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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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Public weighs in on proposed historic district in Georgetown

By Rocco Valluzzo

Noting the benefits of establishing a State-designated historic district in Georgetown, the Historic District Study Committee presented its report at a public hearing on Monday, November 24 at Town Hall.

The proposed district would cover homes and outbuildings on Smith Street, Church Street, Church Street South, and North Main Street in the Georgetown section of Redding.

The Connecticut General Statutes define an historic district as an “area or cluster of related buildings, objects or structures in a compatible setting which, when considered as whole, visually expresses styles and modes of living representative of various periods

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Photo by Jessie Wright

The Shops at Auburn Landing was one of several Georgetown businesses decked out for the holidays for “small business Saturday” last weekend. New in Georgetown this year, families can write a letter to Santa and drop it in the mailbox on the front porch at 28 Main Street — include a return address if you’d like a response back. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Lamont signs H.B. 8002 into law, finalizing controversial housing bill

By Ginny Monk

After months of negotiations and debate, Governor Ned Lamont has signed a controversial omnibus bill that aims to address Connecticut’s dire lack of affordable housing.

Lawmakers passed House Bill 8002 during the special session earlier this month, and Lamont signed it into law on Wednesday, November 26, after receiving it from the Senate the day before. The bill expands fair rent commissions, eliminates most off-street parking requirements for smaller housing developments, and requires towns to create housing growth plans, among other measures.

Lamont vetoed a similar bill that his office had worked to negotiate in June, after the regular session. The governor said he wanted to see a bill that had more town buy-in and called a two-day special session for earlier this month to give lawmakers time to work on

revising the legislation.

After months of negotiations, the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Council of Small Towns stood alongside Lamont at a press conference a few weeks ago to support the new bill.

“This bill tells mayors and first selectmen, ‘What do you want your town to look like in five or 10 years? Start planning accordingly. Where do you want that housing to go? Are you going to zone accordingly? What else do you need? We want to be your partner,’” said Lamont at the press conference.

While some Democratic lawmakers said the negotiated bill wasn’t as strong as the one they originally passed, they think it will go a long way toward addressing the affordable housing need in Connecticut.

Homelessness has increased over the past few years and rent

prices have risen. Most studies estimate the state lacks more than 100,000 units of housing that are affordable and available to its low-income renters.

The bill has sparked fierce opposition from groups that say it weakens local control and puts onerous burdens on towns. Republican lawmakers voted against the bill and criticized the process of passing a bill in special session, which they said did not incorporate enough input from the public. ■

This article originally appeared in CT Mirror

Editor’s Note: See an upcoming issue for a Q&A with Redding’s elected officials and land use experts on H.B. 8002 and how it might affect Redding

America250 celebration could feature joint concert event

By Rocco Valluzzo

Redding is one of many towns and cities across the country holding events to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence next year, marking America’s semiquincentennial.

“We’re trying to figure out how we all celebrate as a town,” said Sean McNamara of Great Oak Lane. “My original idea was to maybe do something at the Concert on the Green and have the high school band perform patriotic music at a special concert.”

McNamara then learned that composer Charles Ives, who lived in Redding, wrote a piece called *Three Places in New England*. The third movement, called “Putnam’s Camp,” was inspired by Revolutionary War General Israel Putnam, who camped in Redding during the winter of 1778-79. McNamara also met with Joel Barlow High music teacher and band director Chris Breault to discuss the idea.

“The question was how could we do this, because Ives’s music is beyond what high school students could play,” McNamara said. The answer came in engaging the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra, a professional orchestra that presents an annual concert season and extensive educational programming, to partner for the event.

“The idea is to have the Symphony come and play the Ives piece and then have the members of the Symphony play with the high school students and incorporate some times when they can get together. It would be a real learning experience,” McNamara explained.

The total cost of the event would be approximately \$39,000, which also includes insurance and other expenses. McNamara suggested \$40 admission per ticket for the event, which would be held at the Joel Barlow High School auditorium. He estimated that if 80% of the tickets were sold it would generate \$16,000.

To help offset costs, the Board of Selectmen has authorized First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to execute grant applications to assist in the funding of the America 250 Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra/Joel Barlow High School Music Department concert event.

Pemberton said that it would have to be a municipal grant, as these grants are not approved for individuals, and it would call for a \$10,000 Town match. At its November 17 meeting the Board of Selectmen discussed some discretionary funds that might be available for the match, including some money in a trust and agency account that is non-budget revenue.

Pemberton also noted that donations could help cover expenses. She pointed to the Park and Recreation Department’s successful efforts to raise money for the Concert on the Green series and suggested McNamara talk to Director Rob Blick, since this event may have a particular appeal to the Department. ■

REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Enjoying the “longview” Stuart Chase Longview Trail at Topstone

By Mary Flieger



Photo by Mary Flieger

On a cool November morning, the skies were filled with scudding clouds in their various shades of fall gray. It was the perfect day

for a hike, and my companion and I had been planning a return to Topstone Park. During our previous visit in October, we had

done a quick loop of the Pond Trail and had encountered an aging and distinguished trail marker named “Stuart Chase Longview Trail” with the subtitle “Dedicated by the people of Redding on his 90th”.

Stuart Chase (1888 – 1985) was considered the “father of open space” in Redding, and some quick math revealed that the signage and trail we were about to embark upon was 47 years old. We parked in the upper lot and located the Pond Trail. I had on my sturdier boots and picked up a walking stick along the way, since I had read in my *Book of Trails* guide that the hike would take us up Topstone “Mountain” with a promised view of the Long Island Sound. Having never spied a mountain from the beach while minding my kids in the water, my curiosity was piqued.

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Committee continues review of five-year capital plans

By Rocco Valluzzo

The Long Range Financial Planning Committee reviewed the updated five-year capital plans for several municipal departments at its Thursday, November 20 meeting.

One of the larger projects involved putting aside funds to get Redding in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with respect to accessibility to Town buildings. The project is expected to take several years and cost an estimated \$2.8 million.

Director of Finance Jim Sanders suggested allocating \$250,000 per year. He noted that this figure would be reduced by \$30,000 for fiscal year 2026-27 since repairing the front steps and installing a ramp

at Town Hall have already been requested as a separate item.

Another capital project is addressing structural issues at Lonetown Farmhouse, which is leased by the Redding Historical Society but owned by the Town. An estimated \$75,000 is needed for masonry bearing walls on new concrete footing.

One of the larger items on the list is \$1,067,000 in fiscal year 2027-28, which would involve the demolition of the Public Works Department mechanics bay building and replacing it with a pre-engineered, insulated structure. The current building does not

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POLICE BLOTTER

Police activity November 17 – November 30

By Donna Christopher

Police assisted in 14 emergency medical calls and two emergency fire department calls.

Train strikes car on tracks

A Metro-North Railroad train hit a car on Tuesday, November 25 at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Metropolitan Transportation Department Police Department said that Train 1848, with scheduled service from Grand Central Terminal to Danbury, was traveling north of Branchville Station when it struck an unoccupied vehicle that was not authorized to be on the tracks. There were no injuries to passengers or crew on the train.

Police secured the scene for Metro-North to conduct the investigation. A preliminary investigation, which included video review and witness interviews, revealed no criminality suspected. The investigation is ongoing.

A Metro-North spokesperson said that approximately 175 passengers onboard the train were de-trained at Branchville Station and provided with alternate bus service to complete their trips.

Danbury Branch trains continued service, thereafter, with residual delays.

Drunk driver leaves scene

On November 20 at approximately 3:48 p.m., police responded to a report of a motor vehicle accident at the intersection of Redding Road and Glen Road. The caller reported that his vehicle had been rear-ended at the stop sign, and that the other operator appeared intoxicated before fleeing the scene in a blue Audi A6.

Officers located the vehicle and its operator at a residence on Wagon Wheel Road. Officers observed clear signs of intoxication, and the driver admitted to consuming alcohol prior to driving and to leaving the scene of the crash. The resident failed the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests and was subsequently placed under arrest and transported to the Redding Police Department, where two breath tests returned blood-alcohol-content readings of 0.2064 and 0.1915.

The resident was issued a misdemeanor summons for Operating Under the Influence and Evading Responsibility and was scheduled to appear in Danbury Superior Court on November 25. The court case currently is awaiting a plea. The case has been closed by arrest.

Resident arrested twice in related incidents

Police arrested a 51-year-old male resident of Woodland Drive Extension in two related incidents occurring on November 22 and November 23, 2025.

On November 22, 2025, at approximately 9:23 p.m., officers responded to a domestic disturbance at Woodland Drive Extension after a complainant reported that a man was intoxicated and acting aggressively inside the home. Upon arrival, officers met with the victim who reported that the resident had threatened her with a knife and made violent statements toward another individual. Officers detained the man on scene without incident and charged him with Threatening 2nd Degree, Reckless Endangerment 2nd Degree, and Disorderly Conduct.

A family violence protective order was issued, identifying the victim as the protected party.

Conditions included no contact, no presence at her residence, and no use of alcohol or dangerous weapons. While being processed, the man violated these conditions by attempting to call the victim, resulting in an additional charge of Violation of Conditions of Release. He posted a portion of a \$2,000 cash bond and was released.

The next day at approximately 10:33 a.m., the police received a report that the man had returned to Woodland Drive Extension address, despite the previously issued protective order. Officers responded to the home and took the man into custody without incident. He was processed on a new charge of Violation of Conditions of Release 2nd Degree. A criminal history check revealed an extensive record including burglary, grand theft auto, probation violations, and crimes against children out of Florida.

The man was held on a \$100,000 non-surety bond, which he was unable to post, and was placed in a holding cell pending arraignment. He was scheduled to appear in Danbury Superior Court on November 24. The case is now in pre-trial; he has entered a "not guilty" plea.

Traffic

Police stopped 99 motor vehicles, issuing three summonses, 36 tickets, 19 written warnings, 39 verbal warnings, and no action in two instances. The infraction rate was 39%.

Thirteen motor vehicle accidents were reported during the two-week period, including three car-versus-deer incidents, five two-vehicle collisions, and four one-vehicle incidents. One complainant reported a hit-and-run collision that allegedly occurred several weeks ago.

Suspicious incidents

Police investigated seven reported suspicious incidents in the two-week period. They were all either checked okay, unable to locate reported vehicle, or resolved. ■

LEGAL NOTICE

The Brunissen Trust for Redding Senior Citizens, Inc. will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road, Redding, CT. ■

Bill Hill
President

Public weighs in on proposed historic district in Georgetown / continued from page 1

in American history." If an historic district is established by a vote of property owners in the proposed district, an historic district commission is enabled by local legislation to oversee the district.

The Historic District Study Committee worked on the report from July to October and has already presented it to the Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, and the State Historic Preservation Office, a part of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. The report covers architecturally significant structures that have historic connections to the American story of the 19th and 20th centuries. All structures in the report are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

According to the Committee's Secretary Heidi Holzer, a resident of Church Street, a State-designated historic district would provide several benefits, including providing access to certain grants and tax credits, setting a precedent for future local historic districts, creating a historic district commission, encouraging better quality design, providing a vehicle for education, and giving communities a voice in their future.

"It gives us more control of how we want to see the area developed," Holzer said. "This is very important."

Holzer added that owners of historic homes qualify for a rehabilitation tax credit, which provides a 30% return, up to \$30,000 per dwelling unit on expenditures with a \$15,000 minimum expense.

The public hearing and interest in establishing an historic district comes amidst the Town's ongoing Georgetown Revitalization project, in which architecture firm Pirie Associates is creating a master plan for redevelopment of the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site and surrounding commercial and residential areas.

"Considering this impending transformation, residents of the Georgetown neighborhood are actively working to ensure the protection and preservation of their homes, their streetscape, and the enduring historic significance of this mill-era village," reads the Study Committee report's "Statement of Significance."

Pirie Associates has presented three design options for the Georgetown Revitalization project to the public for review as they refine the approach they will recommend for the area. Some of these options include proposed redevelopment of privately owned parcels. At the November 24 Historic District Study Committee public hearing, there was some concern about how future development might affect ownership of private property.

"Even if it's an historic district, eminent domain can still come in," said Pat Sturges at the public hearing, owner of 3 Main Street. "It's not ultimately protected if the government wants to move in."

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said the Town is not interested in eminent domain over any private property.

"I am not in favor of eminent domain to take property," she said.

"I can't put something in writing and pledge a future government to that, but I can say that for the Revitalization project, we're just trying to get your input."

There was also concern expressed that an historic district, if created, would prevent residents from making certain exterior changes to their property or could make the approval process more complicated.

"We're not here to take anything away," said Committee member Janice Rothstein. "We're not here to make it difficult. What we're here for is to think about an opportunity, an opportunity for you and your neighbors and your future and what your house means to the people who you give it to when you pass away, or you can talk about when you sell. This is because studies show properties within local historic districts appreciate at greater rates than local markets overall as well as faster than similar non-designated neighborhoods."

Property owners in the proposed historic district will receive a mailed ballot from the Town. If two thirds of the property owners vote to accept the creation of an historic district, the matter will then go up for a vote at a special town meeting. If passed, the Board of Selectmen will then create an Historic District Commission to oversee the district.

The report containing details of the proposed historic district can be found at reddingct.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LegalNotice-ReportSupportingDocs.pdf or obtained at the Town Clerk's office. ■

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League of Women Voters to highlight Georgetown Revitalization at holiday luncheon

By Jessie Wright



Amy Atamian will be the guest speaker for this year's Holiday Luncheon.

The League of Women Voters of Redding is issuing an open invitation to the community to hear an update on plans for the future of Georgetown. The Georgetown Revitalization project, led by the Town of Redding and Pirie Associates with funding from the State's Department of Economic and Community Development, includes developing a master plan for Georgetown and the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site.

The update will be presented at the League's Annual Holiday Lunch on Wednesday, December 10, beginning at 12:00 p.m. The gathering, which organizers promise to be rich in substance and provisions, will take place at Lombardi's Trattoria at 22 Main Street.

The guest speaker for the event is Amy Atamian, Chair of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee. Atamian will share planning updates and future possibilities for the history-rich Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill area. The overarching goal of the Georgetown Revitalization project is to transform Georgetown Village into a vibrant mixed-use center for

the region and the local community. Details about the planning process can be reviewed at reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project.

Atamian has been dedicated to the site's revival, having served as chairperson of the Advisory Committee since its creation in 2022, shortly after Redding acquired the property. The Committee's primary function is to provide guidance to the Town regarding site revitalization. Through its efforts, the Committee has helped secure over \$2.5 million in grants earmarked for planning, environmental remediation, and building stabilization.

Atamian's interest in the Wire Mill site dates to 2005, when she joined the Zoning Commission at the beginning of the extensive Wire Mill rezoning review. She also serves as the Zoning Representative on and chairs the Water Pollution Control Commission, which oversees the Georgetown water treatment plant.

Professionally, Atamian brings significant technical expertise to her role, having worked in the environmental engineering field for more than 35 years. She holds a BFA in Fine Arts from Pratt Institute and an MS in Information Systems Engineering from NYU/Polytechnic. Her background includes involvement in GIS/IT data analysis for a variety of programs across the country, including water/waste-water infrastructure, land planning, and site remedial investigation.

Luncheon tickets are \$38. For more information and to register, please contact the LWV at lwvredding@gmail.com

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Devil's Den Preserve is closed December 8-9 for final days of limited deer hunt

By Jessie Wright

Devil's Den Preserve is closed on certain weekdays this fall for The Nature Conservancy's annual controlled deer hunt during the State-designated firearms hunting season for private lands.

The Nature Conservancy announced that the hunt will take place on November 19-20 and 24-26, and December 1-4 and 8-9. Devil's Den will be closed to the public on these days, and signs will be posted at all public entrances to the Preserve.

Experienced hunters who have

knowledge of Devil's Den Preserve and the local area will be involved and will hunt only in select areas of the Preserve's interior away from any neighboring properties.

The hunt is characterized as a stewardship effort for the land that aims to improve and maintain forest health by reducing the deer population.

"In recent decades, the high density of deer in southwestern Connecticut and associated over-browsing have caused ecological damage in the region's forests,

harming the understory, limiting tree regeneration, and contributing to the gradual loss of native flowering plants," The Nature Conservancy said in a release.

The annual limited hunt began in 2001 and has improved and maintained the ecological condition of the Saugatuck Forest Lands, according to The Nature Conservancy, in combination with other forest restoration efforts. ■



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SPORTS

Season ends with fifth straight win

Football | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High's Dylan Walker, right, tackles Weston's Steve MacHnicki during a varsity football game on Thursday, November 27. Barlow won 55-13 in the annual Thanksgiving game to end the season.

Between making big plays and taking advantage of some turnovers, the Joel Barlow High varsity football team would dominate its annual Thanksgiving game against Weston.

The Falcons not only pulled off some long runs, they also often gave themselves good field position when their opponent had trouble keeping control of the ball. Scoring early and often, they racked up the points in a 55-13 win on Thursday, November 27.

It was Barlow's fifth straight win in the annual contest, which has been played every year since 1996 (except 2020).

Weston was making some progress on its opening series but fumbled, and Jack Hall recovered at midfield to set up Barlow's first scoring drive. On first down, Kaden Holub swept down the sideline to

inside the Weston five before he was pushed out of bounds. Two plays later, he found the end zone, and with Joey Comis kicking the extra point, the Falcons were up 7-0.

"We definitely took advantage of the miscues they had," said Barlow Head Coach T.J. Cavaliere. "They were trying to lateral the ball and fumbled it."

Unable to move the ball on their next series, Weston was forced to punt, only to have Barlow's Alan Gurney block the kick to give the hosts the ball on the six. Keeler Pheeney's five-yard run and the extra point soon made it 14-0.

Taking advantage of another Weston fumble, Barlow started its next scoring drive on the former's 27. Helped in part by a facemask penalty against their opponent, the Falcons got to the two-yard line and

scored when Ben Noome recovered a fumble in the end zone and with the extra point led 21-0.

Before the first quarter ended, the Falcons scored once more, following a Weston punt. Starting on their own 45, they later found the end zone on a 35-yard touchdown run by Hall with 36 seconds left in the quarter.

A Barlow fumble would ultimately result in Weston's first touchdown, coming on a mishandled punt to give the latter the ball on the Falcon 35. On fourth down, quarterback Tim Martin floated a 35-yard touchdown pass to Steve MacHnicki, and although the extra point kick was blocked by Noome, the Trojans were on the board as they trailed 28-6.

Recovering the onside kick, the Falcons started another scoring drive with a 44-yard run up the middle by Holub. An interception by Hall gave the Falcons the ball on the Weston 37, and two plays later, Frank Branca went down the right side on a 17-yard run. With two more touchdowns courtesy of Pheeney and Holub, the Falcons were up 55-6 at halftime.

Sitting on an insurmountable lead, the Falcons scaled back their offense in the second half with no additional points. They used their back-up defense for most of the second half to give younger players some varsity time.

Weston's other touchdown came in the fourth quarter with Martin completing a three-yard pass to Nick Reilly. Will Mihelic's extra point kick finalized things at 55-13.

Holub led Barlow in rushing with 110 yards in his last high school game. Hall had 51 in his finale, while Pheeney had 40.

Barlow finishes the season at 6-4 despite a 1-4 start.

"They could've easily gone in the tank and just said 'So be it' but they didn't," said Cavaliere. "They stuck with it. It shows their passion and desire to keep the program going in the right direction." ■

Great Turkey Escape draws its largest crowd ever

By Jessie Wright



Photos by Jessie Wright

The Joyce Allen Great Turkey Escape sold out on Thursday, November 27, drawing its biggest crowd yet with close to 2,000 attending. The \$35,000 race proceeds will go to the Redding Elementary School PTA, Joel Barlow Robotics, Georgetown Lions Club, Redding Social Services, Dorothy Day Center, Redding Fire & EMS Company #1, New Pond Farm Education Center, Ridgefield Historical Society, Friends of Putnam Park, and three high school track and field scholarships. (From top left, clockwise): The 5K runners assembled at the starting line before the starting horn; Redding's James Sullivan won the race and set a course record, crossing the finish line in 15:17; Holiday cheer and themed garb were plentiful among runners and fans alike; Lonetown Road was packed with runners as the race got underway.

Novices take first place at November debate tournament

Barlow team finishes second overall

By Rob Sample

The Barlow Debate team put in another strong showing at the Connecticut Debate Association's November tournament, which took place on Saturday, November 8 at Pomperaug High School in Southbury.

Among the novice teams who competed, sophomores Charles Rabinowitz and Aniket Gupta took first place – going 4-0 for the day's competition. All participating teams debated the question of whether the Federal government should enact an updated Fairness Doctrine, which would balance the political content people see on social media and, in the process, protect users from misinformation.

"It's the same topic all day, trading sides," noted Barlow Social Studies Teacher Randall Smith, the Barlow Debate team coach.

"Seniors Yu-Min Cho and Brady Decker placed second among the varsity teams. Decker and Cho won twice on both sides to get to the final round. They went 4-1 for the day."

A short history lesson: From 1949 through 1987, the "Fairness Doctrine" governed broadcast content, aiming to ensure that broadcasters aired fair and balanced coverage of multiple viewpoints.

The authors of the Fairness Doctrine viewed television and radio airwaves as a public trust that required government oversight. The Reagan Administration eliminated the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, noting that the rise of cable television had made this notion outdated.

In the individual-speaker competition, sophomore Annabel Lau was the second-place individual novice speaker while Gupta placed fourth and Rabinowitz placed fifth. And despite the tournament being 21 miles away in Southbury, some Barlow parents were present to cheer the students on.

In addition, Michael Rabinowitz and Julia Pang were the parent/judges who were present at the event. The elder Rabinowitz is Charles's dad, while Pang is Anna-Lau's mom.

The Southbury tournament – at which host Pomperaug was crowned the winner – was one of two CDA tournaments that took place on November 8; the second was at Darien High School. In total, 300 students from 27 schools competed in the two tournaments. Stamford's King School was the winner at the Darien event, over second-place finisher Wilton High School. ■



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Unified Homecoming a hit



Photo by Anne Young Albanese

Joel Barlow High School hosted its second annual Unified Homecoming Dance on Friday, November 21 for students who participate in the Unified Sports Program. The Dance theme was "neon" and was held in the upper gym. Unified athletes from Bethel, Ridgefield, Weston, New Milford, New Fairfield, Stratford, and Southbury were also invited. The Unified Sports program unites special education students with typical athletes to participate in different sports together and foster friendships between students who might not otherwise know each other.

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“College, career, and civic life”

Board of Ed approves new K-8 curriculum

By Anne Young Albanese

Members of the Redding Board of Education unanimously approved a new social studies curriculum for grades K-8 at a special meeting on Thursday, November 13. Alisha DiCorpo, Easton-Redding-Region 9 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, developed the new curriculum to meet State and Federal standards, and ER9 Director of Curriculum Elizabeth Stewart presented the plan to the Board.

The goals of the new social studies program, The C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards, are focused on establishing fewer, clearer, and higher standards for instruction in civics, economics, geography, and history. “C3” stands for college, career, and civic life. The framework focuses on students learning critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for higher education, professional pursuits, and being a well-informed citizen.

Starting with kindergarten, students are focused on “Understanding my communities.” The year will cover roles and responsibilities in a community, study familiar places and communities, and explore communities in the past and present. While meeting State requirements, Redding Elementary School will teach kindergarteners using “disciplinary tools and resources that support planning and developing inquiries, gathering relevant information, and communication of knowledge and ideas about a community.”

In first grade, students will focus on “Society and Ourselves.” They will learn how they can contribute

to a democratic society, honor the past and the present, and about different global communities. According to the administration’s presentation to the Board, Redding’s focus also is on learning to use disciplinary tools and resources that support planning and developing inquiries, gathering relevant information, and communicating knowledge and ideas about people’s contributions to society.

Second graders will focus on how they can contribute to society. These topics will include working together as a community, leadership past and present, and decision-making. Students will investigate how people work together and make decisions.

Goals for third graders include learning about the State constitution and government, cultural communities in Connecticut (both current and past), and innovation, industry, and economic growth. The curriculum also is focused on collaborative projects and presentations, which will help students build skills in research, critical thinking, and civic understanding.

Fourth graders will start studying geography. Connecticut wants students to understand different regions, locations, places, and movement. Students also will learn about regional interdependence.

Once students move to fifth grade at John Read Middle School, they will focus on the first lessons in United States history from migration to the American Revolution. Students will investigate economic, political, and social forces that shaped national identity.

Sixth graders will begin with world regional studies. This will include knowledge of world geographic

regions, different types of governments, and economic decision-making and exchanges. Students will expand their use of disciplinary tools and resources and learn new skills like evaluating historical sources and communicating knowledge and ideas about the world.

In seventh grade, students will expand their knowledge of world regional studies. These studies include movement and cultural diffusion, governance and human rights, and regional and global economics. Students will learn about a connective thread within and among course topics.

During students’ last year in middle school, which is the standard eighth grade, they will return to United States history. This will include the origins of American democracy and national identity, expansion, influence, economic growth, civil unrest, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Eighth graders also will work on their study skills.

The social studies curriculum was crafted to have instruction for each year flow into the next. It was also developed across the three districts to teach the same information and skills to Redding and Easton students so that when they arrive at Joel Barlow High School, they will have similar social studies backgrounds. The Easton Board of Education also approved the curriculum at its November 11 regular meeting. The new social studies curriculum will be implemented in the 2026-27 school year. ■

53rd annual Art Show opens

December 6 – 14

By Lisa Goldstein



Photo by Lisa Goldstein

Organizers arranged artwork as it arrived on Tuesday, December 2.

The 53rd Annual Mark Twain Library Juried Art Show starts this Saturday, December 6. The exhibit showcases nearly 200 works of art that will hang on the walls of the Library and on additional panels for an entire week. The exhibition will also be available to view online in a virtual gallery. This treasured event offers not only a charming and festive setting for viewing, but also an essential fundraising effort for the Library, with works for purchase at various price points and 35% of revenue going towards Mark Twain Library programming.

From still lifes to landscapes, sculptures to wildlife, the exhibition offers something for everyone, whether you are in search of a calming respite, a gift for someone special, or the perfect piece to complete a home’s decor.

Throughout the week, the Library also will provide intimate programs that celebrate art, spark conversations, and provide opportunities for community connection. On Monday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m., “Wine & Wisdom with the Jurors” will provide insight and conversation featuring the jurors of the show, Lily de Jongh Downing and Tricia Wright. Meadow Ridge

residents visit on Wednesday, December 10. On Friday, December 12, Redding-ites and interior designers Victoria Tomlinson Cole and Bennett Leifer will share how art can transform a space in “Art & Design.” The show will close with a reception on Sunday, December 14 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. that is open to all, where visitors can meet some of the artists, nibble on holiday goodies, and browse while listening to the talented Barlow Chamber Singers.

Also special this year, while visitors walk through the gallery (or simply check out a book) they may notice additional cardboard monkey sculptures hanging from the ceiling. That’s because this year’s Art Show is dedicated to celebrated artist Jimmy Grashow, whose support of the event and of the Mark Twain Library was – for over 50 years – as enthusiastically unwavering as the Library’s founder himself.

The Art Show can be viewed – and works can be purchased – in person from Saturday, December 6 through Sunday, December 14 during the library’s business hours or online at anytime: mtlartshow.org. To register for any of the programs, visit the library website: marktwainlibrary.org. ■

Library Hours:

Monday and Thursday:

10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.;

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday:

Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.;

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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Experience the “reason for the season”

First Church to present 40th annual Live Nativity pageant

By Pamela Brown



Photo by Jessie Wright

For 40 years, re-enacting the story of the birth of Christ around the holidays has been a tradition for First Church of Christ, Congregational. On Saturday, December 13 at 5:00 p.m., the church again will present its annual Outdoor Live Nativity Pageant. “Its longevity has helped the pageant become part of the fabric of holiday tradition for many of the attendees,” said Dana Taylor, who leads the set up and direction. The free outdoor event will feature holiday carols, live animals, and more, followed by an indoor reception. It runs about 45 minutes, and the rain or snow date is Sunday, December 14.

“The Christmas story is the ‘reason for the season,’ so to speak. It is void of commercialism. It helps our youth to learn the story of the birth of Jesus and at the same time reminds adults of its significance to our collective Christian faith,” said Taylor. The event draws around 150 attendees, including parishioners and community members.

In addition to Taylor, people who are instrumental in the production include Reverend Kimberley Fais (cast director); Bruce Lorentzen (lighting and audio); Reverend

Suzanne Wagner (narration); Taylor’s wife Lyn Simmelink (animal procurement); David and Cheryl Armstrong (refreshments); and Luann Stoner and Rebecca Strang (piano and soloist).

Most of the cast, including shepherds, angels, and three Magi, are youth from the congregation ranging from preschoolers to college students. “Adult roles include Joseph and Mary and the Innkeeper with additional adults acting as shepherds to help maintain direction of the youth. The baby Jesus is usually the child of the adults who play Joseph and Mary,” explained Taylor.

Unlike other pageants, live animals play an integral role in the event. “My wife Lyn, a retired veterinarian, has a client who allows her donkey, Squeakers, to take part in the pageant. We also have a couple sheep and a calf generously supplied by Mike Murray, the Farm Manager from New Pond Farm,” he said. “I think the animals give a realism to the play. Plus, the kids love to see them.”

The pageant includes four different “scenes,” with attendees singing carols at each and walking from

one to the next. The live animals join the shepherds, angels, Magi, and the Holy Family in a quaint and rustic indoor scene held at the Church’s antique Studio building.

“People file through the building for a glimpse of the baby Jesus. The star that the Magi follow to Bethlehem is mysteriously suspended high above the Studio building as a live fire is surrounded by the shepherds as they tend their flock,” Taylor said.

Afterward, there will be an indoor reception in Ahlberg Hall with hot beverages and cookies.

Taylor and his wife have been part of the pageant since 1988, and it holds a significant place in their family’s holiday traditions. “The church, along with most non-profit organizations, relies heavily upon volunteerism. The pageant has been one of those avenues for us to contribute our time and give back to the congregation and the community at large. Our reward is seeing many of the same (happy and joyous) faces return year after year as part of their family holiday tradition,” said Taylor. “Additionally, my two daughters Darcy and Stacy participated when they were younger, as angels, shepherds, donkey handlers, and were able to be the Holy Family when our granddaughters were born.”

Taylor said it’s an educational event and an opportunity for the church to engage with the community.

“It’s non-denominational and open to everyone,” Taylor noted. “The pageant brings a focus to the meaning of the Christian celebration of Christmas.” ■

For more information and any postponement announcements, visit firstchurchredding.org

If trees could talk Time for a new tradition

By Janice Rotchstein

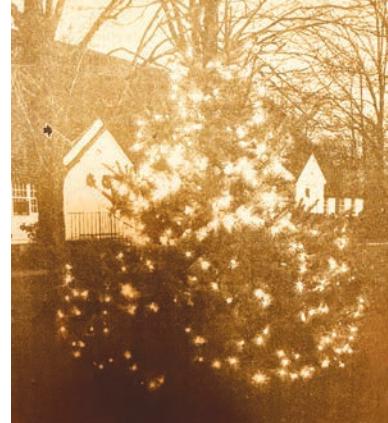


Photo courtesy of Redding Garden Club

Past: Redding’s holiday tree when it was first lit in 1978.

We’re about to lose a dear friend in our town.

She has stood tall through freezing blizzards, torrential rains, and sizzling temperatures. For nearly 50 years, she’s watched hundreds of school buses drive by, local officials pass on the way to meetings, and families enjoy concerts on warm summer Sundays.

Since 1978, we all have been thrilled at her ceremonial tree lighting and those multi-colored bulbs ablaze throughout the holiday season.

That’s why this Saturday, December 6 is so special: It is the last time we will light our 60-foot Colorado Blue Spruce on the Town Green. Unfortunately, over the years, she contracted a fungal disease. And while Redding has worked to give our evergreen a very long life, it’s time to let go.

Not to worry. There are wonderful plans to continue her tradition starting this spring. First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton is considering planting a Norway Spruce around 18 to 20-feet tall. This strong species is known for its classic conical shape; fresh crisp,



Photo by Jessie Wright

Present: The Town Green lit up last year, with the Colorado Blue Spruce reaching 60 feet tall.

woodsy scent; and upward slanting branches that easily hold heavy strings of lights. What’s even more amazing, the genus can grow 100-feet tall by 25-feet wide and live 100 years.

Discussions will begin soon about the dedication of our new fir tree. And, like the old spruce, it will memorialize Edith Pharr’s years of service as Civic Beautification Chairman of the Redding Garden Club.

Simultaneously, there are talks underway to evaluate if the old tree’s wood might be reclaimed. The tradition for such re-use is gaining popularity. For example, this year’s Rockefeller Center 75-foot Norway Spruce will be milled into lumber and donated to Habitat for Humanity.

In Redding, we might keep our tree closer to home as a unique sculpture or a piece of rustic outdoor furniture on the Green. There is also the possibility of making the soft wood available to woodturning enthusiasts.

Giving beloved trees a second life while preserving their beauty is second nature to Eric Tougas.



Photo courtesy of Tougas Timberworks

Future: Reclaimed trees can be repurposed as furniture or sculpture.

craftsman and owner of Tougas Timberworks. “The inspiration begins after you make the first cut,” he said, “which is like opening a treasure chest. You get creative once you see grain patterns that look like flowing water, startling color variations and remarkable burls and knots.”

As we wonder what lies inside our old friend, there is still time to enjoy her splendor and cherish the memories we have shared.

Perhaps Pemberton said it best: “Seeing the tree lit against the night sky brings me joy during the long winter nights. I’m always sad to see the lights go out, and the skyline coming up the hill go dark again.” ■

The 2025 Redding Holiday Tree Lighting take place on Saturday, December 6 at 3:30 p.m. at 100 Hill Road, with the lighting scheduled for 4:45 p.m.

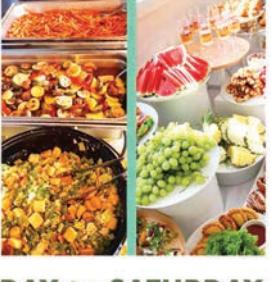
If you have a favorite tree for this column, send your suggestion to reddingtree-conservancy@gmail.com

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The Redding Artisan Holiday Market returns December 13

By Pamela Brown



Photo by Marion Unangst

The annual Redding Artisan Holiday Market returns for its 11th year celebrating local makers and offering unique finds for the gifting season.

“Redding doesn’t have a downtown like neighboring towns, but we do have a lot of talent. I think Redding people love to support local and handmade,” said Marion Unangst, Chairperson of the event and herself a Redding jewelry designer and small business owner.

“It has become a very popular community event. Even though it’s a bit closer to Christmas this year, people still have holiday gifts to buy, so why not at our Holiday Market where you can support local artisans and even our school children?”

The market takes place indoors at John Read Middle School at 486 Redding Road on Saturday, December 13 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

“Every year the event has grown since I started it at Redding Elementary School,” said Unangst, who has been at the helm since the beginning when she set out to create an event reminiscent of the outdoor Christmas markets she visited in Germany when she was a young girl. “I still love every aspect of putting it together every year. My husband, Blake, and my son, Sam, are in charge of the music set list. We’ll be playing traditional holiday tunes.”

The market has attracted new shoppers each year by staying true to its original mission of offering the community a place to shop for the holidays and highlighting the talented artisans in the local area.

The event will feature the work of over 50 vendors from Redding, Wilton, Weston, and Ridgefield, along with other nearby towns. “Many of them are returning, but this year we also have a few new ones that we are very excited about,” said Unangst. Some of the Redding artisans include: Bead Free Forever Jewelry (handmade with bohemian

flair); Erin DeLuca Jewelry (hand-crafted); Stephanie Lauren LLC (pet accessories); Zoia’s Creations (air plant and crystal art); Daisy & Amused Jewelry (handcrafted); Hooks ‘n Brushes (plush animals/dolls); Oak & Vale (candles); Little Birdie Cookies (custom cookies and treats); Hawk Meadow Handmade (décor inspired by nature); and Redding Knives (sharpen and refurbish knives and tools).

A wide selection of items will be showcased, including handmade jewelry, candles, home décor, wood and glassworks, holiday ornaments, hats and scarves, furniture, hand-carved wood statues, soaps and skincare, artwork, pottery, books, and more. “Shoppers absolutely enjoy browsing all the items and having the opportunity to talk one-on-one to the artisans to learn more about the products,” said Unangst.

Shoppers can also enjoy food and beverages while browsing. Local food vendors participating include Daily Fare, Grumpy Dumpling Co., D’s Kitchen, and Hu’s LLC. An annual raffle also is an important part of the event, with each artisan donating a piece to raffle off, with proceeds going to John Read Middle School.

In addition, the market will feature the work of about 11 students, some of whom attend Redding schools and others from schools in neighboring towns. The young craftspeople will be selling and showcasing their handmade wares, including jewelry, accessories, resin art, and baked goods.

“Having the student artisans be part of this community event is one way that makes the Redding Artisan Holiday Market stand out from other holiday events. We have very talented students that love the experience of selling their art,” Unangst said.

“It’s so much fun every year to see what they come up with creatively. It’s a joy to see the big smiles on their faces when they make their first sale.” ■

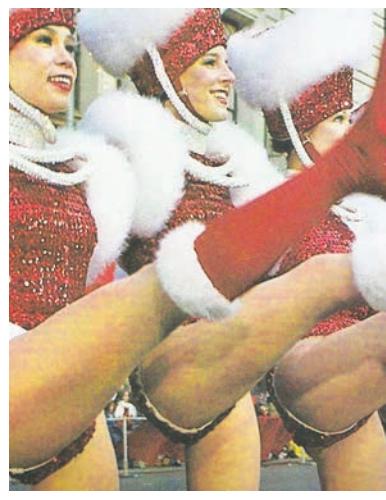
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Recollections from a Rockette

By Donna Christopher



Photos courtesy of Dottie Earle DeLuca

(Left): DeLuca performing as a Rockette in the 1990s. (Right): DeLuca showed off her high kick while attending a performance at Radio City Music Hall years after her time in the Rockettes.

Dottie Earle DeLuca, owner of Fleur De Lis Antiques and Design, is celebrating 14 years at her shop in West Redding with a storewide sale through the holidays. But she also is celebrating this holiday season with a significant milestone – the 100th anniversary of the Radio City Rockettes, a group in which she danced for seven years, from 1990 to 1997.

"The Rockettes are a very significant part of the grandeur of the Great Stage at Radio City," said DeLuca. "Besides being the main show in between movie premieres, they actually saved the Music Hall in 1978-79 by leading a crusade to get the historic Art Deco gem designated as a New York City Landmark. When Radio City first opened, it was a city staple for New Yorkers and visitors alike. Similar to Grand Central Station, the subway opened right into the lounge downstairs where visitors would hang out, read the paper, or smoke a cigarette in the ladies lounge waiting for the movie show times to start."

The Rockettes first performed in 1925 in Missouri with founder/chorographer Russell Markert. They then were picked up by the famous producer Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel and became the Roxyettes at the Roxy Theater in New York City before being brought to Radio City Music Hall for their debut in 1933 at the first Christmas Spectacular.

DeLuca was among more than 500 Rockettes alumnae who recently attended the Rockette Legacy event on November 19 at Radio City Music Hall to commemorate the 100th-year milestone.

DeLuca studied ballet with

Marthe Krueger and was an instructor for the Walter Schalk School of Dance. She has a B.F.A. in Fine Arts from the University of Mass-Amherst and studied in the 5 College Dance Program. Upon graduating, she won a merit scholarship at the prestigious Alvin Ailey Dance School and quickly joined the Clive Thompson Dance Company. She went on to work with Arnie Zane/Bill T. Jones Dance Co and Momix Dance Company. As a singer as well, DeLuca also landed roles both onstage and on television and secured a spot in the Rockettes in 1990.

DeLuca said that when she is asked about her performance career, which includes Broadway credits such as *Follies*, *On the Town*, and *The Will Rogers Follies*, along with television appearances including *PBS: Great Performances* and *Oscar Hammerstein Tribute*, it is usually her background as a Rockette that draws the most attention.

"I consider myself lucky, as I was hired when there was only one line of Rockettes at the Music Hall," she said. Reflecting on the demanding schedule, DeLuca recalled, "I think we were up to five shows a day at one point. You put on the costume, you change to the next number, and the next number. Then the show ends, you're back in your dressing room, and you do it all over again."

A highlight that has been part of the show since 1933 is the iconic "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" number. The routine features 36 dancers in precise, military-style marching that ends with the performers falling like dominos.

"You don't bend your knees

through the whole number, so it is hard," DeLuca said. "You get incredible gluteal muscles. I wouldn't be able to answer what's hardest now. I think the choreography today is very much an Olympic sport."

Christmas Spectacular Choreographer Julie Branam, who danced as a Rockette beginning in 1988, confirmed that while some of the choreography has changed, the camaraderie among the dancers has not.

"We're trying harder things, but at the core of the Rockettes is a group of women who enjoy working together, coming together, and the joy of making it happen," Branam said.

Branam, like DeLuca, said people also are often interested in her years with the Rockettes.

"I grew up in Iowa, and whenever I go back my mom is always so proud. People may not know the Broadway shows, but they know the Rockettes," she said.

When asked whether mishaps ever occurred onstage, DeLuca emphasized the discipline of the performers, saying the dancers are "so professional and so well trained that it rarely happens. It is like a machine."

Speaking of machines, the Great Stage has advanced technology like its elevator hydraulics and rotating stage that makes Radio City Music Hall a unique venue. The system was so advanced that its hydraulics were later adopted by the U.S. Navy for World War II aircraft carriers.

"When I was a Rockette, there were two shows a year, including an Easter show," DeLuca recalled, pointing to the number "Dancing in the Dark" as particularly technically challenging. "There was a circular kick line formation, facing outward, while the stage was rising. There's a circular elevator within the stage that moves up as you're doing this revolving kick line."

DeLuca has very fond memories of her performing career that all together spanned 16 years. But she also has enjoyed her family life in Connecticut with her husband Anthony and son Austin, who graduated Joel Barlow High School in 2020. She encouraged her Redding neighbors to stop into Fleur de Lis at 4 Long Ridge Road to see some photos and hear some stories. After all, it's not every day you get to meet a real live Rockette in Redding. ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

A new stage for Wiremill Academy of Performing Arts at The Granite

By Justin Reynolds

A spark of serendipity has landed Wiremill Academy of Performing Arts a new home in Georgetown.

This fall, the local performing arts school became The Granite's anchor tenant – and both Mary Jo Duffy, Wiremill's Artistic Director and Co-founder, and Rich Wenning, The Granite's Executive Director, couldn't be happier about the pairing.

"The acoustics are perfect for musical theater, choirs, and concerts," Duffy said. "It couldn't be a better space for that. Next year, I'm doing my voice recital there for the first time. I'm really looking forward to it, and the students are all so excited."

The move to The Granite has been seamless for the Wiremill community.

Recently, when Duffy asked Wenning whether he could install outdoor lights so that it was easier to walk to her car after dark, he didn't hesitate.

"The next morning, there were lights outside that go on when it gets dark," Duffy said. "That's the kind of attention and care Rich gives us. He couldn't be more accommodating and up for collaboration."

And the benefits have extended beyond the logistics. Since the move, Duffy has also seen a positive change in her students.

"One thing that I've noticed and been enchanted and happy about is the way all of my kids behave in this space," Duffy said. "I taught them this is a shared space, and they need to clean up after themselves, and they're rising to the occasion, rising to a higher level of themselves. I'm thrilled about that."

Wiremill students are currently preparing a production of *Shrek*, which takes the stage in December at the Little Theater at Wilton High School. Next semester, students in grades four through eight will be tackling *Frozen*; registration is open and there's still space, Duffy said.

Looking ahead, Wiremill Academy is planning additional performances at The Granite and is also exploring new offerings, including a possible class for homeschooled students.

No matter what the future holds, Duffy – like Wenning – is happy that Wiremill Academy has found a home at The Granite.

"I felt like this was meant to be," she said. ■

For more information, visit wiremillacademy.com and thegranitechurch.org

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Apply for a Garden Club scholarship

By Ann Crocker

The Redding Garden Club is once again offering our \$2,000 Mary Clinton Scholarship for 2026.

This year, we are thrilled to broaden the applicant pool to include seniors with interests in environmental sciences, horticulture, floral design, marketing, photography, and/or social media; all of which relate to nature. The application is due by April 22, 2026.

Applicants must be Redding residents enrolled in public or private high school. Applicants must complete 10 hours of volunteer work supporting environmental related activities. Suggestions for volunteering are included in the

application packet, which can be downloaded at reddinggardenclub.org.

Other requirements include an essay of at least 500 words reflecting on your volunteering experience, what you learned, and how the experience relates to your academic and career goals.

A letter of recommendation from a teacher, guidance counselor, or employer is also required.

For any questions or further information, contact Ann Crocker, Redding Scholarship Chairperson at anncsam@yahoo.com or text (203) 788-4133. ■

BOOK REVIEW

A Leopard-Skin Hat

By Anne Serre

122 pages / New Directions / \$13.90



A Leopard-Skin Hat, by Anne Serre, is a first-person story about a deceased woman named Fanny, told by "the narrator," who in the novel is male. French novelist Anne Serre puts forward two characters to contemplate: "the narrator," and Fanny. The narrator is an unnamed friend of Fanny's from childhood; he is also a platonic adult friend. The reader, with book in hand, and author, who wrote it, are now left to evaluate each other. There are considerations to settle. The first of these considerations is that, among several choices, which approach to this author should a reader take? This novel is not biography, autobiography, or hagiography; rather, it is a well-conceived meditation. It is novel as sophisticated Rorschach, seeking to explore an elusive question: Can mental illness be a tradeoff for insight?

Fanny, it is clearly shown, has a rather severe mental illness – variously implied schizophrenia, including multiple personality disorder, or Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). Episodes of Fanny's unreliability are given, yet there is empathy throughout, and important questions quickly emerge. Is the reader to understand "the narrator" as in fact "the writer?" If so, is "the narrator" partially involved, reliable, or unreliable? Perhaps the narrator is meant to be all three – why not? The role of narrator is a literary device. The narrator is a writer (perhaps the author?). He sometimes envies and occasionally "borrows" from Franny's delusion and brilliant but mad speculations. Throughout, the author tries to have her way with the reader. Opposite qualities are sometimes presented as confirming, for example, incapacity as unique to comprehension; absurd non-conformist thinking as original; religion as...something or

other in the mix, and life, affirmed by death.

Tension exists on multiple levels. For purposes of elucidation, throughout the novel, Anne Serre, the human being, appears to resist Anne Serre, the artist. The narrator is a writer who wants the sort of brilliance, insight, and experience he imagines for Fanny. But brilliant or not, Fanny is incapable. Anne Serre the artist shows how the cost of incapacity is elimination, even if that means life itself – and here it does. It is a dear price to pay, and terms of life given to us demand payment, but Serre insists that life is rare but given to us on its own terms. But there is redemption – it comes as acceptance. The human being in Anne Serre must accept those terms as valid. And she does.

A Leopard-Skin Hat describes how mental illness is on the tougher side of all possibilities given in uneven distribution at birth. The loyal narrator is impressed and appalled at Fanny's condition. At her best, Fanny is effortlessly brilliant, but this is deceptive. At her least coherent, she lives multiple lives with others in her skin. Sometimes she awakens to a new identity in the wake of bad behavior of another self. In periods of psychosis, the reader sees how it exasperates "the narrator" beyond a comfort zone. Existentially undependable, Fanny might evince brilliant understanding, but does it mean anything? Not really. The narrator, the author, and finally the reader, too, wonder during the story if Fanny isn't coddled to her detriment by well-meaning cohorts who don't fully appreciate the precarious truth of her existence.

The last sentence claims the book (and reader), at last, for the artist. The artist living in Anne Serre's skin chooses Life above the choice of the doomed, tortured, in many ways gifted soul who did not have a choice. Survival defeats unapplied erudition when the issue is life itself. Perhaps the quotidian wins this tedious argument of insidious intent. Those are the real stakes, and the author, Anne Serre, gives an affirmative spin to Fanny's choice, as she falls to her release. "And while she is thinking to herself like this – airy, unchained, compact, and secure – others in turn, are doing their best to live."

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

LIBRARY CORNER

Tax-efficient ways to give this holiday season

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

As we approach the season of giving, many generous supporters are surprised to learn that some non-profits can accept gifts of appreciated stock. At Mark Twain Library, this method of giving is a win-win: The giver doesn't have to pay capital gains tax, and the Library receives the gift tax-free. This means you can make a bigger impact – at a lower after-tax cost – while supporting the cultural crossroads of Redding. It's one of the most tax-efficient ways to give.

Donors age 70 1/2 or older even

can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their IRA to satisfy their Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) for the year all while lowering their taxable income. It's another efficient way to support the Library without increasing tax liability.

So, if you're looking to maximize your philanthropic goals before December 31, a stock donation is an excellent way to do it. Your financial advisor can help determine what's best for your situation, and the Library is happy

to provide transfer details or answer any questions. Just send me an e-mail at erin@marktwainlibrary.org.

Thank you for considering this powerful and generous form of support for the Mark Twain Library. We rely on the generosity of the Redding community to help meet our operating expenses. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is
Director, Mark Twain Library

Nod to the pod

Jordan, Jesse, Go!: "That's Meisner! With Holly Chou"

By Amy Maloof

A one-episode recommendation from a podcast you might love.

I learned just how fraught recommending things can be when I co-hosted a library program last year. It ran like an in-person version of this column (or, as we described it, "a book club for podcasts!"). We had lively discussions and dull discussions, but there was always someone who didn't like what I'd picked. One specific meeting comes to mind, an evening when my choice had, generally, gone over like a lead balloon.

"Well, that's 45 minutes I'll never get back," sighed one attendee, an otherwise kind woman who happens to be my friend.

Feeling more embarrassed than the moment called for, I did my usual awkward social dance and the moment passed. But I never really learned how to gracefully

deal with in-person pod criticism while remaining a charming host, and so I let the group gradually fade away. But writing here is different. Though I wring my hands every time I send my column into the void – imagining a faceless human muttering, "She likes THIS!?" – it has been a total delight getting to write in this space.

In the beginning, I had many ideas at my fingertips, but after 30 or so columns, the well ran dry. Suddenly, I had to start researching and exploring new material. It was a worthy challenge; I found so many new shows and learned so many new things and really tried to capture the full spectrum of podcast offerings. But now, after over 60 different episodes from over 60 different programs, I'm signing off. Before this fades like the library group, I think it's time.

And so, I leave you with one final recommendation – the very first podcast I started listening to in 2007. It's gentle, it's goofy, it's blue, it's what got me through hours and hours of tedious desk work. Jesse Thorn and Jordan Morris have been best friends since college, and nearly every week since then, they've chatted to each other over microphones. This episode is a fun entry point, with a sweet and silly guest, and a lot of warmth. For nearly 18 years I've grown up alongside these hosts, through our 20s and into our 40s, and they've consistently brought me a genuine joy and comfort. Looking back, I think that's the common thread many of my recommendations have shared. I do so hope you've found a few along the way that bring you the same. ■

Notes from a neighbor

To shave, or not to shave

By Carter Wiseman

For decades, the image of the all-American male included smooth cheeks and chins. Facial hair was associated with hippies and derelicts. "Clean-cut" was the look of a "real" man, whether he smoked Marlboros or not. No more. The beard is growing.

Of course, some followers of Islam, Judaism, and other faiths wear beards as a religious matter. And until the 20th century, Americans considered facial hair a mark of courage and wisdom: Think Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman.

But can you imagine former vice president Richard Cheney or former New York City mayor John Lindsay with a beard? Fast-forward to J. D. Vance and Zohran Mamdani. This is not just about grooming. Facial hair for men still sends messages. These days, a beard can mean manly, even mean,

or with an aerosol can and a plastic disposable from Mexico. But it was worse in ancient times, before metallurgy discovered stainless steel (1913). I can understand Socrates letting his chin locks grow rather than scrape them off with the truncated short swords available in his day. I assume that's why so many statues of young Roman soldiers – who were probably just past puberty – show them clean-shaven, while veterans like Marcus Aurelius had curls from ear to ear.

Times indeed change, even in the military. I once heard an ex-Marine's advice for flourishing in retirement: Every morning, make your bed, and shave! I'm all for discipline, but I would like to think that this leatherneck's grandchildren now help make his bed – and that he serves as a full-bearded Santa in his local holiday pageant. ■

Committee continues review of five-year capital plans / continued from page 2

allow lifts to be used to service the Highway Department vehicles. As a result, the work has to be done outside.

There had been much discussion on demolishing and replacing the office building at the Transfer Station, which has undergone some minor renovations. The project has been moved to fiscal year 2028-29 and perhaps could be grant-funded.

Also planned for a few years down the road is the construction of a garage/workshop behind the Community Center, estimated to cost \$500,000. Replacing the roof over the gym would be approximately \$200,000.

Water Pollution Control Chair Amy Atamian cited capital items that related to the aeration basins

at the Georgetown Water Treatment Facility, including a pump at approximately \$30,000 to get one of the basins online. A second basin would have to be done in the following year or two.

While design and engineering for the replacement of the four bridges that were destroyed by the August 2024 storm are included in the current fiscal year's budget, construction costs are earmarked for 2026-27. These include Sport Hill Road (\$2,067,500), Long Wall Road (\$2,563,750), Brookside Road (\$1,960,000), and Greenbush Road (\$4,380,000).

The State Local Bridge Program (SLBP) will cover 50%, and the Town will be reimbursed for 75% of the remaining costs through

the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following completion.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton and Sanders expect the SLBP may provide funding in a timelier manner than that of FEMA.

"We've got items that have been (FEMA) award obligated in June, and we're still waiting on the reimbursement for that," Sanders said. "So, they were running at about a four-month delay. And they've kind of lengthened that to probably closer to a six-month delay."

All capital requests will be evaluated by the Board of Finance before receiving approval to go before voters. ■

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THE NATURAL WORLD

The Outside Story: Returning home

By Rachel Sargent Mirus



Illustration by
Adelaide Murphy Tyrol

Every holiday season, there is a mass migration of humans toward home and family. We use many tools to help us navigate back to the places we're from – from simple maps to sophisticated GPS – but animals who travel long distances must rely on their own senses. Some of them have a long-range navigational sense called magnetoreception that is like a built-in compass or imprecise GPS.

Earth is surrounded by a magnetic field that is generated by currents in the mixture of molten iron and nickel deep in the heart of our planet. This geomagnetic field exists throughout every environment all the time, making it a uniquely reliable source of information, if an animal can detect it. When some biologists first suggested animals could sense magnetic fields in the late 1800s, their colleagues were skeptical. Yet behavioral scientists continued to collect observations that some animals would change their movement patterns near magnets.

In the late 1960s, a German researcher showed that migrating birds would cluster at the south end of their windowless roosts but

would reverse their choice when surrounded by an artificial magnetic field that was oriented opposite to the Earth's. Around the same time, an American researcher demonstrated that putting magnets on the heads of pigeons interfered with their ability to return home.

Researchers in the 1980s caught male newts, subjected them to the scientific equivalent of being blindfolded and spun in circles, then transported them 10 to 50 km away from their home ponds – 10 to 20 times farther than newts typically travel on their own. The newts adjusted to their new surroundings for several weeks before they were exposed to spring-like temperature changes to stimulate their spring migration instincts. The newts then attempted to travel in the correct direction to return to the ponds they came from, indicating they sensed their position relative to their original pond.

Further research indicates that the newts are detecting the inclination angle, or the angle of the magnetic field lines relative to the Earth's surface. To understand what newts, and animals like them, are sensing, picture the Earth floating in space surrounded by contour lines that map the orientation of its magnetic field. The lines leave the south pole, rising straight up from the ground, but as they do, they split and curve to the left and right to encircle the planet on each side.

As the field lines curve around the planet, they flatten relative to the surface until they are parallel to the ground at the equator. Continuing around, the lines bend back to re-enter the Earth's surface at the north pole, once again perpendicular to the ground. The magnetic field is stronger at the poles and weaker at the equator. By sensing the inclination angle and the

strength of Earth's magnetic field, an animal can infer a "magnetic map" of its location.

Biologists are still researching how magnetoreception works within an animal's body. Currently there are two top theories for terrestrial animals: They are using complex biochemical reactions that are sensitive to magnetic fields or they have magnetite, a magnetic mineral, stored in their bodies. There is mounting evidence that migratory birds use biochemical reactions in their retina to sense the Earth's magnetic field, but those reactions are so complex that many questions remain.

In other animals, biologists have successfully tracked down the location of tiny magnetite crystals; rainbow trout store these crystals in cells in their noses. No one knows yet exactly how the fish use their magnetite, but researchers have recorded signals in the nerves in the fish's nasal tissue. If the crystals can move along with the Earth's magnetic field, they would act like a compass needle that is wired to the fish's nervous system.

Whether you're a trout swimming toward the stream you were born in or hopping on a plane for the holidays, traveling home is a lot of work. Animals migrate because their destination has something favorable: Better weather, more food, or ideal conditions to raise offspring. Whatever your reason, there's just something special about going home. ■

Rachel Sargent Mirus is a teaching artist and writer. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org

Redding Big Outdoors: Enjoying the "longview" / continued from page 1

As we skirted the pond, the trail veered into the woods where we picked up the Base Trail. We then connected to the Stuart Chase Longview Trail, easily found by its stand-alone sign.

It wasn't long before we spotted the prominent cliffs that recall a mini version of the Shawangunk's. The ascent snakes up the back, and underfoot you are walking on decently packed rocky soil – covered in leaves, of course – so I was happy for my walking stick. Some light scrambling is called for, but the ascent is pretty short, and you are there before you know it. At the top of the escarpment, things widen out surprisingly into a nice flat wood, and you are instinctively drawn to the southeast where the view unfolds as you approach. In fact, my attention was drawn in all directions: To the east was the empty spit of sand where families and day-campers

enjoy tetherball, swimming, kayaking, and paddleboats in the summer; to the south was the promised (though missing) view of the Sound, in its place the vivid colors of late fall – the warm browns and burgundies of the oak trees, mixed with the yellows and golds of various hardwoods, mingled with vivid evergreens. It was truly a "Longview"!

After exploring the top of the escarpment for a bit and staying a safe distance from the outer edges, we searched for the entrance to the South Topstone Mountain Trail. We picked up a path that looked like the one we wanted but lacked a name and soon discovered a fallen ash tree with the sign attached. Looking down, I spotted a bright yellow, roundish leaf – and sure enough, in a straggly but blooming state was a native witch hazel tree. Increasingly rare in our woods, this small understory tree

has flowers, ripe fruit, and next year's buds on its branches at the same time, and a long history of medicinal uses.

The trail heads south and eventually meets up with Topledge, where we turned left and headed back in the direction of the pond. At the intersection, we turned left at the Pond Trail and continued in the direction of the beach. As we walked along, a wonderful 1970s-era calisthenics outdoor gym materialized in front of us, and we paused to hang from the rings, stretch our legs on the blocks, and marvel at its timelessness. We passed by the dog run that opens onto the pond, and the children's playground, so nicely situated in relation to the beach and changing rooms/bathrooms. And I thought to myself how wonderful it is to see Mr. Chase's legacy of the "Longview" living on in this marvelous park. ■

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Opening weekend for Easton's Christmas tree farms | By Jess Deutsch



Photo by Jessie Wright

Maple Row Farm was bustling on Saturday as thousands streamed in to select their Christmas tree.

Since 2021, Easton has been named the "Christmas Tree Capital of Connecticut," a badge the small town just next door wears proudly. With over 10 Christmas tree farms and farmstands in under 29 square miles, finding a good tree to kick off the holidays is just a stone's throw away. The weekend after Thanksgiving saw many folks traipsing the farms on the hunt for the perfect tree – and perhaps partaking in a tailgate. But what many people might not know about is the hard work and care that the farmers put into each season to ensure the best experience possible.

I was able to speak with several local Christmas tree farmers, each with their own story to tell. One

Hewig is no stranger to hard work. She has been helping her great aunt on the farm since she was a child. Her days start with mowing – lots of mowing. She and her fellow farmers trim the trees for a classic Christmas tree shape and check on the baby trees just sprouting from being planted two years ago. "We plant about 500 trees every year, we don't know what's going to make it and what won't," she explained. "There's an old saying about Christmas trees: They sleep, they creep, and at year three, they leap." Hewig hopes to pick up where her great aunt left off and expand the farm in the coming years. Bringing back fruit trees is a major project on her list.

My next stop was Sabia Tree Farm, where I spoke with Sam Sabia. Sabia started the farm in 2006 with her husband Mike; they met while both attending Joel Barlow High School. Her days start at 6:00 a.m. – and not only with farm duties. "We have a son, so I'm trying to be a mom, and I'm a teacher, I feed the chickens and ducks, it's busy," she said. Opening day saw them tying up loose ends and finishing last-minute jobs, like making wreaths for their holiday store.

For Sabia, the hardest part of running a seasonal business like a Christmas tree farm is being sandwiched between two of the biggest holidays of the year. "It's challenging, because you want to enjoy your time with your family on Thanksgiving, but it's hard to separate both things and not mentally check out thinking of everything you need to get done," she said.

While Sabia and her husband didn't have any formal agricultural training when they started Sabia Tree Farm, they feel like they really know what they're doing now.

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes, we are literally just making this up as we go along," she told me with a confident smile. "It's hard being a mom and running a business, but it's so great watching him grow up here." Sabia also gets to see her customers grow up along with her son, greeting families who have come since year one now coming back with their grandkids. "It's so cool to be a part of their tradition," she said. ■

For a guide to Easton's Christmas tree farms, visit eastongardenclubofct.org/easton-farm-map-holiday-edition

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Holiday Events 2025

December 4-10

Thursday, December 4

Holiday Music Festival and Tree Lighting
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tree lighting at 6:00 p.m.
Weston Town Green
56 Norfield Road, Weston
westonct.gov

Friday, December 5 and Saturday, December 6

Ridgefield Holiday Stroll
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Friday
12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Saturday
Downtown Ridgefield
inridgefield.com/events/holiday-stroll

Friday, December 5

Music on the Hill presents On this Silent Night
7:30 p.m.
Festival Chorus with strings and harp, featuring Saint-Saëns Christmas Oratorio and other music of the season
10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport
musiconthehillct.org/events

Saturday, December 6

Ridgefield Holiday House Tour
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Tour six distinctive homes and browse a holiday market at Lounsbury House
Lounsbury House (begin tour)
316 Main Street, Ridgefield
ridgefieldholidayhousetour.org

Saturday, December 6

Reindeer Run
10:00 a.m. Check in
11:00 a.m. 5K Race
Festive attire encouraged, run around the cross country course
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike
runsignup.com/Race/Donate/CT/Redding/JoelBarlow-HighSchoolReindeerRun
\$, R

Saturday, December 6

Holiday Pride
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Join Easton Pride for holiday market, food, photos with Santa, crafts
Sport Hill Farm
596 Sport Hill Road
Easton
facebook.com/EastonCTPride

Saturday, December 6

Polar Express Day at The Great Trains Show
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Gather for a reading of the classic book and create an ornament
Wilton Historical Society
224 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonhistorical.org

Saturday, December 6

Cannon Grange Holiday Market
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Cannon Grange
25 Cannon Road
Wilton
cannongrange.org/holiday-market

Friday, December 6 and Saturday, December 7

Holiday Pops Concert
3:00 p.m.
WCSU Visual & Performing Arts Center
43 Lake Avenue Extension
Danbury
eventbrite.com/o/visual-amp-performing-arts-center-at-wcsu-6275173871
\$

Saturday, December 6

Redding Tree Lighting
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Music, refreshments, Santa, fire pits, and tree lighting
Town Green
100 Hill Road
reddingct.gov

Saturday, December 7

Cannon Grange Holiday Market
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Cannon Grange
25 Cannon Road
Wilton
cannongrange.org/holiday-market

Sunday, December 7

Newtown Holiday Festival
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Main Street winter wonderland
Main Street, Newtown
tickettailor.com/events/newtownyouthfamily-services/1890880
\$

Sunday, December 7

Baking on the Farm: Holiday Cookie Boxes
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Sunday, December 7

Holiday Tree Lighting and Vendor Market
3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Shopping, Santa, music by Joel Barlow choir, and lighting of tree
Easton Public Library
691 Morehouse Road, Easton
eastonlibrary.org/library-events

Monday, December 8

Redding Garden Club: Annual Greens Workshop
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
reddinggardenclub.org/monthly-meetings
R

Monday, December 8

Redding Historical Society Holiday Open House
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Meet RHS members, explore the property, and browse merchandise
Lonetown Farmhouse and Zalmon Read Barn
43 Lonetown Road
reddinghistory.org

Tuesday, December 9

Holiday Music Luncheon
12:15 p.m.
Live music by students at John Read Middle School with lunch
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
RSVP to mstillman@reddingct.gov or 938-9725
R

Wednesday, December 10

League of Women Voters Holiday Luncheon
12:00 p.m.
Hear about Georgetown Revitalization project from guest speaker Amy Atamian Lombardi's Trattoria
22 Main Street
E-mail lwredding@gmail.com to RSVP
\$, R

Wednesday, December 10

A Very Merry Pairing Party
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Evening of sipping, shopping, and seasonal cheer with curated gifts and handpicked wines
Collaboration between Clover & Clay and Redding Wine & Spirits
119 Black Rock Turnpike
cloverandclayct.com
R

December 11-17

Friday, December 12

Music on the Hill presents Sounds of the Season
7:30 p.m.
Handbell Ensembles with flute and double bass present festive music of the season
10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport
musiconthehillct.org/events

Friday, December 12 – Sunday, December 14

A Christmas Carol Read & Sing-Along
8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday
2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Sunday
Family friendly, BYO food and drink
Ridgefield Theater Barn
37 Halpin Lane
Ridgefield
ridgefieldtheaterbarn.org
\$, R

Saturday, December 13

Breakfast with Santa and Buddy the Elf
9:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Register for a 45-minute timeslot
Riverbrook Regional YMCA
404 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonymca.org
\$, R

Saturday, December 13

Redding Artisan Holiday Market
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Shop locally crafted wares
John Read Middle School
486 Redding Road
facebook.com/reddingartisanmarket

Saturday, December 13

Gingerbread Snow Globes
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Family program with all materials provided
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Saturday, December 13

Live Nativity
5:00 p.m.
Live animals, scripture readings, and Christmas hymns
Outdoors at First Church of Christ, Congregational
25 Cross Highway
firstchurchredding.org

Saturday, December 13 – Sunday, December 14

CT Dance School presents The Nutcracker
6:00 p.m. on Saturday
1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Sunday
Fairfield University Quick Center for the Art
200 Barlow Road
Fairfield
ctdanceschool.org/the-nutcracker
\$

Sunday, December 14

Gaudete Christmas Market
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Handmade gifts and baked goods
The Georgetown Oratory
30 Church Street
E-mail office@gtownoratory.org with questions

Sunday, December 14

Nod Hill Brewery Holiday Market
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
nodhillbrewery.com/live-music-and-events

Sunday, December 14

Holiday Market
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Hosted by STEMS + CO, Wild Blueberry, Casa Rosetti
Shop local, enjoy festive cocktails by Milestone, hot cocoa bar, and pajama portraits by Tory Williams
2 Main Street
stemsandco.com

Sunday, December 14

Holiday Pool Party
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Enjoy inflatables, free swim, and holiday cheer
Riverbrook Regional YMCA
404 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonymca.org/inflatable-pool-party-3-8
\$, R

Tuesday, December 16

Royal Ballet: The Nutcracker
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Enjoy a screening of the 2017 production, bubbly drinks, and sweet and savory snacks
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
RSVP to mstillman@reddingct.gov or (203) 938-9725
R

Wednesday, December 17

Community Messiah Sing - Hosted by Music on the Hill
7:00 p.m.
The audience is the chorus! With soloists and string quartet
United Church of Rowayton – Livingston Hall
210 Rowayton Avenue
Norwalk
musiconthehillct.org/events

December 18-24

Thursday, December 18

Celebrate the Season – Holiday Recipes with the Thirsty Radish
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Chocolate recipes from cookies to homemade candies
Virtual
Mark Twain Library
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Thursday, December 18

Bethel Pride's Holiday Party
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Open mic and holiday celebrations
Molten Java
213 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
bethelctpride.com

Friday, December 19

Floral Workshop Holiday Centerpieces
11:00 a.m.
Materials provided
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
RSVP to mstillman@reddingct.gov or (203) 938-9725
\$, R

Saturday, December 20

Jingle All the Way!
2:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.
Sing-along with Holiday Handbells and Children's Chorus
Wilton Historical Society
224 Danbury Road
Wilton
musiconthehillct.org

Saturday, December 20

Procrastinators' Market
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Local vendors, find the perfect last-minute gift
Redding Grange #15
399 Newtown Turnpike
reddinggrange.org/events-and-activities

Sunday, December 21

Georgetown Holiday Festival
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Parade on Main Street followed by photos with Santa and festivities indoors
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org

Monday, December 22

Community Carol Sing
6:00 p.m.
Join the Joel Barlow music groups for an evening of holiday music
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike
jbhs.er9.org

Tuesday, December 23

Christmas Carol Sing-along
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Family friendly, hosted by Tracy Carlucci
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
nodhillbrewery.com/live-music-and-events
\$, R

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week's Featured Events

Music on the Hill presents *On this Silent Night*
Friday, December 5
7:30 p.m.
Festival Chorus with strings and harp, featuring Saint-Saëns Christmas Oratorio and other music of the season
10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport
musiconthehillct.org/events
\$

Redding Tree Lighting
Saturday, December 6
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Music, refreshments, Santa, fire pits, and tree lighting
Town Green
100 Hill Road
reddingct.gov

Redding Historical Society Holiday Open House
Monday, December 8
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Meet RHS members, explore the property, and browse merchandise
Lonetown Farmhouse and Zalmon Read Barn
43 Lonetown Road
reddinghistory.org

Want to feature an upcoming event?
E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.

ARTS

Saturday, November 22 – Saturday, January 3
Platform Presents Tiny Acts
Saturdays 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Group art exhibition of works with intimate scale
G-Town Arts
5 Main Street
gtownarts.org

Friday, November 28 – Saturday, January 3

101 Teapots by Frank Kara and Infused Group Exhibition
Saturdays 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
G-Town Arts
5 Main Street
gtownarts.org

Friday, December 5

First Fridays Creative Cocktail Hour
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
G-Town Arts
5 Main Street
gtownarts.org

Saturday, December 6 – Sunday, December 14

Mark Twain Library Art Show
Open during Library hours
Exhibition of art for sale with special programming
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
mtlartshow.org

Saturday, December 6

High Horse with Kat Wallace (Bluegrass Series)
7:00 p.m. Doors open
8:00 p.m. Show
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org
\$

Saturday, December 6

Lyrics Coffeehouse – David Morgan
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation
\$

Monday, December 8

Wine and Wisdom with the Jurors
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Hear from Art Show jurors and learn about their curatorial approach
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Friday, December 12

Interior Design Chat – Art and Design
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Learn how the right piece of art can transform a space
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Friday, December 12

Redding Neighbors & Newcomers Evening at G-Town Arts
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Conversation, community, and a closer look at works on view
G-Town Arts
5 Main Street
gtownarts.org

CHILDREN | TEENS

Friday, December 5
Design Your Own Winter Village
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
For age 4-13
Giggling Pig Art Studio
272 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
thegigglingpig.com/kids-events-bethel
\$, R

Saturday, December 13

Winter Stories by the Fire
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Drop-off program for ages 3-5
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Saturday, December 20

Connecticut Invention Convention – Innovation Expedition
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
For ages 8-11 years old, work in teams to solve a challenge and present solutions
Norwalk Housing Authority
EnVision Center
30 Day Street
Norwalk
wiltonymca.org/invention-convention
\$, R

HEALTH | WELLNESS

Sunday, December 7
Candlelight Yin & Restorative Yoga with Meditation
4:00 p.m.
Candelit session encouraging deep calm and relaxation
Yoga Station
9 Brookside Road
yogastationct.com/workshops-events
\$, R

Monday, December 8

JBHS Red Cross Club Blood Drive
7:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike
reddcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive
R

Wednesday, December 10

Mass Energy Healing with Aggregata
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Sacred morning of energetic renewal
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org
\$, R

Thursday, December 18

The Art of Calm: Meditation with Ancient Wisdom for Modern Lifestyles
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Virtual program
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

NATURE

Thursday, December 4
Forest History of Connecticut
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Explore the ecological processes and rich human history that transformed our forests into what they are today
Ridgefield Public Library
472 Main Street
Ridgefield
ridgefieldlibrary.org
R

Saturday, December 6

Winter Tracking and Tree Identification
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
In partnership with Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road
Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org
R

Monday December 15

Lunch Break Hike and Hang
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Meet at trailhead kiosk along main driveway
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road
Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org
R

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Saturday, December 6

Winter Walk
11:00 a.m.
Historical walking tour of the park followed by a re-enactment skirmish
Putnam Memorial State Park
499 Black Rock Turnpike
putnampark.org

Saturday, December 6

Cheers to One Year
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Celebrate first anniversary of The Shops at Auburn Landing with cocktails, desserts, and appetizers
The Shops at Auburn Landing
28 Main Street
Instagram @shops.at.auburn.landing

Tuesday, December 9

America 250 Community Conversation: The Declaration of Independence
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Discussion of responses to the Declaration of Independence
Ridgefield Public Library
472 Main Street
Ridgefield
ridgefieldlibrary.org
R

Wednesday, December 10

Night of Hope
6:30 p.m.
Panel of speakers on finding light through darkness, presented by Here for You
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org

MEETINGS

Thursday, December 4

Redding Safety Committee
4:00 p.m.
Virtual

Monday, December 8

League of Women Voters
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room
100 Hill Road

Monday, December 8

Board of Ethics
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room and Virtual
100 Hill Road and Zoom

Tuesday, December 9

Redding Fire District 1
7:00 p.m.
Redding Ridge Firehouse
186 Black Rock Turnpike

Tuesday, December 9

Planning Commission
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, December 10

Commission on Aging
9:00 a.m.
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road

Wednesday, December 10

Zoning Commission
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Thursday, December 11

Region 9 Curriculum Committee
8:30 a.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Room A108
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Thursday, December 11

Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual
100 Hill Road and Zoom

Thursday, December 11

Fire District #2 Commissioners Meeting
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road

Monday, December 15

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

Wednesday, December 16

Region 9 Board of Education Finance & Operations
5:30 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Wednesday, December 16

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

Wednesday, December 16

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

Thursday, December 17

Water Pollution Control Commission
7:30 p.m.
Virtual

***Sign-up to receive meeting agendas and notifications at reddingct.gov/subscribe**



Here's to new beginnings.

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