And even though the Department of Revenue Services revised instructions Thursday to grocery stores, directing them to scale back instances in which the tax would be applied, House and Senate Republican leaders still are demanding lawmakers meet in special session this fall and repeal the surcharge.

The budget also includes hundreds of millions of dollars in efficiencies and other savings the administration must achieve now that the fiscal year is underway.

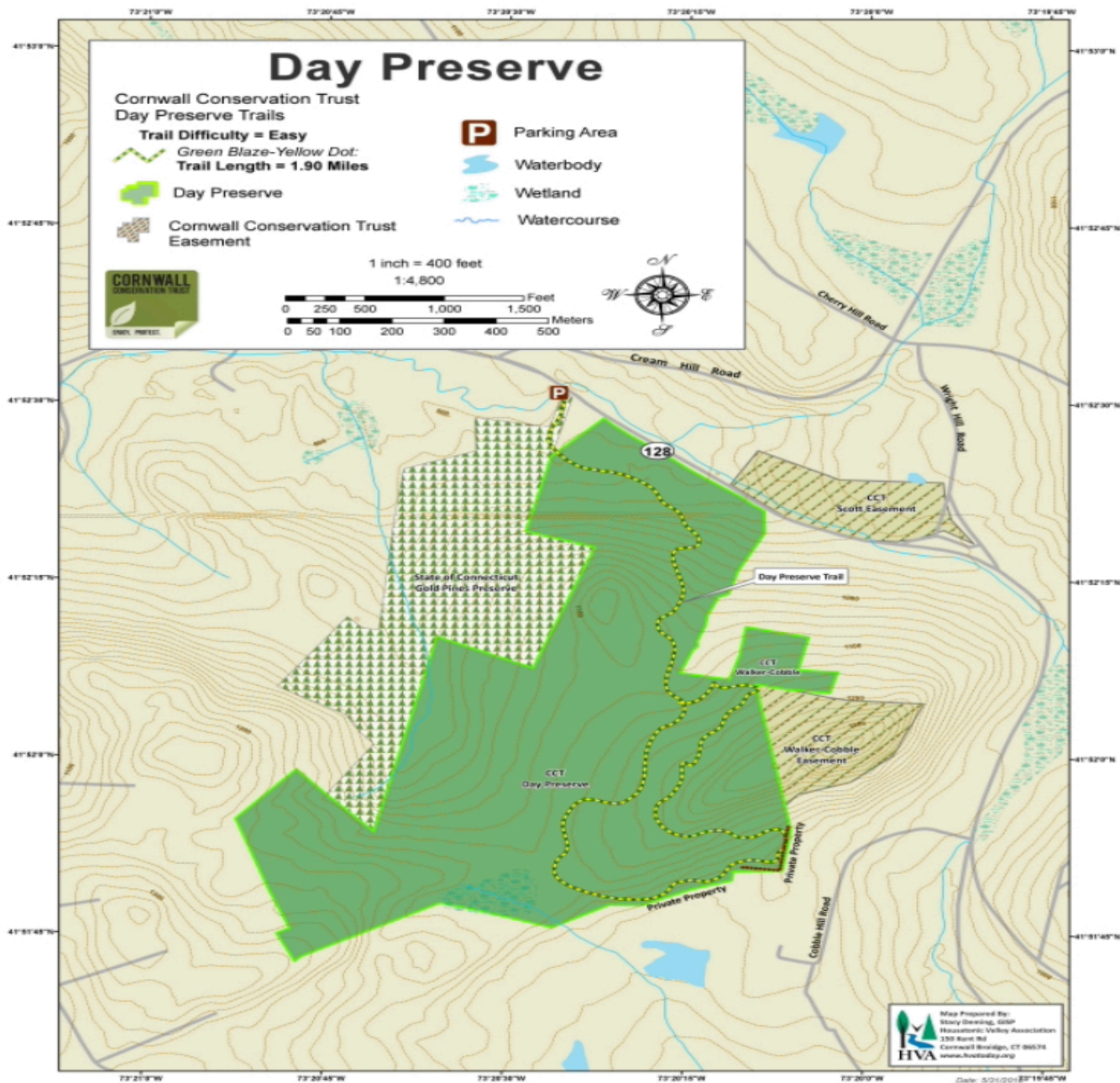
And legislators have known since late May that Lamont reached a tentative deal to resolve a lawsuit Connecticut's hospital industry filed against the state in 2015 regarding its hospital provider tax. Though the bulk of costs tied to that settlement are expected to be drawn from last fiscal year's surplus, administration officials have warned this



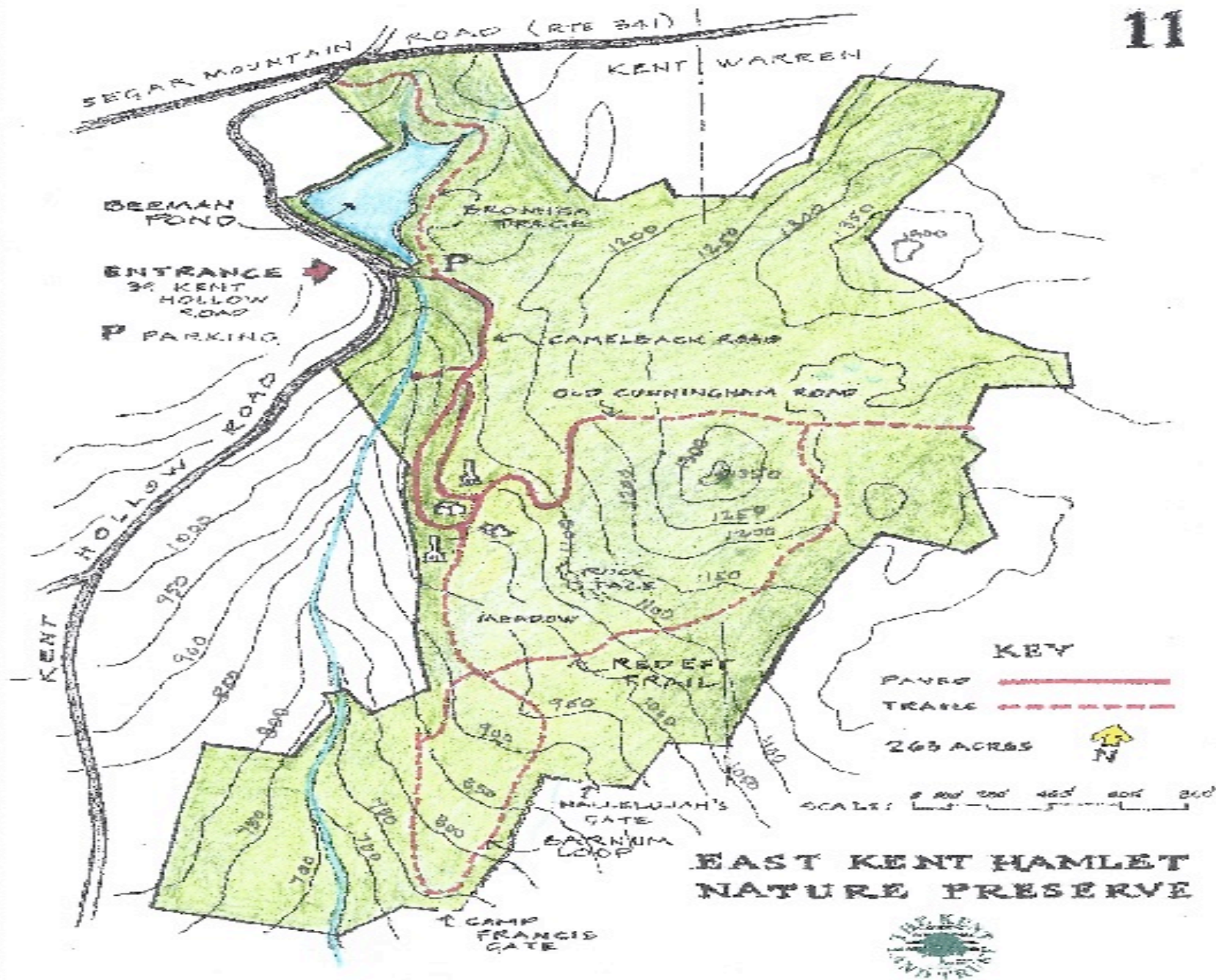
# Mica Ledges Trails













# Macedonia Brook State Park Kent













# Mary Moore Preserve Sharon, CT

















# Bull Hill Preserve Woodstock/Thompson CT









# Lions Head, Salisbury









# Steep Rock Preserve

















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# Outer Island Branford





















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- Column comes out at noon each Friday at [www.courant.com](http://www.courant.com)
- Column comes out in print on Sundays in the Connecticut Section.
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