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SUMMER 2025 ISSUE #30

MAGAZINE







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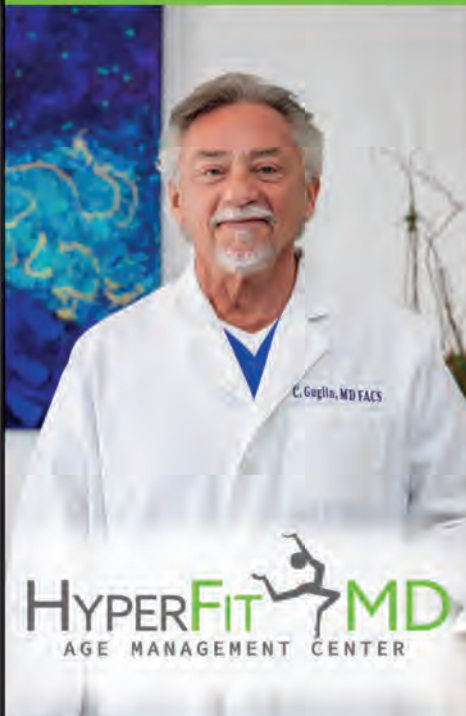
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and ideas for articles featuring the people and business  
community of Orange, submit to: [asliby@OrangeEDC.com](mailto:asliby@OrangeEDC.com).



### On the Cover

We were able to capture this little guy on a  
Spotted Nettle plant at a local beekeeper's  
property. Orange resident Bill Riecker, a retired  
dentist, went into beekeeping as a fun hobby  
to enjoy during his retirement. Read about Bill's  
Bees on Page 20.

Photo: Paula Severino

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# Publisher's Letter



I am pleased to announce this edition marks the 30th issue and 15th year of publishing *OrangeLife* Magazine. Since its debut in 2010, the magazine has evolved with various features and an improved style. We look forward to continuously enhancing the publication and providing the town with valuable and meaningful content.

I'm always fascinated with stories of life's twists and turns that shape careers and personal paths. Reflecting on the past 15 years, we have covered many.

In this issue, for instance, we highlight a few individuals who took remarkable turns. One is the story of a woman who turned her profound grief into physical fitness, which led her to bodybuilding competitions, and ultimately opening a unique gym that focuses on bodybuilding training and competition. Another is about a successful musician who

started out as a filmmaker, but an unfortunate accident redirected his career to producing children's music.

Remember to check our Calendar of Events, as there are many this season. The Orange Volunteer Fire Department is celebrating their 100th anniversary with a car and fire apparatus show in June and a parade in September. Additionally, the fire department is excited to host the Connecticut State Firefighters Convention this year – a first for Orange!

Enjoy this issue and have a spectacular summer.

**ANNEMARIE F. SLIBY**

Executive Director, OEDC

*When visiting any of the businesses that have advertised or that are featured, please let them know you saw their ad or article in *OrangeLife*. As always, I want to thank our advertisers, and First Selectman James Zeoli, the Orange Economic Development Commission, and the Orange Economic Development Corporation for their support.*

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# Swim Education Taught with Passion and Purpose

WRITTEN BY: JOSEPH WEATHERED

A new swimming academy with Ivy League and Olympic ties opened this past fall. Located at 200 Indian River Road in the Colonial Commons plaza, Bulldog Swim Academy is owned by Adriana and Kyle Schack, who look to bring their passion and dedication for the sport and education to the community.

“We wanted to provide a space where individuals of all ages could learn essential water safety skills and develop a love for swimming,” commented co-owner Kyle Schack.

The Academy offers a range of programs tailored to different age groups and skill levels, including programs beginning with the Water Babies level, which is designed for children aged seven months to three years and focuses on water comfort and foundational skills. For both levels,

a parent or guardian is expected to be in the water with their child. The Bulldog Academy website notes that the goal of each class is to provide specific tasks and expectations for the students, always prioritizing their learning process and their confidence in the water.

The Youth Program is designed for children aged four to twelve years and consists of eight levels that guide swimmers from basic water safety to mastering all four competitive strokes. Schack notes that there is a four-student maximum limit to the class so that the educators can provide individual attention and peer learning.

The Discover Swimming level is aimed at individuals aged 13 and above. This level distinguishes itself by helping teens and adults develop swimming skills and confidence in the water. “Our self-paced, mastery-based approach ensures that each student progresses at their own speed, whether they’re beginners or looking to refine competitive techniques,” replied Schack.

Along with Kyle and Adriana, Bulldog Swim Academy boasts a diverse staff which Schack notes “comprises experienced professionals dedicated to a great experience and providing quality instruction.” Among the staff is partner Tyson Wellock, who has opened academies in Seattle, and General Manager Megan Cole, whom Schack has

described as “the master of all things aquatics especially the most important thing, happy kids!”

## IVY LEAGUE AND THE OLYMPICS

Kyle is currently the Associate Head Coach for Yale University’s swimming and diving teams and has coached college swimming at Texas, Arizona State, Northwestern, and Harvard.

“My passion for swimming began at a young age, leading me to compete at various levels,” commented Schack. “This passion naturally evolved into a desire to coach and mentor others, helping them achieve their swimming goals. I coached summer league during high school and college and love the challenges of competitive sport as a coach just like I did as an athlete.”

Adriana Schack grew up with a father who was on the National Swim Team for Mexico. Adriana was inspired by his travels and took to the sport herself around the age of 11. Adriana eventually became among the top 25 in the world for a decade in the 200-meter breaststroke. Within that decade Adriana also competed in the 2000 Sydney, 2004 Athens, and 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The couple met through their involvement in the swimming community, with Kyle sharing that working together “has been a fulfilling experience, as we both bring our unique strengths to the academy, creating a balanced and dynamic partnership.”



Photo: Paula Severino

Owners, Adriana (left) and Kyle Schack (right) in the large changing room, which contains multiple private changing stations.



## COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

Along with educating and introducing newcomers to swimming, the Academy also prepares students for competitive swimming by collaborating with local schools and organizations. For competitive swimmers, the Academy also has a swim team called Bulldog Swimming, that is led by professional coaches with a background in human performance and safe-sport certified. The coaches are former college swimmers at Yale, Auburn, Cal, and Middlebury.

## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

While the Schacks live in the greater New Haven area they chose Colonial Commons plaza as a convenient location for Orange residents. "We chose Orange for its' vibrant community and accessibility," commented Schack. "We also actively participate in local events and collaborate with community organizations to promote water safety and swimming education."



Photo: Paula Severino

A view of the large pool with a viewing room behind the glass in the background. The large pool is 20 feet by 75 feet and a smaller pool located in back measures 20 feet by 40 feet.

## BIRTHDAY PARTY SPLASHES

Along with education and training, Bulldog Swim also hosts birthday parties. According to their website bulldogswimacademy.com, the Academy offers a birthday party experience that is "fun, memorable,

and doesn't involve cleaning up a mountain of mess afterward."

*The Academy is open Monday to Thursday 4 pm to 7 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 9 am to 12 noon. Call 203-701-7740 or e-mail: info@bulldogswimacademy.com. ■*

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# Pump Room Offers Fitness at the Competition Level

WRITTEN BY: JOSEPH WEATHERED

A unique fitness experience has arrived in Orange with the recent opening of Pump Room, located at 33 Old Tavern Road in the new Firelite Commons Plaza. Specializing in the competitive side of fitness and bodybuilding, Pump Room provides 24/7 access to members.

"I designed Pump Room around what a bodybuilder involved in competitions needs in order to be successful," commented Pump Room owner Darlene Sanner. "At Pump Room you have access to pro level coaching, certified nutrition coaching, and certified personal trainers. I also provide show prep planning with women including everything from suit selection to hair and makeup recommendations."



Owner Darlene Sanner in front of the dumbbell rack demonstrating the traditional Bikini Front Pose that she teaches her clients, which is used in competitive body building shows.



A view of the squat cages, which are only a fraction of the strengthening equipment offered.

Sanner, a professional bodybuilder in her own right has a pro card in the WBFF and began competing in WBFF pro shows in 2022, placing in the top three. Sanner then switched federations and went on to place first in the Bikini Open which qualified her for National Level shows. Along with owning and running Pump Room, Sanner is currently training for her second National Level show with a goal to win an IFBB pro card.

## OVERCOMING GRIEF

Sanner remarked that she wanted to open a gym to make a difference in the lives of people who have struggled. "I am a mother of five children, and I am also a grieving mother; I lost my one-year-old daughter to cancer in 2011

and experienced intense grief, PTSD, depression, anxiety, and insomnia. I spent many days battling for some sort of spark to find peace and happiness again. It was not until I started training to compete that I felt alive again for the first time in years.

While I truly have a soft spot for the competitor because I know how rewarding and healing such an intense journey can be, it is mostly fitness in general that lights me up. I see it in my clients when I am supporting and encouraging them; they feel like they can do it, and I know they can. It is an incredible feeling to know I am inspiring others to take a crucial step and caring for themselves not just physically but mentally and emotionally, because fitness is all of those things."





Photo: Paula Severino

## MORE THAN WEIGHTS

Along with the physical side of fitness, Pump Room also provides education and influence through nutrition. Sanner is a certified nutrition coach and offers her clients a proper regimen for overall fitness.

"I am very experienced in meal programming and customizing plans per individual," commented Sanner. "There are many factors to consider when programming nutrition for specific goals. Most important is calculating and constantly adjusting your macronutrient (carbohydrates, protein, fat) intake to align with your goals and

how your body is transforming. Besides bodybuilding, which is the extreme end of the spectrum, anyone involved in fitness with goals to improve definitely needs to focus on proper nutrition; otherwise, it can turn into years and years of no results or little changes to your body composition. Believe it or not, most people who come to me are under-eating so when I start a new client, I am reverse dieting them which is a strategy we use to get the proper amount of food intake and really start firing up their metabolism. Without the correct amount of macronutrients it can be nearly impossible to build muscle tissue."

## SHARING WITH COMMUNITY

Opening a business in Orange was both a passion play and a sense of giving back for Sanner. With her children attending school in the Orange and Amity districts along with being active in high school and travel baseball teams, dance, gymnastics and softball, Sanner is very involved in the Orange community.

"I wanted to open in Orange to provide our community with access to the expertise and knowledge I have attained throughout my own fitness journey," remarked Sanner. "It's not just a gym to me; it's a safe space where a stressed parent can come to decompress and feel welcome. It's an intense place where a youth athlete can see where consistency and dedication can truly take you. I am so truly fulfilled when I can lead and guide my hometown community in such a positive healthy lifestyle."

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# Vacation Planning Beyond the Typical Itinerary

WRITTEN BY: ALYSSA DAVANZO

The travel bug hits at the most unexpected times. When it strikes, everyday activities – like picking up snacks at the grocery store or waiting in I-95 traffic – are suddenly replaced with visions of swimming in crystal-clear waters, hiking mountains of red rocks, or unleashing your inner child at an amusement park – depending on your style.

When the desire for a vacation evolves from a want to a need, how do you sift through the endless options for places to stay and must-see attractions to customize your ideal trip?

That's where Sarah McGovern comes in. As a Certified Travel Associate and the owner of Halcyon Travel Company, a full-service agency offering premium travel packages, Sarah transformed her fond travel memories – like touring Ireland with her father and watching her son light up at the Magic Kingdom – into a career dedicated to crafting unforgettable trips for her clients.

## BACKGROUND

With an extensive background in event planning and marketing, Sarah's entrepreneurial mindset was piqued when a friend who owned a travel agency shared the organization and creativity required to succeed as a travel agent.

"It seemed like the perfect fit, especially with my lifelong love of traveling," Sarah said. "After having my son, I was looking for a job that matched my skill set and offered the flexibility to work from home in Orange. I started part-time with an agency when he was two, and that opportunity eventually led me to launch Halcyon Travel in 2022."

## PERSONALIZED TOUCH

Halcyon – synonymous with calm and happiness – is the feeling Sarah wants her clients to experience as they create unforgettable memories through her

customized, premium travel services. She handles everything from research and planning to booking, ensuring they can enjoy the journey without worrying about the details.

"We do the heavy lifting for our clients, allowing them to plan their dream vacation in a fraction of the usual time," Sarah said. "Whether it's a group of friends touring a glacier in Iceland or a family embarking on a cross-country road trip, we handle the logistics so they can simply show up and live in the moment."

Sarah gets to know her first-time clients through a phone call and a detailed information form, where she learns about their preferences, budget, and vacation goals. Do they envision a week of poolside relaxation, or would they rather fill their itinerary with daily sightseeing and historical tours?

"Anyone can put together a schedule using generic information from popular sites," Sarah said. "We take the time to understand each client's unique needs, making it easier to curate destinations and activities that perfectly align with their vision."

From there, Sarah creates a custom proposal with lodging and transportation options. Her services also include booking reservations, providing personalized digital itineraries through a user-friendly mobile app, outlining travel timelines, and even assisting with visas and other necessary documentation for international trips.



Owner Sarah McGovern.

## ADD-ON SERVICES

For those looking to take their trip to the next level, Halcyon Travel Company can arrange custom apparel, family photo shoots, VIP tours, and unforgettable dining experiences.

Halcyon Travel Company is part of a larger host agency consortium, the Travel Leaders Network, which provides Sarah with exclusive benefits such as discounts, promotions, and marketing materials for top vacation destinations.





Sarah with her family at Disney's Yacht Club Resort in Florida.

"The Travel Leaders Network provides a strong community of experienced agents who support one another," Sarah said. "It also offers valuable educational resources, giving me access to the latest industry insights and tools to stay informed as an agent."

Sarah has built strong relationships with her clients, even receiving vacation selfies in real-time. She values feedback and asks clients to complete

a post-trip survey, allowing her to refine her craft and recommend only the highest-rated experiences.

### CREATING MEMORIES

While most of the trips that come across Sarah's desk are family-focused, she's also arranged bachelorette parties, honeymoons, and – her favorite – multigenerational excursions with grandparents, parents, and children.

"I've organized some incredible trips, like a honeymoon that started in the Greek Islands and ended in Disneyland Paris," Sarah said. "I also recently planned a National Parks vacation with hikes in the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Park. The itinerary sounded so amazing; I had to add it to my personal travel wish list."

Sarah plans to visit Ireland with her husband and nine-year-old son later this year, where she's excited to experience the magic of creating meaningful connections through travel.

"In my family, we firmly believe in collecting experiences, not things," Sarah said. "Memories last a lifetime, and my mission is to help other families explore the world, embrace new experiences, and make their travel dreams come true."

*Where are you headed next? Visit [halcyontravel.co](http://halcyontravel.co), call 917-865-3451, or email [sarah@halcyontravel.co](mailto:sarah@halcyontravel.co) to schedule a consultation with Sarah today. ■*



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# Beekeeping Leads to a ‘Buzzy’ Retirement

WRITTEN BY: CHRISTINA LEVERE

Long-time Orange resident William Riecker was enjoying partial retirement in 2018 when a National Geographic documentary about bees caught his attention. He thought bee keeping would be an interesting hobby to pursue while retired.

“I thought, this could be cool,” he said. Bees were a far cry from teeth — Riecker was a dentist in a previous life — but the leap into a foreign subject matter didn’t deter him. “I already enjoyed being outside and gardening,” he said.

He checked with his wife and neighbors to see if they minded if he brought a few thousand bees into their lives. They didn’t. Even though one neighbor had a severe allergy, he assured Riecker that he was an avid outdoorsman and always carried an EpiPen.



Bill Riecker holding an unused bee frame.

## FIT FOR A QUEEN

Riecker started with two hives. “It’s a significant investment to get started,” he said. “You have to buy bees, unless you can find a swarm” — he was joking about that. A few hundred dollars will get you about 10,000 bees, which amounts to “roughly three pounds of bees and a queen.”

He set up the hive on his property — you have to do this prior to the bees’ arrival — and established the queen bee within the hive; then, he fed the bees sugar water and monitored them. (Bees often require supplemental feeding to thrive.) Over time, the bees started to develop the honeycomb.

If it sounds easy, Riecker is quick to point out that beekeeping is anything but cut and dry. Sure, bees have survived on their own for 120 million years, but there are a lot of things that can go wrong, such as a Varroa mite infestation, an external parasite that can kill bee colonies.

“[That first year] I had treated for the mite, but I didn’t know how often to treat, how much, etc. and my bees died.”

He was devastated but thanks to state and local resources like the Connecticut Beekeepers Association, the Back Yard Beekeepers Association, a Connecticut entomologist who made a house call, and an ever-growing swell of online communities, Riecker was able to establish another healthy hive.

“If we can’t keep our bees alive, we’re in trouble,” he said. “They pollinate



Riecker removes a frame out of the hive box to inspect it for honey. There are 30,000 bees in one hive.

almost all crops.” (It’s true: According to the USDA, one out of every four bites of food people take is courtesy of bee pollination. And those bites of food are even more delicious if they’re drizzled with honey.)

Now, Riecker is happy to share the vast knowledge — and honey — he’s amassed. “I get phone calls from friends, or whoever, who are interested in getting into the hobby, and I’ll put them in a suit, the whole deal,” he said. “I’ve done hands-on demonstrations for neighborhood kids.”



For those who feel less than Zen in the middle of a busy bee colony, Riecker has this advice: “If you get worried, calmly walk away. Don’t swat. Talk slowly and gently. My wife wore the suit once and said, ‘Ok, I’m done.’ It’s not a big deal to me. Most times, I can go with a bare hand and push the bees aside, and they don’t care. But in the fall, bees are preparing for their winter. They’re putting food aside for themselves, and they let you know they don’t want you there. That’s when I’ll wear my full suit. Bees are not pets. They don’t recognize, they don’t know me, but I try to understand them.”

### THREE SEASONS OF HONEY

He’s clearly doing something right. Last year, Riecker amassed 200 pounds of honey. He gives it away or sells it at local farmers’ markets, like Orange Community Farmers’ Market, under his label, Bill’s Bees.



Worker bees are tending to their new brood on this egg and larvae hatchery frame. Honey is not produced on this frame.



Riecker’s collection of honey - summer, fall, and spring, as well as lantern fly (the darkest), with each one having a different taste and color.

Depending on the season, the honey will look and taste different. Spring honey, for example, is lighter in color, pleasant-tasting, and mild. Summer honey is darker and full-bodied. When bees have foraged on the nectar of fall flowers like aster and golden rod, fall is even darker.

“Last year we had a nice summer and enough rain, so we had a large amount of flowers,” he said. “This was the first year I got a fall honey! It’s the first time in seven years.”

Other new firsts include lantern fly honey, created when spotted lantern flies feed on tree sap and leave behind a sticky, sugary residue called honeydew, which the bees are attracted to.

“The honey is opaque and dark, with a musty odor,” he said. “It has a taste similar to molasses; it might be good for BBQ.”

Beyond being tasty, numerous studies have shown that consuming local honey has health benefits, such as helping with allergies. It’s also antimicrobial and anti-fungal.

### PASSION & PRIDE

Riecker didn’t exactly intend for his retirement to become so buzzy, but he likes that it gets him out of the house and that there continues to be a learning curve. He’s fond of and proud of his eight hives.

“If I’m looking at my hives and I’m seeing some bees that are malformed, I try to figure out, *What’s the problem?* Is it viral? A fluke abnormality? Luckily, I can ask people I’ve mentored because we’ve all learned together.”



Bill’s hive boxes lined up in the back of his yard surrounded by the bear fence.

Speaking of together, Riecker also recommends a bear fence. He checked with his wife and neighbors to see if they minded if he brought a few bears into their lives, alongside the bees. They did.

*When the honey is ready, Bill will be at the Orange Community Farmers Market for a few weeks in July until stock runs out, check the farm market website at [farmmarketorange.com](http://farmmarketorange.com) for dates.* ■





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# The First Telephone Exchange and its Link to Orange

WRITTEN BY: GINNY REINHARD

Southern New England Telephone Company (S.N.E.T.) has a long history in the Town of Orange. Communication within the town started out modestly with a telegraph line, owned by two brothers, Edward Clark in Orange and Elias, who lived on the town line in Woodbridge. Their two-way “conversations” began in 1880, using the Morse systems of dots and dashes.

It was about 1895 when the first telephone system began in our town with single, private, party lines connecting Sylvester Colburn, Charles Clark, and Arthur Clark extending to Scobie’s Store. Eventually four more circuits were established in different parts of town with a new-fangled gadget called a switchboard.

## FIRST TELEPHONE

Alexander Bell had been slow to get on board with the telephone but in 1876 he did so indeed, receiving a U.S. Patent for the first practical telephone design. His interest was focused on teaching the deaf as his mother and wife suffered from the infirmity. However, he was encouraged to move forward with the telephone invention, but Bell considered it an intrusion on his real work as a scientist and refused to have a telephone in his study.

In 1877, Bell ventured to New Haven where he lectured at Skiff’s Opera House about his exciting new invention, the telephone and the concept of a central exchange which would allow access to multiple phones using one connected line. George Coy attended this talk and soon set out to find investors so that he could indeed put Bell’s idea into reality. He purchased a storefront on State Street at the corner of Chapel Street in downtown New Haven.

Enter, the switchboard. To the ordinary citizen it appeared to be little more than carriage bolts, teapot handles, and bustle wire. Oh my. The concept



Vintage telephones from various time periods on display at the Academy Museum.

was simple in theory and ultimately in practicality. A subscriber, to the exchange, would pick up their receiver and speak to an operator who would manually connect their line to another fellow subscriber, thus eliminating several lines in and out of the consumer’s address. This would allow them to be connected to dozens of different subscribers.

## FIRST TELEPHONE COMPANY

On January 28, 1878, with the financial support Coy needed, the New Haven District Telephone Company opened for business with 21 subscribers paying \$1.50 per month for the service, thus making it the first commercial telephone exchange in the world. By

February of that year, a directory was printed with 50 subscribers. Among the most prominent business names were H.B. Bigelow & Co., Paul Roessler, and the Register Publishing Co. as well as M.F. Tyler, president of the New Haven & Derby RR. The miscellaneous column listed the police department, the post office, and the Quinnipiac Club.

By 1880, the company had the right to service all of Connecticut and western Massachusetts and was renamed Connecticut Telephone, but by 1882 it became the Southern New England Telephone Company.....S.N.E.T.! Expansion required money so the western portion of S.N.E.T. was sold for capital, thus making it a unique





**The operators sitting on the steps of the Orange Telephone Exchange, Summer of 1938. Pictured from L to R: Mary Khoury, Janice Hungerford, Chief Operator Clara Cade, Florence Connors, Olga Lutenberger, and Helen Fitzgerald.**

Connecticut company. The Blizzard of 1888 didn't help the fledgling company with wiring and poles taken down but soon the number of phones totaled just over 15,000.

#### **TIES TO ORANGE**

Competition for phone companies was fierce, and the Connecticut Legislation realized that the phone company should be a monopoly in nature, passing laws prohibiting new companies and in 1911 the Public Utilities Commission was created, being given the power to regulate rates and services for S.N.E.T. and other utilities. So, where does the Town of Orange fit into this story? Right at the beginning with the switchboard in Scobie's Store. You'll remember that there were three customers connected there, well, the number increased to 48 and by 1908, S.N.E.T. entered the scene, being known

as the Orange Telephone Exchange. The switchboard was located in the home of Alpheus Merwin, the little white house at the top of Old Grassy Hill Road. By 1938, the Orange Exchange was incorporated into the New Haven Exchange with 288 telephones which introduced the dial system, doing away with the central operators.

The brick building across from Mary L. Tracy school was built to house the expanding need for telephones with the building having gone through several owners, now the home of Frontier. S.N.E.T. continued to grow and prosper through two world wars and the hurricane of 1938, as it reorganized, forming a partnership with NYNEX offering cellular service as well as establishing SNET Paging, Inc. offering paging service to Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Boston.

Southern New England Telephone Company continued to broaden their services which included Caller I.D. and CustomLink, a service for residence use of 800 numbers. J.D. Power and Associates rated the company as the "number one rated long-distance company in America," but its success would not continue, as a transaction was announced in 1998 to merge this successful endeavor with SBC Communications, Inc. out of Texas. Although the operating headquarters remained in Connecticut with the S.N.E.T. name, the company officially came to the end of its days as an independent telecommunications service provider.



**A 1930s - 1940s wooden telephone booth.**

*For more information, contact the Orange Historical Society at 203-795-3106 or go to [orangehistory.org](http://orangehistory.org) ■*



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# Multiple Orthopaedic Specialties Under One Roof

WRITTEN BY: TASHA MEISENHEIMER

Connecticut Orthopaedics has a longstanding relationship with the Town of Orange, with having two locations on the Boston Post Road for many years. When an opportunity became available, they realized a chance to enhance patient access and convenience by merging two facilities into one comprehensive center.

The decision to open a new, state-of-the-art facility was deeply rooted in their enduring commitment to serving the community better.

A beautiful 24,380 square-foot, two-story building was constructed at 235 Boston Post Road. This new center, which opened in August 2024, was designed to provide convenient care to patients by offering everything patients need under one roof. The facility offers a full spectrum of services, including imaging, physical therapy, urgent care, and exceptional orthopedic services. By consolidating in a fresh, modern space, they can streamline patient experiences, deliver the highest quality of care, and ensure an expedient and accessible environment.

## SERVICES

The Connecticut Orthopaedics Orange location offers urgent care services, so patients can be seen promptly, and on-site imaging, including MRI to quickly diagnose injuries. The site contains a spacious physical therapy gym staffed by highly skilled, experienced professionals to help patients get back to their daily activities quickly and safely. All of Connecticut Orthopaedics' physicians are fellowship trained and board-certified, which provides for excellence in patient care within the local community. They have experts in all orthopaedic specialties, including foot and ankle, hip, knee, shoulder, hand, wrist, elbow, spine, back, and neck, and have a team of sports medicine experts and joint replacement specialists. All of these specialties are available right on site to ensure ease of access for their patients in the Orange area.

Overall, Connecticut Orthopaedics has 21 locations, including 8 urgent care facilities, 14 physical therapy centers, and 3 surgical centers throughout the state. One interesting service is a mobile MRI unit that moves between offices in Orange and Essex. This mobile service enhances accessibility for patients and allows providers flexibility to meet the growing demands of patient care.

When asked if there is anything that makes the Orange center special, Susan Bader, CEO, shared, "I believe that this state-of-the-art facility really



A view into the on-site sports therapy and rehab gym, which contains all the equipment needed to get patients back to where they need to be.

shows our commitment to serving Orange and the surrounding towns with the highest quality care at one convenient location. In 2025 we were honored to be named the #1 Physician Practice in Orthopaedics in the State of Connecticut by Castle Connolly, and I think that accolade truly speaks for itself. It reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care and our team's dedication to making a positive impact in the lives and communities we serve."

## ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

The Orange location has advanced technology which incorporates the latest imaging and diagnostic equipment. This equipment ensures precise evaluations and tailored treatment plans. They have an expert team of orthopaedic surgeons, physical therapists, and support staff to offer personalized care and comprehensive





and innovative treatment options, which include non-surgical alternatives, minimally invasive procedures, and rehabilitation programs that promote faster recovery and optimal outcomes.

The facility provides comfort and convenience with beautiful, spacious treatment areas, private consultation rooms and easy accessibility. They also focus on athlete care with specialized programs that prioritize a swift and safe return to sports. They care deeply about the Orange community, as many of their providers and staff members live in town.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Connecticut Orthopaedics contributes to the local community. They are hosting a series of free orthopaedic, educational sessions with podiatrist, Dr. Leakna Ung and with hand, wrist and elbow specialist, Dr. Tedd Weisman. Their physical therapy teams have been involved with events in Orange such as the Senior Health and Safety Event and the Health and Wellness Expo. They believe in giving back to the community



**The facility's Fluoroscopy suite. The Fluoroscopy machine is used to capture continuous, moving images which is used to assist in procedures.**

through providing educational resources that support healthy living, injury prevention, and sports safety.

Connecticut Orthopaedics prioritizes patient needs so they can get in to see a doctor promptly with online self-scheduling. Their urgent care is open evenings and weekends for

convenience. They also have their own app, Ortho-on-the-Go, through which patients can have their orthopaedic injury evaluated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Connecticut Orthopaedics experts can be contacted at 203-407-3500. Learn more at [ct-ortho.com](http://ct-ortho.com).* ■

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# Film Career Plans Shift to Success in Music

WRITTEN BY: TASHA MEISENHEIMER

A talented Orange resident, who had big plans for a career in film, was forced to make a change that led him to a successful unexpected musical career. Little did Zach Andersen know that an impromptu game of Ultimate Frisbee would lead to a major life-changing event.

In October of 2006, Zach, a sophomore and film major at Fitchburg State College, slipped on wet grass and landed on his head while playing frisbee. Thinking he only suffered a concussion; he was shocked to discover he had fractured his C2 vertebrae. He spent two long months in a hard collar and another two in a soft one. He desperately needed an activity to occupy his time and delved into video games and decided to learn guitar. His older brother, Eric, a talented lead guitarist, taught him guitar chords while he was at home recovering on weekends. Zach would return to school and practice. What started off as a pastime led him to an impressive musical career.

He reflects, "I was always into music, but never thought I would become a musician, as I was more into playing sports and working on film-related projects; but it was a fairly easy transition going from script writing to song writing."

After finishing the semester, he returned home. The brothers had more time to play together. Eric was able to improvise over Zach's rhythm guitar, playing with ease. They started playing as a duo in 2007 as "The Andersen Brothers." They recorded their first album entitled, "Unrequited Daze" in 2011. Unfortunately, Eric suffered from painful arthritis in his fingers. He had an extremely busy work schedule, so



**"Zach of All Trades: Volume Three" – Andersen's most recent album.**

frequent performance was a challenge. Zach decided to keep performing as a solo artist, although Eric still records with him on studio projects. While Zach tries to make his own sound, he has been inspired by many successful musicians such as Blues Traveler, Blind Melon, and Maisie Peters to name a few.

## IMPRESSIVE LINE-UP

While transitioning from a focus on film to music, Zach still incorporates his love for film and animation into his music. Many of his songs are inspired by pop culture, such as video games, anime, cartoons, and comics. Being a fixture in the "nerdy music community," he performs special concerts at various conventions and for the past decade, he has played two to four shows at Connection. In 2012, he performed at Anime Boston, in 2014 he played at UConn, and in 2023 and 2024 he performed at Rhode Island Anime. Most recently, he played at the Retro World Expo in 2024.



**Zach Andersen and his mascot, Hooty, working on a new children's song.**





One of Andersen's many live performances.

Locally, Zach has performed in a variety of venues, from bars to coffee houses, festivals to conventions and has made appearances at charity and fundraising events. Zach has played at Stella Blues Acoustic Café, The Cellar on Treadwell, and Canteen Coffee & Tea. He also has performed at The

Glastonbury Apple Harvest Festival, KIDS Fest, and multiple conventions and looks forward to playing at the Localpalooza in June 2025.

In addition to playing gigs with various artists, Zach also organized two original music concert series, "Monsters of Acoustic Rock" at Sage Sound Studios in Shelton and "Storytellers in the Cellar" in Hamden. He feels fortunate to have booked and worked with over 150 incredible Connecticut-based acts. Zach has written over 250 songs and performed over 500 shows and currently has released three studio albums, four live albums, and seven singles.

### MUSIC FOR YOUNGER EARS

Zach first began writing music for adults and then turned his energy to a younger audience in 2015. His mother is a preschool teacher, and her boss had asked her if he composed children's music. This inquiry provided Zach with a challenge he was more than eager to tackle. Initially, he intended to write a few songs, however, it blossomed into an entire album called "Songs for Stuffed

Animals." He affirms, "Writing for children is a really creative exercise, and I feel has improved my songwriting skills overall." He has performed at the KIDSFEST in Hamden three times and has played at a few children's shows at Gastropark in West Hartford and the First Church Preschool in Old Greenwich.

Zach moved to Orange in 2005 and continues to stay grounded here because of its "quiet convenience." He shared, "Orange is a peaceful town, far enough away from the hustle and bustle of the city, but anything you could ever need is only a couple minutes away." When he isn't playing a gig, writing music or collaborating with local songwriters, Zach enjoys hiking with his two Australian Shepherds, Kaze and Fuuka. He enjoys taking nature photographs and has just started playing golf.

*Zach is available for hire for any type of children or family friendly event. You can visit his website at [linktr.ee/zachandersenmusic](https://linktr.ee/zachandersenmusic) to learn more. ■*

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## September 16, 2025

Orange Economic Development Corporation's

## 19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

### Race Brook Country Club

246 Derby Avenue, Orange

In Partnership with the  
Orange Volunteer Fire Department

**Breakfast & Check-in at 8:30 am**  
**Shotgun Start at 9:30 am**  
**Lunch Immediately Following**



### \$225 Per Player Includes

Breakfast • 18 Holes with Cart • Tournament Gift  
Lunch Reception • Awards • Snacks & Drinks



## ORANGE Artisan Festival & Business Expo



**Thursday, June 19, 2025 - 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm**

Orange Fairgrounds (rain or shine) 525 Orange Center Rd.

Free & Open to the Public

**BUSINESS, ARTISANS, & CRAFT VENDORS**  
**LIVE MUSIC, FOOD TRUCKS, ACTIVITIES**

Vendors: 2:30 – 6:30

Dance Performance: 4:30 – 5:00 | Concert: 6:00 – 8:00

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ORANGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION



# Where There is a Need, There is a Lion

WRITTEN BY: ALLEN GREALISH

Lions Club International was founded in 1917 in Chicago with a simple mission: to serve the local community.

This mission evolved to focus on helping the blind and vision-impaired, establishing itself as a fully volunteer-based organization. Today, with over 46,000 clubs in more than 200 countries, Lions Clubs worldwide continue to embody the spirit of service.

In Orange, the spirit of service thrives through the Orange Lions Club, founded in April 1952. For over 70 years, this dedicated group has tirelessly served the community, creating lasting impacts. Under the current leadership of President Daidre Chamberlain, the club organizes numerous events throughout the year to raise funds, offer services, and foster community spirit.

## EVENTS

One of the most cherished events is the annual Town Easter Egg Hunt at High Plains Community Center (HPCC), a tradition running for 63 years. Families gather to enjoy a fun-filled day that brings smiles to children and adults alike. Another highlight is the Night of Comedy Under the Stars, scheduled for September 5<sup>th</sup> at HPCC, and always promises a great evening of laughter.

The Fall & Spring Golf Shoot Out at Orange Hills Country Club offers a fun way to contribute to a good cause. Likewise, the Orange Country Fair raises funds for Fidelco Guide Dogs, supporting independence for the vision impaired. Health is also a priority for the Orange Lions, as seen in the Diabetes Screening held at the Health and Safety Fair, promoting awareness and early detection.

A cornerstone of community service is the Annual Orange Lions Thanksgiving Dinner, a beloved event running for



Lions Club Members from left to right: Ann Carollo, Jim Leahy, Lawrence Messina, Suzanne Anderson, Lion Club President Daidre Chamberlain, Marianne Miller, Alan Sturtz, Patricia Romano, Ken Lenz, Michael Muttitt, and Robb McCorkle.

36 years. It brings people together to share a warm meal and heartfelt conversations. Other events such as the Senior Pizza Party foster fellowship among senior residents.

The Lions' generosity extends beyond events. Through the Amazon Pickup/Distribution Event, they fill food banks, support Food to Kids, and assist animal shelters. The Mattress and Christmas Tree Recycling Pickup demonstrates their commitment to environmental responsibility.

## GRANTS

In addition to these efforts, the Orange Lions Club provides community grants to local organizations. Recently, \$6,500 was dispersed to support vital community services, including the local library, police and fire departments, and the food bank. They also offer Amity High School Senior Scholarships, investing in the future of local youth.

Food drives and grants for Food 2 Kids, participation in the Orange Memorial Day Parade, and the installation of a

drinking fountain with a doggy water bowl at HPCC are other examples of their dedication.

Notably, the club provides eye screening for elementary, kindergarten, preschool, and daycare students. Led by Lion Betty Hadlock, these screenings use a specialized camera to detect vision issues early, aligning with the Lions Club's global mission to fight blindness.

The Orange Lions Club also supports disaster relief efforts nationally and internationally, reflecting a commitment that knows no borders.

As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Orange Lions Club relies heavily on the community's support. All funds raised are given back to the community through charity and essential services. Donations may be tax-deductible and are crucial to sustaining these impactful programs.

For information, or become a member, email to [OrangeLionsCT@gmail.com](mailto:OrangeLionsCT@gmail.com) or follow on Facebook @OrangeCTLions ■



Orange Congregational Church

# Strawberry Festival



SATURDAY

**June 14, 2025**

RAIN DATE: JUNE 15

Come enjoy a day of strawberry treats and family fun at the Orange fairgrounds!

- Food and Drinks
- Strawberry Treats
- Red Car Show
- Family Games
- Local Vendors
- Live Music

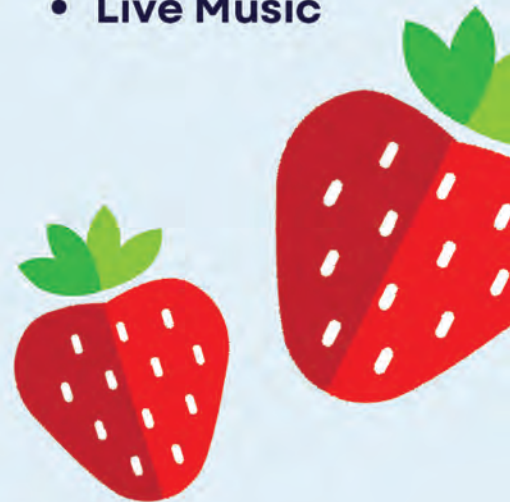
**9AM - 5PM**

**HIGH PLAINS FAIRGROUNDS**

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🌐 [OrangeCongregationalChurch.com](http://OrangeCongregationalChurch.com)

**FREE ADMISSION**





# Business Milestones

Congratulations to these Orange businesses who celebrated milestones this year. We wish you continued success in the years to come.



Owners, Jacob and Ivory Urban with their children Bryson, Conrad, and Ashton.

## Camp Cedarcrest – 886 Mapledale Road

This year Camp Cedarcrest will be celebrating its 100th season. Camp Cedarcrest has been committed to providing an enlightening and enjoyable outdoor experience to the adults and youth of the Greater New Haven area, focusing on environmental stewardship, community service, team building, and personal growth. The owners, Jacob and Ivory Urban have been dedicated to preserving the mission and the beauty of Camp Cedarcrest for the past 18 years. Camp Cedarcrest will be holding their 100th year picnic celebration open to the public, on Sunday August 9th.

100  
Years



Stephanie and David Cuzzocreo.

## Orange Fence & Supply – 205 Boston Post Road

Orange Fence & Supply Company is celebrating their 95th year, owned and operated by four generations of the Cuzzocreo's. The company was established in Orange as Orange Rustic Works in 1930 by Anthony Cuzzocreo, continued and grown as Orange Fence into the 1990s when Roy and Stephanie took the lead. Now, David Cuzzocreo who grew up in the business (like Roy and Joe) is running things with brother Brian, and Roy and Stephanie. Orange Fence provides all types of beautiful custom fences, as well as arbors, pergolas, and gates throughout the Southern Connecticut area.

95  
Years



Back: Emily Newhard, Memory Care Director; Larry Zackery, Executive Director; Walter Parks, Executive Chef; and Caroline MacKinnel, Community Relations Director. Front: Michelle Walker, RN Designee; Mary Neschke, resident; and Taisha Owens, Resident Service Director.

## Maplewood Senior Living – 245 Indian River Road

For 15 years, Maplewood Senior Living in Orange has provided older adults with a vibrant, engaging lifestyle rooted in personalized care and connection. With thoughtfully designed spaces, resort-style amenities, and a dedication to exceptional assisted living and memory care, Maplewood at Orange has become a trusted resource for families seeking quality senior living. Central to its success is a deeply committed, long-tenured team. Their expertise and compassion have fostered an environment where residents feel supported, valued, and empowered—making Maplewood at Orange a cornerstone of senior living excellence in the community.

15  
Years



Sitting: Dr. Harsida Desai, OD, Dr. Natacha Louis-Charles, OD, Dr. Caitlin Imbrogno, OD. Standing: Debbie Weyel, Celeste Rodriguez, Sophia Ambrose, Annelise Rivera-Valazquez, and Mariana Lopez.

## Family Eyecare of Orange – 501 Boston Post Rd.

Family Eyecare of Orange was founded by Dr. Natacha Louis-Charles and has established a reputation in the community for providing patients with exceptional eye care service for 10 years. They offer patients a wide variety of solutions such as primary care, contact lenses, myopia management, LASIK co-management, pediatric, vision therapy, and low vision. The practice features state-of-the-art technology and has future goals to expand the practice by adding a third exam lane.

10  
Years



# Orange Youth Services Expands its Programs

WRITTEN BY: ANNEMARIE SLIBY

Orange Youth and Prevention Services, a department under the Community Services umbrella, has been expanding its efforts, adding more programming for the children of Orange.

Their mission is to engage kids, families, and community partners in youth driven programs to promote positive youth development, reduce substance abuse through prevention, promote emotional wellness, and build a healthy and drug-free community. Community Services Director Stacey Johnson, who oversees Orange Community Services, recently hired Chantelle Bunnell as the new Youth Services and Prevention Coordinator.

“Chantelle’s extensive background in working with youth and families in both the school and the criminal justice system, combined with her deep commitment to the Orange community, is an incredible asset for the Department,” says Johnson.



Chantelle Bunnell, Youth Services and Prevention Coordinator.

## WORKING TOGETHER

Orange Youth and Prevention Services works collaboratively with many partners, specifically Orange Police Department’s Officer Bailey and Officer Arabane, who have teamed up on many projects with Bunnell. They were instrumental in bringing back the Juvenile Review Board (JRB), which serves as a diversion for kids that have been in contact with the police due to an incident. The goal is to address any issues they may be facing and serve as an alternative to going into the juvenile justice system.

Bunnell launched Orange Youth Services Teen Representatives (OYSTR), aimed at supporting and empowering the kids in our community. OYSTR is designed to provide young people opportunities in the community with planning events and community services, as well as leadership and prevention programming. This is a voluntary group of teens who work on prevention issues and host events for teens in Orange. This past March, they hosted two days of ‘Technology with Teens’ in which they held officer hours at the Senior Lounge. The goal of the program is to have the younger kids work with seniors on any technology questions or issues they may have.

“Sixteen seniors participated, and the teens were able to get all but one question answered—both groups enjoyed themselves,” says Bunnell.

Additional things OYSTR is developing are an art class and a ‘glow’ event. Chantelle indicated, “These events are designed to help young people



unlock their full potential. They can run programs, provide prevention services, and help find the right programs for teens in Orange.”

## EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

Orange Youth and Prevention Services developed a few events to bring awareness and education to families, specifically the effects of “screen time” and vaping.

In March, parents had the opportunity to attend a dinner and see a film called, ‘Screenagers the Elementary School Edition’ at Peck Place school. Bunnell and Diane Downey, social worker for the Orange elementary school system, hosted the event. The film focuses on understanding how to manage screen time, its effects, and how to pull back if parents feel their child is spending too much time on screens.

Recently, students had the opportunity to attend a presentation at Amity Middle School, focusing on vaping and its dangers. Teens were given the opportunity to sign a pledge indicating they understand the risks and harms of vaping, choosing to protect their health. In addition, through grant funding, the department was able to sponsor Dennard Mitchell, a motivational



speaker at both the Amity Regional High School for 9th graders, and Amity Middle School for 7th and 8th graders. Students learned strategies about how to cope, with a positive message and positive energy.

Bunnell exclaims, "The Amity School District and Orange Elementary School system have been amazing partners, and we hope to bring more educational events to the town."

#### DRUG & ALCOHOL PREVENTION

Orange Youth and Prevention Services also works on Drug and Alcohol Prevention and have been developing educational and inspirational programs. An example is 'Yoga with Teens,' taught by yoga instructor and Orange resident, Stephanie Kennedy. Providing events such as this gives the opportunity to address the prevention component, along with having a positive, pro-social activity for teens.

Bunnell states, "The classes were a huge hit, and we had a wait list. They journaled before the class began, learned breathing techniques for life pressures, mindfulness, and inspiration." More classes will be planned over the summer.

Orange Youth and Prevention Services is dedicated to enhancing its programs, and Bunnell is passionate about her mission.

Johnson says, "In her short time here, Chantelle has created momentum in the community for the development of programs to address youth and family needs, and people are excited. We look forward to this continued momentum."

Visit [orangeyouthservices.org](http://orangeyouthservices.org) for upcoming programs with a link to register, access to scholarships, and more. Call Chantelle at 203-891-4785 or email [Cbunnell@orange-ct.gov](mailto:Cbunnell@orange-ct.gov). ■



Children taking a watercolor class hosted by Youth Services during spring break.

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## TOWN OF ORANGE CONCERT NIGHTS

6 pm – 8 pm, Under the Gazebo at the  
Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road

Food Trucks and Vendors will also be on site as part of the Orange Community Farmers Market

June 19 <sup>th</sup>	The Sabb's Brothers
June 26 <sup>th</sup>	The Extras
July 10 <sup>th</sup>	Yesterday Today
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	TBD
July 24 <sup>th</sup>	The Boomers
August 7 <sup>th</sup>	Gunn Street Revival
August 14 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Badowski Blues Band



# Calendar of Events

WRITTEN BY: MARY BIALY

## May 23: Racebrook School Food Truck Festival

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, 4 to 8 pm. Multiple food trucks, live music, free and open to the public; free parking. For information, check the Facebook page RBSFoodTruckFest.

## May 25: Memorial Day Parade

The Ceremony begins at 10:30 am at the Gazebo at 525 Orange Center Road. The parade immediately follows at the corner of Pine Tree Drive and Orange Center Road and will conclude with a ceremony at the Orange Center Road Cemetery. In the event of rain, the ceremony will be moved inside at High Plains Community Center, and the parade will be cancelled.

## June 14: Congregational Church Strawberry Festival

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, 9 am to 5 pm. Food, live music, vendors, red car show and more. Free admission. For information, call 203-795-9749 or check orangecongregationalchurch.org. (Rain Date: 6/15)

## June 19: 5th Annual Artisan Fest And Business Expo

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Free and open to the public, free parking. Artisan and business vendors, food trucks, live music by the Sabb's Brothers (band plays 6-8pm), activities, performances, and networking. For more information, check orangeedc.com/Events\_Activities.

## June 21: OVFD 100th Anniversary Car & Fire Show

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, noon – 5 pm. Free admission to spectators. The Orange Volunteer Fire Department is celebrating 100 years of service with a showcase of classic cars, vintage fire trucks, and antique apparatus, from across the region. For more information, check orangevfd.org/car-show.

## June 26: Orange Community Farmers' Market Opening

The pavilion at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, 3:30 pm to 7 pm. The market runs each Thursday from June 26<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup>. A variety of vendors, food trucks and live music. Check FarmMarketOrange.com for a list of vendors each week or call 203-891-1045.

## July 5: Concert & Fireworks Celebration

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, 6:30 pm. Welcoming comments from First Selectman James Zeoli, followed by a concert by the Bernadettes, several food vendors, and a Fireworks Spectacular. Free admission, parking donation of \$5. (Rain Date: 7/6)

## July 31-August 3: Orange Volunteer Firemen's Carnival

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road. Rides, games, food, and activities. Proceeds go to the Volunteer Fire Association. For more information, check orangevfd.org.

## August 22-23: The Orange Players

High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road. The Orange Players presents ACTING UP! 2025, an evening of original, unpublished one act plays. For more information, check OrangePlayers.net.

## August 29 – September 1: Odyssey '25 A Greek Festival

Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church, 480 Racebrook Road. Greek food, dancing, live music. For more information, check saintbarbara.org.

## September 6: The Rotary Club Of Orange Summerfest

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road, 2 pm to 8 pm. Free admission, family fun, entertainment, and good food.

## September 14: CT Firefighters Parade

Meetinghouse Lane, Orange Center Road, Orange Fairgrounds, at noon. The Orange Volunteer Fire Association is hosting the 142nd Connecticut Firefighters Convention and Parade, and residents are welcome to attend the parade. Firefighters and fire trucks from across the state will be participating. The parade route begins at Fred Wolfe Park, traveling up Ridge Road, to Meetinghouse Lane, and down Orange Center Road, ending at the Orange Fairgrounds. For more information, visit orangevfd.org.

## September 16: OEDC Annual Golf Tournament

Race Brook Country Club, 246 Derby Avenue. Check in and breakfast at 8:30 am, shotgun start at 9:30 am, lunch immediately follows the tournament. The OEDC partners with the Orange Volunteer Fire Department. Registration is open on the website at orangeedc.com/Events\_Activities/ or call 203-891-1045.

## September 20-21: Orange Country Fair

Orange Fairgrounds, 525 Orange Center Road. Agricultural fair with exhibits, contests, food vendors, tractor & truck pulls, classic car show, music and midway. For more information, check OrangeCTFair.com.

## November 20: Holiday Farm Market

The gym at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, 3:30 – 7 pm. A variety of artisan, farm, and craft vendors, and food trucks. Free admission and parking. For more information, call at 203-891-1045.



**Orange Community**  
**Farmers' Market**

**OPENING DAY JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup>**  
**Thursdays Until 9/25**  
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