



The Old Guardian

Month 9 of our 61st year

October 2026

“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 – Bob Cave

Welcome Back!

The Old Guard has started a new year—As we approach our 62nd year I am pleased that the Old Guard has transitioned to a service organization with a goal of helping others in our community. This year we have six committees providing assistance (and support) as we address food insecurity. Last week I mentioned that we are looking for a new Treasurer as we recognized Steven Guest for his involvement as our Treasurer. If you know someone who may be interested with helping the Old Guard as Treasurer, please contact me. Included in this newsletter is a list of the

speakers for October. You may want to consider inviting a friend or Neighbor to hear one of these great programs.

Bob

Committee Reports:

Food Insecurity Committee – Jeff Lee, Mike Dore, Rhon Ernest-Jones, Ted Ruby, Bob Schaefer and Mike Feehan.

As we enter the second month of our program year there are many opportunities for you to serve our communities in the ongoing battle against food insecurity.

When one of our Chairmen asks for volunteers please join the efforts to sort and package food, deliver meals, fill a red bag for the backpack program, prepare a meal for those in need, help with the food rescue process, or if you can't volunteer in one the activities above please consider making a donation to support the fight!

Thanks!

Jeff

Food Insecurity – Quantified Volunteering and Impact - Jeff Lee

MEALS ON WHEELS – Bob Schaefer

Meals on Wheels has a regular roster of approximately 30 volunteers. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, rotating teams of two volunteers meet at the First Baptist Church in West Hartford, where prepared meals are dropped off. We proceed to deliver food to

approximately 8 to 12 area residents who might not otherwise have a meal. Through the first 10 months of 2026, we have delivered 3150 meals to our clients.

FOODSHARE – Mike Dore

On the first Friday of every month, Old Guard members travel to CT Foodshare's headquarters in Wallingford to sort and box food for distribution through the network of options including Mobile Foodshare and local food banks. YTD through September, the numbers for Foodshare Wallingford sorting & boxing are:

115 volunteers who volunteered 349 hours and sorted & boxed 68,110 pounds of food, which equates to 54,365 meals. We have doubled the number of available volunteers from 8 to 16; all the metrics for this program will be increasing accordingly.

W.H. BACKPACK PROGRAM – Ted Ruby

Currently, 27% of West Hartford public school students are experiencing food insecurity. The Backpack Program serves that group.

In the past year, we have collected on average 45 bags and boxes of food donations each month from September to April. The Backpack Program from the Fern Street Food Ministry distributes food to 155 families in West Hartford each week. We usually do not think about food insecurity in a town like West Hartford, but there are many families that depend upon programs like Backpacks to make it from week to week.

Next Collection Date is October 20th.

LOAVES AND FISHES – Rhon Ernest-Jones

The Old Guard has now completed almost a year of service to the Loaves and Fishes program, which consists of providing a hot lunch every weekday to

those in need. A team of six Old Guard members serves once per month at the Immanuel Church on Woodland Street in Hartford. We have been allocated the second Friday of each month, and have a roster of nine

volunteers to allow for occasional absences. The number of lunches served in each session generally totals 90-100.

FOOD RESCUE PROGRAM – Dave Simpson

We have two Retail Rescue teams. Dave Simpson and Kevin Morrison pick up fresh produce on Wednesdays at Big Y Bishop's Corner and deliver to Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen at Immanuel Church in Hartford. Year-to-date deliveries average 3 to 6 boxes weighing just under 100 pounds.

The other team member is Paul Lamonica who on Thursdays picks up a delivery van at the House of Bread in Hartford and drives to Trader Joe's at Corbin Corners to pick up frozen foods, bread and produce (avg. 300 to 500 lbs.) and then delivers the same to St Joseph Cathedral food pantry.

THE OLD GUARD'S FINANCIAL IMPACT ON FOOD INSECURITY – Mike Feehan

The impact of member donations to Old Guard Food Insecurity Programs in September 2026 was \$4,620.

This breaks down as follows:

- (a) \$2,750 impact to Foodshare (reflects the 5xs multiplier) and
- (b) \$1,870 impact to the WH Youth Red Bags Program (37 bags @ \$50 ea. plus \$20 cash).

For the program year-to-date, the overall total impact of Old Guard generosity has reached \$553,170. This sum is primarily due to the remarkable donations over the summer.

When you make a donation, please continue to let the food charity of your choice know that you are a member of The Old Guard, and also advise Mike Feehan, either at one of our meetings in person or via email of the amount and recipient of any donation you make.

Special Events Committee Co-Chaired by Hank Boulton and Rhon Ernest Jones

Upcoming

- **Talcott Mountain October 6th** - A National Medal of Science recipient and MacArthur Fellow, Dr. Stassun is Professor of Physics & Astronomy at Vanderbilt and Director of Vanderbilt's Frist Center for Autism & Innovation. His OSG Lecture, "Wired for Wonder: Neurodiversity and the Future of Scientific Discovery," explores a fascinating idea: different ways of thinking, learning, and experiencing the world can also be powerful engines of scientific discovery. Drawing on his work as an astrophysicist and educator—and on examples from the search for habitable worlds and life beyond Earth—Dr. Stassun will consider what can happen when science makes room for different kinds of minds. You'll find more information about Dr. Stassun and his OSG Lecture [here](#). The OSG Lecture begins at 6:30pm in the Talcott Mountain planetarium, located on campus at 324 Montevideo Road in Avon, with a reception following the event. Tickets for the evening are available at this [OSG ticket link](#). Feel free to share this link with others.
- **Stockbridge November 11th** – Experience the Norman Rockwell Museum, Lunch at the Red Lion and a tour of Chesterwood, home of Ddaniel Chester sculptor of the Lincoln Memorial statue. October 6th, Contact Hank or Rhon if you would like to attend
- **Annual Holiday December 15th** celebration is locked in with the Town and County, Save the date!

**We have several additional ideas but are looking to our members to;
Let us know what you want.**

Salvation Army – Larry Carr, E.T. Price, Co-Chairs

As of our September 29 meeting, we are just 61 days until our first

Saturday morning manning the Red Kettle at the Post Office on LaSalle Road. So, be on the lookout for the signup sheet in a few weeks for folks willing to spend an hour on a Saturday morning to serve this very worthwhile cause. Those who have worked the kettle in past years can attest to our having some good conversations and fun, while meeting our neighbors as they bring their holiday gifts to be mailed.

CT Foodshare – Mike Dore

Here are some photos from one of our October 2nd volunteer date - sorting apples and shucking corn.



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



First Time Foodshare Volunteers
Mike Dolan and Tom Child

If you are interested in joining our group, please send me an email, I will happily add you to our list.

Foodshare Wallingford has just announced a new construction project that will more than double current volunteer sorting space, so new recruits are needed.

Our next volunteer date is **Friday November 4th**. Still time to join the November team.

Habitat ReStore – Ron Robinson

Habitat ReStore - 9:00 to 12:00 on October 14 at Cottage Grove Road in Bloomfield.

We prepare donated items for sale and enjoy each other's company while getting the genuine satisfaction of making a meaningful contribution toward affordable home ownership.

Please use the link below to register and feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you.

New to ReStore, you can create an account at the top of the sign in page.

Monetary donations are always accepted. Catch up with me at the meetings.

If you have any difficulties and/or questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Ron Robinson

Membership – Tom Donahue

Growing Our Membership Together

I'm excited and grateful to begin my tenure as your Membership Chair! I'm looking

forward to working together to welcome new members, strengthen our connections,

and continue building a vibrant and welcoming organization.

We're already off to a wonderful start. **Five new members joined us in September**, the

first month of our programming year! That is something to celebrate and a great

indication of the enthusiasm and energy within our organization.

As you meet our members, please look for **name tags with a green dot**. A green dot

means that person has joined within the past year. Please take a moment to introduce

yourself, welcome them, and engage them in conversation. A friendly greeting can make

someone feel connected and truly part of our community.

And remember, the best way to grow our organization is **through personal invitations**.

Think about your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others who might enjoy being part

of what we do. Your invitation could be the reason someone new discovers our

organization and becomes an active member.

Thank you for helping make our organization welcoming, connected,

Bowling – Tom Goodrum, Art Greene Co-Chair

Come and join us for Fellowship and Fun,

Rekindle an old passion, get some steps in, and have a free cup of joe.

Bowling will start on Thursday, October 22, 2026 at 9:30 am and continue every Thursday morning.

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

No experience necessary.

Inflation has hit us; the price this year will be \$9.00 for the three games, which also includes shoes and balls if you need them.

Please us me know if you have any questions.

Tom and Art

Storytellers – Bernie Weiss, Jon Dixon

October 6th - Mike Cass - 26.2 - My marathon experiences.

October 13th - Pete Tiernan - Potpourri

October 20th - David Lewis - My Collegiate Claim to Fame

October 27th - Clem Sayers - Paris to Normandy

Speakers – Larry Carr, VP

**October 6th - Derek Slap: Senator and Deputy Majority Leader
CT's Legislative Agenda**



State Senator Derek Slap was elected in the special election on February 26, 2019, to represent the 98,000 residents of the 5th State Senate District towns of West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington, and the western portion of Bloomfield. He previously served one term as state representative for the 19th House District, serving constituents in West Hartford, Avon and Bloomfield.

Derek makes his home in West Hartford with his wife, Alex, daughters Maggie and Zoe, and son, Charlie. He is Vice President of Advancement at The Village for Families and Children, one of the largest providers of mental health services in Connecticut. Derek has been a lecturer in political science at Yale University and an adjunct communications professor at Quinnipiac University, Sacred Heart, Central Connecticut State, Southern Connecticut State and Eastern Connecticut State universities. In 2017 he won an “ARC Angel Award” from ARC for his advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities.

Legislative Goals:

As Chair of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee, Derek is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure Connecticut’s institutions of higher education meet the state’s workforce needs. Improving accessibility and affordability of higher education and workforce training programs are important issues that Derek works on as co-chair of the committee.

Other legislative priorities include supporting our non-profits, our local public schools, and folks with disabilities. Derek has also been a leader in the effort to improve governance and transparency at The Metropolitan District (MDC).

As always, one of Derek’s most important goals is enacting an affordable, balanced, and sustainable biennial budget that meets the disparate needs and inequities in Connecticut.

Legislative Accomplishments:

The very first bill Derek introduced and led passage of was to create an independent consumer advocate for the MDC. The bill won unanimous passage in both legislative chambers.

Derek also introduced a bill in 2017 to help close the gender wage gap, by prohibiting employers from asking job applicants about their salary history. The bill eventually passed in 2018 and Connecticut was one of the first states to enact such a ban – now law in many states across the nation.

Derek also played a role in helping Connecticut become a national leader in combating age discrimination. He introduced a bill to keep questions about age, high school and college graduation and attendance dates off job applications. The bill was passed with strong bipartisan support in 2021.

Derek is an advocate for improving access to healthcare for all children, regardless of immigration status. He is also a champion for the environment, gun safety laws, and voting reforms such as early voting.

Experience and Education:

Derek is the former Chief of Staff for the Senate Democratic Caucus, where he managed a 70-person staff, helped achieve significant budget savings, and worked with citizen activists to address issues such as gun safety, school security and mental health reforms; GMO labeling; and access to high quality Pre-K.

Before his tenure as Chief of Staff, Derek was Director of Communications for Senate Democrats for four years. Derek has also been Deputy Chief of Staff/Communications Director for the Secretary of the State, Communications Director for the DeStefano for Governor campaign, and Director of Public Information for the City of New Haven.

Derek was also a news anchor and reporter at NBC Connecticut from 1999 until 2004, and before that worked at TV stations in Florida and at CNN Headline News in Atlanta.

Derek earned his MBA from the UConn School of Business and bachelors' degrees in Broadcast Journalism and International Relations from Syracuse University, where he graduated Magna cum Laude

October 13th - Bruce Putterman: Founder and Publisher of the CT Mirror

“The Intersection of Journalism and Public Policy”



Bruce is CEO and Publisher of The Connecticut Mirror. He is responsible for the strategic direction of the organization, revenue generation, product innovation, reader engagement, and all business operations. He has a Bachelor of Arts in History and an M.B.A. in Marketing from Cornell University.

October 20th - Jeff Bravin: Executive Director of The American School for The Deaf

The Past and Future of the American School for the Deaf



Jeffrey S. Bravin has been employed at the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford, CT since 2002. He is currently the Executive Director responsible for oversight of the school. He reports directly to the Board of Directors with responsibility for carrying out the vision, mission and goals of ASD.

Prior to assuming this role, Jeff served as the Assistant Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer of the school. Prior to that he was the

Director of Special Projects which focused on logistics related to the building of ASD's new State-of-the-Art Educational Facility, the Gallaudet-Clerc Education Center—as well as ASD's PrintWorks as part of ASD's Technology Center. This role also included supervising Information Technology Services, Security, Sign Language and Interpreting Services, as well as the Isola Bella Summer Camp. Jeff also assisted in fund development, special events and public relations strategies, including managing alumni relations.

He earned his B.A. Degree in Government from Gallaudet University, M.S. Degree in Deaf Education from McDaniel College (formerly known as Western Maryland College), and M.S. Degree in School Administration and Supervision from Queens College. He is currently studying for his Ed.D. in Education Leadership at the University of Connecticut.

Jeff also currently serves on the Advisory Board for the State of Connecticut, Department of Aging and Disability Services; the Board of the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD); and the Connecticut Council on Organizations Serving the Deaf. He was formerly on the Board of Directors for the National Theatre of the Deaf and American Society of Deaf Children.

**October 27th - Dr. Ruth Mitman: Founder of The Mitman Group
Aging Well**



Founder, and president of The Mitman Group, is a 50-plus market advisor with over 30 years of experience studying the mature market. A Ph.D. graduate in Gerontology, Transportation and Education from Michigan State University, Ruth has a diverse professional background in striving to improve the quality of life for the older population.

Dr. Mitman was a Corporate Gerontologist at The Hartford Financial Services Group, has served on the faculty of the College of Lifelong Learning at Michigan State University and was a consultant for AARP.

Ruth lives in West Hartford with her husband, The Rev. John Mitman. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Your officers for 2026-2027

Bob Cave, President

Larry Carr, Vice-President

Arthur Greene, Secretary

Mike Dore, Asst. Secretary

Jim Palma, Corresponding Secretary

Stephen Guest, Treasurer

William O'Connor, Asst. Treasurer

Peter Tiernan, Historian

John Mitman, Chaplain

Clem Sayers – Past President

Committee Chairs 2026-2027

Tom Donahue - Membership

Don Kauke - Communications

John Keleher - Nominating Committee

Bernie Weiss, Jon Dixon - Storytellers

Gary Banks, Information & Technology

Bernie Weiss - Senior Job Bank

**Hank Boulton, Rhon Ernest-Jones, Bill OConnor, Dave Lewis - Special
Events**

David Mangs, Music

Parker Simonds, Hospitality

Ron Robinson, Jim Palma - Habitat for Humanity

Food Insecurity - Jeff Lee,

Bob Schaefer, Meals on Wheels

Mike Dore – CT Foodshare

Ted Ruby – West Hartford Youth Backpack Program

Rhon Ernest - Jones – Loaves & Fishes,

Mike Feehan – FoodBank

E.T. Price, Larry Carr - Salvation Army

Bill OConnor - UCONN Health Center

Chuck Hasbrouck - Golf

Tom Goodrum, Art Greene - Bowling

Jim Palma - Audit

John Keleher - YMCA

Clem Sayer, Bob Cave, Tom Donahue, Bill O'Connor – Awards