

# CONNECTED

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EDELSON CAMPAIGN - 69TH DISTRICT HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## *The Future of the Southbury Training School Part One: Southbury Farmlands*

**BY ED EDELSON**

The Southbury Training School (STS) in Connecticut, which covers a significant area within the 69th House District, faces an uncertain future due to a court decree. Originally established in 1937 on 1,700 acres, STS was designed to house 1,200 residents with intellectual developmental disabilities in a progressive environment that aimed to provide training and employment opportunities. However, after a 1986 decision to cease admitting new residents, the facility began to decline, and its agricultural lands were largely abandoned. While the conventional approach of the town of Southbury has been to wait for the state to determine the future of STS, I felt that Southbury should actively participate in planning for its future.



During my tenure as First Selectman, I successfully initiated efforts to repurpose the Southbury Farmlands, a key component of the STS property. In 2011, I facilitated a meeting with state officials, leading to the transfer of the farmlands to the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) with an agricultural easement managed by the Southbury Land Trust. This process involved complex negotiations and legislative action, ultimately resulting in the leasing of five farm areas to new and young farmers. I am particularly proud of the success of these initiatives, especially the establishment of Hidden Gem Orchards, which serves as a model for future agricultural development on the property.

However, since I left office in 2015, progress on the Southbury Farmlands has stalled. While the existing farmers continue to thrive, little has been done to further develop the site, such as demolishing obsolete buildings, expanding farming opportunities, and improving the water supply system. I am concerned that the current leadership has not been involved in or aware of ongoing studies and initiatives related to the farmlands. My previous successes demonstrate my ability to lead these efforts, and if re-elected, I pledge to take an active role in shaping the future of STS.

Read my full blog post and learn more about my effort by going to [www.edelson4ct.com](http://www.edelson4ct.com).

Check out the video below from the ceremonial signing of the STS Farmland Preservation bill in 2013

## NOTES FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL



**Left:** Ed welcomed officer Chris Grillo as he became Southbury's first Chief of Police.

**Center left:** Ed joined Jeff Desmarais, Ellen Fox and Susan Bysiewicz and others at the SDTC picnic.

**Center right:** The HVDC picnic was a great outing for the 80+ Democrats who attended the Bar-B-Que at the Pavillion in Heritage Village on Friday night.

**Right:** So many friends from Southbury were out and about at the Bridgewater Fair.

***Volunteer Spotlight:******Barbara Mechler, Advisor and Volunteer Coordinator***

Barbara moved to Southbury in 2016 after her three sons were successfully “launched” and self-supporting. Raised in Wethersfield in a very Republican family, Barbara switched her political affiliation in the early 90’s when she voted for Bill Clinton. Her active political involvement, however, like that of volunteer, Kelly Keenan, occurred in 2016 when Trump was elected. To express her commitment to Democratic policies and legislation supporting a diverse population, Barbara joined Indivisible, the Southbury Democratic Town Committee (SDTC), and the Heritage Village Democratic Club (HVDC). She is delighted to support Ed Edelson in his campaign to represent all people in the 69th legislative district.



Barbara spent her 34-year career in public education in Meriden, Naugatuck, New Fairfield, and as a literacy consultant in lower Fairfield County districts. When Ed asked Barbara to review his draft of “Lois’s Story”, a children’s book told from the minister’s daughter’s perspective of Southbury’s resounding “No!” to the Nazis in 1937, Barbara immediately jumped in. She is delighted Ed’s book is widely read in elementary classrooms throughout the State of CT to illustrate the importance of standing up to hate. Inspired by “Lois’s Story”, students have even formed their own “Upstanders Clubs” to stand up to bullying and hate!

Now retired, Barbara enjoys musical activities in Heritage Village and community theater. She volunteers with New Start Ministries to help resettle refugee families and on a variety of Village committees.

When not on the golf course, pickleball court, or hiking trails, Barbara spends time recruiting volunteers for Ed’s campaign, writing letters, and advocating for Ed’s election to state government. She knows Ed will be a strong advocate for seniors and working people in the towns of Southbury, Roxbury, Bridgewater, and parts of New Milford.

**Letter to the Editor: Endorses Edelson for State Representative**

A Newcomer to Southbury, arriving in 2022, my husband and I have had the privilege of meeting Ed Edelson (and his lovely wife Christine) at many community and Heritage Village events. Searching for events that spoke to us, one was the 85th anniversary “When Southbury said NO to the Nazis.” This 3-day event, with panel discussions, the movie, “Home of the Brave,” and history about the actual 1937 events, showed firsthand the enormous contributions Ed made to make this happen for our community.

Also, joining “Great Decisions,” a series of sessions on foreign policies, with Ed as moderator. Here Ed researches topics, providing more substance, allowing participants to build their own consensus. Ed stimulated folks to express different perspectives, while he remained open-minded to critical themes of import at each session.

These encounters with Ed at the helm, led me to understand his absolute commitment to his community and his absolute integrity. Retired after various careers working for several corporations, national research laboratories and co-owning a small business, Ed was also chief elected officer of a small town in Connecticut. Learning Ed was Southbury First Selectman (2011-2015), served on the Connecticut Siting Council and two local boards (Strategic Planning Commission and the Water Pollution Control Authority) solidified my endorsing Ed.

In government I seek candidates whose policies and actions are clearly for the common good. Ed values our Input as residents, has visions for a fiscally disciplined state budget, visions for the Southbury Training School Campus, visions for this district. He’ll listen to all perspectives and do his due diligence. He will ensure we are heard. Ed Edelson will be an effective legislator for the 69th District Connecticut State Legislature. He has my vote; I hope he has yours.

Jodi Maxner

Southbury - August 14, 2024