



UConn alumna finding her game in the WNBA

SPORTS, 1B

The Bulletin

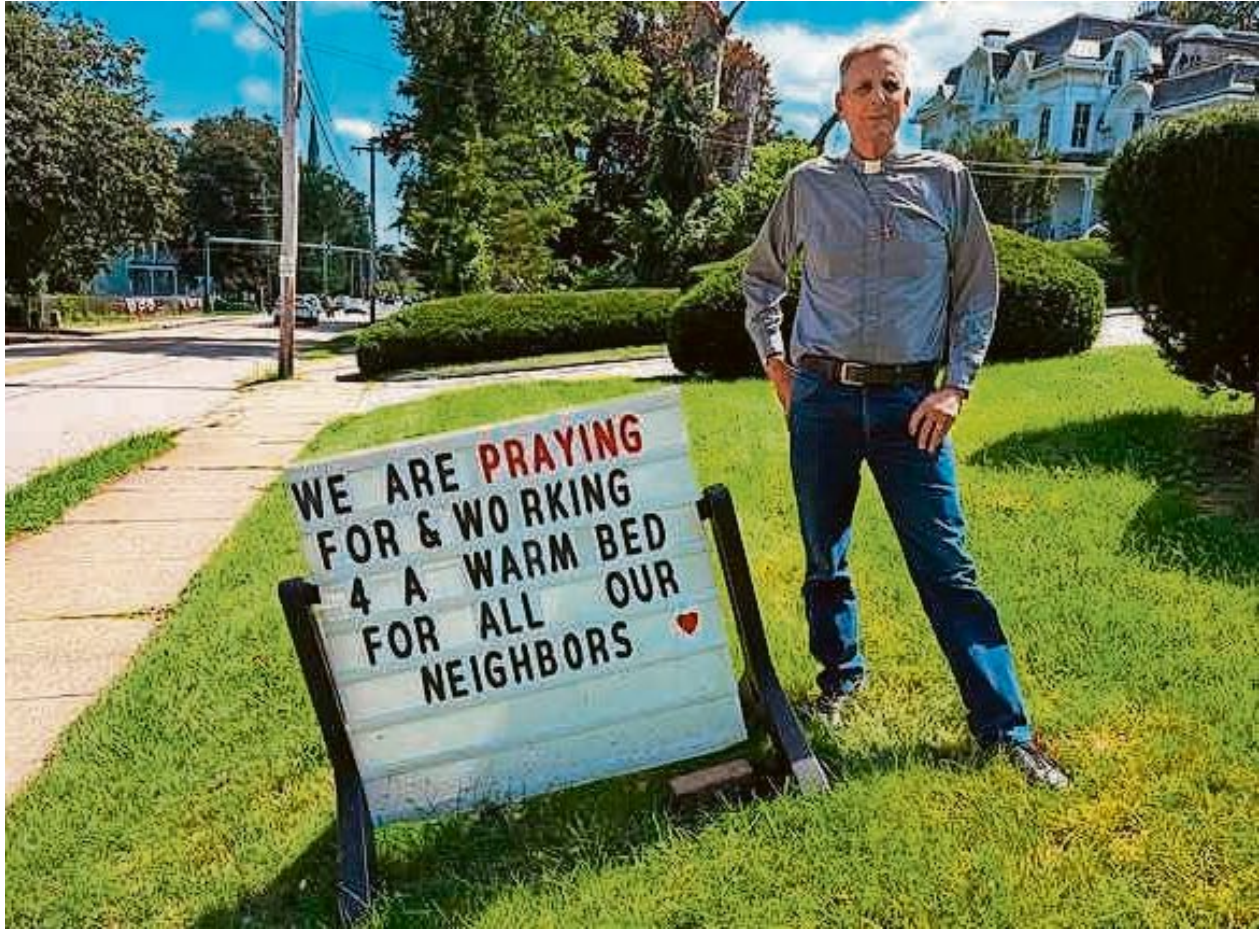
WEEKEND

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2026 NFL season preview: Rams look unstoppable



St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church Pastor Eric Heinrich is still working with TVCCA to get approval from Norwich for TVCCA to use the community room of the church as an overnight shelter from Nov. 15 to April 1 annually. MATT GRAHN/NORWICH BULLETIN

Pastor: Serving the homeless is ‘who our faith calls us to be’

Matt Grahn
Norwich Bulletin | USA TODAY NETWORK

St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church Pastor Eric Heinrich wants to be a good neighbor, but he also wants to continue helping the homeless in the area.

Since the end of last winter, the Thames Valley Council for Community Action and St. Mark Church has been working to utilize the community room in the back of St. Mark’s as a 58-bed cold weather shelter for homeless individuals from November 15 to April 1 annually.

It would open from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m., with 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. being the times the shelter would directly serve the homeless.

The two organizations announced the potential sale of the St. Mark Church building to TVCCA in March, and there has been a mixed response from Norwich residents, including neighbors opposed to the project, and opposition from Norwich Free Academy and Congregation Brothers of Joseph.

A public hearing has been held twice during the Commission on the City Plan meetings this summer. The continuation of the public hearing on the shelter is set for Sept.15 at 7 p.m. at Norwich City Hall. The city needs to decide whether or not to allow the shelter use by Nov. 20, Heinrich said.

St. Mark Church’s ministry

When Heinrich first arrived at St. Mark Church five years ago, he observed that the congregation has a strong tradition of service, from donating both cash

and items during collection to organizing the weekly community meals and bonding with the people the church serves, he said.

“It’s who we are,” Heinrich said. “It’s who our faith calls us to be.”

St. Mark Church has worked with TVCCA on the warming center in Norwich since it first opened the one in the basement of the Buckingham House in downtown in 2024. Some of the people who have left that location on Sunday mornings have walked up to St. Mark Church, and have stayed there until the shelter reopened for the evening, Heinrich said.

Addressing concerns

The opposition to the shelter ranges from property values to public safety.

The location of the church at 248 Broadway is a short distance from Norwich Free Academy, which has questioned the shelter’s operating and dismissal hours given how close it is to the school.

“We recognize that shelters serving individuals experiencing homelessness are a critical community need, and we do not raise these concerns lightly or without genuine appreciation for the population this facility would serve. However, the proximity of this specific location to an active school campus with significant foot traffic during the exact hours in questions warrants careful, deliberate scrutiny before approval,” NFA Head of School Nathan Quesnel wrote July 16 to Norwich City Planner Dan Daniska.

See PASTOR, Page 2A

Trace Adkins, Kool & the Gang lead fair season entertainment

Sandy Meindersma
Norwich Bulletin | USA TODAY NETWORK

As August settles in and the days begin to grow shorter, fair season arrives with all the sights, sounds and traditions that make late summer in eastern Connecticut so special. The Brooklyn Fair and Woodstock Fair have been bringing communities together for more than 165 years, offering far more than just rides and fried food. From live music and agricultural exhibits to livestock shows, midway games and can’t-miss entertainment, these beloved events are packed with reasons to spend a day making memories with family and friends.

See FAIR SEASON, Page 2A

Free breakfast and lunch available in Norwich schools

Beth McDermott
Norwich Bulletin | USA TODAY NETWORK

Families with students in 11 Norwich-area schools will receive free breakfast and lunch throughout the 2026-27 school year through participation in the federal Community Eligibility Program.

The Norwich School District announced the meal benefit, which allows all enrolled students at participating schools to receive breakfast and lunch at no charge, according to a community announcement. Families do not need to complete household applications to qualify for the free meals.

See FREE MEALS, Page 2A



Students in 11 Norwich-area schools will receive free breakfast and lunch throughout the 2026-27 school year. MATT GRAHN/NORWICH BULLETIN



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