Summer Guide

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Local Farmers Markets Produce Lots Of Summer Shopping & Fun

By Margaret Radman
Freelance Writer

Farmers markets - a deep-rooted New England tradition that ushers in the summer with locally grown produce, homemade baked goods, locally harvested honey, maple syrup, organics, and artisan made goods - are once again opening for the season.

In celebration of summer's bounty, farmers markets - often set in a festive atmosphere featuring live music, food trucks, and advocacy for relevant causes and events - provide a direct connection between local growers, small business, and consumers that supports the local economy. Listed below are area farmers markets for this summer:

CROMWELL FARMERS MARKET: June 5 to Sept. 4, Fridays, 4 - 7 p.m.

Happens at Riverport Park along the Connecticut. River. The annual event in its 12th year features around 43 vendors, including six food trucks serving up everything from lobster rolls, polish specialties, wings, wraps, sliders, tacos, subs, and so much more. Drawing a crowd of some 650 participants a week, the festivity presents farm-fresh vegetables, locally sourced products, artisans, and live music under the pavilion.

Choose from specialty coffees, local baked goods, spices, craft liquors, CBD products for pets and people, custom hand-made jewelry, nutrition coaching, and home made natural health products, to name a few of the many offerings available at the market. Learn about and support causes aiming to end domestic violence and other important causes.

WETHERSFIELD FARMERS MARKET: May 28 to Oct. 8, Thursdays, 3 - 6 p.m.

In its 18th year now, this family and pet friendly event held at the historic Solomon Welles House features two food trucks: Sabores Mexicanos - an authentic mexican Enfield restaurant that uses made- from- scratch recipes handed down through the generations and Tropicana Acai Bowls, along with about 37 other vendors weekly.



Organic produce, pasture-raised meats, artisan jams & jellies, herbs, honey, home baked goods, Yankee hard ciders and wins and craft liquors from local vineyards and distilleries, goat milk cheese, specialty confections, chocolates, and coffees are just a sampling of Wethersfield's Farmers Market offerings, all grown or produced in Connecticut. Live musical performances and kid friendly events round out the day.

MIDDLETOWN FARMERS MARKET: June 26 - Oct. 30, Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Middletown Farmers Market takes place downtown at Union Park, South Green

For a more low key experience, there is Middletown Farmer's Market downtown at Union Park/South Green, at the corner of Main and Pleasant Streets.. Offerings include fresh, locally grown produce, free-range eggs, homemade jams, local honey, and artisanal baked goods.

For year round locally grown and organic produce, visit the River Ridge Farm & Downtown Market at 725 Main St. River Ridge manages their own farm, and adheres to fully organic practices, growing over 200 varieties of fruits, vegetables, and flowers as well as meats, tofu, breads, dairy, and pantry staples sourced from local Connecticut and New England producers.

ROCKY HILL - VETERAN FARMERS MARKET: Aug. 6

This one-day regional Veteran Farmers Market happening at the Rocky Hill Veterans Affairs Campus, offers locally grown goods, meats, eggs, baked goods, honey, and handmade items, all produced by Connecticut's veteran farmers and artisans.

Veteran-owned food trucks will be on site with live music by RipChord, the 102d Army National Guard Band, performing from 5 to 6 p.m.




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Hitting The "Clubs" – Golf In The Summer Season

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

Golf is an incredibly popular sport, unique for its versatility and capacity to host groups that span generations. As summer days stretch long and warm, golf is a great way to get family of all ages and groups of friends out together on the range, regardless of skill level. Fortunately, numerous Connecticut businesses in the local area are particularly keen on golf.

One such place is Torza's Golf, a "family-owned driving range in Cromwell, Connecticut, with roots in the golf industry spanning three generations," stated owner Jodi Torza Faraci. With facilities that are open year-round, Torza's encourages and supports golfers of all ages and abilities, providing "an environment where everyone feels comfortable."



As Faraci explained, "What sets Torza's Golf apart is our focus on creating a community. We aren't just a place to hit golf balls." With a focus on community and connection, Faraci emphasized the joy that comes from watching golfers enjoy themselves, especially the repeat customers who gradually improve their games and build confidence. "Summer brings a great energy to the range," Faraci admitted, helped in part by the various programs Torza's hosts throughout the season. From their Junior Swing Squad camps for beginners to private lessons, group instruction, and private event rentals, they tend to routinely garner quite a crowd.

For those looking to practice on a short course, Miner Hills Golf Course in Middletown has a nine-hole course where people can squeeze in a quick game or sharpen specific skills. With memberships and a variety of classes and tournaments to explore, there are programs available for every golfer, no matter their skill or age.

If the formal sport of golf isn't quite your speed, miniature golf is a way to experience part of the sport without all of the stress. At Safari Golf on the Berlin Turnpike, 18 safari-themed holes offer hours of fun and unique course design. Life-sized safari animals, a mid-course cave, and vibrant waterfalls provide a brilliant backdrop to any mini golf game.

A short distance down the road from Safari Golf is the Berlin Batting Cages, which also feature two miniature golf courses, as well as their eponymous batting cages and bumper boats, among other activities.



With plenty of locations to choose from and a wide range of skill levels and ages provided for, golf may just be the summer sport one needs to get out in the fresh air and have some fun!

Pictures provided by Jodi Torza Faraci.



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Making Music – Summer Concerts 2026

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

Warmer weather means more opportunities to attend outdoor activities, bringing events like concerts out into the grass and evening summertime breeze. Drawing massive crowds, Cromwell Recreation Department's Summer Concert Series and the Middletown Symphonic Band bring the energy and zest of summer into their outdoor performances, allowing people to enjoy nature and music at the same time. The Cromwell Recreation Department's Summer Concert Series showcases bands from all across Connecticut, spanning genres from country music to rock and roll and everything in between. Held on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Riverport Park, the summer concert series has partnered with the Cromwell Belden Public Library to align with the start and end dates of the summer reading program.

According to Rosanne Krajewski, part of the Cromwell Recreation Department, the concert series began "several years ago," starting with only a couple of concerts throughout the summer. This year, a record of nine concerts provide ample opportunities for people to explore more genres of music and bands that they may never have decided to listen to on their own.

Along with a wide variety of bands, each concert is accompanied by a collection of food trucks – "We even scored Cousins Maine Lobster truck for July 15th," Krajewski shared, adding that "Everyone is looking forward to that one!" With free admission and a community focus, Krajewski emphasized that "We hope that people get out and enjoy a free evening down by the beautiful Connecticut River, meet their neighbors and experience a wonderful community event." The joy of bringing people together and allowing the local community to get to know each other and socialize at a common event is one of Krajewski's favorite parts of her involvement in the program.

The Middletown Symphonic Band has its roots firmly planted in the Middletown community, forming in 1979 in "Middletown's tradition of Italian musicians who played at various feasts and festivals around town," according to member of the band Kathy. The founder of the band, Santo Fragilio, had the noble wish of "giv[ing] all the musicians who would not otherwise have a chance to play and all the kids who study music up through high school to have an opportunity to keep a hand in and to share with audiences."

The band holds firm in that goal 47 years later, comprised of members who span all ages and levels of ability. "The MSB is a community band," Kathy shared. "We welcome players of all ages and abilities with the goal of building and spreading community through music." The non-profit nature of the band means that the players are volunteers, investing their time and energy into a common goal – community performance.

Weekly band practices are held at 7:30 p.m. every Thursday, preparing for the numerous events that the band is hired to perform at. This year, the country's 250th anniversary has provided a loose theme for their musical repertoire. Music is a universal language – bringing a community together through that language is a magical process and experience. As Kathy put it, "When we are playing music together, the rest of the world dissolves into the background."

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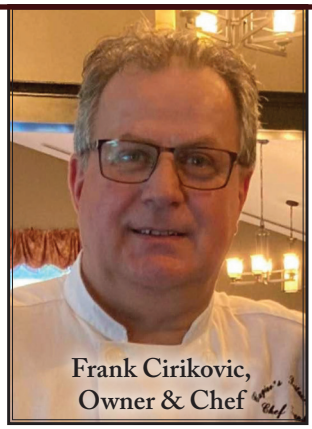
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Owners And Pets Can Explore These Dog Parks In Region

By Margaret Radman
Freelance Writer

Providing exercise for dogs is an important part of pet ownership but for those lacking a fenced in yard, finding a safe place for their four legged companions to run, play, and explore, can be a challenge.

In response to this need, dog parks have cropped up all over the state, with off-leash parks now in Rocky Hill, Cromwell, Newington, Wethersfield, and many more in neighboring towns and cities.

Particularly useful for pet owners who don't have access to a yard, off-leash dog parks offer an affordable, straightforward solution for their pooches to get exercise, socialize, and sniff out the environment.

Municipally managed dog parks are structured similarly and generally follow the same rules, with across the board requirements that dogs display a current town license and up to date rabies tags. Dogs must be at least four months old, healthy, and leashed when entering or exiting, with a two-dog limit per pet owner. Most post signs that owners are responsible for their dog's behavior while visiting the park.

Parks are usually open year round from dawn to dusk with the exception of closings due to inclement weather. They are divided into two separate spaces for dogs 25 lbs and under, and a separate space for dogs over 25 lbs. Typical amenities include benches, picnic tables, shaded areas, water fountains, and dog waste cleanup stations. Listed below is a list of area dog parks:

ROCKY HILL

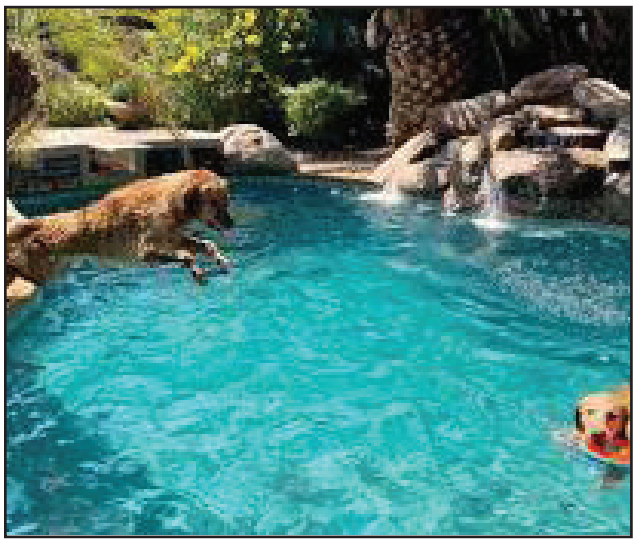
Rocky Hill Dog Park, located at 375 Elm Street in Elm Ridge Park, opened in July, 2014 after years of fundraising. It sits on 1.5 acres and is managed by Rocky Hill Parks and Recreation. It is equipped with drinking water, trees, and benches. It is open from dusk to dawn.

CROMWELL

Cromwell Dog Park is located at 80 Coles Rd. on the town-owned Hoffman Farm property. The park opened in June, 2014, and was built and paid for through community led fund raising efforts rather than municipal taxes. A seasonal water fountain with bowls, agility obstacles, shaded benches for seating, waste stations with poop bags are among park amenities. It is open from dawn to dusk, that is strictly enforced.

NEWINGTON

Newington dog park is located at 55 John H. Steward Drive, adjacent to the Hartford HealthCare Campus. It opened in September 2022. It sits on a 1.5 acre area that is leased to the town by Hartford HealthCare. It opened in September, 2021 and is managed by Newington Parks and Recreation. A picnic table, trees for shade, and running water are available.



WETHERSFIELD

Wethersfield dog park is located at 154 Prospect Street within Mill Woods Park. Amenities include benches, picnic tables, a kiddie pool for summer weather, cleanup stations, trash receptacles, watering stations and message boards.

These are just a sampling of the many dog parks in the region that offer an affordable and convenient option for getting Fido exercise and off-leash time to explore, when used wisely.

Dog parks are a viable option for dog owners who don't have their own yard. However, there is some controversy among professionals regarding the possibility of encountering aggressive dogs and disease transmission like canine influenza, kennel cough, and parasites like giardia and hookworms that can linger in the soil.

Furthermore, because park rules rely on an honor system without active enforcement, this leaves open the possibility of noncompliant visitors.

Determining one park over another can be better assessed using platforms like BringFido that provides user ratings.

Alternatively, apps like Sniffspot that allows dog owners to rent out fully fenced private yards or private hiking trails by the hour may be considered. For example, there is one private dog hiking trail in nearby Portland that can be rented through the app.

Likewise, long leash walks in open fields or parks can provide much of the same benefits of a dog park. Ultimately, pet owners should be guided by their dog's temperament, training, and individual needs when determining what option is best for both themselves and their pets.

For a comprehensive list of dog parks in Connecticut, visit https://www.bringfido.com/attraction/parks/state/connecticut/

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Summertime Exploration – Local Scavenger Hunts

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

With the weather warming up and schools letting out, finding time to get outside and enjoy the sun can become as important as it is difficult. With the help of ScavengerHunt.com, finding family-friendly outdoor scavenger hunts has never been easier.

The process is simple – from their website, find a nearby location that you have always wanted to explore. Tickets are good for a single scavenger hunt in any of their over 3,000 featured locations and showcase hidden gems from all over the city. And, even if your summer ends up booked and you cannot find the time to participate, not to worry! The tickets are good for two years, allowing for flexibility and easing the pressure of iron-clad deadlines.

Their Middletown hunt is about a mile and a quarter, taking explorers from the Connecticut River to the deKoven House and everything in between! Each stop in the hunt features puzzles, activities, and riddles for families and friends to solve together. They even have a leaderboard on their website, adding a layer of competition for those who enjoy the thrill of the chase!

Along with encouraging exploration and puzzle-solving, these scavenger hunts also promote learning and curiosity. It can be hard to find ways to engage with local history in a meaningful way, and this Middletown scavenger hunt helps to fill that hole. It is a way for kids, parents, and any other explorers to engage with historic sites that may have started to fade into the background of their daily lives.

So, if you find yourself with a sunny day and a group of friends (or kiddos who need tiring out) consider doing a scavenger hunt. It's what summer days are built for!



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Cromwell Recreation Presents Its 2026 Summer Concert Series

Cromwell Recreation will present its 2026 Summer Concert Series from June 17 through August 12, with performances held every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Riverport Park, 1 River Road in Cromwell. The weekly outdoor concerts feature a rotating lineup of R&B, Rock, Motown, and Top 40 music, and attendees are encouraged to bring a chair. Food trucks will be available on site.

The concerts are offered in partnership with the Cromwell Belden Public Library as part of the community's Summer Reading kickoff. In the event of rain, each concert will move to the following day, Thursday.

Admission is free. For additional information, contact recreation@cromwellct.gov.

- **June 17 –** Sister Funk Rock-Country & Folk-Pop Presented with Cromwell Belden Public Library – Kickoff to Summer Reading
- **June 24 –** Crossover Classic Rock, Alternative, New Country
- **July 1 –** Juice Box Top 40 Party Band
- **July 8 –** Stevie Tribute Band Stevie Nicks's Music
- **July 15 –** Cobblestone Road Country Rock Band
- **July 22 –** Fountainhead Classic Rock Band from the 80's Club Scene
- **July 29 –** Chris Marra Band Timeless Rock Classics
- **August 5 –** Downtown 6 Dance Music Through the Decades
- **August 12 –** Shout Yacht Rock Presented with Cromwell Belden Public Library – Summer Reading Wrap-Up



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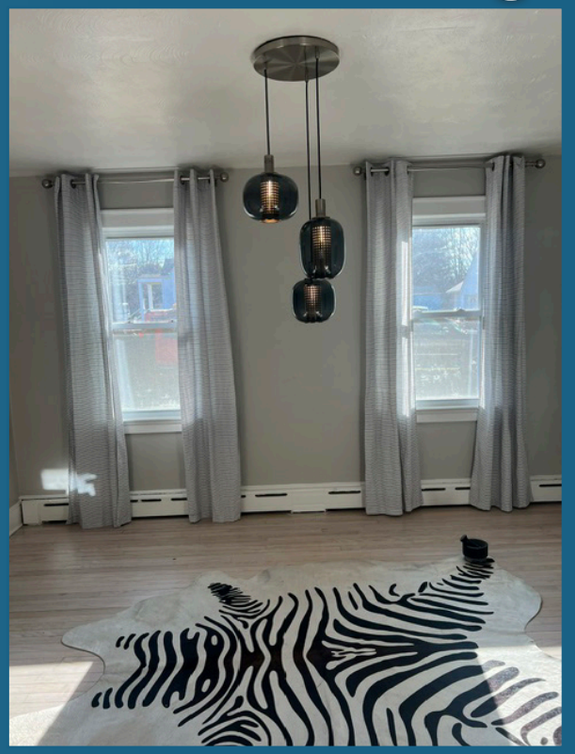
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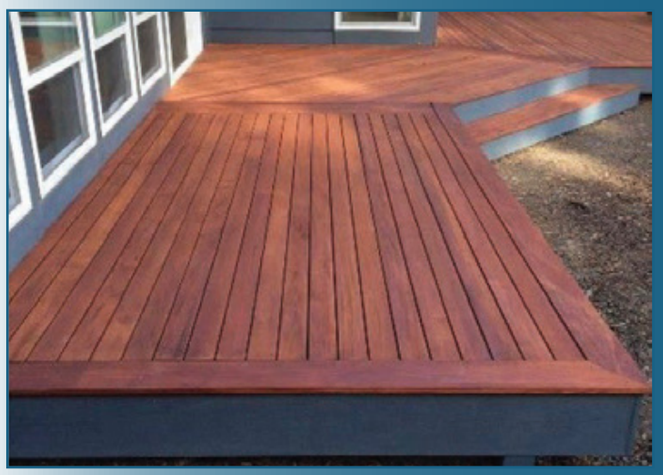
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State To Increase Safety Efforts With Busy Summer On Roads

By Liam McLoughlin
Staff Writer

REGION — This summer is lining up to be like no other with events like America 250 and the World Cup set to kick off soon.

In addition to regular summer and vacation travel, the state Department of Transportation is expecting increased activity on the roads over the next few months.

As a result, the department is increasing the presence of their Safety Patrol program to keep roads as safe and efficient as possible.

Beginning last weekend, the program is extending their hours on I-95 and Route 15 to include weekend patrols from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.

Patrol vehicles are dispatched from the department's Highway Operations Centers in Newington and Bridgeport, as well as the state police.

"Every year, the Safety Patrol helps thousands of drivers throughout the state," said DOT Commissioner Garrett Eucalitto. "This free service is part of our broader commitment to keep Connecticut moving safely, especially during an exceptionally busy summer."

The Safety Patrol is a free roadside assistance initiative sponsored by GEICO, helping drivers change flat tires and jump-start vehicles, as well as assisting first responders with tasks such as clearing debris from the roadway.

The program was first launched with a focus on I-95 in 1995, using only four trucks. Today, 15 vehicles patrol I-84, I-91, I-95, I-291, I-395, Route 2, Route 7, Route 8, and Route 15, and reportedly respond to 15,000 calls every year, according to officials.

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Celebrating 30 Years


Newington Extravaganza Will Return July 15-19

By Hailey Keel
Freelance Writer

NEWINGTON - Looking for action-packed fun for the whole family that memories will last a lifetime?

Beginning on July 15 and lasting until July 18, the town of Newington will be hosting its annual Newington Extravaganza festival. This festival will be at Mill Pond (123 Garfield Street) and doors officially open on Wednesday, July 15, at 5 p.m.

Within the festival spanning over four days, there will be something for everyone. For adults, there will be activities such as the beer and wine garden, where adults can purchase beers such as Blue Moon and drinks such as Arnold Palmer Spiked. The alcohol will be provided by Happy Harry Wine and Liquor Warehouse of Newington and will cost $5 per purchase.

For children (or people young at heart), there will be classic carnival rides to go on. Tickets for rides are as follows: $20 on July 15-16 (Wednesday and Thursday), $25 on July 17 (Friday), and $30 on July 18 (Saturday). There will also be children's games and activities, such as clown toss, an interactive circus station with stilt walkers, and trackless train rides (an additional $3 purchase).

However, each day of the festival brings something different. For instance, on Friday, there will be tethered hot air balloons ($30 online purchase), and on Saturday, there will be a food truck festival, where there will be 16 food trucks to try delicious food from.

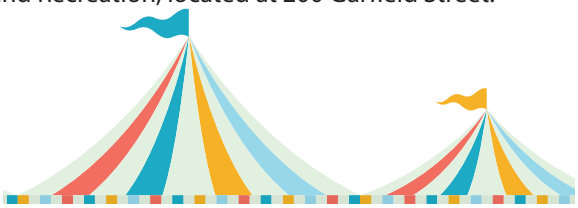
Saturday will be the biggest day of the festival, with not only the food truck festival happening, but also the craft fair, with over 100 vendors to purchase goods from. As well as this, live music will be performed throughout the day from the bands Vinyl Countdown, Measured Soul, and Shaded Soul (there will also be live music on the other days).

The highlight of Saturday at the Newington Extravaganza will be at 9:30 p.m., when the sky will be lit up with colorful fireworks.

Hours for the Newington Extravaganza are Wednesday to Friday, 5 to 10 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information and online ticket purchasing, please go to newingtonct.gov/parksandrec.

Tickets can also be purchased at the Newington Parks and Recreation, located at 200 Garfield Street.



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Lots Of Local Opportunities For Tennis, Pickleball & More

By Margaret Radman
Freelance Writer

The benefits of playing a sport cannot be overstated. Regular participation improves physical health, builds confidence, fosters friendships, and teaches teamwork and discipline. For young people in particular, sports are a great and healthy alternative to sedentary activities, while developing life long skills. Truly, the benefits are boundless for all.

With so many choices, there's a sport for everyone but why not get the ultimate cardio workout while having fun with one of the racket sports - tennis, pickleball, or badminton. Enjoy the versatility of playing indoors or out, doubles or singles. Tennis - the daddy of racket sports - can be picked up at just about any age, providing a fun and exciting workout.

Find out what all the rage is about with Pickleball - a combination of tennis, badminton, and pingpong - that isn't actually played with a racket, but a paddle, though is still considered a racket sport because of its similarity to tennis.

The fast moving game uses a court about half the size of a tennis court, that - like tennis - provides for a rigorous workout with fast moves, pivots, lunges, and volleys the game demands, comparable to the exertion of cycling, swimming, or basketball.

Listed below are remaining racquet sports sessions in the area this summer:

CROMWELL:

TENNIS:

Intro to Tennis, ages 4 - 13: July 14 - Aug. 6

Beginner Tennis for Teens and Adults, ages 14 and up: July 14 - Aug. 8

Also weeklong tennis camps from July 13 - July 17 for ages 4 - 5 and 6 - 12.

PICKLEBALL:

Pickleball, ages 14 and up: July 13 - Aug. 5, advanced and beginner classes

NEWINGTON:

TENNIS:

Tiered youth, junior, and adult tennis classes from beginner to advanced, offered as private, semiprivate, or group lessons. Ages 4 and up.

Sharpen skills and learn technical tips with drills for advanced skills. Choose from a league, junior tennis team, or season pass to use the Mill Pond courts from May 1 to Oct. 30.

Participate in NTA (National Tennis Association) matches for women's and men's doubles, mixed doubles, senior doubles, and men's singles.

Enjoy socialization at the adult doubles pizza party on August 9 and end-of-year party on September. 6.

PICKLEBALL:

Youth Pickleball Clinic, ages 8 - 17: June 19 - July 31

Adult Pickleball Clinic - Ages 18 and up, beginner and intermediate: July 19 - July 31

BADMINTON - June 18 - September 3, ages 18 and up

ROCKY HILL:

TENNIS:

Two sessions for ages 4 - 17, all skill levels: June 22 - July 13 and July 20 - Aug. 3

Two 5-day tennis camps in July, for ages 6 - 12.

Beginner to Intermediate Lessons: June 22 - July 15

Beginner to Intermediate Lessons: July 20 - Aug. 1

Intermediate to Advanced Drill and Play: June 23 - July 16

Intermediate to Advanced Drill and Play: July 21 - Aug. 13

PICKLEBALL:

Youth, Ages 7 - 17: July 22 - Aug. 26

Beginner Adult, Ages 18 and up :July 22 - Aug. 26

Intermediate/Advanced Adult Ages 18 and up: July 22 - Aug. 26

BADMINTON:

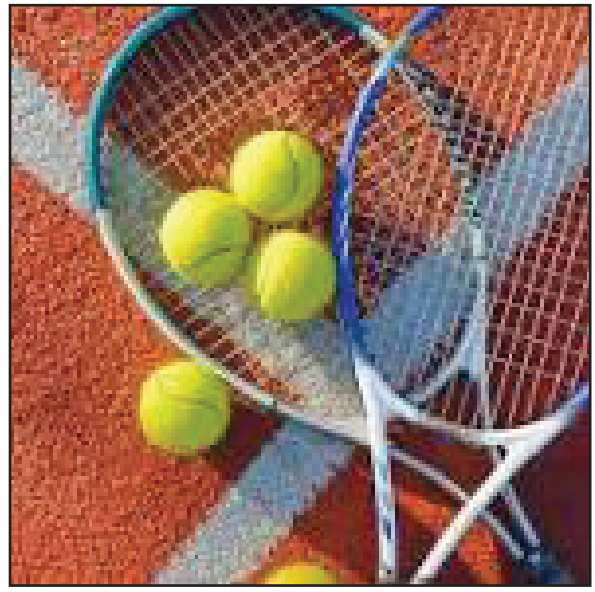
Join the Fly Badminton Club this summer at the Rocky Hill Community Center Gymnasium. to learn badminton or brush up on skills.

All sessions Wednesdays, from July 8 to Aug. 26

Beginners Clinic Ages 10 & Under, 5 - 6:30 p.m.

Advanced Clinic Ages 11 & Up, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

*Registration for ongoing classes may be closed. There may be a small additional fee for non-residents.



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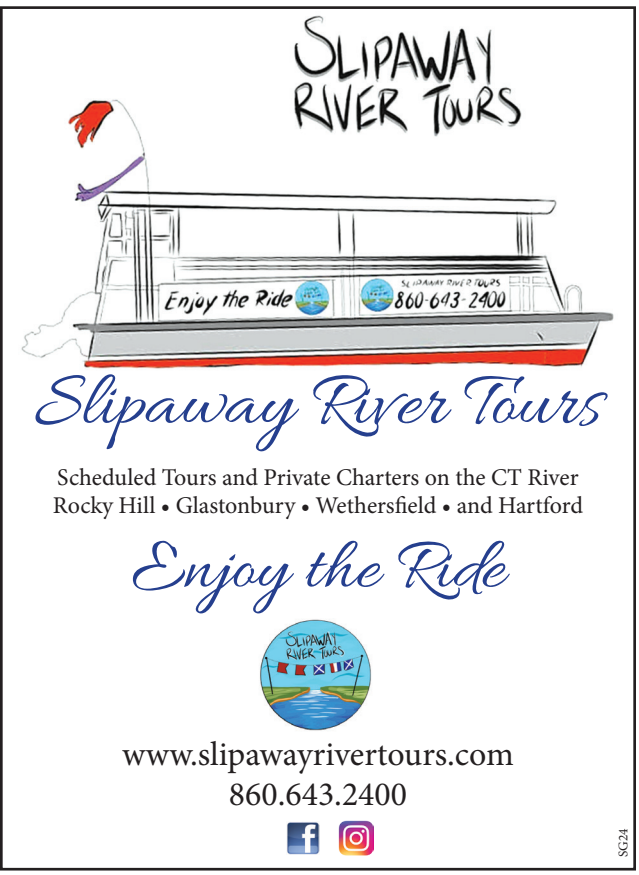
Community Summer Camp Offers Programs For All Ages, Interests

By Joyce Boncal
Freelance Writer

CROMWELL - Camp Cromwell offers numerous summer camp choices for children of all ages.

The summer camp program is a cohesive, organized program for children of all abilities entering grades K-8 by the fall of 2026 as well as for younger children. Attendance can be for a single week or for the full seven week program. Children have a chance to meet and mingle with children from other areas of town and even other towns. Summer camps keep the minds and bodies of the attendees active in an enjoyable, welcoming environment. Listed below are details of the numerous camps being held this summer.

All registrations must be finalized by 12 p.m. on Thursday for the following week. The registration website is cromwellrec.recdesk.com. Camp Cromwell will run from June 22- Aug. 7, Monday through Friday (except July 3). Time is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Woodside Intermediate School, 30 Woodside Rd. The fee is $195 weekly for a resident and $205 for non-resident. For the shortened week, June 29 – July 2, $160 for a resident and $170 for non-resident. There is a $10 per week sibling discount but they must be registered for the same week.



Grades K-4 and 5-8

Week 1, June 22-26, Trivia week; for the shortened week, June 29-July 2 (no July 3), Stars and Stripes week; week 3, July 6-10, World Cup week; week 4, July 13-17, Adventure week; week 5, July 20-24, Safari week; week 6, July 27-31, Science week; week 7, August 3-7, Carnival week

There is Little Camp Cromwell for the tiny campers, age 3-5. They can enjoy seven weeks of fun and excitement. Activities are designed to encourage creativity and social interaction. Their action days will include songs, stories, arts and crafts, indoor and outdoor play, library time, and special weekly entertainment. The location is the Town Hall activity room 41 West St, Cromwell, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The Monday, Wednesday and Friday program, is $155 resident, and $165 for non-resident. For the shortened week, June 29 to July 2, $105 resident, and $115 non-resident. For Tuesday and Thursday $105 for resident, and $115 for non-resident. For a Monday through Friday week, $235 for a resident, and $245 for non-resident. There is a $25 discount if you register for all five days of the same week.

Week dates and themes are:

Week 1, June 22-26, Bright Beginnings; week 2, June 29- July 2, Red, White and Blue; week 3, July 6-10; Move It and Grove It; week 4, July 13-17, Magical Make Believe; week 5, July 20-24, Storybook Adventure; week 6, July 27-31, Dragons and Fairies; week 7, August 3-7, Fun Fair.

Camp Sunrise is a camp for special needs children age three to 21. The camp provides growth opportunities in a welcoming, supportive environment. The camp operates for six one-week sessions from June 22 to July 31, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Smith Middle School Cafeteria, 216 Addison Rd, Glastonbury. Transportation is provided from Cromwell Town Hall.

For questions, call Anna Park at the Glastonbury Parks and Recreation, 860-652-7683. This program is partially subsidized by the Town of Cromwell and through the generosity of the Knights of Columbus.

There are also specialty camps available. For specifics of each camp program, see the Cromwell Recreation website, cromwellrec.recdesk.com, email, recreation@cromct.com, 860-632-3467.



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What The Heck Is Hacky Sack?

By Joyce Boncal
Freelance Writer

Hacky Sack is a game more formally known as footbag. While "Hacky Sack" is technically a brand name, it has become the common term for the game itself. A Hacky Sack is a small, soft ball, usually about 2 by 2.5 inches, filled with sand, beans, or similar material, making it ideal for kicking, stalling, and passing between players.

The basic concept is simple - keep the sack off the ground without using your hands or arms. Players stand in a circle and pass the sack from one person to another using their feet, legs, shoulders, chest, or head. The fun comes from the creativity involved- players perform freestyle kicks, stalls, roll-overs, and other inventive moves to keep the rally going. Once the sack touches the ground, the round is over.

Versions of footbag-like games have existed for centuries in Chinese, Asian, and Native American cultures. The modern version gained popularity in the 1970s through the 1990s, especially on college campuses, in physical education programs, and in freestyle competitions. Today, organized tournaments are held around the world through the International Footbag Players' Association. A quick search on YouTube reveals just how skilled and creative top players can be.

Basic Rules of Hacky Sack

·No hands or arms may be used, except for the initial serve.

·The sack must remain in the air during play.

·If the sack hits the ground, the rally ends.

·Players typically stand in a circle and pass the sack to one another.

·The game usually begins with a serve to a player's chest, allowing the sack to drop to the feet to start the rally.

In circle play, a "hack" occurs when every player touches the sack before it hits the ground. If every player touches it twice, it is called a "double hack."

Freestyle Competition Scoring

Freestyle footbag competitions often score tricks based on difficulty, creativity, and control:

·**1 point:** Basic control and coordination

·**2 points:** Moderately difficult tricks requiring setup

·**3 points:** Advanced combinations showing style and creativity

·**4–5 points:** Highly skilled maneuvers demanding exceptional precision and timing

Health Benefits

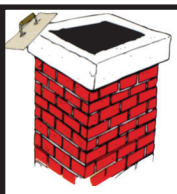
Hacky Sack offers more than fun and exercise. Regular play can improve balance, mobility, agility, coordination, stamina, reaction time, creativity, and cardiovascular fitness.

According to Joshua Lamay, a group of students at Cromwell High School regularly plays Hacky Sack for both recreation and exercise.

For serious enthusiasts, the 44th Annual East Coast Footbag Championships will take place July 4–5, in Brooklyn. The event will include prize money competitions. For information, contact Drew Martin at drew.D17@gmail.com.







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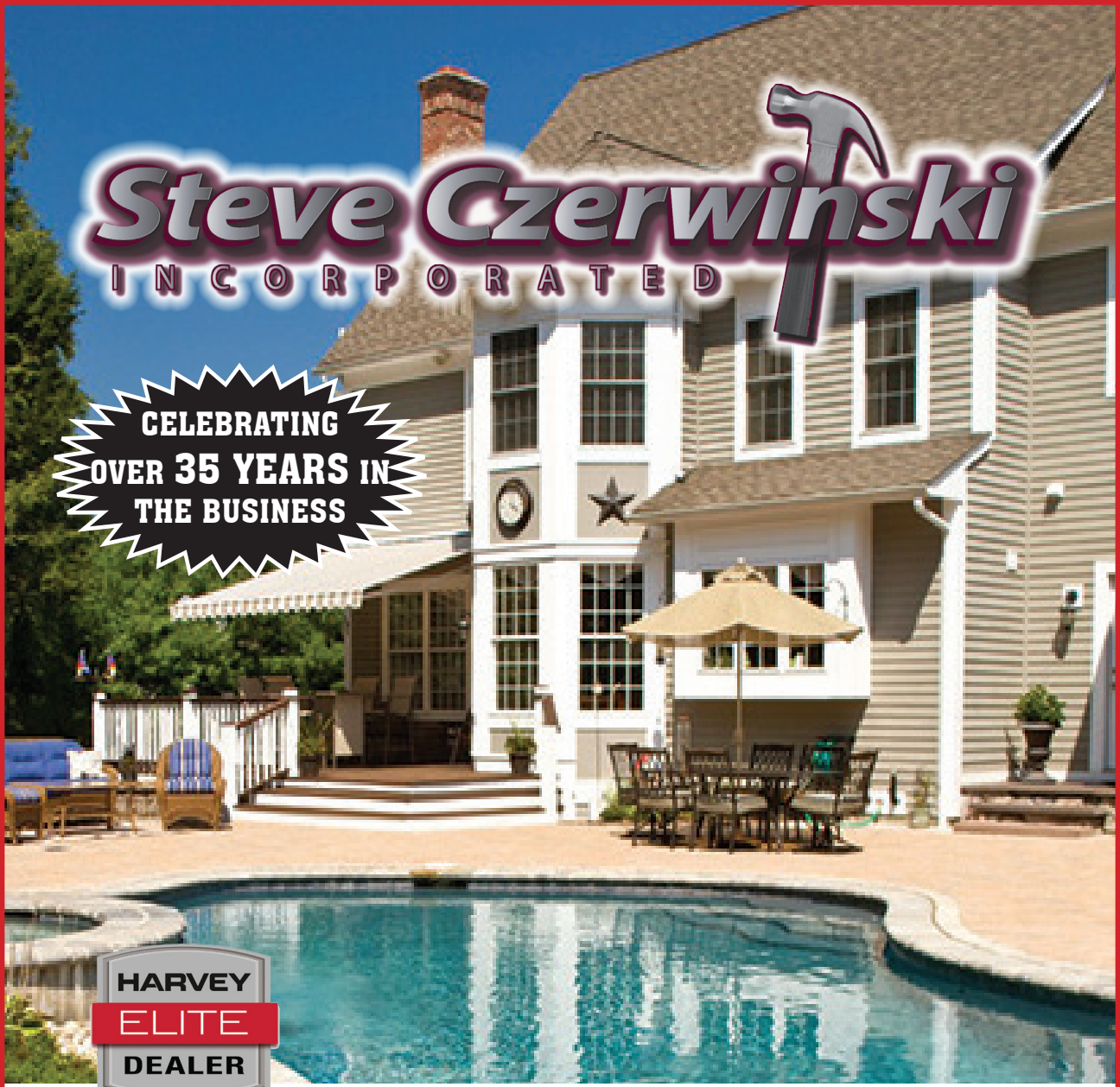
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