



The Old Guardian

Month 10 of our 60th year

November 2025

“Good morning Old Guard”

Gentlemen,

Here's what's in the Newsletter:

- The President's Corner
- Committee Chair Reports
- This Month's Storytellers
- This Month's Speakers
- Officers and Chairs

The President's Corner – Clem Sayers

November is a month of Celebration. Election Day, celebrating one our treasured human rights as Americans. Veterans Day, celebrating and honoring all those who served and of course, Thanksgiving Day, celebrating Family and Friends and everyone that we hold dear.

Let's take a moment to celebrate the Old Guard. Fellowship and Service are who we are, and we all should be very proud. I know that I am.

Clem

West Hartford 250 – Tom Donahue

Tom who is on the West Hartford 250 committee spoke at the October 28th meeting about the celebration noting a couple of programs;

- A day where we acknowledge all the diverse nationalities living in West Hartford.
- A day where all the flags of the US over the past 250 years are displayed (February 13th)
- Old Guard sponsored Time Capsule is scheduled for July

Clem presented Tom a donation to the Town of West Hartford for \$250.00 for the 250-year celebration program.



If anyone from the Old Guard wants to make a donation - make the check out to The Town of West Hartford with the memo “Old Guard 250 Celebration”. He can take your check at any meeting.

Committee Reports:

Habitat ReStore – Ron Robinson

November 12th we will be having a Build Day at 9 Mahl Avenue in Hartford so we will not be working at ReStore again until the second Wednesday of December.

Register here

https://vhub.at/OLDGUARD_hfhncce

This is also the time of year that we encourage donations from all who would like to support Habitat.

For your convenience I am happy to collect your checks.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Habitat in all ways this year.

Ron Robinson

Foodshare - Wallingford & Local Volunteering Opportunities & West Hartford Youth Food Program. -Jeff Lee

Good day Old Guard!

After introducing Rhon, Mike and Ted at the 10/21 OG meeting & by the time you read this, I will have had individual meetings with each of them. Ted and I brought our food donations right after the meeting to The Universalist Church on Fern St. and Ted met our direct contact at the church.

I have since met individually with Rhon and the Mike. All three of them have made progress in enhancing how their individual areas of responsibility can be improved upon and allow us to operate more effectively.

I have only one request going forward; Please give these guys the great support you've given me over the last 3+ years!

Thanks!

Jeff

CT Foodshare – Mike Dore, Jeff Lee Emeritus

Our first volunteer day in Wallingford was another Old Guard success story because each one of you helped make it happen!

7,392 lbs. of food processed by 7 volunteers...Over 1,000 pounds per OG member!

Simply an outstanding team effort...Thank-You!

Join us Friday November 7th.

Use this link to register or contact Mike

[Quick Link to CT Foodshare
Sign-up or Sign-in](#)

Carpooling to Wallingford;

25 minute ride **leaving** at 8:15 for a 9:00 start at Foodshare.

- Exit 41 - Rockledge Golf Course parking lot
- Exit 44 - Prospect Plaza parking lot

Please contact Mike to confirm your carpooling spot.

Thanks,

Mike

West Hartford Youth Food Program – Ted Ruby, Jeff Lee Emeritus

The third meeting of the month on November 18th will be our next bagged food collection for the WHYFP also known as the “Backpack Program”.

Ted will arrive at the parking lot at 10:00am

Donations can be dropped directly to my car (bright red Ford Explorer).

Our October collections surpassed the previous months with donations totaling \$1440 in food value!

Please watch for the flyers in the hallway and email reminders at future meetings.

This food is for distribution to local kids who are food insecure especially on weekends.

These are most needed items. (Please note: you are not restricted to these items).

- Peanut butter small sizes
- Pasta sauce 24 oz or smaller
- Canned vegetables and beans
- Dry pasta 16oz
- Dried beans, up to 2 lbs.
- Canned tuna or chicken

Help in another way: if you have any extra grocery bags with handles (Big Y, Whole Foods, etc.) The Fern Street Food Ministry uses 1600 bags every month.

It is hard to believe that in a town like West Hartford that 27% of the public-school children are experiencing food insecurity.

Thank you for your generous donation past and future.

Ted

Special Events – Ray Bliss, Bill OConnor, Paul Dean Emeritus

Save the date reminders:

Holiday Luncheon, Banquet Room at the Back Nine in New Britain

Tuesday, December 9th, 2025

11:00 am registration to 2:30 pm luncheon

Festive Holiday Music provided by Judy Handler and Mark Levesque

Spring Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Pond House Cafe, at Elizabeth Park in

West Hartford

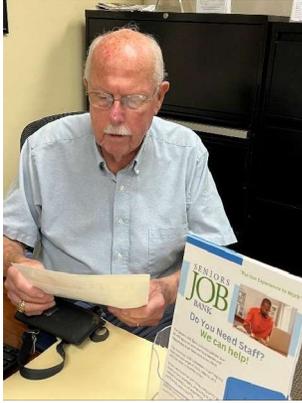
Tuesday, May 12th, 2026

11:00 am registration to 3:00 pm luncheon

Ray

860-690-2756

Senior Jobs Bank – Bernie Weiss



THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

This year the Seniors Job Bank is projected to serve 1250 jobseekers and 821 businesses, professional practices, municipal, and other organizations



The Old Guard has long been a valued source of support for the Seniors Job Bank, providing talent for our Board, as well as very welcome financial backing. Now, during our annual fall fundraising campaign, please extend that tradition by donating. Here's how:

DONATION LINK: <https://seniorsjobbankct.org/donate/>

And remember... if you need some help at your business or around the house, contact us:

Seniors Job Bank

50 South Main Street, Suite 216

West Hartford, CT 06107

860-521-3210

seniorsjobbankct.org

Historian – Peter Tiernan

Should you learn of a member of the Old Guard who passed away—perhaps in the Courant, by word of mouth, or however, let me know.

Thanks,

Pete

University of Connecticut Hospital Volunteers – Bill OConnor

The New Year is rapidly approaching. Time to set some goals and objectives.

Consider following the longstanding history of volunteering of the Old Guard.

The Guard had a long commitment for volunteering at the UCONN Hospital in Farmington.

Old Guard members assist patients in finding their appointments and may assist them with a wheelchair.

Volunteers serve a 4-hour shift 8 to noon or noon to 4 on Monday, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays.

Some training is required per HIPPA rules.

This is a rewarding activity for our service.

Contact Bill OConnor for details:

Meals on Wheels – Dale Richter

Delivering meals since 1966.

Over 30 members volunteer for this important program.

Calendar <https://ctoldguard.org/meals-on-wheels/>

Contact Dale Richter if you would like to join a team –

Consider a co-chair position.

Contact Dale

Foodbank – Mike Feehan, Lou Aiello Emeritus

Mike keeps an accounting of donation made to the listed charities by Old Guard members. Please let him know of your generosity.

During November I will be asking for your updated donations to the following charities:

- CT Foodshare
- Loaves & Fishes
- West Hartford Foodbank
- House of Bread
- West Hartford Youth Backpack Program

A. Donations in Oct reported on or before Oct. 28.

- Cash donations = \$2,150
- In kind donations (Backpack Program) = \$1,440
- Total Oct report donations = \$3,590
- Food value impact of Oct donations = \$12,190

B. Cumulative cash and in-kind donations.

- Program year thru Oct 28 = \$7,161

C. Cumulative impact, program year donations.

- program year thru Oct 28 = **\$40,160**

(Cumulative impact reflects matching gifts and Foodshare 5Xs multiplier, wherever appropriate)

Mike Feehan

Bowling - Tom Goodrum

Come and join us for Fellowship and Fun.

Bowling at 9:30 am every Thursday morning.

Bowling will be at Callahan's Bowl-O-Rama, 2143 Berlin Turnpike in Newington.

No experience necessary.

The price is the same (no inflation) at \$8.25 which includes shoes and balls if you need them. And free coffee is available also.

Here are some photos from October 30th



Thanks for participating - Harry Meyer, Bill Rose, Hank Boulton, Bob Murphy, Jim Palma, Ron Robinson, Russ Levere, Art Greene, Tom Goodrum

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Tom

Storytellers – Bernie Weiss

November 4th – John Keleher – “An All-American Family”

November 11th – Pete Tiernan - “Veterans Day”

November 18th – Jim Palma – “Chief Operative of the Secret Service”

November 25th - Jim Warner – “Raising a Gay Child”

Speakers – Bob Cave, Chairman

November 4th - Dick Kisiel, State Capitol Guide “A walk around the CT State Capitol”



Dick Kisiel, After being appointed as superintendent in Avon in 1997, Dick joined the Avon-Canton Rotary Club serving as president in 2003-04. In 2012, he chose to join the Manchester Rotary Club while serving as Manchester's interim superintendent of schools. He continued his Rotary service with the Suffield Rotary Club eventually serving as its president for two years. He currently resides at the Reservoir condominium complex in West Hartford.

Dick grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts and attended his parish elementary and high schools where he eventually met and would later marry his high school sweetheart. While in high school he completed requirements to be named as an Eagle scout. He continued supporting the scouting movement while in college. He received his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Clark University in preparation for an eventual career as a clinical counselor in a school setting. With the absence of

positions for which he was trained and the need to support a new family, he launched his fifty-four-year career in education by teaching psychology at a nearby high school for two years. Still desiring to pursue his original career goal and training, he was appointed a guidance counselor at Enfield High School and soon thereafter the director of the program.

By accepting the invitation to serve as an assistant principal at the Fermi High School in Enfield, Dick launched his career in school administration. This four-year assignment created a penchant for school leadership which eventually led him to become a high school principal in Granby, Connecticut. During his tenure as principal, he pursued a doctorate degree at Boston University in leadership. Using his new training and insights along with previous experiences, Dick accepted his first position as superintendent of schools in a newly formed regional school district in Southeastern Massachusetts. Thus began a twenty-five-year career as a superintendent that also included the towns of Avon, Manchester, and Mansfield Connecticut. Dick's professional career also included adjunct staff assignment teacher of general psychology to adults at the University of Hartford, and a adjunct staff position at the University of Connecticut focused on leadership and change issues with future superintendent aspirants. He worked as an education consultant assisting the Sheff plaintiff's legal case to reduce the racial segregation in the City of Hartford schools. He ended his professional career by providing ongoing professional development experiences for school superintendents through the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents. On occasion, he still provides consulting services for school district leaders and boards of education on matters related to leadership and change.

Dick was happily married to his wife Janice for 43 years until her untimely death eight years ago. He is fortunate to have the support of his three children, six grandchildren, numerable relatives and friends, and a close personal friend and traveling companion many of whom came to celebrate Dicks eightieth birthday at Winding Trails in Farmington. Dick enjoys the company of his cat, named Moxie.

In retirement, Dick maintains a training schedule at Health Trax in Avon, regularly plays golf, and walks/hikes the trails around the Hartford reservoir. He enjoys reading regular and historical fiction, volunteers weekly as a docent at the Connecticut State Capitol, teaches English to immigrants in Hartford, and actively participates in his Hartford church's interest in helping those less fortunate and forgotten. He anticipates traveling abroad again and will continue to enjoy regular trips to Caribbean beaches. He now regrets not bidding on the trip to South Africa auctioned at the club's recent golf tournament. He looks forward again to working with a group committed Rotarians and being an active and contributing member of the Avon-Canton Rotary Club.

November 11 - Ronni Newton - "Covering Local News: Why It Matters"



Before launching We-Ha.com in 2014, Ronni was editor of West Hartford Patch, and during her three years at Patch she wrote thousands of stories, shot photos and video, posted to a variety of social media sites, and managed a team of local editors for other Patch sites. She is the recipient of two first-place awards from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Ronni has been a resident of West Hartford since 1998, and an active member of the community as a journalist and leader since she moved here. Ronni has also worked as managing editor for lifestyle magazines and freelanced as a writer and copyeditor. She even managed an oral history exhibition for the Noah Webster House/West Hartford Historical Society, volunteered with many local non-profits and was PTO president when her children were in elementary school.

She's originally from Stamford, CT, and graduated from Duke University – where she met her husband, Ted. Ronni has a daughter and a son and *is the go-to person if anyone wants to know what's going on in West Hartford.*

November 18th - Stephaine Simpson, “Managing & Redefining Stress Throughout



Stephanie Simpson is a multi-hyphenate creative and leadership expert—coach, consultant, speaker, and artist—who helps individuals and organizations lead with purpose and thrive through change. Rooted in a holistic mind-body-spirit approach, her work blends psychology, movement, and trauma-informed practices to foster connection, clarity, and courageous leadership. Stephanie assists clients and companies—including media, education, healthcare, finance, and startups—to build resilient teams, navigate stress, and cultivate human-centric workplace cultures. She's particularly passionate about helping people reconnect to their inner wisdom, creativity, and values so they can manage and redefine stress throughout their life.

Stephanie is the author of *21 Day Stress Management Workbook: A Holistic, Interactive Guide to Re-Defining Your Relationship to Stress*, and she has been featured in several journals. She brings an embodied, expressive lens to everything she does. She holds an MA in Clinical Psychology from Columbia University, and is a Certified Coach and Master Practitioner of the Energy Leadership Index.

November 25th – Jim O'Rourke, President & CEO of YMCA of Greater Hartford - "The future for the Y looks good"



- Jim O'Rourke is a notable figure associated with the YMCA, known for his leadership and community involvement.
 - He has held various positions within the organization, focusing on youth development and community service.
 - O'Rourke has been instrumental in expanding YMCA programs and outreach initiatives.
 - His work emphasizes the importance of health, wellness, and social responsibility.
 - He has received several awards for his contributions to the YMCA and the communities he serves.
 - O'Rourke advocates for inclusivity and accessibility in YMCA programs for all demographics.
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Your officers for 2025-2026

Clem Sayers, President
Bob Cave, Vice-President
Arthur Greene, Secretary
Mike Dore, Asst. Secretary
Jim Palma, Corresponding Secretary
Stephen Guest, Treasurer
William OConnor, Asst. Treasurer
Peter Tiernan, Historian
John Mitman, Chaplain
John Keleher – Past President

Committee Chairs 2025-2026

Mike Cabrey, Membership
Don Kauke, Communications
Ed Turbert, Nominating Committee
Bernie Weiss, Storytellers
Gary Banks, Information & Technology
Bernie Weiss, Senior Job Bank
Ray Bliss, Bill OConnor, Paul Dean (Emeritus), Special Events
David Mangs, Music

Parker Simonds, Hospitality

Ted Ruby, West Hartford Youth Food (Backpack Program)

Mike Dore, Jeff Lee Emeritus, CT Foodshare

Rhon Ernest-Jones, Local Food Volunteers

Mike Feehan, Lou Aiello Emeritus, Foodbank

Ron Robinson, Habitat for Humanity

Dale Richter, Meals on Wheels

Larry Carr, Salvation Army

Bill OConnor, UCONN Health Center

Chuck Hasbrouck, Golf

Tom Goodrum, Bowling

Dan Tracy, Audit

Art Greene, Secretary

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