

National Voter Registration Day is September 15

By Jessie Wright

With the November midterm elections fast approaching – and Connecticut’s new no-excuse absentee ballot application portal opening in just over a week – efforts to encourage eligible voters to register to vote are underway with the return of National Voter Registration Day on September 15.

The holiday, marked since 2012, is a non-partisan civic celebration dedicated to the democratic process. The day is endorsed by National Association of Secretaries of State, the National Association of State Election Directors, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and the National Association of Election Officials.

If you have not yet registered to vote, need to change your registration, or are unsure of your voter registration status, start by visiting nationalvoterregistrationday.org or reddingct.gov/register-to-vote. ■



Photo by Jessie Wright

Residents gathered on the Town Green and at the Center Fire Station on Sunday, August 30 to greet riders in the CT United Ride, the state’s largest annual 9/11 tribute. See page 7 of this issue for more coverage of the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and a collection of community memories. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Regulatory hurdles still to clear for Project Adventure sign

By Rocco Valluzzo

School officials are hoping to erect a large sign at the Project Adventure challenge course at John Read Middle School to honor seventh grader Luke Sorce who died earlier this year. While positive feedback on the idea throughout multiple Town bodies is plentiful, the size of the proposed sign, coupled with a maze of State and municipal regulations on how such requests are handled, are presenting a challenge.

The approvals process was initiated following a July 15 proposal for improvements to the school’s outdoor area and challenge course, which the Board of Selectmen then referred to the Planning Commission under Connecticut General Statute 8-24. Town Attorney Steven Stafstrom confirmed that this referral was legally appropriate, as the project involves the erection of sizable steel poles and a sign, constituting a “substantial improvement

to municipal property” rather than simple maintenance.

Measuring five feet by thirteen-and-a-half feet, the proposed sign is over 10 times the normal size for signage allowed by the Zoning Regulations. It is to be placed between two 20-foot-high steel poles, 15 feet or more off the ground. It is made of prefabricated aluminum designed to look like wood and engineered to withstand 120 mile-per-hour winds. Its design incorporates Sorce’s original artwork and contains a quote he frequently used, “Try to make one person’s day a little better.”

Although the Planning Commission expressed strong support for the memorial’s intent, it issued a letter to the Board of Selectmen on August 25 citing concerns that the current configuration was not in keeping with the surrounding environment, ultimately not endorsing the proposed design. “The letter is

positive in tone, but with qualifications,” noted Commission member Regina O’Brien at the meeting.

Stafstrom further clarified that the Planning Commission’s decision was rendered within the statutory 35-day window, starting from their first meeting after the referral was made.

Under General Statute 8-24, overriding a negative report from the Planning Commission requires a majority vote at a Special Town Meeting. However, even if the Special Town Meeting results override the Planning Commission’s opinion, the project would not necessarily be considered approved, as it must still comply with local Zoning Regulations.

As the proposed sign’s square footage greatly exceeds the limit for residential zones, a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) would likely still be necessary. The

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REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

A Little River North puzzle piece

Cross Highway to John Read Road

By Mary Flieger



Photo by Mary Flieger

In between summer storms and before our “dome” of humidity landed in early August, I set out to explore the middle segment of the Little River trail system located between Cross Highway and John Read Road. Having spied the aging trail sign entrance from a previous

hike at Crossfield, I parked in the pull-off spot in front of the Equus trail. Backtracking, then crossing the road and hopping the cable barrier, I descended into lush, cool woods.

The recently cleared entrance is now easy to spot, but it must be noted that those wishing to avoid dodging Cross Highway traffic and limited road shoulder should consider parking at the northern entrance to this trail located on John Read Road (enter John Read Road from Route 107).

A beautiful mix of hardwoods including eastern hemlock, white oak, sugar maple, and paper birch shade this trail, which hugs the river from the start. Look for the painted white blazes; as the trail progresses, they transition to the newer metal blazes, hung diamond-wise. A pair of walking poles could be welcome here to help navigate the boardwalks spanning the

wetlands; after this, the path turns dry, soft, and flat weaving its way through stands of cinnamon and lady ferns. Looking to your right (or east) there are beautiful views of the adjacent farm fields.

The river was loud and fast, and I paused at different intervals just to listen to it. Sometimes melodic, sometimes just a wall of sound, it was my companion for most of the way.

A joint ownership between Redding Land Trust, the Hill Family, and the Centennial Watershed State Forest (identified by the yellow blazes) this trail is a key element in Redding’s plan for a greenbelt running the full length of the Little River Valley. There is perhaps a little more than a mile of trail between Cross Highway and John Read; it was like discovering a perfectly beautiful puzzle piece in a master

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Route 53 bridge project and detour pushed to 2028

By Rob Sample

The State’s timetable for replacing the Route 53 bridge over the Saugatuck River as it flows into the Saugatuck Reservoir has been pushed back by approximately one year, according to Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) sources as well as the Redding Highway Department.

The bridge-replacement project cost was pegged at \$7.2 million when the DOT announced its plans in the summer of 2024. The project plans have not changed: The bridge span itself, which dates to 1939, is considered in good condition but the substructure is rated as poor. In this case, the substructure includes items such as piers and abutments which help support the bridge.

In a study several years ago, the DOT gave the bridge’s substructure an overall poor grade, noting that one abutment had evidence of cracking and spalling – the technical term for deterioration of material on a structure’s outer surface. The span itself is considered in above-average condition – but because of the substructure issues, the entire structure must be rebuilt.

Eva Zymaris, a DOT spokesperson, noted that the earlier announcement of the bridge’s project schedule – to begin fall 2026 – was an estimate. This estimated schedule was among the details of the project covered at a public information meeting at the Redding Community Center in June 2024. The first step of the project was originally set to begin this fall with the relocation of phone, cable, and electrical utility lines, with the bridge closure and detour in place by April 2027.

“Relocation of utilities is [now] anticipated to begin by the end of 2027, with the detour anticipated to begin in 2028,” Zymaris said. “The specific detour start date and duration are still being determined and will be communicated as the project schedule develops.”

Jamie Gracy, Director of Redding’s Department of Public Works, noted that the project delay was first revealed earlier this year during a DOT meeting, though the DOT did not provide a specific new timetable at that time. That meeting involved DOT officials and representatives of municipal highway authorities and was held at the DOT’s District 3 Garage in New Haven.

The bridge project’s announcement in June 2024 was closely followed by a major storm and flooding that August, which resulted in extensive road and bridge damage in Redding and other nearby towns. However, discussions with the DOT offered no information on what led to the Route 53 bridge project’s postponement.

“While this timeframe coincided with the August 2024 flooding, those response efforts did not have an impact on this project’s schedule,” said Zymaris.

Once the work is set to begin, sections of the road will be closed to through-traffic, which means

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LEGAL NOTICES

All owners of motor vehicles registered in the Town of Redding are hereby warned that the Board of Assessment Appeals will meet in the Town Hall Hearing Room, Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. for the sole purpose of hearing appeals related to the assessment of motor vehicles. All persons claiming to be aggrieved by the doings of the assessor of the Town of Redding with regard to motor vehicle assessments on the Grand List of October 1, 2025, are hereby warned to make their appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals in person at this meeting. Applicants should bring completed appeals application and will be heard on a first come, first served basis. The meeting will adjourn once all appellants have been heard. If there are no appellants present the meeting will adjourn immediately. ■

Greg Stackpole, Chairman / Redding Board of Assessment Appeals

The Brunissen Trust for Redding Senior Citizens, Inc. will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 12, 2026 at the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Rd, Redding, CT. ■

Bill Hill / President

Redding to Hold Public Information Session on State-Mandated Zoning Changes

The Town of Redding Zoning Commission will hold a public information session on **September 23, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall** to discuss upcoming updates to the Town’s Zoning Regulations. The proposed changes are required to bring Redding’s regulations into compliance with Connecticut Public Act 25-1, a State law that took effect on July 1, 2026.

The session will focus on new State requirements related to “Middle Housing,” which the State defines as residential buildings containing between 2 and 9 dwelling units. Under the new requirements, Redding must allow middle housing and mixed-use developments that combine residential and commercial uses in areas that are currently zoned for commercial or mixed-use development.

Key points for residents to note include:

- **Changes Are Limited to Specific Areas:** The proposed zoning changes would affect approximately 2% of the Town, primarily within existing commercial areas such as Georgetown.
- **Single-Family Residential Neighborhoods Are Not Affected:** Areas currently zoned for single-family resi-dential development will remain unchanged by these provisions.
- **Updated Parking Requirements:** The proposed regulations will also address new State mandates limiting minimum off-street parking requirements for certain multifamily residential developments.

The Zoning Commission and the Town’s consultant, BFJ Planning, will provide an overview of the State requirements, explain how the proposed changes will be incorporated into Redding’s existing Zoning Regulations, and answer questions from residents.

The information session is intended to provide residents with an informal discussion to learn about the new State requirements prior to a Public Hearing planned to take place on October 28, 2026. ■

The Redding Zoning Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing for September 23, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Town Hall Hearing Room, 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the following application.

Application #26-03Z - 82 Laurel Lane (Assessor Map and Lot #11-149) Owner: William Barrett – In accordance with Redding Zoning Regulations Section 5.12 request for A Special Use Permit for a detached 3 car garage apartment above. ■

Matt Lecher, Chairman / Redding Zoning Commission

NOTICE OF REDDING SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

The Legal Voters in the Town of Redding, Connecticut, and those entitled to vote therein are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Special Town Meeting to be held on September 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road, to consider and vote upon the following:

1. A resolution pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §8-24 to over-ride the disapproval of the Redding Planning Commission with respect to the proposal of the Board of Education for a Project Adventure sign at John Read Middle School.

To do any and all things legal and necessary to accomplish the above-named purpose and to take any other action that may legally and properly come before the meeting.

DATED at Redding, Connecticut this 31st day August of 2026. ■

Redding Board of Selectmen:
Julia Pemberton, Diana M. Carlino, Michael Thompson

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We welcome Letters to the Editor. Please be clear, civil, and concise. E-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

To the Editor,

One of the pleasures I get from reading the *Sentinel* is the column, “Redding’s Big Outdoors.” Willow Bradford’s of September 3, 2026 was no exception.

In it, I enjoyed walking with her as she dealt with an old fear from having heard what she and her father thought at the time was a mountain lion’s scream when they walked the Equus Trail together years ago. I’m glad she overcame that fear and what she calls her “lack of...disregard,” for the reality is that it’s doubtful they heard a mountain lion.

Like the great bald eagle, majestic in flight but so puny in cry that Hollywood can be relied on to overdub the dramatic scream of a hawk when they want to express soaring freedom, so too the cry of a mountain lion, though threatening, is surprisingly mild. It is not at all like the scream of a woman Ms. Bradford describes. As many of us in Fairfield County have learned after being awakened, horrified by the cry of something wild prowling past our homes on an early-spring night, what Willow and her dad most likely heard was merely a fox.

It sounds just like we imagine a woman would if she were in the last terrified throes of violence.

But I don’t want Willow (or anyone) to be irritated with me. I sympathize with her fear, for it was many seasons waking up just that way before I finally found the animals’ calls on the Internet.

And when, even now, my heart nearly arrests from the alarming cry, I still have to remind myself, “It’s only a fox.”

So, thank you, Willow, for overcoming your fear and getting back out in the woods; and thank you, *Sentinel*, for choosing to emphasize one of Redding’s greatest assets, its Big Outdoors. ■

Ken Brooks / Old Lantern Road, Danbury



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POLICE BLOTTER

Traffic, assists, and an untimely death

Police activity August 31 – September 6 | By Donna Christopher

Police assisted in four citizen calls, 12 emergency services calls, and three fire department calls. Two animal control investigations were conducted, and police processed two firearms permits.

Traffic

In 74 motor vehicle stops, police issued four summonses, 15 infractions, 27 written warnings,

and 28 verbal warnings. The infraction rate was 26 percent.

Only one motor vehicle accident occurred; on August 31 on Newtown Turnpike, a vehicle collided with a stone wall, with the operator sustaining minor injuries.

Sick animal

Animal control responded to a sick animal call on August 31 for an owl on the side of Starrs Ridge

Road. The raptor was turned over to Wildlife in Crisis.

Untimely death

Police conducted a preliminary investigation into the untimely death of a 49-year-old male who had been processing firewood at his residence on Granite Ridge Road and who was later found unresponsive near the stacked wood. ■

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SPORTS

Growth year for Barlow ahead
Football season preview | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

The Joel Barlow High varsity football team will be a young one in 2026 with new players in a number of positions. It will count on the leadership of captains (left to right) Sean Rinaldi, William Miller, and Keeler Pheeneey.

With a decrease in numbers and the graduation of several key players since last year, the Joel Barlow High varsity football team has its work cut out for it as it prepares to start the 2026 season.

The program is currently at approximately 39 players, which is considered light, and increases the importance of injury prevention. Because of this, the team has limited full-contact practice, resulting in a need to improve overall physicality and defensive aggression before league play. They must also replace an experienced offensive/defensive line with young talent.

“It’s going to be definitely a learning curve, especially early on in the season,” said Head Coach T.J. Cavaliere, now in his seventh season with the team. “Obviously, as they get more experienced, hopefully that’ll benefit their ability to know their assignments and to play fast.”

Barlow had a tough time in a pre-season scrimmage against perennial powerhouse St. Joseph of Trumbull. However, the team performed decently against Oxford and remained competitive with Notre Dame Prep and Naugatuck.

Finishing with a 6-4 overall record last year, the Falcons graduated several key players, including former captains Ben Noome (All-SWC first team), Ben Zirulnik (All-SWC honorable mention) and Jack Dellorusso (All-SWC honorable mention), all starters on Barlow’s line. Also gone is quarterback Tyler Young, who was a defensive back. Slot receiver Luke Bishop (All-SWC second team) has also graduated.

The Falcons will miss Jack Hall (All-SWC second team) at fullback and linebacker. Running back/linebacker Frank Branca (all-SWC honorable mention) has also left, as have safety Kaden Holub (All-

SWC second team) and lineman Luke Taylor.

A young team, the Falcons will have just five seniors this season, including captains Keeler Pheeneey and Sean Rinaldi. The former will be at quarterback and the latter at fullback. Both are linebackers on defense.

Classmate Connor Lee will be on the offensive/defensive line as will Nate Gillon, while Matt Grall is a running back/defensive back.

A key junior is captain and running back/defensive back William Miller. Logan Slater will see time on the line as a right tackle.

Cavaliere hopes Alex Jezowski can step up on the offensive and defensive lines. Joey Comis, who is at guard and linebacker, will also handle the kicking duties and is a possible punter.

The remainder of the roster is dominated by underclassmen, including sophomore Tyler Collins, who is also a possible punter.

Barlow’s conference schedule is balanced this season. It will face top-tier opponents like Newtown, Masuk, Brookfield, and Pomperaug, alongside winnable games against Bassick, Bethel, and Weston. Cavaliere is hoping for a .500 or better record, emphasizing the importance of an early season win to build momentum.

“We do play three out-of-league games, so you don’t know what you’re going to get in regards to those opponents,” said Cavaliere. “We’ve just got to be ready to play.”

Barlow opens the season on Thursday, September 10 when it visits New London. Kickoff is set for 6:00 p.m. ■

Young Falcons bring skill
Boys soccer season preview | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

(Left to right): Sam Cooper, Waldy Vasquez, Tom Swabsin, Noah Beninati, and Sam Walker are captains of the 2026 Joel Barlow High boys varsity soccer team.

The pre-season has already given the Joel Barlow High boys varsity soccer team an idea of what it can expect in 2026.

While the Falcons may be young, they are already showing technical proficiency, particularly in the freshman class.

“I have to say, all things considered, I’m very, very pleased with the dedication and refocus that our program seems to have to this point so far, and I think we’re going to surprise a lot of people,” said 23-year Head Coach Paul Winstanley. “We’re extremely young, but we’re really into it. And I’m kind of excited about that.”

He is particularly impressed with the defensive skills the team has shown in the pre-season. The real test, however, comes when it open the season this week.

At practice since August 24, the Falcons are a little larger this year in terms of numbers with 37 players in the program (varsity and JV). About 16 or 17 are freshmen, according to Winstanley.

In any case, the Falcons hope for significant improvement over last season’s performance. Posting a 2-11-2 overall record, they missed qualifying for the State tournament for the first time since 1986.

Barlow graduated several key players since then, including former captains Justin Bente, Zack Mikhael (All-Patriot Division), Nick Niles (All-Patriot Division), and Leo Rivera. Terry Slater and Matt Santangeli have graduated as well.

Although a young team, the Falcons do return some varsity experience. Much rests with senior captains Sam Cooper, Waldy Vasquez (All-Patriot Division), Noah Beninati, and Sam Walker.

Seniors Gregor Parry and Max Gynchak are back as well. Returning to the team is classmate Sam Hartley who was sidelined with injuries for a couple of seasons.

Starting in goal again will be junior and captain Tom Swabsin. Sean Connolly and Rhys Freyre are also back, as is Noah Stevens.

“We’ve only switched a couple things, but by and large, everybody’s going to be kind of in the same roles,” said Winstanley. “But again, some of the beauty of this group out here is I can literally move people around, and it just doesn’t change.”

From the sophomore class are the Rudd twins, Caleb and Zach, and David Zirulnik. Up from the JV team is Tyler Sogofsky.

The Falcons also have a number of freshmen who could see varsity time, including Sawyer Beninati. Backing up Swabsin in goal are Will Schneider, Drew Chaida, and Eugene Abramov. ■

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How many Redding kindergarteners are vaccinated?

By Sasha Allen

Across the nation, more parents are exempting their children from vaccines required for school entry – but Connecticut’s kindergarten vaccination rates have increased since the pandemic, and for one inoculation, Connecticut has the highest rate in the nation.

Vaccinations have fallen and measles cases nationwide increased, with 2025 bringing the highest number of reported cases since the disease was declared eliminated in 2000. Connecticut reported one case, and the state had the highest MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination rates in the nation among kindergarteners for the 2024-25 school year.

In Connecticut, 98.2% of kindergarteners received their MMR vaccine, according to CDC data. Herd immunity, a form of indirect protection against the spread

of communicable disease, is met when 95% or more of a population is vaccinated. Only nine other states reached herd immunity for the MMR vaccine in the 2024-25 school year.

Overall, vaccination rates for Connecticut children have increased since 2020 after they fell during pandemic. According to a *Washington Post* analysis, the only other states to see this increase were Maine and Alabama.

Connecticut only allows for medical exemptions to vaccinations for school-age children after eliminating religious exemptions in 2021. Connecticut does not allow personal exemptions. But even with these laws, some schools did not meet the 95% threshold for herd immunity.

However, many towns in the state met herd immunity for last

year’s kindergarten classes. Some have very high levels of vaccination – over 98%.

Redding Elementary School kindergarteners had a 97.1% full vaccination rate last school year; 97.1% had received the MMR vaccine.

While Connecticut has high levels of childhood vaccination, seasonal vaccination rates are not as high. Last flu season, according to data as of December 2, 2025, the flu vaccination rate was down 6% compared to the same time last year. There was an increase in flu cases and hospitalizations, and cases were far higher last flu season than they were the same time last year. ■

This article originally appeared in CT Mirror



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Young volunteers are on a mission to SOAR

By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of SOAR Together
Christopher Caldwell, a junior at Joel Barlow High School, has been involved with SOAR Together since he was in eighth grade. He is interested in horticulture and rescues plants from local nurseries and big-box stores for later donation to the community.

For Christopher Caldwell, plants are a passion. But instead of gracing his windowsill or his front steps, Caldwell has turned the scraggly plants he rescues from big box stores and nurseries toward a higher purpose: Helping to counter rising rates of loneliness, social isolation, and depression among people of all ages.

“I don’t have a 100-percent success rate, but just one rescued plant can bring joy and cheer into somebody’s life,” said Caldwell, a volunteer for the Redding-based non-profit SOAR Together. Caldwell is one of SOAR’s local teen volunteers who use simple acts of kindness to bring a well-needed message of love and hope into the lives of people who in today’s “connected” world feel quite disconnected and even abandoned.

SOAR is an acronym that stands for Social, Occupational, Artistic, and Recreational, adjectives that describe the array of programs the organization spearheads to accomplish its mission. Founded four years ago by Executive Director Ginger Smith, SOAR’s work now extends throughout Fairfield County.

Forms of social connection that previous generations took for granted – community organizations, programs at churches and synagogues, bowling leagues – either no longer exist or are hanging on in a diminished capacity. In response, communities have taken steps to counter this trend. SOAR Together does this, in Smith’s words, “one gesture of kindness, one smile, one connection at a time.”

Caldwell, a junior at Joel Barlow High School, became involved in SOAR as a middle schooler when his passion for horticulture and flowers dovetailed with many of SOAR’s outreach programs. Currently, Caldwell is helping to plan an event that will have a large number of community connections:

“Across the Ages,” set for September 28 at Lounsbury House in Ridgefield. The project is being led by Caldwell’s peers, twins Adelle and Aidan Reed, who are seniors at Ridgefield High School. Caldwell has gathered about a dozen rescued plants to grace the tables at the event.

Caldwell is also the President of Barlow’s Baking Club. The Club recently baked 30 boxes of cookies as a SOAR project, which they gave to Bridgeport Hospital’s oncology staff. They donated 50 cookie bags to Norwalk’s senior center and will be providing plenty of sweets for the September 28 event as well.

“It’s been perfect for me to be able to use my passions in ways that help the community,” said Caldwell.

Also at Joel Barlow, Senior Adreanna Chapin became involved in SOAR through her involvement in the school’s Best Buddies program. This program matches student volunteers with classmates who have physical or intellectual challenges – who are often at risk of being isolated in a school environment. Chapin has been involved with Best Buddies since her freshman year and is now the group’s president; her Best Buddy is fellow senior Isabella Ordegon.

“I’ve known Isabella since first grade, and we’ve become a lot closer through Best Buddies,” said Chapin. “We do a lot together. We meet for lunch, and we have worked on programs together. We’ve also done several ‘Flower Power’ rescue programs with SOAR: We get donations of flowers from nurseries and stores, and we make them into bouquets.”

“We try to find people who might be having a bad day – when we present the bouquets their faces light up,” Chapin continued. “We’ve given them to fellow students and teachers, and we’ve gone out to do this into the community as well – such as walking around downtown Ridgefield and presenting gift bouquets to people we meet.”

SOAR’s inclusive mission makes it a natural match for people who are involved in Best Buddies, Chapin said, because the Buddies are inclusive by definition. Its membership has doubled since the club began working closely with SOAR, as Chapin’s classmates have become interested in both organizations.

In SOAR, all involvement is hands-on and newcomers get their proverbial feet wet very quickly. Some projects require a high degree of planning, while other initiatives are more spontaneous in nature.

Last spring, SOAR Program Manager Sophia Tuozzoli and Barlow senior Ryason Wanat created

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“What my culture means to me” RES PTA announces participation in annual Reflections competition

By Anne Young Albanese



At the first Redding Elementary School (RES) PTA meeting of the school year, the Board of Directors announced participation in the National PTA’s *Reflections* competition. This annual contest invites students to create and submit artistic entries related to a theme.

This year’s theme is “What My Culture Means to Me.” Culture is made up of everything a group of people does. It’s what makes a group of people alike, but different from other people in the world. Culture can include knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and habits. It is expressed through holidays, food, clothing, music, language, art, and tradition. It can even be found in quieter, everyday moments, such as generations gathering for a family reunion, how one’s name is pronounced, stories passed down about a hero, values

taught in a school community, or on the sports fields.

The National PTA noted that there is “no single, agreed-upon definition for ‘culture,’” so they anticipate many different interpretations of the theme.

“The 2026- 2027 *Reflections* theme, ‘What My Culture Means to Me,’ is particularly inspirational, as it allows students to highlight what makes them unique within the context of culture. We’re hoping to display art from the *Reflections* contest at our International Festival, as the events go hand in hand this year,” said RES PTA President Kristina Scaviola.

Students may choose from a variety of different creative media when making their entries. These include dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography, and visual

arts such as drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, or mixed-media work.

Winners of the RES local competition will earn congratulations from the administration, a gift tote with RES spirit wear, as well as a certificate recognizing their achievement. Connecticut winners will be honored with a ceremony and awards recognizing their categories. National PTA winners will be honored in two different ways. One student from each of the seven media will be recognized with the Outstanding Interpretation Award. A virtual exhibit on the National PTA website will honor the students who have won national-level awards. Last year, this included more than 200 students.

The RES PTA *Reflections* Chairwoman is local artist Kristin Terrana-Hollis. She will coordinate the judges. Typically, the chair chooses judges from a selection of different educators every year.

Projects must be submitted to the RES PTA by a date that will be announced shortly. The local judges will then submit the winners to compete in the Connecticut PTA level by its deadline of February 1, 2027. ■

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REDDING'S OWN

Emmy-winning script writer brings works to Westport Country Playhouse

By Justin Reynolds



Matt Hoverman after his Emmy win in 2014.

As a third grader at Redding Elementary School, Matt Hoverman and a friend wrote a play about a girl who ran away to join the circus. Almost 50 years later, the Redding native is returning to the theater where he grew up watching shows – this time, as a playwright behind two productions at Westport Country Playhouse.

On Monday, September 14 at 7:00 p.m., the Playhouse will host a script-in-hand playreading of *The Next Best Thing*, a comedy written by Hoverman about “an outrageously funny, irreverent grandmother” and her battle against the kinder AI robot her family builds to replace her when she dies.

Five days later, on Saturday, September 19, Hoverman’s work will take the stage again with performances of *Clifford The Big Red Dog: The Musical*, for which he wrote the book, at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

The connection between Hoverman and the Playhouse goes back to his childhood.

“I remember a production of *Aladdin*, pre-Disney film, at the Playhouse that was literally magical,” Hoverman said. “I chased the actor who played Aladdin out to his car for an autograph. I also saw a production of *Peter Pan* in which I first experienced the whole ‘clap if you believe in Tinkerbell’ routine – which we’ve found a way to honor (aka steal) in our *Clifford* musical.”

For Hoverman, who also saw Broadway shows during his childhood, something about the Playhouse felt different.

“Being so close to our home, our community, I had a feeling of ownership about the Playhouse,” he said. “This was our theater. Of course, it didn’t hurt that we’d often run into Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward at the Country Emporium in Redding having Sunday brunch at the next table.”

Hoverman realized that theater could be part of his life early on. In 1977, Redding Elementary School teacher Terry Dion picked Hoverman and his friend, Michael Kroll, to write the book for a musical that the class then put on called *Mabel, the Queen of the Gypsies*.

“Writing and performing in that play was a wonderful gift because I grew up thinking that writing plays and acting in them was something I could just do,” he said. “I also grew up in a very funny family, with two parents, Jim and Sharon Hoverman, with Midwestern, irrepressible, irreverent senses of humor. Over dinner each night, we passed around salad, mashed potatoes, and quippy one-liners.”

After high school, Hoverman went on to study playwriting at Brown University under Paula Vogel. After graduating, he moved back and forth between acting and writing until a playwright at Yale eventually encouraged him to write.

“The head of the playwriting program, Mark Bly, read one of my plays and said, ‘Do this!’” Hoverman said. “Not necessarily what you want to hear when you’re currently acting, but still, I took heed, gave up auditioning, and committed to writing full-time.”

That turned out to be a shrewd decision. Soon, Hoverman was getting “modest” productions, interest from Broadway producers, and a few awards. After a chance encounter with a buddy who was the head writer on the PBS animated series *Arthur*, the friend encouraged him to audition to write an episode.

“I watched a bunch of *Arthur* episodes and, using my theater training – and, more importantly, the hours I’d spent at the Bethel drugstore reading comics that I didn’t pay for – I pitched a bunch of ideas,” Hoverman said. “A few got chosen, and I wound up writing 17 episodes, and some *Curious George* episodes as well.”

Hoverman went on to win an Emmy with the whole writing team. While in Los Angeles for the ceremony, he met writers for Disney and went on to become head writer for a slew of shows, including *Fancy Nancy*, *Firebuds*, and *Sofia the First*.

“It turns out that I’m imaginative and funny and, for whatever reason, seem to have retained a connection to the heart of that third grader who wrote *Mabel*,” he said. “Or maybe I’m just emotionally arrested. But I really love writing episodes for this age group.”

Hoverman, who has a sister who has a disability, has also used his work in children’s television to push for inclusion. He said he created Disney’s first disabled princess, who has a visual impairment, for *Sofia the First*.

“I’ve done my best to increase representation of characters with disabilities in all my shows, so that kids who have disabilities can recognize themselves on the screen and so typical kids can see that someone with a disability might make a terrific, fun friend,” he said.

Hoverman’s work in children’s television eventually led him to *Clifford The Big Red Dog: The Musical*. Working with composers Casey Breves and Sam Tsui, he adapted a popular episode where Clifford wishes he could be a small dog after causing too many accidents. The stage version adds music, puppetry, and physical comedy.

“We wanted to make a show that would hook and entertain our young audience, many of whom are seeing a play for the first time, while also bringing a nostalgic smile and a few belly laughs to parents and older kids,” he said.

While *Clifford* is aimed at families, *The Next Best Thing* is geared toward adults, focusing on technology and human relationships. Hoverman said the play explores what can be lost when people become overly reliant on technology.

“I hope that audiences leave the theater willing to loosen up a bit, take some risks, and allow themselves to have a bumpy conversation with someone who maybe has a different point of view,” he said.

Having two of his works presented at the theater he grew up attending makes the week especially meaningful for Hoverman, who now lives in Los Angeles with his family. His mother, Sharon, still lives in the Redding home where he grew up and is a local realtor.

“After growing up dreaming of seeing my plays on the Westport Playhouse’s stage, it’s absolutely thrilling and an honor to have not one but two of my shows presented in a week,” he said.

The timing is especially fitting: the performances come just days before Hoverman’s 40th reunion at Joel Barlow High School.

“I just look forward to making kids and adults from my hometown laugh – and maybe shed a tear or two,” he said. ■

For more information, visit westportplayhouse.org and matthoverman.com

Planet Granite Festival to host music, dance, food, and family fun in Georgetown

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of The Granite

For two days in September, The Granite will turn into festival grounds of live Americana, bluegrass and country music, dance workshops, children’s activities, food, and community celebration as it hosts the inaugural Planet Granite Music & Dance Festival on September 19 and 20.

“Our goal is to celebrate community and the arts with a fall festival in Georgetown that also serves as an important fundraiser for The Granite and its mission to preserve the Granite Church for future generations and its vision to be sustainable as a community gathering and performing arts space,” said Richard Wenning, Co-Executive Director.

The collection of family-friendly events will run from around 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, rain or shine. The unique festival celebrates a mix of Americana, bluegrass, and country music with 14 bands playing live across indoor and outdoor stages, along with food, beverages, four types of dance, workshops, jamming, activities for children, and much more. According to Wenning, it’s The Granite’s third major indoor-outdoor event since the Granite Debut in 2024.

“Attendance fuels live performances, emerging artists, and cultural programming that bring people together across generations. Our goal is for audiences to feel truly connected to the arts, to each other and to the community,” said Wenning. “This festival is more than just a series of performances; it’s a gathering of artists and community members in a shared experience designed to ignite creativity.”

Along with Wenning, the event was brought together by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Austin Scelzo, The Granite’s Director of Bluegrass Programming and Scott Smith, The Granite’s Co-Executive Director serve as musical producers. Other team members include Dylan Martello, The Granite’s audio guru, who is managing the sound team; Hannah Chambers, The Granite’s House Manager, who is managing volunteers, the ticketing, and activities; and Reed Collyer, The Granite’s Event and Rental Manager, who oversees food and drink.

The musical performances will feature 14 bands, including a mix of touring, primarily Northeastern bands, as well as two artists who call Redding home, specializing in Americana, bluegrass, and country music. Saturday’s line-up includes the Chris Luquette Band, Cole Quest and the City Pickers, The Talking Hearts, Timothy, Bugs on a Log (featuring Austin Scelzo), Hilary Hawke Band, Wires and Wood, and Kentucky Girls. Sunday will host performances by The Alpaca Gnomes, North County Band,

The Slide Stops, Hitch & The Giddyup, Jason Ingriselli & The Miles North, Carrie Linsky (of Caravan of Thieves), and Bugs on a Log.

“These are genres that have found a home at The Granite and are well-suited for its space,” explained Wenning. “The genres reflect the musical specialties of our creative leaders and feature American music, shaped by our history over the past 250 years. Saturday’s a little more bluegrass, and Sunday’s a little more country.”

In addition, there will be hands-on music and dance workshops, held in three areas: inside The Granite’s Main Hall, the Outdoor Stage, and the Workshop Room. Attendees can learn line dance, country two step, square dance, and flatfooting, in addition to trying their hand at being in a country band, bluegrass jamming, harmony singing, and songwriting. The workshops are appropriate for current and aspiring artists, as well as anyone interested in expanding their musical chops.

Kids will stay entertained with a variety of activities, including story time, an instrument discovery experience with Bugs on a Log, a kids’ musical showcase, and a tented Kids’ Zone.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase at The Granite, provided by several local vendors, including Uncorked Georgetown, serving elevated American cuisine and The Coop food truck featuring fried chicken, nuggets, and waffle fries. A cash bar for beer and wine will be available. Several other restaurants are just steps away for attendees, across the street in the heart of Georgetown.

According to Wenning, the name, Planet Granite, was intentional. “Our inspiration comes from a desire to celebrate our shared humanity and creativity in harmony with the very earth beneath us. The name honors the amazing granite – quarried nearby in 1899 – from which our historic church is built,” explained Wenning. “Set along the scenic Norwalk River, we sit right next door to the historic Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Factory, a site currently awaiting its own transformation as part of the Georgetown Revitalization effort.”

Wenning encourages everyone to attend. “Bring the whole family and spend the weekend with us. By attending, you’re supporting the non-profit restoration and programming of a cornerstone for cultural life in the greater Georgetown area. Historic Georgetown Village is a place where nature meets the arts in a vibrant, walkable community, and we cannot wait to share that magic with audience members from near and far.” ■

For more information on the festival and to purchase tickets, visit planetgranitearts.org

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Twenty-five years later, Redding remembers 9/11

By Donna Christopher

John Maher, a freelance camera-man and director of photography, recalls being at Yale University on September 11, 2001 to shoot an interview with the school’s president when his pager went off with a New York area code plus “911,” signaling an urgent assignment.

When he tried to return the call, phones and pagers weren’t working. That’s when he learned, “Something’s happened in New York,” he said.

He eventually connected with his client’s contacts and was booked to work 9/11 coverage first in Connecticut, then later in New York City and Ground Zero.

“We ended up at Stamford Hospital, where (the news media) were expecting a lot of injured to come in. Turns out, no one, of course,” he recalled.

He was brought into New York on a special train reserved for hospital workers and rescue workers, then hiked toward Lower Manhattan with his sound man and heavy gear, remembering that when they reached Grand Central and stepped outside, “the entire building was ringed by National Guard, standing almost shoulder to shoulder.”

A client’s truck carried them as far south as it could, but from there they had to hike “many blocks” toward the forward satellite position at North Moore Street and the West Side Highway. As they walked south, the conditions changed.

“The air was not great that day. It had shifted, so we’re getting a bunch of ash and stuff coming down as we walked down,” he said. Everything below Canal Street fell into what he called the “wider exposure zone.” He hadn’t dressed for what became an hours long trudge across the city.

“I wore my cowboy boots, which was a mistake, because I didn’t have the right socks,” he said. Later, crossing from the West Side to the East Side, he passed through

what he described as a kind of no man’s land of shuttered and damaged buildings, where “through that zone there were these abandoned buildings.” At one point, he entered a Duane Reade that was “completely ransacked, broken open somehow,” found a proper pair of socks, and “left five dollars and a note,” then sat on the street to change before moving on.

Maher went into Ground Zero late that Friday night and spent about seven hours there shooting three rolls of tape, two of which were confiscated by the National Guard.

He later returned on another night alone with a small hand held camera, shot about an hour-and-a-half of material, and managed to smuggle out roughly a half hour that was ultimately aired by his client. Between these assignments, he returned to Connecticut to see his family in Redding where he lived from 1987 to 2009 before moving to Terryville.

“It seemed to me psychologically the evening of Friday the 14th of September that it looked pretty obvious they weren’t going to get anybody out of there alive,” he explained. “I got the feeling that everybody was bummed out that they weren’t going to get anybody out. Everybody had been working around-the-clock down there.”

Mark Twain Library will host a program on Thursday, September 10 at 7:00 p.m. featuring rare original footage captured by Maher. His film, *At Zero*, offers a deeply compelling look at New York City during one of our nation’s most difficult moments and shows how individuals were processing the attack in the days following September 11.

Maher now lives with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a progressive and incurable lung disease that he said doctors have linked to his brief but intense exposure to the toxic

dust and fumes at Ground Zero after 9/11.

The *Sentinel* asked other community members for their reflections about that day as the nation marks the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks. Their responses have been lightly edited for length.

Scott Romano, Fire Commissioner, Redding Fire District 2

Romano was a New Canaan police officer working nights on September 11, 2001. After coming home and falling asleep on the couch so as not to disturb his pregnant wife, he woke around 9:00 a.m. and watched the news coverage with her; he said what first cut through the shock was the sound of firefighters’ PASS alarms, devices that go off when a firefighter stops moving, blaring continuously after the first tower collapsed, a noise he explained to his wife as he began to grasp the scale of the loss. Called back in that afternoon to join a contingent heading to Manhattan, he was eventually staged at the Javits Center and deployed to an intersection in central Manhattan to block access to downtown; by about 3:00 a.m. on September 12, he found himself standing at Ground Zero, remembering most vividly the look of awe and disbelief on everyone’s faces.

“No one had ever seen anything like this, and no one knew what it was like to be ‘attacked’ in our own country,” Romano said. “The other thing that struck me then, and that I always remember, was the silence. There was very little vehicle traffic, resulting in no honking horns or rumbling trucks. The sky was also eerily quiet, with only the occasional sound of a passing fighter jet heard. There was no other air traffic, just absolute silence.”

Continued on page 8

Voices from Meadow Ridge

9/11 through a global lens

“Residents of Meadow Ridge bring perspectives shaped by diplomacy, military service, international business, faith, and the arts. Their memories bring a perspective of how 9/11 reverberated through Americans living and working around the world,” said Carol Morgan, who helped compile these memories from residents at Meadow Ridge.

Carol Morgan, who at the time worked in photography and publishing in New York City, was on 14th Street by Union Square in Manhattan where she saw crowds pointing to the smoke rising from the World Trade Center. “They must be shooting a horror film,” someone said as she joined the silent flow of people walking north. Morgan later helped produce the first book of 9/11 photographs by Associated Press photographers, created to raise funds for the victims and their families.

Lt. Colonel Nick Lacey (Air Force, pilot to U.S. vice presidents) was attending an aviation insurance meeting in McLean, Virginia. He recalls the initial disbelief, then the realization that the Pentagon and other sites were targets, Air Force fighters circling overhead, and the Smithsonian moving the original Constitution and other historic documents for safekeeping.

Dan Sharp (former President, Meadow Ridge Resident Board; Peace Corps builder; global CEO) helped build the Peace Corps and has led international organizations. He offers this context when explaining how 9/11 reshaped global alliances and U.S. relationships abroad, insight he has long shared as moderator of Meadow Ridge’s Great Decisions foreign policy discussion group.

David Dolan (Co-chair, Meadow Ridge Resident Health Committee; Catholic charities) draws on his years of service in Catholic charities as he reflects on faith, service, and the role of religious communities in responding to grief and need in the wake of the attacks.

Peter Clough (former international IBM executive) was living in Paris on IBM assignment from 1995 to 2002 and remembers experiencing 9/11 as an American abroad. He watched the shock and solidarity in Europe and how world opinions shifted in the days that followed.

Jack Neafsey (international oil executive; former Meadow Ridge Residents Association President) was on Cape Cod that day. He endured “three hours of hell” after learning that a hijacked plane had departed Newark at the same time and in the same direction as the flight carrying his middle son, an investment banker, before finally hearing his son’s flight had been diverted safely to Atlanta. ■

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Book Review

Lilith | By George MacDonald / 264 pages / Eerdmans



Lilith, by George MacDonald, is a fantasy novel, first published in 1895. In this book, as in earlier but dubious historical writings, *Lilith* of the title was biblical Adam’s first wife. The title indicates authorial attention to fantastic possibilities of parallel existence. Interestingly, the author was a close friend and strong influence on Charles Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll, who wrote in *Through the Looking Glass* about Alice in Wonderland. There are similarities in each writer’s references to reality, with playful, logical eccentricities expressed between impossible characters.

Promotion for this volume reads: “This newly printed edition of *Lilith* is designed for readers searching for thought-provoking literature with deep spiritual underpinnings.” Probably. For the religiously-inclined reader, there are copious Christian analogies shoehorned into the narrative. But they seem awkward to the modern sensibility. Over the years, other writers – fantasy writers especially – have acknowledged that MacDonald’s work influenced theirs. These include George Orwell, J.R.R. Tolkien, and L. Frank Baum, whose *The Wizard of Oz* (1900) was famously made into a film in 1939, and can be seen as inspiring the films of the *Harry Potter* series and others. Fantasy is a popular genre, especially for film, and it is growing in popularity today as a literary genre.

MacDonald, a Scottish Congregationalist minister, lived from 1824 to 1905. He was from an educated, religious family, and grew up in “an atmosphere of Calvinism.” In this simpler time of limited travel and of cottages and forests, writers could (and did) describe traveling characters as sleeping in caves, or on boughs made into a bed on a forest floor, and this was not considered coy.

In MacDonald’s fictional world, heaven was conceived as a kingdom, and death as an alternative life. (Attempts at representing life in death were less successful). If a

mind is open to religious confabulation, there may, in imagination, potentially exist “another side.” Plots in these stories are intricate and complicated but similar in intention and rich with characters. Characters in fantasy fiction typically seek something – they seek identity and relevance, which might, or might not, be defined. Fantasy writing flirts with parallel possibilities and typically relies on a male-questing story to hold interest (an exception is Dorothy Gale, who joined male-ish characters on a quest to petition the Wizard of Oz). How, then, should these books be approached? What do they represent?

Religion was dominant in 19th-century Britain. But science was also growing in importance. Trained as a scientist in an era of pre-Freudian emotional naivety, MacDonald became a minister and a writer. His fantastic descriptions of another world articulate his private quest through personal doubt.

Books from authors like George MacDonald offer the modern reader insight into other possibilities in the life and mind of men and women. The focus is usually on achieving identity. In *Lilith*, love and death are dominant themes. The bewilderment of Mr. Vane, a Scottish nobleman, as he encounters another existence, is meant to be the reader’s bewilderment. Mr. Vane enters a parallel world through a library mirror and describes what he sees and experiences. He discovers Little People, with the innocence of children, and Giants, who are withdrawn and menacing, living in states of half-life or half-death. The parallels to *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), and Jonathan Swift’s little Lilliputians and gigantic Brobdingnagians are impossible to miss.

Celebrations of childhood and innocence are measured against the corruption of adult-like giants. Adam and *Lilith*? What worlds might have been born from that marriage? It is not magical thinking that sustains fantastic realities, but credulity. The writer attempts to put the reader into a state of accepting. Mr. Vane admits, perhaps on behalf of the reader: “I was like a child, constantly wondering and surprised at nothing.” Which is probably the best frame of mind in which to approach these books, and the fantasy genre as a whole. ■

Review by Tom Casey, author of *Human Error*, *Strangers’ Gate*, and *Unsettled States*

Library Corner

The soul of the Book Fair | By Erin Shea Dummeyer

If you’re ever in need of a reminder of how much good there is in the world: I recommend volunteering at your local library book fair.

I remember my first Mark Twain Library Book Fair when the volunteer I was stationed with told me she had taken off work to volunteer. I was surprised that someone found a volunteer job worth the PTO. The next year, I was paired with someone who works the opening cashier desk shift every year because of how exciting it is. And this year,

while opening the boxes in the pre-school section, a volunteer told me that she missed the past couple of years due to health issues and just couldn’t wait to be back pitching in this year. It’s an experience the people of Redding treasure: both volunteering and shopping. A coworker of mine has gone on Box Day every single year to fill a box of books for her mom, which she gives to her for her birthday. It takes her all year to get through “reading the box.”

I also love seeing our volunteers get into merchandising their

sections, giving directions to the dealers, and coming up with ideas for little improvements, all in the spirit of moving the needle for how much support can be raised for the Library. I know this sounds hyperbolic, and maybe it is, but being at Mark Twain Library really feels like a boon for the soul. I am so grateful for the volunteers each year who make it happen. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers | By Margi Esten

Heartwood, a novel by Amity Gaige is an easy read, which is fortuitous as it is impossible to put down. Considered a literary thriller, it centers on the disappearance of Valerie Gillis (her trail name is “Sparrow”) while hiking the Appalachian Trail in the dense and remote Maine woods.

Valerie documents her struggles in a journal with letters addressed to

her mother. Lieutenant Bev Miller, a veteran Maine State Game Warden, leads the search and refuses to abandon it even when all seems lost. An unexpected character enters the picture with the tip that finally leads to Valerie’s rescue.

From beginning to end, it reminded me of *Into Thin Air* by John Krakauer, the bestselling non-fiction book. As I said, it reads

like a thriller but also explores the complex emotional bonds and estrangements between mothers and daughters.

Amity Gaige is an American novelist. She has written five books and was a 2016 Guggenheim Fellow in Fiction. She is currently working as a lecturer in English at Yale University. ■

Back from summer hiatus, adult programs resume at Mark Twain Library – with new additions | By Lisa Goldstein

Mark Twain Library has long offered the community regular programming for adults that appeal to a variety of interests, from reading to knitting to chess. Many of those programs take a break over the summer months and are starting back up again this fall with some new offerings getting added to the mix.

“Sometimes new interests crop up and other times there is a long-standing request that community members are looking to fulfill,” explained the Library’s Adult Program Coordinator Elaine Sanders. “And we’re thrilled to be able to provide the programs.”

One of the new programs will be a monthly meetup for mah jongg players. Over the summer, the Library offered free classes to teach the age-old game. It was so popular that the Library opted to add this new monthly program to its repertoire in an open-play format. The

first Mah Jongg Open Play starts on Thursday, September 17 at 10:30 a.m.

Another addition for adults that began this summer and will continue monthly is a B2B networking group. The library has often served as a meeting spot for entrepreneurs, sole practitioners, freelancers and gig workers. This new group offers small business owners and workers a place to exchange ideas, share experiences, build meaningful relationships, and discover new opportunities. The next networking event takes place on Tuesday, October 6 at 10:30 a.m.

Some of the ongoing programs kicking back into gear include sessions for theater lovers. Redding’s Eileen O’Brien is a retired award-winning drama teacher and director who heads up an improv program and a script reading program at Mark Twain Library. For those drawn to comedy, Unscripted

is an improv workshop that meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. O’Brien offers tips and tricks on the form and then participants can try out the techniques during scenario prompts. In Redding Reads Scripts, held on the second Tuesday of each month, O’Brien and Liz Correa, a fellow Redding resident and former actor, work with a group made up of all levels to pick a play and act it out through a reading session.

For more regular adult programming – from monthly book groups and virtual author talks to yoga and meditation classes; from group discussions on aging or parenting to collaborative writing meetups and world affairs forums; from chess and knitting to tips for women about money – stop into Mark Twain Library at 439 Redding Road and inquire about what is upcoming or visit marktwainlibrary.org ■

Twenty-five years later, Redding remembers 9/11 / continued from page 7

Julia Pemberton, First Selectwoman

“I remember exactly where I was, as I think most people who experienced that day do. I was driving down to work in Wilton Center, listening to Don Imus. The first plane flew into the tower. Imus and his crew were talking about it, concerned, recounting another small plane crash into the tower but also the prior terror attack. There wasn’t an immediate assumption this was terrorism. I was at the spotlight by Wilton Town Hall when the second plane hit the tower, and it was devastatingly clear what was happening. Once I got to the office, everyone was trying to get news. Nobody could focus on work. We kept refreshing *The New York Times* for updates. Then the third plane hit the Pentagon.

I remember thinking, what’s next? Feeling fear and uncertainty. Then grief and sadness. I drove home to pick up my kids at school with sadness, knowing that there were kids whose parents would not be picking them up that day, and explaining in age appropriate terms what was happening and shielding them from the gravest news. I was unaware that my four year old was

comprehending the news on NPR on the radio until he asked me when we were going to catch the bad man ‘Osada Balada.’ ‘Soon,’ I said.

I felt the country I’d experienced growing up was forever changed. I also remember the outpouring of grief for those lost and the compassion of communities hoping to provide some comfort to people who’d lost family.”

Chris Vadas, Redding Police Officer

Redding Police Officer Chris Vadas describes his brother Bradley Vadas as a vibrant 37-year-old senior vice president at Keefe, Bruyette & Woods who lived life with incredible passion, whether he was trading on the 89th floor of the South Tower, skiing deep powder in Jackson Hole, or playing a round of golf.

“On the clear morning of September 11, 2001, I was cutting the lawn at a home in Fairfield when my wife rushed out to tell me my father’s boss was on the phone. My dad had already spoken to Bradley a couple of times after the first plane hit, including a heartbreaking final call where he told him, ‘Dad, it’s not looking good.’”

The family gathered at his Westport house on Bermuda Road and desperately held onto hope because he was so athletic.

“If anybody could get out, it would be Bradley,” Vadas said.

Months later, in March, Bradley’s mangled ID card was found clipped to his blazer lapel on a rooftop three blocks away, and his remains were finally identified.

Bradley was honored with a memorial service at the Congregational Church on Post Road, and Vadas continued to attend local remembrances. He is planning on going to ceremonies this year in Westport, including one on the 25th anniversary at Sherwood Island State Park.

Reflecting on those agonizing days and the years that followed brings a heavy sorrow, but it also forces Vadas to find a way forward without letting the tragedy consume his entire existence.

“Though the pain of losing him never truly fades, I try to live by the mindset that we must keep moving forward. I’ve come to terms with the legacy of that day. My son was born two weeks later. The nice part of having him born then was it helped bring many smiles to people,” he said.

His son Bradley, named after his uncle, is about to turn 25.

Richard Wenning, Board Member/Co-Executive Director, The Granite

“9/11 brings a pit to my stomach and tears to my eyes every year, as it is doing now, answering your question. I was well into my second decade living in Washington D.C. at the time and was at the gym when the planes hit. Everything changed that day. New York City and D.C. transformed forever along with generations of families.”

Jessie Wright, Managing Editor, Redding Sentinel

“I was a 6th grader in Minnesota when 9/11 happened. Though my Midwestern location and age shielded me from fully understanding the weight of the events until years later, the fear of that morning was strong enough to trigger indelible memories.

I had stayed home sick from school that day and had been cautioned by my parents not to spend the entire day watching cartoons. Of course, I was doing just that when my dad called me, unexpectedly on his way home from work before lunchtime.

“Are you watching TV?” I remember him asking me. “No,” I lied. “If you are, please turn it off,” he said. “Something bad has happened, and I don’t want you watching anything before I get there.”

My parents were glued to the news the entire evening. I remember feeling afraid to watch, afraid to see what was making them so riveted in anguish.

I’ve heard that having a memory of 9/11 serves as a divider between generations. If you are old enough to remember it – and to remember the world before it – your life experience is fundamentally different from those who have only lived in the world that came after. ■

John Maher will give his presentation on Thursday, September 10 at Mark Twain Library, featuring two of his documentaries, *At Zero* and *Art of Remembrance*, with rare original footage and personal reflections from the days surrounding the attacks. For full information about the presentation and to register (required) visit marktwainlibrary.org

REAL ESTATE

August 2026 real estate report *A look at trends in the local housing market*

By Bill Whitehead and John Talley

Thirteen properties changed hands in August, a four-property increase over August 2025, reflecting the continued strength of the spring and summer real estate market in Redding and throughout Fairfield County. Inventory remains very tight, with just 24 homes currently for sale, compared with 28 during the same period last year. Year-to-date, the average sale price is \$1,094,298, a slight increase from \$1,091,601 in 2025. The price per square foot continues to show significant strength, averaging \$396, a 13 percent increase over last year. As of the writing of this report, 12 properties were under contract, further underscoring the continued demand and limited supply in the Redding market. ■

Bill Whitehead and John Talley are realtors with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

August 2026													
Town	Current Inventory	Homes Sold		Average Days on Market		Average List Price		Average Sale Price		Percent Sale Price >/< List Price		Average Price/SqFt *	
	As of September 3	August	2026	August	2026	August	2026	August	2026	August	2026	August	2026
Redding	24	13	62	79	115	\$1,285,300	\$1,078,829	\$1,301,846	\$1,094,298	1%	1%	\$455	\$396
Ridgefield	50	35	176	75	83	\$1,335,654	\$1,423,238	\$1,390,105	\$1,459,284	4%	3%	\$472	\$465
Weston	32	15	70	68	84	\$1,467,400	\$1,475,392	\$1,524,467	\$1,549,742	4%	5%	\$433	\$442
Wilton	21	27	158	62	77	\$1,407,611	\$1,454,893	\$1,487,093	\$1,573,295	6%	8%	\$459	\$477
Easton	17	9	52	81	79	\$1,112,433	\$1,071,973	\$1,129,556	\$1,086,487	2%	1%	\$307	\$374
Bethel	20	15	101	71	78	\$558,367	\$611,372	\$572,733	\$623,041	3%	2%	\$309	\$310
Newtown	74	25	201	76	93	\$693,428	\$704,588	\$700,540	\$712,961	1%	1%	\$312	\$310
Average	34	20	117	73	87	\$1,122,885	\$1,117,184	\$1,158,048	\$1,157,015	3%	3%	\$392	\$396

REDDING SOLD - August	Sale Price	List Price	%/ List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
37 Highland Ave	\$364,000	\$399,000	-9%	\$349	77
30 Portland Hill Rd	\$715,000	\$699,000	2%	\$407	61
27 Apple Ln	\$750,000	\$745,000	1%	\$407	63
119 Peaceable St	\$840,000	\$869,900	-3%	\$385	46
76 Pocahontas Rd	\$885,000	\$885,000	0%	\$375	78
86 Fire Hill Rd	\$950,000	\$850,000	12%	\$408	69
86 Seventy Acre Rd	\$985,000	\$938,000	5%	\$628	96
25 Starrs Ridge Rd	\$1,000,000	\$999,000	0%	\$202	64
74 George Hull Hill Rd	\$1,560,000	\$1,595,000	-2%	\$326	114
128 Black Rock Tpke	\$1,600,000	\$1,499,000	7%	\$406	90
110 Sport Hill Rd	\$1,650,000	\$1,695,000	-3%	\$311	94
15 Silversmith Ln	\$1,650,000	\$1,585,000	4%	\$501	115
240 Umpawaug Rd	\$3,975,000	\$3,950,000	1%	\$1,218	60
Average	\$1,301,846	\$1,285,300	1%	\$455	79

REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market	REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
19 Olmstead Rd	\$529,000	\$470	24	33 Old Stagecoach Rd	\$1,150,000	\$344	70
268 Umpawaug Rd	\$749,000	\$191	155	207 Redding Rd	\$1,170,000	\$375	87
22 Great Pasture Rd	\$749,900	\$350	9	11 Long Meadow Ln	\$1,245,000	\$210	90
31 Granite Ridge Rd	\$760,000	\$267	1	281 Newtown Tpke	\$1,295,000	\$210	140
6 Great Pond Ln	\$799,000	\$494	15	28 Goodridge Rd	\$1,325,000	\$280	112
11 Fire Hill Ln	\$799,000	\$324	52	286 Black Rock Tpke	\$1,329,000	\$320	51
299 Redding Rd	\$879,000	\$227	87	74 Black Rock Tpke	\$1,395,000	\$206	164
15 Fire Hill Ln	\$900,000	\$284	8	12 Werf Dr	\$1,495,000	\$371	27
28 Winding Brook Ln	\$910,000	\$263	58	2 Longwood Dr	\$1,599,000	\$255	2
149 Old Redding Rd	\$995,000	\$472	1	63 Turney Rd	\$7,400,000	\$786	263
380 Black Rock Tpke	\$999,500	\$203	50	206 Umpawaug Rd	\$7,725,000	\$590	108
16 Shady Ln	\$1,025,000	\$237	103				
123 Cross Hwy	\$1,100,000	\$312	23	Average	\$1,596,767	\$335	71

Listings continue on right side of table

* Calculated using livable square footage

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Route 53 bridge project and detour pushed to 2028 / continued from page 1

travel will be limited to residents in the affected areas. Because Route 53 is a State highway, the DOT originally developed a 14-mile-long detour that consisted of travel on other State highways. At this stage, it’s unclear whether the rescheduled plan will involve the same detour route. Gracy noted that the DOT attempted to confine the detour to State roadways as much as possible.

“The official detour route began down in Weston,” Gracy noted. “Route 53 is a fairly heavily traf-ficked cut-through route, and peo-ple are likely to figure out their own alternatives, which may have an impact on local roads in Redding.” Gracy pointed to his own com-mute to work as an example. He be-gins his morning drive in Oxford, roughly 25 miles from Redding, and travels mainly on backroads

through Southbury and Newtown before reaching Redding. “There are people who follow behind me for much of my route, and after I get to the Highway Department, they keep going to places even farther,” he said. With the widespread availability of GPS mapping, they can easily locate an alternative if there is a chokepoint at any place along their journey, he added. ■

Young volunteers are on a mission to SOAR / continued from page 5

several dozen floral arrangements – using cut flowers salvaged by Cald-well and others from stores such as Trader Joe’s. They delivered the bouquets to pediatric patients at Bridgeport Hospital. While they couldn’t witness the children’s reactions firsthand due to patient privacy, their deliv-ery brought plenty of smiles to the staff. “We could see that it truly made their day brighter,” said Wan-at. “It’s very rewarding to be able to bring some joy into somebody’s life and see their spirits uplifted.” Involvement in SOAR often works hand in hand with these teens’ other community pursuits. Caldwell’s roles in the Torch Club at the Boys & Girls Club of Red-ding-Easton (BGCRE) first intro-duced Caldwell to SOAR, and he has continued those ties now as an officer of the BGCRE’s Keystone Club. In Ridgefield, the Reed twins have worked on measures as wide ranging as peer suicide-prevention workshops and the distribution of

hundreds of welcoming note cards to new high schoolers. Caldwell and Wanat are helping distribute similar cards at Joel Barlow. The cards bear a simple mes-sage: You are loved. This is a phrase you’ll hear often from peo-ple associated with SOAR. It’s not an empty slogan, either: These kids mean it – and the recipients appre-ciate hearing it. “We see it in people’s faces,” noted Aidan Reed. “We make new people we meet feel like they’re part of a real family, and for stu-dents involved in SOAR, it is grat-ifying to know we’ve made an im-pact in someone’s life.” The Reeds say they enjoy the smaller SOAR gatherings the most. “You become better acquainted with people in those settings,” said Adelle Reed. “We’ll all play bingo or a board game, and in the conver-sation that follows, people will tell us about themselves and their life stories.” The Reeds similarly meet with a group of middle-schoolers – kids who are shy at first but later

open up in response to this positive outreach. Cathryn Mills, a senior at Ridge-field High School, made a splash last year by building two “chatty benches” in Redding. Though it was her Eagle Scout project, the benches were inspired by her two years’ involvement in SOAR. The concept originated in Great Britain and are intended to spark conversa-tion and connection. Mills also serves as captain of both her varsity girls’ basketball and soccer teams. Through it all, she has managed to find the time to volunteer at SOAR events large and small in both Redding and Ridge-field, and she particularly enjoys talking to seniors at SOAR gather-ings. She said in addition to offer-ing a sense of connection to others, it’s given her a sense of joy as well. “What keeps me coming back to SOAR is the passion I see in Ginger and all the people in SOAR,” said Mills. “It’s so simple to be able to bring moments of joy into people’s lives. SOAR is awesome.” ■

Scam aware *The jury-duty scam: The summons you never received*

By Anthony Freyberg

Imagine answering the phone and being told you have failed to appear for jury duty, and the caller says there’s a warrant for your ar-rest. The only way to avoid jail, is immediately to pay a fine. It sounds frightening, doesn’t it? And that’s exactly the point. I’ve written a lot about how criminals use fear, authority, and intimidation to steal money in the past, and this is a classic example. It’s easier than ever for scam-mers to impersonate a police offi-cer, court official, or other law en-forcement officers. Undoubtedly, they know your name, address, and other personal information which make the call sound legitimate. The jury-duty scam has evolved from a crude phone con into a so-phisticated psychological operation involving spoofed phone numbers, real officials’ names, fake warrants, fake judges, QR codes, cryptocur-rency, and even fake websites. Recent warnings from Federal courts say e-mail scammers may use official-looking documents, real names, and spoofed phone numbers to make their demands seem more legitimate. Creating a sense of urgency, warning that

police are on their way, is another common tactic. The scammer usu-ally demands payment be made by gift card, wire transfer, cryptocur-rency, or a payment app like Zelle or Venmo. These methods are dif-ficult, often impossible, to trace or reverse. In a recent twist, scammers weren’t merely demanding money over the telephone. They were di-recting victims to fake jury-duty websites where victims were asked to enter personal information and make payments. The warning signs are clear: legitimate courts do not demand payment over the phone in order to cancel an arrest warrant, and law enforcement never requires fines to be paid with gift cards or cryptocurrency. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately! Call the court directly using a phone number you obtain independently – not one supplied by the caller. Re-member: Never provide personal or financial information to anyone over the phone unless you’re dead sure you know who you’re talking to. Jury duty is an important civic responsibility, and we can protect that sacred process by staying scam aware. ■

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THE NATURAL WORLD

Conserving the northern metalmark

A small butterfly with a big impact | By Timothy Brown



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
This year’s annual butterfly count saw a dramatic increase in the number of observed northern metalmarks, an endangered species in Connecticut.

On a hot July morning, a team of conservationists slowly walks through a cedar-limestone glade in western Connecticut, searching for the northern metalmark (*Calephelis borealis*), one of the state’s rarest butterflies. The site is home to a small population of metalmarks, and for the past 10 years researchers have included the site in their annual 4th of July butterfly survey. This year, they counted a remarkable 39 metalmarks, a significant jump from the single-digit numbers usually found at the site.

This dramatic increase is thanks in part to a team of dedicated conservationists from Earthplace, Highstead, the Connecticut Butterfly Association, and the Connecticut Botanical Society, who have collaboratively stewarded the site for the past six years. Faith Novella, Conservation Manager at Earthplace, serves as the metalmark project manager, leading efforts to remove invasives, maintain an open canopy, and plant native nectar sources for the endangered butterfly.

“When you walk onto the site, you can feel that everything’s a little different,” said Novella. “It’s a very beautiful spot.”

The site is located along Cameron’s Line, an ancient limestone fault formed during a continental

collision some 450 million years ago. The alkaline-rich soil created by the lime is key to the metalmark’s survival, supporting both their preferred larval food source, roundleaf ragwort (*Packera “Senecio” obovata*), and a variety of nectar plants upon which the butterfly depends. As one of the northernmost metalmark sites in the U.S., protecting the butterfly means maintaining the habitat that sustains it.

Northern metalmarks are listed as an endangered species in Connecticut due to habitat loss, invasive species, reduced forest disturbance, and climate change. They are short-lived creatures – adults only survive for about two weeks – and weak fliers. Metalmarks have strong site fidelity and stay close to their emergence locations. In addition, like other butterfly species, they are highly sensitive to their surroundings and susceptible to environmental threats, including extreme weather and other climate-related events. For example, torrential rains during the summer of 2024 led to a precipitous drop in the number of metalmarks identified at the site during the 2025 survey.

From a conservation perspective, these small butterflies, which are only about a third of the size of a monarch, have an outsized impact; they are what scientists call an “umbrella species.” By protecting the northern metalmark, conservationists are helping to protect other species as well. Like many other parts of Connecticut, the metalmark site is under attack by invasives such as phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) and Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) which out-compete native plants, and autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), which fix nitrogen and can change the chemistry of the soil. But several years ago, the team realized that simply removing invasives was not enough; the butterflies needed additional food and nectar sources.

For the past five years, Highstead, a conservation and ecological research non-profit located in

Redding with expertise in ecotypic plants, has led the collection, propagation, and re-planting of essential nectar sources that are genetically adapted to local conditions. Their work corroborates research by David Wagner, UConn Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and others, suggesting that such habitat management can quickly reverse insect declines. In addition, the team creates disturbances such as mowing and weed-whacking to maintain the open cedar-limestone glade habitat, which their host and nectar plants need.

This holistic approach seems to be working. For years, the annual butterfly survey, led by Victor DeMasi, a Redding lepidopterist and curatorial affiliate at the Yale Peabody Museum, found few metalmarks at the site, often no more than eight or nine individuals. The 2026 survey represents a nearly 400% increase in the number of metalmarks found at the site.

“This year was like nothing I had seen there,” said Novella. “It was unbelievable; there were so many.”

While Novella emphasizes that this year’s count does not yet reflect a population trend, the 2026 data has inspired the team to continue their work. In addition, the project is supporting other conservation efforts throughout the region by providing ecotypic seeds collected from the site to like-minded organizations through the Northeast Seed Collective. While Novella is realistic about the challenges metapopulations like the metalmarks face, she insists this project, like the butterflies themselves, may have an outsized impact on conservation more broadly.

“I don’t want to underestimate the potential and the realized impact that this site has had on greater conservation efforts in the Northeast,” she said. “We’re collecting endangered plants that could be genetically important for habitat restoration elsewhere, and it’s all thanks to the butterfly. I’m very grateful that we have a beautiful and charismatic little mascot.” ■

If trees could talk Harvest frenzy | By Janice Rotchstein



A squirrel and a cedar waxwing feast on the bountiful harvest provided by local trees.



Photos licensed through Shutterstock

Have you noticed how busy trees are this time of year?

The commotion is caused by birds, animals, and insects – none of whom have the luxury of cruising the Caraluzzi’s aisles. These creatures are feverishly harvesting from all species of trees, from those dotting our backyards to the vast emporium straddling Redding’s woody trails.

Some avians are stopping by for food as they migrate; others stowing seeds in bark crevices or hollows. And all kinds of critters are collecting summer’s bounty before the weather turns cold.

These activities make September a perfect time to get out and admire Mother Nature’s ingenuity. Here’s where to look.

Oaks: A single mature tree can feed more than 1,000 species of mammals, insects, and birds. These noshers come in droves for leaves, bark, lichen, and especially

acorns – high in protein and fat – a preferred food source from the moment they drop.

Maples, hickories, and walnuts: Squirrels go mad for the nutritious nuts and seeds (samaras). They tuck them in large caches in the ground rather than individual holes. While they’re at it, they dig fake “larders” that are left empty – a cagey way to deceive rival diners.

Dogwoods: Bluebirds, cedar waxwings, American robins, grey catbirds, and woodpeckers treasure the bright red, fleshy berries known as drupes. The fruit is perfect for long flights or chilly winter nights.

Crabapples: Wild turkeys, black bears, deer, squirrels, even our feathered friends go for this high-energy snack. In fact, don’t be surprised if you see flocks of compatible avians hunting together.

Pines: Wildlife can’t wait to collect the calorie-rich cones. Chickadees

and jays extract the seeds with their beaks. Squirrels and chipmunks chew through the scales from bottom up before hiding them for later. Deer and other mammals devour the tree’s tender outer bark, low branches, and needles.

Willows, birches, poplars and alders: Beavers opt for the bark and inner cambium. By cutting limbs and placing them underwater, they create a handy pantry near the entrance to their lodge. That means when the pond freezes, they don’t need to go foraging.

Fallen leaves: Insects like millipedes, springtails, queen bumblebees, firefly larvae, and Luna moths thrive under decomposing foliage. They feed on decaying leaves or the microscopic organisms growing on them. The leaf layers also provide a warm blanket to manage plunging temperatures.

Ironically, all these harvesters are much like us. Sometimes, in our hurry, we misplace or drop things. So do they. Seeds are fumbled; nuts forgotten. Yet everything works out. In fact, it’s these mishaps that often germinate new trees.

So, as you go about enjoying, canning, and storing this summer’s bounty – pause a moment to take pride in your yard. It is not only nourishing you and many creatures, but also sowing future forests. ■

If you have a favorite tree story for this column, contact redding-treeconservancy@gmail.com

OBITUARY

Dennis Paget 1937 – 2026



Dennis Paget passed away on September 6, 2026 in Redding. The world is less bright now that we have lost this ebullient, fun-loving man. He and his wife Nancy Pelz-Paget shared memorable adventures over 55 years of marriage.

Residents of Redding since 1985 and residents of Meadow Ridge

since 2020, Dennis and Nancy also lived in mid-Manhattan. Dennis spent a decade at the William Morris Agency representing Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Sammy Davis, Jr. and Frank Sinatra, Jr. among others. After many years of producing award-winning corporate meetings, Dennis founded Language American Style to teach foreign executives business English.

Author of *They All Lived in Redding* and *How to Visit Your Mother: A Survival Guide for Children from 16 to 60*, he enjoyed painting, loved museum-going and was a facile raconteur who enjoyed witty conversation. He reveled in international travel with his wife, and each trip was a learning experience or a hunt for folk art. Some of their folk-art collection was exhibited at Mark Twain Library.

A Memorial Service will be held in the future. ■

Portofino
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6:00 - 8:00 pm
every Sunday

LADIES NIGHT
2 for 1 drinks
every Thursday

213 Greenwood Ave. (Dolan Plaza) Bethel
Closed Mondays
203-797-8131
portofinorestaurantandwinebar.com

Redding’s Big Outdoors: A Little River North puzzle piece / continued from page 1

plan. About three-quarters of the way in, the river branches and the trail continues straight between the east and west streams.

Somehow, I had managed to take 90 minutes to walk this mile; everywhere I turned there was a new plant to identify, a beautiful view of the river to take in, some extraordinary pile-up of flotsam in the river (is that a beaver dam?) or downed tree; a bird sound to identify. But the afternoon was waning, and I suddenly realized I had lost cell phone service, and my car

was back on Cross Highway... so I picked up speed and headed for John Read Road. As I emerged onto the dirt road, I spotted the entrance to the next segment of the trail. But I also realized it was now too late in the day and too buggy to continue. Energy flagging, I considered my options and realized I was in the best possible location for a pick-up: I walked up John Read Road to Warrup’s Farm and called for a ride home.

Note: This trail is not open to dogs. ■

Regulatory hurdles still to clear for Project Adventure sign / continued from page 1



Image courtesy of Redding Planning Commission

Rendering of the proposed sign at the Project Adventure course at John Read Middle School.

Board of Selectmen noted historical precedent for such variances, citing a similar sign at Redding Elementary School that was permitted to expand to 24 square feet in 2016.

The Selectmen clarified that the primary purpose of the Special Town Meeting is specifically to address the Planning Commission’s report, not to bypass the ZBA.

“I support a sign,” said First

Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at a Special Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, August 31. “I think the sign is beautiful, and I think the intent is beautiful. I certainly have no qualms about sending it to a Town Meeting to move it on.”

The Special Town Meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 100 Hill Road, prior to the Selectmen’s regular meeting. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Remembering 911: A Community Tribute Thursday, September 10 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Powerful footage from Redding documentarian John Maher and a film screening <i>Art of Remembrance</i> along with community sharing of memories Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Redding Grange Hyper-Local Farmers’ Market Saturday, September 12 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Browse produce and goods from Redding growers Redding Grange #15 399 Newtown Turnpike	Planet Granite Music & Dance Festival Saturday, September 19 – Sunday, September 20 Weekend of eating, drinking, dancing, and grooving to Americana, Bluegrass, and Country acts The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitchurch.org/events \$	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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ARTS

Sunday, September 13
**In Conversation with Bob Marty
and Joseph Fucigna**
11:30 a.m.
G-Town Arts
5 Main Street
gtownarts.com

**Saturday, September 19 –
Sunday, September 20**

**Planet Granite
Music & Dance Festival**
Weekend of eating, drinking, dancing, and grooving to Americana, Bluegrass, and Country acts
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitchurch.org/events
\$

CHILDREN | TEENS

Saturday, September 12
RES Family Fun Day
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Free for RES families, enjoy bounce houses, food trucks, face painting, and fire trucks
RES Playground
33 Lonetown Road

Monday, September 14
**Kindergarten Story Time
with Bus from RES**
3:10 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.
Students attend independently
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org/events
R

FOOD | WINE

Friday, September 18
Refreshments with Friends
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Mid-century swank, classic food, and lively conversation
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road

Sunday, September 27
**The 4th Annual
Nod Hill Oyster Fest**
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Freshly shucked oysters and cold beer.
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
nod-hill-brewery.turntable-tickets.com
\$, R

Saturday, September 12
**Redding Grange Hyper-Local
Farmers’ Market**
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
399 Newtown Turnpike

FUNDRAISERS

Saturday, September 12
**Georgetown Lions Club
Italian Dinner**
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Delicious food and the chance to get involved with the Lions Club service projects
Pryor-Hubbard Hall
30 Church Street
\$

Saturday, September 26
**New Pond Farm’s Hayfield
Hustle & Family Oktoberfest**
9:30 a.m. Children’s Run
10:00 a.m. 5K and 5 mile races
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Family Oktoberfest
Registration closes September 12
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Saturday, September 26
Aldrich Artists at the Table
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Dine al fresco in sculpture garden with exhibiting artists with oyster bar and locally-sourced dinner
The Aldrich
258 Main Street
thealdrich.org
\$, R

NATURE

Saturday, September 12
Pollinators in the Meadow
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Walk with apiary manager Ann Murray
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Sunday, September 13
**Woodland Mushroom
Discovery Walk**
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Walk and learn about mushroom foraging with delicious samples
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
R

Tuesday, September 22
**So Long Summer on
Long Island Sound**
Meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. (optional)
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
An educational cruise: History, ecology and oysters with the Heritage Center
Maritime Center
99 Calf Pasture Beach Road
Norwalk
E-mail mpilato@reddingct.gov
\$, R

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, September 10
**Remembering 911:
A Community Tribute**
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Powerful footage from Redding documentarian John Maher and a film screening *Art of Remembrance* along with community sharing of memories
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Friday, September 11
Rainbow Elders Coffee Klatch
10:00 a.m.
Bethel CT Pride
Bethel
Mix and mingle with other folks and find out about LGBTQ+ senior focused events in the area, age 55+
eventbrite.com/e/rainbow-elders-coffee-klatch

Saturday, September 12
Redding Shred Day
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Redding Transfer Station
84 Hopewell Woods Road
reddingct.gov

Saturday, September 12
**Household Hazardous Waste
Drop-Off**
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Visit hrra.org for list of accepted items
Miller-Driscoll School
217 Wolfpit Road
Wilton
hrra.org/household-hazardous-waste

Saturday, September 19
**Bark in the Park:
In Memory of Tyler**
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Free, family- and pet-friendly festival to raise money for rescue animals with vendors, raffles, activities for pets and children
Bennett Memorial Park
14 Shelter Rock Road
Bethel
happilyforeverafter.org/
barkinthepark2026

Saturday, September 26
Congregational Artisan Fair
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Shop handcrafted items, antiques, jewelry, and furniture, enjoy food, live music, and community
First Church of Christ, Congregational
25 Cross Hwy, free shuttles from RES parking lot
33 Lonetown Road
firstchurchredding.org

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
44 Portland Avenue
bethlehemlutheranct.org

**Calvary Independent
Baptist Church**
Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. / Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
Nursery provided for all services.
711 Redding Road
cibcredding.org

Christ Church, Episcopal
Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
184 Cross Highway
christchurchredding.org

**First Church of Christ,
Congregational**
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
25 Cross Highway
firstchurchredding.org

Long Ridge United Methodist
Sundays at 11:30 a.m.
201 Long Ridge Road
Danbury
longridgeumc.com

**Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish
St. Patrick Church:**
Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m.
Confessions:
Saturdays 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. and Mondays and Thursdays 7:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and before/after
Weekday Mass
Eucharistic Adoration:
Mondays and Thursdays 7:00 p.m.
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

**Georgetown Oratory of the
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**
Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 12:00 p.m. (Latin)
Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30 a.m.
Wednesday: 6:00 pm. (Latin)
Holy Days: 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
First Fridays and Saturdays: 8:30 a.m.
Confessions:
Saturdays 7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. and Wednesdays 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Eucharistic Adoration: Saturdays 5:00 p.m. following Vigil Mass
30 Church Street

Temple B’nai Chaim
Friday, September 11
7:00 p.m.
Erev Rosh Hashanah
See website for complete High Holy Days schedule
82 Portland Avenue
templebnaichaim.org

MEETINGS

Thursday, September 10
**Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill
Advisory Committee**
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room and Virtual
100 Hill Road and Zoom

Thursday, September 10
Redding Fire District #2
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road

Monday, September 14
League of Women Voters
4:00 pm – 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room

Monday, September 14
**Park and Recreation
Commission**
7:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center / Multi-Purpose Room
37 Lonetown Road

Monday, September 14
Board of Ethics
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room and Virtual
100 Hill Road and Zoom

Monday, September 14
Republican Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
33 Seventy Acre Road

Tuesday, September 15
**Region 9 Finance & Operations
Committee**
5:30 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Tuesday, September 15
Region 9 Board of Education
7:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Tuesday, September 15
Conservation Commission
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, September 15
Zoning Board of Appeals
7:00 p.m.
Virtual

Wednesday, September 16
Board of Assessment Appeals
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, September 16
**Water Pollution
Control Commission**
7:30 p.m.
Virtual

Thursday, September 17
Democratic Town Committee
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Monday, September 21
Special Town Meeting
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Monday, September 21
Board of Selectmen
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, September 22
Planning Commission
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual
100 Hill Road and Zoom

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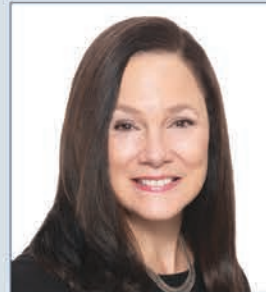
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1 & 2 Based on information from Greenwich Association of REALTORS, SmartMLS Inc. 1/1/2026- 7/6/2026. The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2026 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logo are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Anywhere Advisors LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

