

BUSINESS

PERSPECTIVE: Gov. Ned Lamont's no-drama approach to governing Connecticut is in stark contrast with what's happening on the national scene, writes columnist Paul Choiniere. **D5**

Find a summary of all last week's market news in one package **Page D3**

The Buzz: Appliance firm ties brands under one roof

Shore Appliances, along with Hallock's and Morrone Electric, now operates under one unified name: **Hallock's Appliances**.

This merger brings together decades of family ownership under a single, recognizable brand in Branford, Clinton, Groton, Old Saybrook and Westerly.

Originally founded in 1957 in Clinton by **Bud Vece** and his brother, **Shore Appliances** began as a small, family-run business. In 1982, **Gerry Vece** took over the three-person operation and grew the company into a multi-location business serving the Clinton and Old Saybrook communities.

In 2011, Gerry's daughter, **Tara Vece**, joined the company and opened a Groton location, which experienced rapid growth. As co-owners Gerry and Tara continued expanding while maintaining the company's strong family foundation. That growth accelerated in recent years with the 2023 acquisition of Hallock's in Branford, one of the state's oldest and largest independent appliance retailers, followed by the 2024 acquisition of **Morrone Electric** in Westerly, a well-established family business.

In 2025, the company further expanded with the addition of **Gallo's Appliance** in New Haven. While Gallo's continues to operate independently under its own name, the partnership enhances the organization's ability to serve a broader customer base, including contractors, builders, and apartment communities. Hallock's Appliances continues to offer a full range of home appliance solutions, including in-home installation backed by an in-house service team.

Events & Activities

A **Meineke**-sponsored donation drive is running Memorial Day through July 4 benefiting **Easter Seals / Veterans Rally Point**. Items requested include socks, T-shirts, underwear and hygiene products. Donors will receive \$25 coupon at Meineke.

Drop-off locations are at 74 West Thames St. (Route 32), Norwich; 266 Bridge St., Groton, and 665 Broad St., New London.

People & Places

Masonicare announced the release of a new white paper detailing the results of a first-of-its-kind pilot program using 40 Hz light therapy in a real-world memory care setting. Conducted at Masonicare at Mystic in partnership with **Optoceutics**, the six-week study demonstrated significant improvements in resident quality of life alongside meaningful reductions in staff burden.

Ten residents living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia participated in the program, receiving one hour of daily therapy integrated into their normal routines. Results exceeded expectations: Improvements were observed in sleep, mood, focus, energy, and memory.

In a release, the company said "findings highlight a critical gap in memory care: while non-pharmacological interventions are widely sought, few have demonstrated measurable impact on both resident outcomes and staff experience. Masonicare's pilot suggests that 40 Hz light therapy may offer a scalable, low-burden solution that integrates seamlessly into existing care environments."

The Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce spotlighted **Kerriann and Jeroen Koeman**, founders of **Wicked Tulips**, in its

SEE THE BUZZ PAGE D2

Making the last assignment count



WHAT'S GOING ON
Lee Howard

It was the last and perhaps most challenging assignment in a lifetime of media work for national publications.

But for longtime National Geographic photographer Todd Gipstein, who grew up in New London and now lives in Groton, his 30,000-mile, around-the-world trip in three and a half weeks was the perfect way to wrap up a career that has taken him to some of the most exotic and isolated locations any one person could ever expect to explore.

"I'm not getting any younger, and it would be hard to top this," Gipstein told me after giving a presentation Thursday to the New London Rotary Club describing his final assignment in January that wrapped up a 55-year career, 40 of them at National Geographic.

The trip was part of a National Geographic-branded excursion that took a few dozen tourists on a private jet to Peru, Easter Island, Fiji, Australia, Cambodia, Nepal, Bhutan, India, Africa, Jordan and Morocco. Gipstein was the designated photography expert on the \$110,000-a-person trip, who helped the travelers improve their photo skills through hands-on tips as well as formal lectures.

He also took thousands of images and videos himself in anticipation of creating a nearly half-hour film that each voyager would receive as they arrived back in the United States. And a few weeks later, Gipstein would have to provide a souvenir book of the trip as well.

Much of his video work was edited using Adobe Premier while in a plane thousands of miles in the air flying from one location to another.

"I did not get to sleep like the other people or look at movies," Gipstein told fellow Rotarians. "I

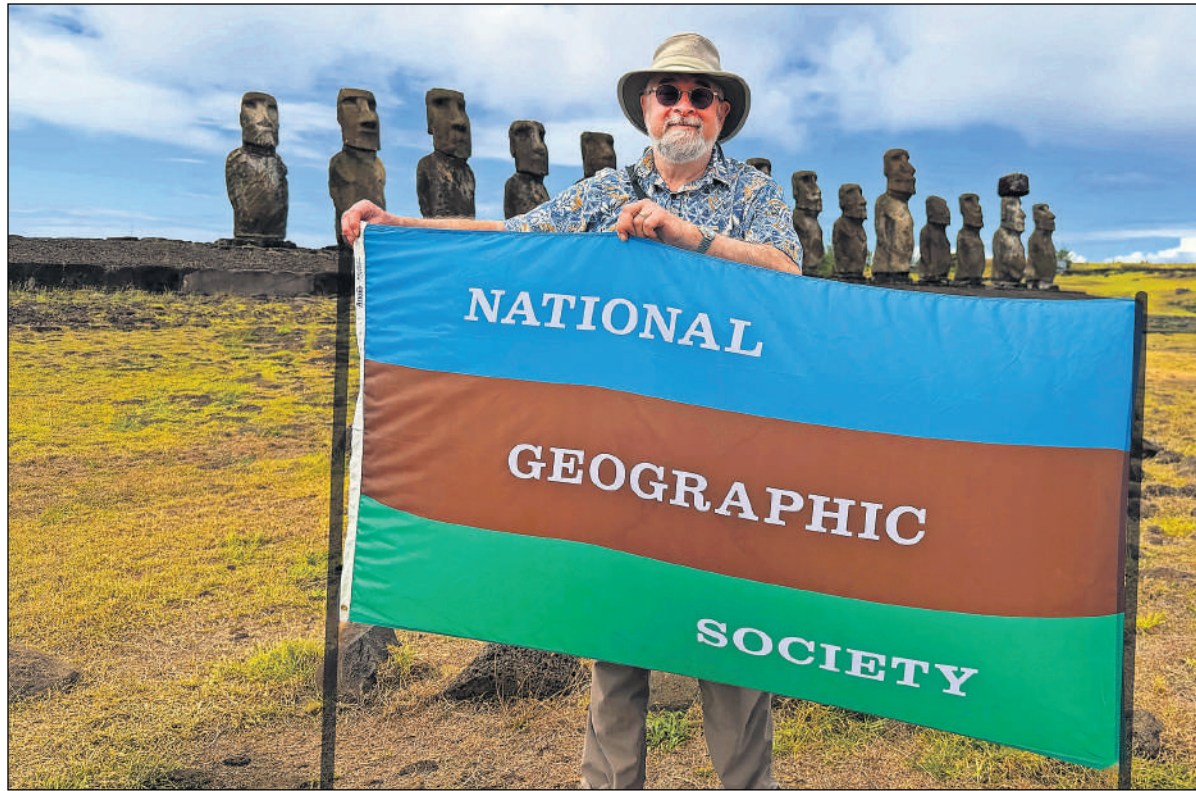


PHOTO COURTESY OF TODD GIPSTEIN

National Geographic photographer Todd Gipstein stands on Easter Island in January 2026 during his last assignment.

had to get caught up with the day before when I shot, edited the pictures and put them all together."

At least while on the plane he was able to eat. Many of his stories about shooting photographs and videos involved being served wonderful meals in amazing locations that he barely had time to eat because of a colorful dance presentation that he needed to shoot to document the trip.

He recounts having to view hundreds or perhaps thousands of photographs daily, sometimes in his hotel room, and once during a three-hour bus ride. Gipstein wound up hoping that his plane wouldn't catch a tail wind and show up to the next location an hour early, because he needed the time for video editing.

"Every hour was precious," he said. "They said that this is a marathon, and they weren't kidding. And I was sprinting through it. ... I am going on adrenaline the whole time."

Gipstein said photography is inherently a stressful job, as you're constantly on the run trying to get the right shot from the

SEE WHAT'S PAGE D2



PHOTO COURTESY OF TODD GIPSTEIN

A Cambodian dancer during an evening performance at Angkor Wat in January 2026, as photographed by Todd Gipstein

As gas rises, would kelp help?



ZOE BEKETOVA/MIT VIA AP

A researcher holds a piece of tank-grown kelp Friday, March 13, 2026, at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, Mass.

By **ZOE BEKETOVA** and **ANA GEORGESCU**
MIT Graduate Program in Science Writing

Woods Hole, Mass. — Green cells whirl around a red-light chamber, propelled by a blade through bubbling water. These little seaweed cells, called gametophytes, will develop into a strain of fast-growing kelp — part of what was once a government-funded initiative to develop sustainable biofuels for American transport.

Electricity from solar and wind energy can power cars, however ships and aircraft largely run on liquid fuels made with a large percentage of oil or gasoline. When burned, those emit carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that causes global warming. Biofuel, refined from organic material like plants or algae, is a potential option to change the fuel makeup.

One kind of biofuel comes from kelp. Through a process that uses heat and pressure to produce fuel, known as hydrothermal liquefaction, this

humble seaweed could power ships and aircraft without any petroleum.

"We need other sources of energy that are sustainable, we can't just rely on petroleum," said Scott Lindell, a marine scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution about a 90-minute drive south of Boston. "There's hardly anything simpler, or anything that grows quite as fast and as sustainably, as seaweed."

Existing biofuels, like corn-derived ethanol, primarily work as gasoline additives. Corn crops require agricultural land, fresh water and pesticides while kelp, by contrast, can be grown in the ocean with minimal resources.

Although any bioethanol — whether produced from corn or kelp — releases hazardous gases when burned, such as acetaldehyde, these fuels produce fewer greenhouse gases overall compared

SEE KELP PAGE D2

Sanctuary for rescued pigs taking shape in Glastonbury; famous porcine presides

A Glastonbury couple with a now-famous pig has brought their five pigs to many schools, nursing homes, birthdays and private events over the last four years.

It's for their business Gilbert the Party Pig which, despite delighting people everywhere, is probably most famous for its star pig, Sprinkle, a porcine who has drawn Hollywood accolades for a role in the popular series, "Only Murders in the Building."

Now, Michelle and Terry Burns are planning a Gilbert Forever Sanctuary Farm where rescued pigs "can live in peace," the Burns family explained on Facebook.

The business began when one of Michelle Burns' former colleagues from her preschool teaching days asked her to bring her 2-year-old pig to visit preschool students. She saw the joy that Gilbert, a 160-pound pig, brought to those students and then pursued it as a business.

Michelle Burns had trained Gilbert on a leash since he was six months old and is he very social.

"We've taken him in the car, and he was used to being around people and people touching him," Michelle Burns said.

— Hartford Courant

Remote working encouraged as English cricket club tries to boost attendance

Working from home is the new normal for millions of people in the U.K., and Surrey County Cricket Club has spotted an opportunity to galvanize attendance at its south London ground.

Surrey, one of the most successful teams in England, is encouraging hybrid workers to come and do their jobs at The Kia Oval, just south of the River Thames.

Over the winter, it upgraded the Wi-Fi and set aside work areas with desks, access to power and clear views of the game. "Work From Oval," it's been dubbed.

It pondered whether it is the "best home office in the country"

and crucially assured would-be workers that "we won't tell your boss."

Hundreds have taken up the chance to work at the Oval, a place with attendance issues.

Harry Ashton, director of Elite Finance Solutions, usually works from a coworking space in nearby Wimbledon. He jumped at the chance of working at the Oval for just 15 pounds (\$20).

"It's not quite as good as Lytham Cricket Club," he quipped, referencing his local club in the northwest of England.

— Associated Press