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Strike by New Jersey Transit train engineers leaves some 350,000 commuters in the lurch

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US claim of state secrets privilege in Kilmar Abrego Garcia case is 'inadequate,' judge says

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Contributed Photo

Coventry students who participated in the Make Something Festival.

Coventry students' voices heard at choral festival

MAINA DURAFOUR
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COVENTRY — Coventry Public Schools showcased a few of its talented students during a statewide choral festival, celebrating collaborative music-making.

The event, "Make Something Festival," is organized by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. During the day, students from middle school, high school and college meet and do vocal workshops.

Under the direction of clinicians Sophia Miller, Adam Podd and Matt Podd, participants rehearse a variety of songs created by the Podd brothers, such as "Yonder Come Day," "I Shall Be Released" and "Over My Head I Hear Music in the Air."

Students from both G.H. Robertson School and Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School participated in the festival, a project led by music educators Madison Adams from G.H. Robertson and Jessica Dalrymple. See COVENTRY ON PAGE 4

Chronicle Arts Series: Palmira Magliocco

MAINA DURAFOUR
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COVENTRY — Palmira Magliocco was 22 years old when she moved from her native Sicily to the United States. There, she was able to study art in school and find her way to abstract, a painting style that puts her in a creative, meditative state.

Magliocco's first memory with art goes back to when she was a young child. She used to draw

on the walls of her house, making the hallway her own canvas. When she was 10, her dad decided to redo the house.

"You cannot paint here anymore; no more painting here, you can paint on paper," she recalls him saying. "I was just drawing portraits, whatever things I saw, and then I went to middle school and then I went to high school."

Her passion was so strong that she wanted to pursue it by going to an art

high school, which was in Syracuse, Sicily, 45 minutes away from her home. Because of the distance, her dad refused, and she ended up going to a scientific high school, where she studied chemistry, math and science.

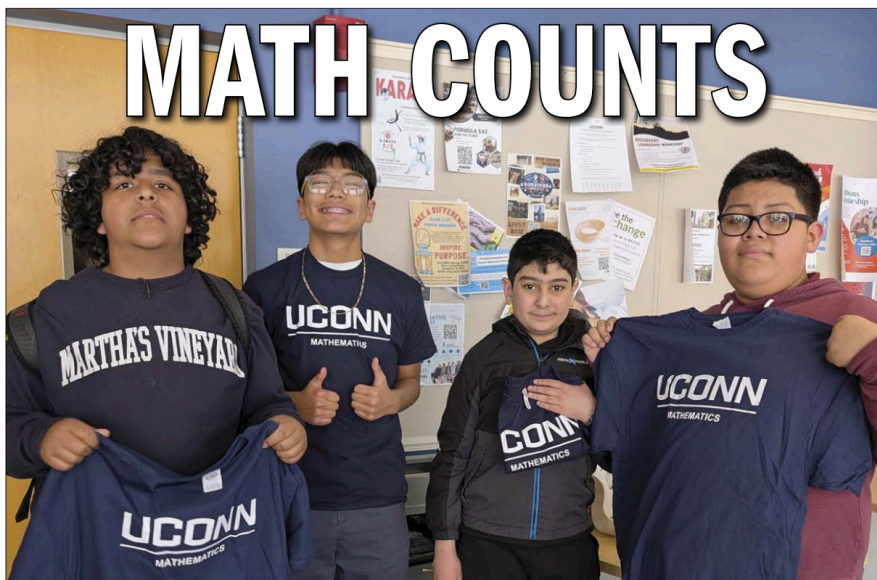
It was only when she moved to the United States with her husband that she was able to go to art school, even though she did not know English very well, and was determined

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Maina DuraFour

Palmira Magliocco stands in front of one of her art pieces during a Chronicle Art Series interview.



Zita Bodonyi

Members of the Windham Middle School Math Club, which was brought back to life after students returned from the pandemic.

Windham Middle School revives club

MAINA DURAFOUR
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WINDHAM — A teacher at Windham Middle School has revived the school's Math Club in an attempt to make math a subject in which students can have fun while also learning life-long skills.

Zita Bodonyi, supervisor of the Math Club and a math teacher at WMS, decided to revive the club

when students came back to school after the COVID pandemic.

The idea to create a place where students could play with math sprouted in her mind when everything was still shut down. She started thinking about what children this age are doing and was looking for a certain direction that would benefit them.

In the past, the school had a Math Club, which was then

supervised by Katherine Siegelstein, the school's special education coordinator. She told Bodonyi about Math Counts, a nonprofit organization that offers extracurricular math programs for students from grades 6 to 8 throughout the United States.

"It's an awesome program; they have a mission statement and they provide all the materials," she said. "The local chapters can do

however they choose, they can do it collaboratively, they can make practice times, and so on."

The Math Club has now been running for three years and all students are welcomed to join the club, which Bodonyi considers as an enrichment activity. Although the level of problems solved tends to increase at the end of the year, it is open to students with any level in math,

whether it is their strong suit or not.

Before being a math teacher, Bodonyi was a language teacher at WMS. What led her to become a math teacher was the many students that needed help in this subject. While most of them would get excellent grades in English, many would struggle with math, and she would help them as much as she could.

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Jeff Gordon's Office

Homeschoolers are joined by their parents at the Capitol with State Senator Jeff Gordon.

Parents, Gordon happy after homeschool proposal dropped

MAINA DURAFOUR
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COVENTRY — Homeschooling parents celebrated after the state renounced its legislation to impose more control over homeschooled children, a proposal which was heavily criticized by parents and

some political leaders.

According to Senator Jeff Gordon (R-Woodstock), this victory was made possible by the numerous parents, students and politicians that have shown up and protested the proposed legislation.

The bill was proposed following a case of child

abuse in Waterbury that shocked the state. A man was discovered after spending more than 20 years sequestered in his parents' home after being pulled out of school in fifth grade.

"Rather than addressing the failure within the child welfare system, it sought

See PARENTS ON PAGE 4

Coventry students' voices heard at choral festival

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Students from G.H. Robertson were Olivia Bellantoni, Breandan Earle, Willow Gentile, Lily Jaworski, Melissa Pascino and Vivienne Hartigan. Students from Capt. Hale

were Eliana Gutierrez, Ruth Marquez, Sofianna Morang and Madelyn Sowa.

During the festival, students were able to collaborate with students from other districts, improving their skills musically and also building confidence.

Windham Middle School revives Math Club

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"I started studying math and I was able to get my certification as a math teacher, and at first, I was just using it as a support to support my students," she said. "Unfortunately, there are many openings usually every year in the building, and one year they asked me to step in as a math teacher."

Her first love is with languages and she never thought she would become a math teacher. However, when she started learning math, she realized it was just another language to learn.

"I do want to promote that mentality of 'you don't have to be afraid of it.' You can make it work," Bodonyi said. "You can understand because the more you understand math, the more you understand the logic of life."

Math Club takes place once a week, after school time, for two hours. During the club, her students do exercises that are relevant to the middle school curriculum but go further.

"For example, in seventh grade, they study triangles, and they do the sides, they do the angles and so on. But in the club, we did the proportions of the triangles. So that was extra fun," she said.

One of her favorite parts is when she sees students' thoughts going in all sorts of directions to solve a

problem. She also loves to see the students discover a new formula or find out that things work the way it was planned.

"That's where they realize that they can go into directions that they never thought about before," she said.

About six to eight students are enrolled in the club, and some come to every meeting, some not.

Since she brought the club back, the team has been participating in the Math Counts Eastern chapters competition, taking place at the University of Connecticut. The competition is supported by the Department of Mathematics and is run by volunteers. Bodonyi believes this is a very good experience for the students. The first year, they did not have a full team, but now they do.

For the past two years, individual competitors have qualified to go to the state competition, something she hopes will continue. Although most of her team is graduating and moving to high school, a group of teachers is working on bringing in new students.

"We talked about networking; we talked about bringing other people in," she said. "Other teachers have mentioned students who actually started showing interest and networking among the kids."

Make Music Day Hebron seeking musicians

The Town Center Project is once again bringing Make Music Day to Hebron. This year's festivities will be held Saturday, June 21st.

Make Music Day is an international event dedicated to the celebration of music! Originally established in France in 1982 with over 1000 cities in over 120 countries and growing, Make Music Day is a day not to be missed.

All levels of musicians are welcome, all genres – individuals, family talent shows ... your imagination is your only limit. We'll be lining Main Street, bringing back the "Mile of Music".

Sign up to participate today! For more information check out our facebook page, facebook.com/towncenterprojectinc or our website, www.towncenterproject.org.

Oklahoma inks deal with UAE company to build \$4B aluminum smelting facility

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma state officials announced a deal Friday with a private company in the United Arab Emirates for the construction of a \$4 billion aluminum manufacturing facility in northeast Oklahoma.

Gov. Kevin Stitt and

Oklahoma Department of Commerce officials say the deal with Emirates Global Aluminum would result in the first new aluminum smelting facility to be built in the U.S. in 45 years.

The annual capacity of the smelter would be about 600,000 tons (\$44,000

metric tons) of primary aluminum, according to a memorandum of understanding signed by Stitt and the company's CEO.

The project is expected to create about 1,000 direct jobs and 1,800 indirect jobs, commerce officials said. The facility would be constructed on more

than 350 acres (140 hectares) at the Port of Inola, east of Tulsa. The agreement is contingent upon the Oklahoma Legislature approving a package of financial incentives that includes \$275 million from the state, as well as state property, sales and inventory tax exemptions.

Chronicle Arts Series: Palmira Magliocco

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to succeed.

"It was hard to study. A normal kid would take probably a day to do a paper, [but] it would take me two weeks," she said. "But I graduated with a 3.9. I did it."

She studied at the University of Hartford, where she first learned what she qualifies as a "conservative" training. She learned to produce many realistic pieces and sometimes worked on more impressionistic or abstract forms of art.

During her senior year, her art history teacher told her something that would shape her artistic journey.

"My art history teacher said to me 'all your shapes are defined, what if you have no boundaries?' And I'm like, 'oh, OK, what does that mean?'" she said. "So that was a different way of thinking that I started to approach."

With abstract, the challenge was greater because she had to start with a blank canvas and nothing for inspiration other than her feelings. It's a longer process, too. There were times where it took her months before finishing a piece.

"It took me some time to understand abstract," she said.

Magliocco decided to turn herself toward abstract because realistic work became like second nature

because of all the years of practice she has had.

Her approach to abstract painting uses a meditative approach, in which the decisions she takes come from not her mind, but her subconscious and gut. To this day, when she paints, meditation is the first step she uses before layering colors on her canvases.

When she paints, she uses all sorts of media like acrylic, oil, pastels or even ink sticks. When she paints, she never uses the paint that comes out of the tube, she always mixes in colors to create her own palette.

"How do you make a white painting talk to you, define itself? It's about the brush strokes; it's about the color that transpires," she said about one of her abstract paintings, where she used many shades of white. "But basically, it's a white painting. And all of this is done without thinking about what I am going to do, how am I gonna make this thing."

In addition to painting, Magliocco also has experience in sculpting, print and photography.

One day, one of her students asked her if she would be interested in barnwood, and she said yes. When she received the pieces, she cut them to the size she wanted and created personalized and unique frames for her artwork. She believes it gives her pieces



Melina Durston

Palmira Magliocco stands in front of one of her art pieces during a Chronicle Art Series interview.

a "warm feeling."

She experimented creating frames with metal scrapes as well. She then put her artwork in between plexiglass and drilled the piece to the metal creation. She came up with this idea when she was preparing for an exhibit. She could not drill holes in the wall, so she tried to come up with a solution.

Although art is and will always be her first love, there was time in her life where she had to choose security over it. It is difficult to live from art, and she worked many other jobs to be able to sustain her family and herself.

"As an artist, it's very hard to break through. You don't go and be an artist because you want to make money," she said. "You are an artist because it's good for your soul. It's good for you."

Throughout her whole

career, despite selling many pieces of her artwork, she had to find ways to pay the bills. To do that, she worked different jobs, like painting murals, helping people redesigning their homes or teaching.

Her experience shaped her advice to the younger generation of artists: "Do follow your dream, but get a minor, maybe in digital art, something that is a little bit easier to use or to earn a living," she said. "You have to find another venue to be able to support yourself."

Magliocco still practices her art and can be found on Instagram @palmirastudios or on her website palmirastudios.com.

The Chronicle Art Series will profile local artists weekly this spring and summer. To be featured in this space, or recommend an artist, email mdurston@thchronicle.com.

Parents, Gordon happy after homeschool proposal dropped

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to impose sweeping and burdensome government oversight on thousands of law-abiding families," Gordon said. "That approach was not only unfair, it was deeply misguided."

Diane Connors, a member of the homeschool community, believes the latest decision was made

possible by the numerous people who have gathered to express their discontent. She doesn't know if the state will try to implement the legislation in 2026, but she said there seems to be no signs they would.

"This legislation is not moving forward in the 2025 session, and I sincerely hope it marks a turning point," Gordon said. "If future

proposals are introduced, I'll continue to advocate for fairness, transparency and the right of families to make educational decisions free from unnecessary state interference."

He said he is proud Connecticut's homeschool families voiced their thoughts loud and clear, which made a big difference.

"I'll continue to support legislation that strengthens protections for children while respecting parental rights," Gordon said. "If this issue comes up again, we must ensure it goes through the proper public hearing process. It is far too important of an issue to sidestep the typical channels meant to prevent rash decisions."

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