

Diamantis guilty on all counts

Former state school building chief convicted of corruption

By Ken Dixon and Peter Yankowski
STAFF WRITERS

BRIDGEPORT — A federal jury Wednesday convicted Kostantinos “Kosta” Diamantis, former head of the state office that oversees about a half-billion dollars in school construction projects annually, on 21 public corruption charges.

The jury found Diamantis guilty on all 21 counts of bribery, extortion, conspiracy and lying

**Diamantis** to investigators. The verdicts were read aloud by U.S. District Court Judge Stefan Underhill at 11 a.m. He then asked each of the 12 jurors if they agreed, culminating their 10 hours of deliberations over more than two days.

Diamantis, 69, watched the jury with a seemingly bemused half-smile as the verdicts were

read. During the trial, he testified in his own defense and said the tens of thousands of dollars he took from two contractors, mostly in cash that he failed to report to the IRS, was for networking, introducing subcontractors to other companies and providing legal assistance outside the scope of the state job from which he was fired in October 2021.

Underhill scheduled sentencing for Jan. 14. Diamantis remains free on bond.

He also will face additional public corruption charges in a trial set for early next year, with federal prosecutors claiming that Diamantis, a lawyer and former state lawmaker, quashed a state audit of an eye care practice that was engaged in health care fraud when he was employed in the governor’s budget department, the Office of Policy and Management.

“It was a clean sweep, I was just hoping it would go the other way,” Diamantis said on the elevator ride down to the ground floor of the courthouse after the verdicts were read Wednesday.

He left by a side door before 11:30 a.m. and drove off in a white pickup truck, dodging a throng of more than a dozen reporters and photographers.

Prosecutors declined to comment after the verdict, walking past reporters and TV crews without reacting.

Norman Pattis, Diamantis’ defense lawyer, said he believed his client could face between 10 and 12 years at sentencing.

But he told reporters outside the courthouse that there could be “several” possible avenues for appeal, including an “anomaly”

Guilty continues on A6



Gov. Ned Lamont received a flu and COVID-19 shot administered by registered nurse Oyenmwun Adeyin at Meriden’s Community Health Center Inc. on Tuesday

LAMONT GETS ANNUAL FLU, COVID VACCINES

Latest disease data shows spikes lower than in previous years

By Cris Villalonga-Vivoni
STAFF WRITER

MERIDEN — Getting a vaccine at a community health center is Gov. Ned Lamont’s yearly tradition since 2021. This year, Lamont, alongside Meriden Mayor Kevin Scarpati, received both his flu and COVID-19 vaccine and said he already feels “safer.”

Although not as exciting as Trick-or-Treating for Halloween, Lamont’s annual public display aims to showcase his health journey and encourage others



Gov. Ned Lamont speaks about COVID-19 vaccine access on Tuesday before receiving his own shot.

to get their yearly vaccines, especially during a time of mixed vaccine messages.

“This is a good time to do it, available for all ages, especially somebody my

age, very important to do. We’ve had about a third as many people vaccinated this year as we had all of last year,” Lamont said after receiving his vaccine at Meriden’s Community Health Center, Inc. “Here’s your opportunity. This is the time to come forward to do it.”

An estimated 993 COVID-19 cases have been reported so far this fall, with a significant spike in cases in September, according to the latest weekly data from the state Department of Public Health.

Vaccines continues on A6

Advocates: ‘It’s the Wild West here in Connecticut’

Overlapping oversight, underfunded agencies regulate assisted living

By Jordan Nathaniel Fenster
STAFF WRITER

The death of an 85-year-old man and the investigations into the facility in which he lived has sparked conservation relating to the oversight of elder care and senior living facilities in Connecticut.

Raymond Hessel, who was suffering from dementia, died in 2023, 10 days after falling out of his bed, according to a police report. Hessel had been living in a Norwalk-based facility operating without proper licenses, according to agreements between the man running the facility and two state departments. The Norwalk location, along with four run by the same man in Stamford, closed as part of the agreements.

Hessel’s family has filed a lawsuit claiming fraud and misrepresentation after the services they were marketed for Hessel did not line up to what was provided. A similar

Agencies continues on A4

Records: Aunt charged in girl’s death was convicted of hurting child

By Christine Dempsey
STAFF WRITER

NEW BRITAIN — The woman accused of abusing her niece, whose body was found in a storage bin a year after she is believed to have died, played a role in bruising and breaking the bones of a much younger child in her home years earlier, according to the warrant for her 2023 arrest.

Jackelyn Leeann Garcia, 28, whose most recent address was on Tremont Street in New Britain, was sentenced on Dec. 4,

Aunt continues on A6

Greenwich designer refused to let ‘Project Runway’ loss hold him back

Jason Troisi has seen career take him to New York Fashion Week

By Tyler Fedor
STAFF WRITER

GREENWICH — When Jason Troisi lost his chance to continue as a participant on “Project Runway” in 2010, he said the producers told him he didn’t know how to design outfits.

“The fact that they were going to do me like that just gave me so much more fire,” said Troisi, who is in now in his 40s and from Greenwich.

He appeared on season 8 of “Project Runway,” a reality show

where amateur fashion designers compete to create the best outfits.

Since then, the high school football defensive end-turned-fashion designer held his own fashion show and was included in other shows in New York City and the surrounding area, including Atlantic City Fashion Week in 2022, all while operating a landscaping business to support his dream.

In September, he got the chance to return to New York Fashion Week and show off a

new collection of outfits.

“It feels powerful,” Troisi said. “But you never let it get to you, you always have to check your ego.”

Growing up he said he suffered from attention deficit disorder, which he “couldn’t get help” for.

“I was always so angry and I always felt so misunderstood by the world,” Troisi said.

So he turned to sewing in ninth grade, which he said helped calm him. Being able to

Runway continues on A4



Left: Jason Troisi poses during New York Fashion Week. Right: Zachary Sturza walks down the runway during New York Fashion Week.

Deandre Watkins/Courtesy of Jason Troisi/