

REDDING SENTINEL

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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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\$3

Commission considers raising sewer fees

By Rocco Valluzzo

In an effort to bring the Georgetown sewer treatment plant to the point of eventually being self-funded, the Water Pollution Control Commission (WPC) discussed the possibility of raising user fees at its Wednesday, March 15 meeting.

An analysis of sewer usage since 2019 indicated that usage rates and revenues have both been decreasing while costs have increased. Prior to that year, revenues were staying above 50% of operating costs, according to WPC Chair Amy Atamian. Now they are well below that mark.

Costs that seem to be fluctuating the most involve equipment, maintenance, and supplies, and to a lesser extent sludge disposal fees. This fiscal year, the disposal fees have been higher.

If the plant were to see revenues pay for 50% of its operating costs at current usage rates, it would have to raise its rates by 26%, up to \$22 per 1,000 gallons. Atamian noted this change would be completely unreasonable.

If the facility was at full capacity (245,000 gallons per day) and were to have revenues cover expenses, it would have to increase its rates by 6%, or perhaps slightly more to have some cushion for the capital fund.

“And that’s at the full flow capacity – we’re not there yet,” said Atamian. “The Town is still going to have to subsidize the plant until we ever are fortunate enough to get more capacity.”

Currently, residential customer usage peaks at anywhere from 5,000 to 10,000 gallons per quarter, with most falling around the 7,500-gallon mark. Commercial usage covers a wide range, with Meadow Ridge having five accounts, four of them in excess of 100,000 gallons per quarter.

A consumer using 5,000 gallons per month is currently paying \$135 a quarter. If the rate is increased by 6%, it would be \$140 a quarter. An increase of 10% would be \$143 and \$145 at 12%.

“It’s not bad until you start getting down here to like Meadow Ridge, one million gallons a quarter,” said Atamian. “They could see a significant increase. Where in the 10 to 20,000 gallons per quarter, you’re only going to see maybe \$11 to \$20 change per quarter in the rate bill if we’re using this type of scenario where we’re just increasing the charge per 1,000 gallons.”

Although there are no new customers at the moment, there are those behind development efforts in the Branchville area of Ridgefield who are interested in using the plant. The Western Connecticut Council of Governments is currently conducting a study to look at total capacity of the plant, what the usage might be in Georgetown, and potentially what the usage might be in the

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Photo by Luann Stoner

A pair of horses in a reflective moment at the pond at Canine College on Marchant Road. If you have a photo you’d like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

Budget nears completion following public hearing

By Jessie Wright

The Board of Finance held a public hearing on Monday, March 20, where both the Board of Selectmen and Redding Board of Education presented their respective approved budgets and community members were given the chance to weigh in.

Overall, the tenor of the hearing was measured, with members of the Board of Finance asking few clarifying questions and public comment running only approximately 15 minutes. The Board of Finance made no vote or action on any of the numbers – discussion will continue in subsequent meetings before the budgets are finalized and a Town referendum is set later this spring.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton noted that two adjustments had occurred since the Board of Selectmen approved their budget last week. The first was a new, mandatory increase for the Town’s contribution to Connecticut’s Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS) which was just announced, leading to an increase of \$120,000 next fiscal year. CMERS is the public pension plan provided by the State for participating municipalities’ employees. The second change fortunately offsets this unexpected expense – the Town was recently able to negotiate a 5% increase for its health insurance coverage next year, where it had initially budgeted a 6% increase. While line-item values have shifted as a result, the proposed overall budget number remains at \$16,306,554, a 2.48% increase from last fiscal year.

ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon and Redding Board of Education Chair Chris Parkin led the Redding Board of Education presentation. McKinnon maintained his focus on the district’s strategic priorities and highlighted how several budget items for next year are directly linked to these identified goals. Some of those expenditures include the addition of a dedicated K-8 Mathematics Coordinator, an ELL (English Language Learner) Teacher, a Structured Literacy Teacher, new science curriculum, and the development of a Grade 8 capstone project.

Both McKinnon and several members of the public in attendance noted a decline in student performance at Redding schools in recent years and urged the Board of Finance to fund these action items that tie back to the strategic plan in place to improve the district.

“I think you live in a remarkable community,” said McKinnon. “Everyone here clearly values

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CT PTA names Outstanding Educators

By Jessie Wright



Dr. Jason McKinnon

The CT PTA (Parent Teacher Association) has announced this year’s “Outstanding Educators” awards, with educators in ER9 taking the top prize in three of the ten categories.

Dr. Jason McKinnon was named “Outstanding Superintendent” for his work as Superintendent of the Easton-Redding-Region 9 school districts. Nora Gaydos, Grade 6 English Language Arts teacher at John Read



Nora Gaydos

Middle School, was named “Outstanding Middle School Teacher”, and Shannon Cormier, a Paraeducator in Pre-K-Kindergarten at Redding Elementary School, was named “Outstanding Paraprofessional” for 2023.

Applause and cheers broke out among those attending the Board of Finance public hearing on Monday, March 20 when Redding Board of Education Chair Chris Parkin shared the news.



Shannon Cormier

Teachers, administrators, and volunteers from across the Connecticut were nominated by the leaders of their local PTA’s for consideration. Colleagues, students, and families also provided letters and messages of recommendation as part of the nomination process. All the winners will be honored at an awards dinner held on Wednesday, April 26 at the Sheraton Hartford South in Rocky Hill. ■

REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Turkington Falls Trail

By Scott MacMillan



Photo by Scott MacMillan

The historical record has little to say of Oliver Turkington except the following, which is plenty for our purposes: He was born in Armagh, in what is now Northern Ireland, in 1781, into a family of landed gentry. When it came time to marry, for reasons un-

clear, Oliver’s father disapproved strongly of his choice of a wife, a woman named Ann Rudock. Ann and Oliver clearly had something special, because the son told the father where to put it and married Ann anyway. The father then disinherited the son, who emigrated

with Ann to the New World and settled in a place called Redding, where Oliver set up shop as a weaver. The couple did well for themselves, having 13 children, and by the time he died in 1866 – Ann having predeceased him 17 years earlier – Oliver had built or acquired three dwellings and 109 acres of land. True love pays off!

What’s this have to do with hiking? Fast forward to 2001, when the Town of Redding, together with the Nature Conservancy and with backing from the State, acquired five new properties, including parts of the old Turkington estate. On one of these properties, there was said to be a waterfall – an unnamed stream flowing through a ravine, deep in the untouched forest north of John Read Middle School, in the woods on the right side of Redding Road when one is Bethel-bound. Stuart Green, a member of the Town’s

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EDITORIAL

A fiery orange and red sunset tinged the sky behind the Redding Community Center on Monday night as residents made their way into the building for the public hearing on the 2023-2024 budget. Competing priorities, tax implications, and differing philosophies on spending can rankle even the closest of friends and colleagues – there was an air of preparation for tense moments as everyone took their seats.

And yet – those moments rarely materialized. Much of the public comment made was in support of the budget; questions were respectful, explanations were thorough. As some of the participants walked out of the building following the meeting, murmurs of, “Everyone was so nice this year” and “There wasn’t much to argue with” could be heard.

Perhaps it was the new budgeting process this year, particularly by the Board of Education, that provided transparency and strategic rigor to the numbers, which have been available to the public already for months. Perhaps it was the economic climate we all find ourselves in, and a shared understanding that many increases this year are out of the Town’s control. Perhaps it was the beautiful spring weather that day. I wonder – and hope, in small part – that perhaps additional sources of information on the process have helped to encourage productive discussion.

Whatever the reasons, there was admirable civility in Redding this week.

There will be another opportunity to come together and speak with our leaders and neighbors next week at the Redding League of Women Voters Speak Up event on Wednesday, March 29. I hope to see many of our readers there and be just as proud to be part of Redding as I was this Monday evening. ■

Utility work underway to replace wood with metal poles

By Donna Christopher

Several residents have contacted the Sentinel and Highway Department about utility work being done in recent weeks by Eversource, including along John Todd Way.

The work is a right-of-way maintenance project, which is underway in Redding and Bethel. Eversource gave notice to the Towns and residents affected by the areas back in September.

Director of Public Works James Gracy has been aware of the work and has heard from several residents recently inquiring about the activity. “Eversource does not have to notify Public Works when they are changing the wood to metal poles, but they did let the Town know in the fall,” he said.

Media Relations for Ever-

source Mitch Gross said the work involves the replacement of older wooden structures with steel structures that “weather” or darken over time. “John Todd Way area is one of those locations,” Gross explained.

A letter with the details was sent to community officials and property owners affected at the locations, informing them of this upgrade and that similar projects are being done in rights of way across the state.

A sub-petition filed in September outlines the maintenance work that includes replacing 12 existing single circuit H-frame wood laminate transmission line support structures on the 3402 Line with new H-frame weathering steel structures. ■

Let there be light Town Hall windows installed after months-long wait



Photo by Susan Clark

New windows were installed at Town Hall last week in the Hearing Room, after supply chain delays had left the area boarded up for several months.

Budget nears completion following public hearing / Continued from page 1

and cares about education, and we have some of the best teachers and staff in Connecticut.”

However, McKinnon noted that Redding students are currently scoring below the “DRG A” average, a group of peer schools that includes Darien, Easton, New Canaan, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.

“I don’t think we are where we could be,” McKinnon continued. “It’s really important that over

the next three to four years, we pay close attention to our strategic priorities, because those priorities are a roadmap or a blueprint to get better... When we think about a budget, I really want us to think about not what we can afford, but what we value. Because I feel like we have a lot more work to do.” ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

With reference to the March 9, 2023 article by Robert E. Moran on Artificial Intelligence and the arrival of Open AI technology, here is an example of what AI can do. What comes next in this unexplored space is limited only by the imagination.

Spring’s Arrival:
A Poem by ChatGPT (prompted by Dan Souza)

As winter’s chill begins to fade And snowdrifts start to melt away We sense that spring is on its way Bringing new life to every glade

The birds return from southern shores Their melodies once more we’ll hear And buds emerge from barren floors As trees begin to green and cheer

The grass will soon need mowing too As longer days approach with glee And kids on spring break will pursue Adventures with boundless energy

We pack away our winter clothes And don lighter jackets instead While dreaming of summer’s warm repose With shorts and sandals in our heads

Yes, spring is here, and that’s a sign That summer’s not too far behind So let’s enjoy this hopeful time And leave our winter woes behind

Dan Souza
Fire Hill Road

Early start to Earth Day clean-up

By Alice Smith and Sandi Martin



Because every day is Earth Day for this “green team”, we got an early start and picked up some roadside trash during our lunch hour on Umpawaug Road (from

Parson’s Lane to Route 107).

Look how much we gathered! We calculated that it is around 45 pounds.

You don’t need to wait for this

year’s “Earth Day/Rid Litter/Help Build Mt. Trashmore” event to help out. Start at the edge of your property to see what’s been tossed. You won’t believe what you find.

We invite and encourage you to join us (and volunteer) on April 22, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to help us build our annual mountain of trash as well as learn about all the different initiatives that are happening at our local Transfer Station, Town and State. Check the townofreddingct.org/events calendar for details.

Thank you for keeping Redding Green and Clean and making every day Earth Day! ■

Alice Smith
(Redding Selectman’s Office)
& Sandi Martin (Fox Run Road)

Redding League of Women Voters to host 5th Annual Speak Up on March 29



The Redding League of Women Voters (LWV) will host their 5th Annual Speak Up on Wednesday, March 29 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Redding Community Center. All Redding residents, young and old, are invited to attend this unique New England-style open forum where residents can ask their questions and voice their concerns.

“We’re excited to be bringing together such an interesting and accomplished panel of our Town officials. It is not often that you get in one room such a wide array of elected officials, key Town employees, and volunteer board and commission chairs,” said Kim O’Rielly, Redding LWV President. A deep bench of panelists will be in attendance, including First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon, and Director of Human Services Angelica Fontanez. “This is a

great opportunity to not only get answers, but to also put a face to a name. You never know what will be asked, and I am often surprised about what I’ve learned and what new things are shared about our community,” continued O’Rielly.

It’s springtime, and that means it is also budget season. The Speak Up is a great opportunity to ask those unanswered questions about next year’s Town budget that we all will be voting on in May. With First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, Board of Finance Vice-Chair Ward Mazzucco, and ER9 Superintendent Dr. McKinnon all in attendance, there is a breadth of knowledge waiting to be tapped.

But it’s not just about the budget; no question is too small, no issue is too big for the Speak Up. In the past, topics have included Georgetown redevelopment, the need for new playgrounds, speeding on our rural

roads, keeping Redding green, dog-friendly trails, and protecting residents against fraud. All Town departments will be represented – from the Police Department to Park and Recreation; from the Highway Department to the Building Department.

The Redding League of Women Voters is especially looking forward to welcoming Easton-Redding-Region 9 School Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon. Dr. McKinnon was recently named the 2023 Outstanding Superintendent by the Connecticut PTA. Also in attendance will be Redding’s new Director of Public Works, Jamie Gracy, whose department is responsible for maintaining the 92.96 miles of Town roads, and Shaun Donnelly, Chief Building Official, who oversees permitting for all new construction, remodeling, additions, and renovations.

The Redding LWV is honored that several of our fellow volunteer residents will also be sitting on the panel. These are our neighbors

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Redding Sentinel Ltd believes in supporting the community it serves.
We pledge to donate all profits to local community organizations.

Ribbon-cutting at Lonetown Marsh

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton cuts the ribbon on the new Lonetown Marsh boardwalk with Stuart Green (left) and Dave Pattee (right).

Sunshine and birdsong filled the air on the first day of spring this week – a fitting backdrop for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new boardwalk through Lonetown Marsh. Town officials, school administrators, and conservation enthusiasts met at the entrance to the recently-refurbished boardwalk on Monday, March

20 as Conservation Commission Chair Dave Pattee and lead Trail Tender Stuart Green welcomed First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to officially open the eighth-of-a-mile wheelchair-accessible trail.

In years past, Lonetown Marsh was often used by neighboring Redding Elementary School for

science and nature coursework and activities. One of the hopes for the new boardwalk is that students will once again have access to the natural area for educational purposes.

“It’s just wonderful to have this amenity back, given that this is our first open space that the Town purchased with public funds,” said Green. “I remember bringing our children here when the scouts first built the boardwalk.”

“My son is now 56 years old, and he went to Redding Elementary School, and he remembers walking on the boardwalk,” added Pattee.

The boardwalk entrance is located on Lonetown Road, across the street from Redding Elementary School. Nazzaro Inc., construction company based in Georgetown, rebuilt the boardwalk this winter, connecting it to an observation platform overlooking the Marsh. ■

Wire Mill committee explores additional grants

By Rocco Valluzzo

To help fund the clean-up and future development of the 44 acres of Town-owned land in Georgetown, the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee is looking into additional grants from both the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and other agencies.

Tighe & Bond, a Middletown-based engineering firm, is conducting an environmental data gap analysis of the property. This was funded by a \$200,000 Brownfield assessment grant the Town of Redding received from the DECD in July 2021.

James Olsen, an engineer with Tighe & Bond, said his firm is putting together a work plan for some of the costs identified as part of the analysis. While there may not be enough funding in the current Brownfield grant to cover all the data gaps, Olsen recommended applying for another assessment grant to be used to complete some of those other tasks.

“I think the prudent thing to do is to go through these data gaps and figure out which are the significant ones and then tackle those first and see if maybe we can close them out,” Olsen told the committee at its March 9 meeting. “That’s something we would recommend in the next step.”

He also mentioned a \$200,000 Brownfield area-wide planning grant that will be announced

sometime this month. This, he thought, would fund other parts of the project.

“There’s enough money there and probably even some more if you were to get the full \$200,000,” said Olsen. “We have to think a little bit more about how we can tie into some more of the work that’s needed, like on the river walls, the buildings or whatever.”

According to Committee Chair Amy Atamian, there are also three new DECD grants that were just announced. One is an assessment grant with the cap of \$400,000, which seems like the most likely grant that the Town should pursue.

The second is a \$4 million remediation grant in which the DECD has a preference for projects with a definite plan.

“That doesn’t really seem that it’s in the cards yet,” Atamian said. “We just don’t have that kind of level of planning for the area.”

The third grant is the community challenge grant. With a cap of \$10 million, it could be the last bit of money that would go into the project to really make it viable, according to Atamian.

Should the Town receive any of these grants, the committee recommended that the Planning Commission take up hiring a planner to develop a master plan for the Georgetown area that would include perhaps a separate, smaller master plan for the development of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property. ■

Middle school musicians shine in Western Region Festival

By Jessie Wright

Thirty-two students from John Read Middle School performed as part of the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) Western Region Festival on Saturday, March 18.

A regional, audition-based festival, the CMEA Western Region Festival showcases some of the best of the area’s young musicians in chorus, band, jazz ensemble, and (new this year), strings.

Students auditioned for the groups on December 5, having prepared their audition materials after school with JRMS music teachers Kevin Duffy and Dave Ebert for months beforehand.

Students had to prepare an excerpt of music and sing or play a scale passage for their auditions; for jazz band, students also had to perform an improvised solo. JRMS has a particularly strong

cohort of musicians this year, according to Ebert.

“We ended up with 26 kids who qualified and were accepted for the Western Regional choir, which was just unprecedented, just crazy,” said Ebert. One of those students opted to play in the Western Region concert band (she plays the flute in addition to choir, for which she also qualified). Six more instrumentalists made the festival.

“One is a jazz band student, who for the third year in a row is going for jazz piano – which is also unprecedented,” said Ebert. “They take two jazz pianists a year, and Austin Bradford made the jazz ensemble for the third year in a row.”

The students rehearsed their Festival music with Ebert and Duffy for the last month, and then came together with

qualifiers from other schools as an ensemble to rehearse for four hours on Friday, March 17 and five hours on Saturday, March 18 before performing in the Festival concerts later that day at Wilton High School.

“It’s generally a more challenging level,” Ebert said. “There are students from the various schools who are very talented as well, and so they are getting to work with – if it’s choir, maybe the best 100 students in this part of the state who have auditioned for this. So, it’s a step up from what we do in a general chorus or band or string group at our school, so we can do more challenging music.”

Some of the highlights from the Festival this year included a song from the straits of Australia, a spiritual, and a piece from a local, Connecticut composer. ■

CLASSIFIED

Redding Land Trust is requesting expressions of interest from marketing and communications professionals and firms interested in contracting to support social media, membership outreach, and website upgrades (<https://reddingctlandtrust.org/>). Interested parties should contact Richard Wenning, Redding Land Trust Board member, for more information, at rich@befoundation.org or 203-938-9000.

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SPORTS

Barlow cheerleading team wins New England championship



Photo by Eric Stark

The Barlow varsity cheerleading team won the New England Regional Cheerleading Competition on Saturday, March 18 at Worcester State University in Worcester, MA. The team had advanced to the regional competition following their second place win in Class L at the Connecticut State Championships on Saturday, March 4. **Back Row (left to right):** Head Coach Jamie Krivosta, Hailey Romano, Emily Bruce, Jessica Wiesenfeld, Assistant Coach Samantha Aurelia. **Front Row (left to right):** Camila Mendez, Alexa Stark, Kimberly Moughty, Grace Downing, Haileigh Sanzari, Holly Landa.

Falcons are 18th in Class M finals

By Rocco Valluzzo

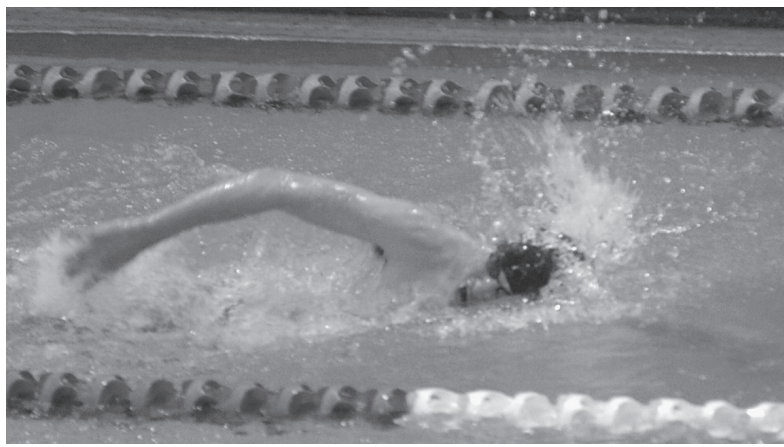


Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow/Bethel High's Lance Hansen was 18th overall in the 50-yard freestyle at the state Class M boys swimming finals on Thursday, March 16. Barlow/Bethel was also 18th overall as a team with 108 points.

The final meet of the season would perhaps be the most difficult for the Joel Barlow/Bethel High boys swim team.

The Falcons were one of 19 teams to take part in the state Class M championships last Thursday, March 16. It was quite a tough field of competitors, as they placed 18th

overall with 108 points at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.

Defending champ Pomperaug easily won its third straight title, this time with 834. Wilton was a distant runner up with 447, and Avon was third with 391.

Barlow/Bethel was represented

in only five of the 12 events and had only five swimmers competing. Its first points came in the 50-yard freestyle. Finishing in 23.43 seconds, Lance Hansen took 18th overall. Two places later was Connor Zhu in 23.67.

Zhu also represented his team in the 100 free. Finishing in 50.82, he was 12th overall.

The team also qualified for the 200 free relay. Here, Hansen, Caeden Frederickson, Benjamin Funk, and Zhu combined for a 1:37.86, beating their seed time and taking 13th.

The team's best finish of the day came in the 100 backstroke. Hansen beat his seed time by 0.23 seconds and was seventh overall. Frederickson also scored in the event, placing 22nd in 1:03.20.

Finishing the meet for the Falcons in the 400 free relay, Zhu, Sofiane Hilmi, Frederickson, and Hansen finished in 3:42.15, good for 13th. ■

Redding League of Women Voters / Continued from page 2

and friends who contribute their time and talent to keep our town thriving. Joining the event will be Ward Mazzucco, Board of Finance Vice-Chair; Dan Barrett, Planning Commission Chair; Angela Caes, Park and Recreation Commission Co-Chair; and others.

There are few rules for this

open forum. The Redding LWV promotes civility and respect and asks that questions be well thought out, short (to allow time for all to be heard), and respectful to those questioned. The nice thing about the Speak Up is that one does not have to shout to be heard. Everyone is listening to the

insightful questions and focused on our Town officials' thoughtful answers. This is democracy in action – the New England way.

Mark your calendars for March 29 at 7:00 p.m. and plan to join in the 5th Annual Speak Up. ■

Cycling in Redding Gearing up

By Matt Miller

After reading the first installment of this series last week, I hope you have overcome any lingering inertia or trepidations about riding a bicycle in Redding and are ready to get on the road.

If you have an old bike lying around, you're going to get it tuned up, ideally at a bike shop. We're not just talking about some oil and air in the tires. All the cables, brakes, hubs, and derailleurs must also be checked!

If you are going to spring for a new bike, let's get started. Remember, this is the time to find a good local bike shop (there are several), not Walmart. I'll break this down into all the key components, as the choices will be a little daunting, and the prices will go from several hundred to vast fortunes depending on the frame and components.

You get what you pay for, and a good shop will also help guide you.

1. Frame material and size: In order of cost (lowest to highest), you can get steel, aluminum, carbon fiber, or titanium. Without attempting a treatise:

- Steel: the old standard – reliable, but heavier
- Aluminum – a good affordable choice on a budget
- Carbon fiber – a great combination of strength, light weight, and flexibility
- Titanium – better suited for long-distance touring

I have had (and ridden) all of these frame materials at one time or another, but I now ride carbon fiber exclusively.

Before we get into the rest, the frame size is also important. Although you can raise or lower a seat, you should be comfortable on the bike and be able to reach the handlebars without feeling stretched out or cramped. Sitting on the seat, with feet flat on the pedals at 90 degrees (one up, one down), your "down" knee should be slightly bent.

2. Wheels and tires: Most wheels will be spoked, which is fine, with variable quality. The key question is tires. If you're going for a "road" bike, the tires will be thin, with some tread. They will probably have an inner tube that will accommodate a high pressure (up to 120 psi). The idea is to have only as much contact with the road as you need, because there are only two variables that limit your speed (independent of weight and fitness): road resistance and air. We'll talk about air and wind later, but a wider tire with more tread will slow you down. And yes, a wider tire can also give you more security on rougher surfaces. An upgrade is a tubeless tire, like your car. They are pricier, but give a softer ride at slightly lower pressure, and because of a sealant, are more resistant to getting a flat.

3. Gears: As noted last week, most road bikes will have two gears (chain rings) in front and six or more in the back (cluster). The highest (hardest) gear is using the largest ring in front and the smallest in back, and vice versa for the lowest (easiest) gear. Just make sure you have a range that will give you a low enough gear to get up the hills you plan to ride. Don't worry too much about the highest gear. Almost all variations will include a high enough gear to satisfy your "need for speed".

Generally, shifters these days will be reachable from your handlebars without moving your hands, with front gears controlled on the left and rear gears controlled on the right. Gear shifting these days is "indexed", meaning a "click" will shift the gear exactly the right amount. This is very easy, but a fancy upgrade is "electronic" shifters in which the shift is battery-powered. Very cool, and it makes it easier to shift gears very often. More on that next week.

4. Seat: If you're new to this game, a soft, wide padded seat sounds nice, but in fact, a narrower seat with a little groove down the

middle will end up being more comfortable. You really want to sit on your pelvis bones (ischial tuberosities – you really don't want long distances on your butt muscles).

5. Pedals: If you've never ridden with cleats that attach the pedal to your bike shoes, you may be tempted to get a regular flat pedal. If you've got the nerve or previous experience, please get a cleated pedal. We'll talk later about technique, but you have vastly more control and power if your foot is attached to the pedal. Yeah, you will have to learn how to do it, and you'll fall over a couple of times, but trust me, it's worth it.

6. Brakes: Many bikes, particularly less expensive ones, will still have caliper brakes on both wheels, with your left hand controlling the front brake and right hand controlling the rear. Many manufacturers are now moving to disc brakes, which will have more stopping power and will handle wet conditions better. Go for it if your budget allows.

A last word on choosing a type of bicycle: if you want to ride asphalt roads, but either aspire to ride on gravel and dirt OR just don't love the idea of a skinny tire on uneven asphalt with potholes and frost heaves (Redding roads can be like that sometimes), you may want a gravel bike. That's fine. All the advice above still applies.

Now, since I want you to have everything you need to get out there, we must talk about essential equipment. And I mean ESSENTIAL.

1. Helmet: Not negotiable. All the time. Don't leave the house without it.

2. Bike shoes: A good bike shoe, even on a flat pedal, has a firm sole that will be much better for transferring power to the pedal. If you get cleats, the shoe attachment to the cleat can either be sticking out the bottom (which is ideal but does make it impossible to walk) or inset into the sole. If you really want to save money at first, including having a flat pedal, wear comfortable running shoes.

3. Gloves: A padded bike glove will cushion your palm from bike vibrations and will help protect your hand from nasty abrasions if you ever fall.

4. Sunglasses: Not just for sun. You really don't want bugs flying into your eyes at 15 miles per hour.

5. Padded bike shorts: I don't care if you refuse to wear lycra. But a seamless pad in the shorts is worth it, because seams between a bike seat and your butt are just plain unfriendly after a short while.

6. Light: Some sort of flashing light, at least in the back attached to your seat post, is invaluable. Even in broad daylight, evidence has proven that cars are far more likely to see you and pay attention if you have a light.

7. Water: You're going to get thirsty, because you're going to sweat (which will evaporate). Stay hydrated and put a bike water bottle in a water bottle cage attached to the frame (get two cages). Put whatever you want in there. Maybe not beer.

8. Little seat bag: Good to have to carry tools for changing a tire, CO2 cartridges for flats, maybe a few bucks, and a spare inner tube.

9. Floor tire pump (for home): A bike is not like your car. You'll have to put air in your tires every time you ride.

Whatever you buy, the expert at your bike shop will not only guide you but will also make sure your bike is adjusted to your body. Take the time to do that. In the next installment, we'll cover basic techniques for road riding.

In the meantime, go outside and play. ■

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Students to compete in State Invention Convention

By Susan Dorenbosch



Eight John Read Middle School (JRMS) 8th graders and nine 5th graders will compete in the state level of the Connecticut Invention Convention this year. The Invention Convention is a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) competition.

To reach the state level, students first competed in their grade level local JRMS Invention Convention. All JRMS 5th and 8th grade students designed, built, and presented an original invention. Students followed the engineering design process to develop their creations, made a prototype of their designs, and created a trifold display to explain and present their thinking.

The winners were chosen to advance to compete in the state semifinals. The state semi-finalists will participate in a virtual competition, where each student submits a video to the Connecticut Invention Convention.

Rebecca Richards (STIC/STEM staff), Bryan Donnelly (Grade 5 teacher) and Bryan Holmes (Grade 8 teacher) served as advisors to students for the local competition and will be working with the winners as they navigate the next steps. Students will be notified toward the end of April if chosen to advance to the state finals. The state finals will be a live competition at UCONN's Student Union on Saturday, June 10, 2023.

JRMS 5th Grade Invention Convention Winners - March 9, 2023

Julia Verses:
Mr. Seedy

Solves the problem of having seeds in your smoothies. It has a strainer built into the bottom of the straw, so as you raise the straw out of the smoothie, it catches the seeds much like a fishing net would work.

Aly Bennett / Taylor Kreitz:
King of Cones

Solves the age-old problem of dripping ice cream. The cone has a flared candy ring that catches the dripping ice cream to be enjoyed later.

David Thrasher:
The Thrasher Trasher

This idea was thought of when David was home sick. It solves the problem of always having to get up to throw away your tissues by combining a garbage can and a tissue box.

Luke Stevenson:
Canine Cleaner

The Canine Cleaner is a specialized crate that your dog goes into to get washed up before going back into the house. It is almost like a carwash for canines and prevents muddy paws from wreaking havoc in your home.

Maebh Rinaldi:
Flip & Dip

This invention is for artists who are lazy, clumsy, or are just crunched for time. It is a paint brush that has a built-in water tube. Artists can paint, flip out the brush, and dip it into the water tube.

Hadley Schuchard:
Uniyola Pencil Sharpener Cover

This solves the problem of your pencil tip breaking in your bag. There is a pencil cap to prevent pressure on the actual pencil tip, and a pencil sharpener attached to the cap. The sharpener lets you sharpen your pencil manually if your tip does end up breaking.

Charlotte Walker:
T-E-B (The Entertainment Briefcase)

This solves the problem of kids getting bored during long trips. It is an all-in-one case that has a whiteboard front, a blackboard back, and markers, chalk, mazes and puzzles inside.

Hadley MacDonald:
The Heater Hat

The purpose of this invention is to help swimmers keep their wet heads warm and dry when going outside in the winter after their indoor practices and competitions.

JRMS 8th Grade Invention Convention Winners - March 2, 2023

Katie Kinyon:
Bio Paper

To solve the problem of tons of toxic gift wrapping paper being sent to landfills each year, Bio Paper is biodegradable and is decorated with biodegradable algae-based inks.

Max Anstett:
Fishstalker

To solve the problem of having a sonar fish detector that is difficult to place by casting it, and can be lost, the Fishstalker puts the sonar on a remote controlled model boat

that can be accurately placed and easily retrieved.

Sara Fenzel:
Butter Stick

To solve the problem of trying to spread melted butter on toast or corn with a knife, which is slow and messy, the Butter Stick uses a dispenser similar to a glue stick to dispense the butter quickly and neatly.

Ripley Robinson:
The Coco Bag

To solve the problem of plastic pollution caused by single use shopping bags, the Coco Bag is a strong, reusable bag made from biodegradable coconut fibers.

Jade Collins:
Double It Up

To solve the problem of taking a long time to bake a large batch of cupcakes, where each pan of cupcakes must be baked one at a time, the Double It Up is a stack of two cupcake pans angled so that all the cupcakes bake evenly.

Alya Poliscuk-Strazdas:
Mel-low Memory

To solve the problem where people under stress tend to dig their fingernails into their skin, harming themselves in the process, the Mellow Memory is a handheld device that allows someone to dig their nails into it with the same sensation, but without harming themselves.

Allison Prugh:
The Hearing

To solve the problem of having a hearing aid fall out and possibly get damaged or lost, the Hearing provides a discrete cord that attaches the hearing aid to an earring, a more attractive alternative to the hearing aid guards on the market that look like headbands.

Kimaya Sajit:
The Easy Play

To solve the problem of having your pet's toys get lost under furniture or elsewhere, the Easy Play is a pet bed that has attachments for up to five toys, keeping them neatly in place. ■

Barlow Robotics team sets sights on next tourney

By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of Joel Barlow High School

Members of the Joel Barlow FIRST Robotics team took part in an area tournament recently at Wilby High School in Waterbury. Standing (L-R) are Mentor Bill Kinahan, Nate Knorr, Julia Vassallo, Co-Captain Alex Weiss, Siddarth Gupta, Ryan Scala, Brian Weiss, Co-Captain Peyton Lecher, Brady Decker, Annabella Rosa, Teresa Rodrigues, Tobias Manayath, and Tate English. Kneeling are Randy Riveria, Emily Ploss, Kenji Perrett, Samantha Navin, and Christina Roby. Missing from photo are Matt Arnold, Jeff Berg, Giulia Dos Santos, Aubrey Gil, Angela Humphry, Mateo Jara, Priti Kiefer, Caroline Roby, Addison Vanderburg, and Lila Voytek.

The Joel Barlow FIRST Robotics team had a mixed bag of results at its first competition, held Saturday, March 11 at Wilby High School in Waterbury.

"Our bot didn't perform quite the way we wanted, costing us points in the field," said Bill Kinahan, the Sikorsky retiree who serves as senior mentor for the Barlow team. "But this also was an opportunity for our team members to conduct tests and fix things quickly between matches, so that the robot could continue to compete."

On the plus side, the team earned several important accolades. Key among these, it won the Engineering Inspiration Award, which FIRST describes as celebrating "outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering within a team's school or organization and community."

Earning this award was based in part on an entry essay and an interview by FIRST officials with Co-Captain Peyton Lecher.

"The FIRST officials said to me that their interview with Peyton blew them away," said Kinahan. Because it received the area award, the Barlow team will compete for the district-level Engineering Inspiration Award, he added. That event takes place April 6 through 8 in West Springfield, Massachusetts at Eastern States Exposition complex.

Additionally, the students nominated Kinahan for the district's Woodie Flowers Award. The regional finalist will be announced during the West Springfield tournament.

Being in the mix for both of these awards means the team will take part in the regional event. "However, that doesn't mean our robot will get to compete," said Kinahan. Much will depend on how the robot – which has been named Mantis by the Barlow team – performs in its next Connecticut

tournament. That's set for Friday, March 31 through Sunday, April 2 at Hartford Public High School. The robot will need to do well to make up for its rather prosaic performance at the Waterbury tournament.

"The team needs a total of 55 points [to make it to the West Springfield competition]," said Kinahan. "We got 16 in Waterbury, which means we'll need to get 39 more points in Hartford – which is tough to do." Kinahan explains that the region's top 90 teams get to compete in the district competition, and that 55-point mark is typically the cutoff for getting to take part in the district-level tournament.

In preparation for the Hartford event, the team is reprogramming the robot to make better moves. "We have some ideas on how to make the robot compete in more the way we want it to...and if it does, we should do pretty well in Hartford," said Kinahan.

The programming nature of the current work illustrates the multifaceted nature of a FIRST Robotics team. Software and engineering are key functions. The team also encompasses machining and carpentry skills, which were key in both the robot's construction and in building the team's practice field.

Several team members with graphics skills created logos for the robot bearing the name of the sponsor companies. There's even a team member with sewing skills, who spent several weeks creating patterns and cutting material to create the robot's removable bumpers. "It's like a small company," said Kinahan.

The group's team spirit was in strong evidence in Waterbury. "Our students were loud when they needed to be – especially cheering on our team's robot driver, who is a rookie this year," said Kinahan. "That team spirit is great, because we will have to run the table in Hartford." ■

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LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS OF REDDING

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5TH ANNUAL SPEAK UP

WHAT IS A SPEAK UP?
An open community forum where Redding's elected leaders, chairs of appointed boards, committees, and commissions, and key town and school officials take questions from Redding residents about our community and government issues.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO:

- ASK QUESTIONS**
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- GET INFORMED**
Get to know our town officials and get informed about how our town works.
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- Director of Public Works Jamie Gracy
- Chief Building Official Shaun Donnelly
- Redding Police Department
- Co-Chair Park & Rec Commission Angela Caes
- Chair of Planning Commission Dan Barrett
- And others

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF REDDING

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REMEMBERING REDDING

Aunt Julia | By Bruce Nelson



Julia Hill Sanford



A group of visitors in front of Julia Sanford's house in 1906



The house in 1937

As the elm trees shed their final leaves in the late autumn of 1924, passers-by could see the shades had been drawn, and the large white house that had entertained so many guests and provided shelter for numerous folks less fortunate than its owner was by then without life. Aunt Julia wouldn't be hosting Thanksgiving that year.

In 1819, Aaron Sanford Jr. and his wife, Fanny, began raising their eleven children in the elegant house behind the white picket fence that sat about a hundred yards south of Meeker Hill Road on the Black Rock Turnpike. Aaron's father had been one of the founding members of the Redding Methodist Society. Sanford agreed to hold the first service in his own home on Cross Highway on June 24, 1789 – the minister that day was the great Jessie Lee, the circuit riding preacher who convinced the good people of Redding to establish what would be only the second Methodist Society in the United States.

Most of Aaron and Fanny's children would grow up to be extremely successful in their chosen professions. Son Daniel would attend university and then become an educator. In 1858, he founded his own boarding school, the Redding Institute, located on the Ridge, about a half mile north of the family homestead. Henry Sanford would be one of the founders of the Adams Express Company and then serve as its president for many years. Aaron Sanford III would be elected the High Sheriff of Fairfield County before serving as the president of the Newtown Savings Bank. Daughter Mary Elizabeth would marry Marshall Driggs, the president of the Williamsburg Fire Insurance Company in New York City, while her sister Fanny would wed Edward Shaw, an educator who taught at her brother's institute

prior to becoming its headmaster. And son Jessie Lee would become one of Redding's most successful farmers on a tract of land that sat just north of Meeker Hill Road.

But it was youngest daughter, Julia Hill Sanford, who would remain on the family homestead and take over for her father when he could no longer manage the farm on his own. When her father passed in 1875, he willed life use of the house and farm to Julia.

By 1880, the federal non-population schedule showed Julia's farm consisted of about forty acres of land. The remainder of the original farmstead lands had been divided among her siblings after her father had passed and his will had been probated. But despite the smaller footprint, Julia had greatly increased the number of livestock from the previous decennial schedule when her father had still been in charge. She then had half a dozen cows, about a dozen sheep, several pigs, and some twenty chickens. Her farm was capable of providing all the milk, butter, eggs, beef, mutton, and pork she would need, and she was selling several calves and lambs each year that would provide her with extra cash.

During those first ten years Julia ran the farm, she built an additional barn across the road and added a wing onto the north side of the house to accommodate the needs of her new housemate, Doctor Annie Reid, Redding's first female physician. Annie's stepmother was Julia's aunt, and Annie's father a prominent Methodist minister who later became the president of Genesee College (Syracuse University).

In addition to Annie Reid, Julia's nephew, Samuel Carter Shaw, the son of her late sister Fanny was living in the house in 1880. After becoming an attorney, Shaw would later be appointed as a judge and then elected as a

member of the state legislature representing Redding.

Julia's home was one of the first on the Ridge to having running water at both the house and the outbuildings. In 1892, she had a windmill, a water tower, and a large holding tank installed that would provide a steady flow of water to service all the needs of the farm.

By the turn of the century, Julia's large and prosperous out-of-town family had become regular visitors to her home on the Ridge. While she was indeed an aunt to many Sanford family members, other guests soon began calling her aunt, and it wasn't long before practically everyone in Redding was referring to her as Aunt Julia as well.

Her brother-in-law, Marshall Driggs, was a frequent visitor, often bringing along members of his side of the family from New York City to hunt pheasant and quail on the weekends. Marshall's nephew, Fred, became particularly enthralled with the town and Julia soon made arrangements to acquire a tract of land in the Aspetuck Valley for the younger Driggs.

It wasn't long before Julia was either representing or buying and selling land to all those who found Redding to be a mecca for wealthy business owners, writers, and artists. Author Jeanette Gilder took up residence just south of Julia on the Black Rock Turnpike, soon followed by children's author Amy Ella Blanchard and her life partner illustrator Ida Waugh, who purchased what is today's Spinning Wheel Inn. Fred Drigg's good friend, noted architect, builder, and magazine publisher Noble Foster Hoggson purchased the old Abel Morehouse homestead at the foot of Church Hill Road from Julia in 1902. Hoggson then persuaded several more friends to do the same, as together, they transformed the

valley into an enclave of beautiful summer residences for wealthy New Yorkers.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Julia's home on the Ridge was constantly mentioned in the pages of the Newtown Bee and the Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer. There was hardly a week that went by when Julia wasn't entertaining at least one or more parties on an overnight basis. Some were her prominent relatives, but many more were simply friends that she had made over the years.

As the years passed, Julia needed more help around the farm. Julia's nephew, attorney Samuel C. Shaw, would often be awarded guardianship of some of the teenaged children involved in some of the legal cases he was handling. Julia and Annie had often taken these children in and given them a good home until the case was either adjudicated or until the child reached the age of majority.

In 1907, Shaw was appointed as guardian for fourteen-year-old Curtis Hungerford. The teen then came to live with Julia. In 1911, Julia began paying Curtis a salary of \$12 per month plus room and board. She would continue to provide him with room and board during the winter, but without pay since his only tasks would be to bring in the wood and tend to the livestock.

Perhaps a more suspicious Julia would have noticed the young farmhand's rather expensive taste in clothing and jewelry. Besides his natty attire, the young man wore a gold watch, and possessed a diamond ring and diamond stick pin. He also owned a motorcycle. While most of the people he knew wondered how he could afford his lifestyle, Julia gave it little thought – at least until the day in April 1912, when she realized that

the rather large amount of cash she kept in the house to pay her bills seemed woefully short.

As it turned out, Hungerford had been systematically stealing from Julia for well over a year. Police discovered he had over \$1700 in a bank account, and they discovered another \$300 in cash hidden in the barn.

Convicted in May 1912, Hungerford was sent to the George Jr. Republic in New York (an institution for wayward youth). The request for leniency was made by Attorney Shaw, no doubt at Julia's request. While the judge granted the request, he noted Hungerford's lack of contrition, stating that the defendant showed "not one redeeming quality." Had it not been for Julia's kindness, Hungerford would have likely been sentenced to prison.

In July, 1923, Annie Reid died as a result of injuries suffered in a fall at her home. Less than a year later, Julia suffered a stroke and passed away in late April.

Julia's funeral was one of the largest the town of Redding had ever witnessed. Over 250 mourners came to the service, and the state police in Ridgefield were summoned to handle the crowds. School was cancelled that day, and the flag on the Town Green was flown at half-mast while the Town Hall was closed for the funeral. Annie Reid's son-in-law, the Reverend Raymond Cunningham, presided over the service, and Aunt Julia was laid to rest in the family plot on the Ridge.

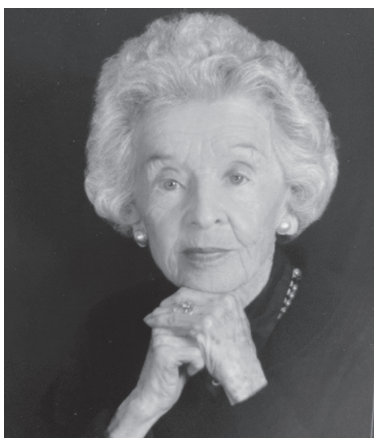
A remarkable woman whose hard work, hospitality, and kindness was long remembered. Her home was bequeathed to her nephew Samuel Shaw, and after remodeling the house, he lived there until his death in 1937. ■

Bruce Nelson is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding

OBITUARY

Jean Clair Lewis

Passed away March 9, 2023



Jean Clair Lewis

Jean Clair Brisbine Lewis, a long-time Ridgefielder, died March 9, 2023, just one month shy of her 106th birthday in her home at Meadow Ridge. Jean, who was predeceased by her husband Robert E. Lewis of 74 years, was a small-town girl from the plains of South Dakota who became a world traveler, an accomplished golfer and bridge player, a mom, grandma and great-grandmother. In her long life, she survived two pandemics, the Great Depression and multiple wars, breast cancer, the Digital Revolution, and a great big, beautiful mess of a family.

Born in Artesian, South Dakota, Jean grew up in nearby Woonsocket where her love of golf, dancing, and driving were firmly instilled. As a 12-year-old, she could often be seen tooling around in her father's Ford

Model-T. She was valedictorian of her high school class and graduated cum laude from the University of South Dakota. While working as secretary to the president of the South Dakota School of Mines, she met her future husband. Jean and Bob married in March 1943 and soon after moved to San Francisco, when Bob was recruited by Pan American Airways to fly Pacific wartime supply runs out of the city's Treasure Island. Jean worked for Bank of America before the birth of her children, Linda Lewis Drake and Robert L. Lewis.

Jean and Bob were transferred by Pan American a number of times after World War II, including a six-year stint in London. Although reluctant to take her children to a country still plagued by rationing and food shortages, the couple's years there were exciting as they traveled throughout Europe and the Middle East, skied in Austria, and golfed at England's exclusive Wentworth Club. During that time, Jean also joined the Pam Am wives' group, visiting the elderly and making clothes for orphanages.

In 1957, the family moved to Ridgefield, a town of about 7,000 at the time, where Jean belonged to the Caudatowa Garden Club, a successful investment club, and a weekly bridge group. She volunteered to drive for Friends

in Service Here (FISH) and participated in the young women's Pilgrim Guild and food pantry at the First Congregational Church, where she was a member. If there was one passion that defined her, however, it was her love of golf. Jean learned to play at the age of ten, honing what would become legendary putting skills on sand greens. She was also a straight-down-the-middle hitter with a short game that struck fear in the hearts of her adversaries. During her lifetime, she had three holes in one. She and Bob were original members of Salem Golf Club and later joined many of their friends at Silver Spring Country Club, where Jean served on numerous committees. Her work as Rules Chairman - teaching others to use the rules to their advantage - won her even greater esteem among her golfing community.

Jean has been described as spunky, stubborn, competitive, respected, and a huge influence in a pint-sized body. She was a "lady both on and off the course" and a good soldier who always followed the rules without complaint. Her secret to longevity – two Oreos cookies a day.

Jean is survived by her daughter Linda Drake of San Francisco; her son Robert Lewis and his wife Gerri of Ridgefield; grandchildren Tracy Drake of Chicago, Joanna Drake and husband. ■

Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary

By Donna Christopher

You don't need to rush into burning buildings to support the efforts of fire fighting in town. The Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary is an active group that was started in 1970 by Marian Sandlot and has re-emerged in recent months following a pandemic hiatus.

The group fundraises for firefighters and EMS, plans community events, provides food and water at "rehab clinics", and responds to major fire calls to give firefighters a place to rehydrate, rest, and recharge.

The Auxiliary conceived of the idea for the fire preparedness & escape planning workshop held on March 12 in response to requests from the public following a devastating local house fire in February.

The workshop will run again later this year, according to Sara Baker, President of the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary. The workshop for adults, primarily for parents, with information about creating a fire escape plan, was held at the Georgetown Firehouse.

Baker is one of nine active members of the Auxiliary. The group welcomes new members 18 and over. The most important role of the Auxiliary, said Baker, is to work closely with the fire department on fundraising efforts, workshops, and community outreach. Anyone can join that wants

to support the community, and meetings are quarterly.

Baker joined the Auxiliary to support her husband, a volunteer firefighter for 20 years. She is also the co-owner of Ridgefield Carpet and a part-time Registrar of Voters in Redding.

Like Baker, many of the group's other members have a personal connection to the department. Their backgrounds range from nursing, to HR, to education, to finance, to fire investigations. One of the group's members, Kaitlin Boensch, is a fire investigator with Travelers Insurance. She has a master's degree in emergency management and fire science and investigation; before becoming a mother, she was a volunteer firefighter for ten years.

"I loved being in the fire department before but felt like I couldn't commit to consistent fire response between my job and the kids, so I'm glad I can help out in this way," Boensch said. ■

For more information, e-mail auxiliary@townfire.org

Frog Frolic set to kick off spring

By Lisa Goldstein



Photo by Lisa Goldstein

Attendees enjoy the entertainment at last year's Frog Frolic.

Preparations are well under way at the Mark Twain Library for the 26th-Annual Frog Frolic Festival, which is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 and traditionally kicks off the spring season for the entire Redding community. The Library revived the outdoor fundraiser last year, after it had to hibernate during the height of the pandemic, by adding live music, food trucks, and a beer tent in an effort to attract a broader audience.

"We received such amazing feedback about the new elements, we added to this long-standing tradition," said Festival Chair Melissa Capezio. "We wanted to make it an event where everyone in the community could come together to have a great time, no matter their age or life stage." She added, "We've got amazing performances planned, fab food and beverage offerings, and plenty of fun activities to keep everyone in your crew entertained! It's going to be a really great day!"

Two bands that are already lined up for this year's event are folk music band Hitch & the Giddy Up and the Country/Americana group North County. Students taught by local karate master Sensei June,

who has been a regular at this event over the years, will also perform. More entertainers will be added to the schedule in the coming weeks.

A variety of tastes from a mix of food trucks will be available for purchase, including: Spanish flavors from Artisan Food Trailer, sweet treats from All Belgium waffle truck, paella from Redding's own Salas Foods, and every kid's favorite from 900 Degrees Pizza Truck. A beer tent will once again offer adult beverages from local brewery Nod Hill, as well as Ancona's Wines and Liquors. Plus, Quartertone Coffee is back, this year with a trailer!

The spirit behind the Frog Frolic is the much-loved short story by Twain, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County", which introduced the world to the witty voice of Mark Twain. The idea for the first Frog Frolic was hatched years ago to raise a few dollars for art supplies for children's story times; the event eventually grew to a fundraiser that adds considerable revenue to the Library's bottom line. For the last few decades, the Frog Frolic has provided Redding residents and surrounding towns a place for the whole family to

relax, meet friends, and enjoy a bit of spring fever. In addition to the expanded features of live music, food trucks and beer tent, the games and activities geared toward children that have been the backbone of this festival from the beginning will return, plus a robust Silent Auction open to any and all to bid online and an amphibian booth hosted by New Pond Farm Education Center.

The Frog Frolic takes place outside from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on May 6 and is nestled in front of the Redding Community Center at 37 Lonetown Road amid Redding's country roads and rolling hills. Attendees are encouraged to bring a blanket or a chair and stay all day as the entertainment is free and will be ongoing throughout the festival. Tickets to participate in the games, crafts, and for food items from the concession stand are available on location. Food truck fare will be available for purchase. All proceeds benefit the Mark Twain Library.

The Frog Frolic relies on the dedication and hard work of many community volunteers as well as the generosity of financial sponsors each year.

"We are so grateful to the Frog Frolic committee, our festival volunteers, and of course our sponsors for making this year's Frolic one you will certainly want to hop on over to," said Capezio.

So far this year, Redding's Meadow Ridge Retirement Community and the Granite Church have jumped in to sponsor. Registration for volunteers is open and event coordinators say they could use as many helping hands as possible. For volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, visit marktwainlibrary.org ■

Holi Festival

Celebrate spring, love, and colors

this weekend | By Pamela Brown

Get ready to celebrate spring in joyful colors! A traditional Hindu festival in India, Holi is a special time to celebrate the end of winter and arrival of spring while recognizing the triumph of good over evil. People of all ages and every religion and culture are invited to attend the first-ever Holi on the Green in Danbury this weekend. The free event takes place on Saturday, March 25 at Danbury's CityCenter Green on Ives Street from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Hosted by the Danbury Library, along with community partners CityCenter and M&T Bank, the celebration will feature fun events and activities for all ages. "The library is committed to being a welcoming destination, a source of inspiration, and responsive to the varied needs of our city's diverse community," said Anh Tran Ng, Civic Engagement and Marketing Coordinator for the Danbury Library.

"When the Danbury Library brought this event to CityCenter Danbury's attention, I thought it was a fantastic event. Downtown Danbury is filled with diversity/culture," said Lazaro Chavez, Manager, CityCenter Danbury. "What better way to kick off our 2023 events than with a cultural celebration filled with color, music, positive energy, and VIDA (life)!"

The Library works closely with community members, and for the past few years has collaborated with the Asian-Indian community on a Diwali celebration. "We saw how extensive and popular Diwali

was for our city and wanted to expand our celebration of South Asian heritage. CityCenter's enthusiastic response pushed the momentum on this event forward," explained Ng.

Throughout the day, attendees will celebrate by throwing Gulaal, a colorful food-grade powder, in the air and at each other. The symbolic colors represent love, fertility, divinity, nature, peace, and happiness. Gulaal will be available for free at various stations around the Green. Flower garlands will also be distributed.

All afternoon, AD SaaZ, a local Bollywood DJ, will be spinning music and will serve as the master of ceremonies for a fashion show highlighting clothing and accessories from India. In addition, there will be numerous vendors showcasing items such as jewelry, clothes, paintings, arts and crafts, and more; cultural dance performances including folk and Bollywood; local singers from the Indian community; and traditional Indian food provided by Spice, a local Indian restaurant.

"I'm excited and looking forward to this Festival," said Mini Santosh, Community Liaison and Resource coordinator for the Asian-Indian community. "People can expect fun – joy with colors." ■

This is an outdoor event; dress accordingly.

For more information, visit citycenterdanbury.com or register through Danbury Library's events calendar at danburylibrary.org

Turkington Falls Trail / Continued from page 1

Conservation Commission and head of the Trail Tenders, the volunteers who maintain Redding's trails, was among those who helped blaze and cut what is now the Turkington Falls Trail.

As Green recalls, they blazed and blazed but found no waterfall. "Everyone was saying there's a falls!" he says. Finally, another volunteer, Bruce Given, reported from downstream that he had found it – off the property itself, in what is now Centennial Watershed State Forest. To reach the falls now, one must follow a looping route that leaves the Turkington Falls Natural Area and doubles back on the Reeve Biggers Trail. Green did mention an "unofficial" route to the falls, unblazed and potentially inaccessible.

An ancient love story, a secret cascade – it was too much to resist. I was compelled to seek out Turkington's legacy. One enters the area from Old Stagecoach Road, shortly before the intersection with Gallows Hill Road. There's just enough space to park a car on the roadside. Near the trail's start, one walks through fallen ash trees in

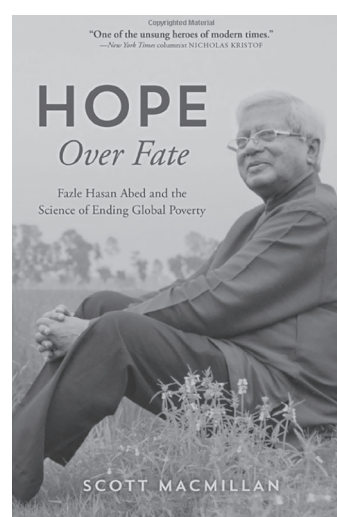
various states of decay, the wreckage of the emerald ash borer, an invasive tree-killing bug. These were once pastures and farmlands divided by stone walls, and through the second-growth forest, one can still picture rolling fields.

As we reach the stream, we find it bridged by another fallen ash, which my seven-year-old daughter decides she'll walk across. It's pointless to try to stop her, even though the trail goes another direction. She parkours her way along the boulders on the opposite bank – whereupon she reaches the unofficial route to the falls, which is now thoroughly well-trod. At the top of a knoll, we come into view of Turkington's beautiful flume. A rustic bench announces snack time. From trailhead and back, the hike is roughly one hour, and that's with a seven-year-old and frequent breaks.

As for the Turkingtons, Green says he cannot remember whose idea it was to name the falls after them. The story of being disinherited for love emerged in a historical review written by Stuart Reeve, a local historian, as part

of the land acquisition process. It was agreed that the couple deserved some recognition. You can visit Ann and Oliver at the back of Old Congregational Church Cemetery off Great Pasture Road, their names barely legible on the faded headstones. They're still together, parental disapproval be damned. It was pointless to try to stop them. ■

Scott MacMillan is a volunteer Trail Tender and author of the book *Hope Over Fate*:



Non-profit to bring history buffs and tourists to Redding

By Pamela Brown

History: Historical Tours by Design, has set its sights on Redding as the location for its newest architectural bus tour. Established in 2019, the non-profit aims to bring awareness to the historic buildings in Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts communities through architectural history tours and hopes to inspire their preservation.

Revolutionary Redding: A Bus Tour of Colonial Era Homes will feature a visual tour of 25 buildings and residential homes in town and will offer an in-person look into the interiors of a few to view original architectural details and more. The tour takes place April 16 at 1:00 p.m. All ages are welcome.

"This is the first tour of its kind in Redding – a one-time cultural experience," said Georgette Blau, founder of History and a Connecticut native. "By connecting people to the historic buildings on our tours and sharing their stories, our goal is to promote the appreciation and preservation of our cultural heritage." Blau added that the tours can also offer guests a new perspective on their communities and a greater appreciation for the architecture of the buildings.

Not just for history buffs, History tours aim to provide an interesting and educational experience for all attendees. The tour guide for *Revolutionary Redding* will be an expert in Redding history who will share background stories on original homeowners of the structures, architectural details, Redding history, and general colonial life. Guests will learn about the Barlows, the Barretts, and the Reads, some of Redding's early colonial families.

Guests will ride on a coach bus for approximately four hours to view the homes, with stops at some of them. "Homeowners like to show off their homes and add extra information beyond our script, but sometimes they simply let the group in and have the tour guide do all of the talking," Blau said, noting guests will learn about beehive ovens, parson's cabinets,


and more.


According to Allison Casazza, History's Tour Production Manager, the homes selected for the tour had to reflect the architectural styles of the colonial era or the vernacular buildings of the period. The majority will be Georgian and Federal homes from the 1700's, including the site of one of Redding's earliest crimes. Three notable homes on the tour include the Old Stone House at 12 Marchant Road, circa 1750; the Gurdon Bartram House, built in 1767, at 248 Newtown Turnpike; and the Saltbox that once belonged to the famous Colonel Horsefeathers.

"One of the most significant homes on the tour hosted General Israel Putnam for dinner many times. Israel and his troops were encamping for the winter at nearby Putnam Park," said Casazza. "Israel was very concerned with deserters and ordered the execution of one in order to discourage others. It has been said that in the same house the wife of the soldier charged with desertion watched through the attic window as she became a widow and her husband was shot."

Casazza noted Redding's history is reflected in its buildings. "Redding and its colonists have many important ties to the Revolution, and fortunately so many of their homes are still standing in Redding Center and well beyond," she said. "We are excited to highlight a great collection of these beautiful buildings throughout town and connect them to Redding's founding families, while also looking at many aspects of their daily lives apart from the war. The Town also does such a wonderful job of saving their historic buildings and supporting preservation efforts in the community." ■

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit history.org or call (212) 683-2027





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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Georgetown School of the Arts

Drawing, painting, woodworking, weaving, and more!

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Susan Jackson

Are you or one of your favorite students keen on sharpening artistic, weaving, or woodworking skills?

If so, it might be time to pay a visit to Susan Jackson, owner of Georgetown School of the Arts and Paint, Draw & More. Both organizations are housed inside an artistic workspace located at 25 Old Mill Road, offering classes to students of all ages with a primary focus on drawing.

“Drawing is important for everyone to have in their lives,” Jackson said. “We focus on teaching drawing so that children can grow up and feel like – regardless of whether they pursue a career in art – they are comfortable sketching an idea and communicating with images.”

Jackson grew up in Connecticut and moved to California, where she got a master’s degree in theatrical set design and worked for Disney.

“Disney had a huge layoff, and I ended up working for a very short time with a private arts school out West,” Jackson said. “Working with them felt very comfortable

to me. I saw how the art school was run and eventually decided to move back to the East Coast and develop and start my own business.”

Over the years, Jackson has spoken with many adults taking art lessons, who share a mantra that ultimately inspires the work she does.

“They say, ‘I used to love to draw, but when I turned 8 or 9, I couldn’t make it look real, so I gave up,’” Jackson said. “I realized there was a gap in our education. For my small part of the world, I really want people to feel comfortable conveying an idea with drawing as another tool in their life.”

Paint Draw & More, a mobile program where art instructors bring materials and lessons to various towns in Fairfield County, was “the first incarnation” of Georgetown School of the Arts.

“It began in 1994, running after-school art classes in different parks and recs and community centers,” Jackson explained. “We’ve had classes from New Milford down to Fairfield and have been teaching



for a long time.”

A few years later, Jackson saw a house in Georgetown for sale – a “small, little accessible community” – bought it, and opened up a studio there, which is now Georgetown School of the Arts.

“Georgetown is a perfect location,” Jackson said. “It’s a vibrant community with neighbors who care. I love Georgetown.”

While Paint, Draw & More started primarily as a drawing and cartooning program, Georgetown School of the Arts has since

Continued on page 9

Water usage for Georgetown salon approved

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Jessie Wright

With the expected water usage well within the maximum allocation, the Redding Water Pollution Control Commission (WPCC) approved a four-chair salon proposed for 8 Main Street in Georgetown on Wednesday, March 15.

Love and Light Salon Studio owner Jocelyn Furtado plans to open the first week in April. The salon will be open Wednesday through Saturday.

“At maximum capacity, I’m looking to use about 400 gallons per day,” said Furtado. “That’s going to be extremely rare. My guess is on most days, even at full capacity, 18 clients is a very solid full day. I’m guessing I’ll be at about 200-250 (gallons) a day at most.”

Furtado added her shop will be a green surplus salon, with 95% of its carbon emissions offset. All the hair clippings and all the foils will be fully recyclable.

“They’re actually sent out to a company in Canada that has the machinery and the equipment to be able to fully carbon neutralize everything,” she explained. “They turn the hair into hay barrels. They use it for planting.”

All of the hair care products used at the salon (including hair dye) are made by Dominus, an

organic, sustainable beauty brand based in Parma, Italy.

“Everything is up to 99% organic and biodegradable,” said Furtado.

The salon will have two sinks, each fitted with an Ecohead shower head. These provide high water pressure but use 65% less water than conventional shower heads, introduce negative ions into the water stream, and help to remove rust and sediment.

“I usually wash every client’s hair for about ten minutes from start to finish,” said Furtado. “On average, with the Ecoheads that we are using, I’m using about 13 gallons of water per client, which is very, very minimal.”

Most salons average between one to three gallons of water usage per minute. The maximum amount of clients Furtado’s salon will see daily with four stylists would be 24 to 30 clients. She personally anticipates seeing approximately six clients per day.

“I think that’s great on the chemical issues and the water usage that you were using low flow fixtures,” said WPCC Chair Amy Atamian. “We have an allocation of 2,000 gallons a day at that location. “There is sufficient allocation there.” ■

Small Town, Big Outdoors

Please join us for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 2 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm at the Redding Community Center.

Our featured speaker will be **Andrew Fisk, PhD, Bureau Chief of Natural Resources at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.**

We welcome everyone to come and learn more about what your land trust is doing to preserve Redding's natural beauty. Refreshments will be provided. If you are unable to attend in person, we encourage you to attend virtually by way of Zoom.

To access the Zoom link and learn more about the event, please visit our website www.reddingctlandtrust.org or email us at info@reddingctlandtrust.org

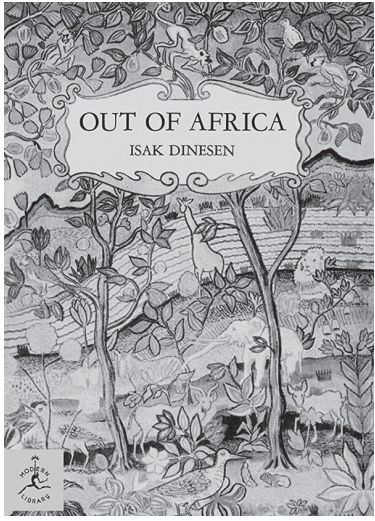
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BOOK REVIEW

Out of Africa

By Isak Dinesen

416 pages / Modern Library / \$21.49



"I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills." That first sentence in *Out of Africa* is unforgettable from the book and from the film by the same name, spoken in a softly accented voice by Meryl Streep.

Karen Christenze von Blixen-Finecke was the name of the baroness, also known later as the writer, Isak Dinesen. She came to Africa in 1914 and left it in 1931. Her husband, Baron Bror von Blixen-Finecke and her lover, Denys Finch-Hatton, were friends and hunter guides for safaris, popular at the time in an area of Kenya that became Nairobi.

First, one must remark Dinesen's style – fluid, sharp, declarative, and graceful. Secondly, one must acknowledge the primacy of place in the narrative. "The equator runs across these highlands, a hundred miles to the north, and the farm lay at an altitude of over six thousand feet. In the day-time you felt that you had got high up, near to the sun, but the early mornings and evenings were limpid and restful, and the nights were cold. The geographical position combined to create a landscape that had not

its like in all the world. There was no fat on it and no luxuriance anywhere; it was Africa distilled up through six thousand feet, like the strong and refined essence of a continent."

Her occasional use of the second person subtly invites intimacy, and the precision of her prose communicates her unique feeling for the land and its natives. One implacable fact is that she writes from a time and place that no longer exists. She writes as a pioneer citizen of a failed experiment in colonialism, but she writes with passion and acute accuracy. The pleasures of *Out of Africa* the book, are different but equivalent to the pleasures of the film. It is the story of youth, passion, love, and destruction and death.

One curious fact is that another excellent female writer emerged from the same place and time. Horse trainer and pilot Beryl Markham wrote *West with the Night*, about growing up in Kenya, a remarkable book of lasting acclaim. Markham was Dinesen's rival for Denys Finch-Hatton's affection (called Felicity in the film). Together, both books portray a nascent colonial settlement where exotic adventure was the equal of gossip. Women had burgeoning equality for the grit, talent, and determination they demonstrated by their presence and actions. In this new landscape, unlike any known before, they expressed their full range and demanded respect. The record each made has lasted with the sort of nobility that the best accounts claim when they survive into the next century. ■

Review by Tom Casey
Tom is the author of *Human Error and Strangers' Gate*

Georgetown School of the Arts / Continued from page 8

diversified its offerings.

"We're more than just an after-school drawing program," she said. "We also hold weaving and woodworking workshops and summer camps. We're also available for private parties."

While Jackson doesn't have any employees, she does rely on a team of contractors to teach lessons.

"They're all artists in their own right," Jackson said. "They sell their work on their own, and they teach after-school programs and summer camps."

Over the years, Jackson has developed nearly 700 distinct visuals and projects which she uses for programming.

"I try to combine the visual with some type of drawing – like focusing on overlapping or the foreground, midground, and background," Jackson said. "We also introduce different mediums as well, like chalk pastels and colored pencils."

What inspires her work?

"I get my ideas from every-

where," Jackson said. "I travel a lot, and we have a lot of multi-cultural items in our collection. I bring things back from vacations, find things in calendars and art books. We focus on individuals as well. We do animals, still lifes, landscapes. Kids can take our program for years and years and years and never repeat a project."

If you're looking to enroll in art, weaving, or woodworking classes – or you want to learn more about the school and its programs for your kids – Jackson suggests heading to the website, georgetownarts.com and contacting her after perusing the offerings.

Georgetown School of the Arts is active on Facebook and Instagram, and they'll also have a booth at Georgetown Day in June. The arts school also offers gift certificates, which may be just the surprise a friend or a loved one needs to rekindle their love for drawing and creativity. ■

Commission considers raising sewer fees / Continued from page 1

development of the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property to assess the plant's ability to share capacity with Ridgefield.

"We have a couple of options to think about," said Atamian. "I think we can justify increasing

our rates just based on the increase cost we've been seeing over the past couple of years."

The Commission plans to hold a public meeting to go over these options before the end of May. ■

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

On March 10, I testified before the Connecticut General Assembly's Planning and Development Committee, in support of House Bill 6800 "An Act Concerning Electronic Book and Digital Audiobook Licensing." I have included an excerpt from my testimony below. More and more, it feels like librarians are David and the "Big Five Publishers" are Goliath. We aren't expecting the same purchasing terms that we employ for print books...we simply want a seat at the table when it comes to digital purchasing.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, digital material usage has exploded at the Mark Twain Library. Circulation of digital materials increased by 42% in February as compared to this time in 2019. But as our digital materials

become more and more popular, it has become increasingly difficult to keep up with demand.

For example, right now our digital item with the longest waitlist is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. If you were to place a hold on it today, it would be available some time in August. As a user, you may think to yourself "This book is only \$15 bucks on Kindle! Why doesn't the Library buy another copy?" But if I were to purchase an eBook copy of *Lessons in Chemistry* for the Library, I would have to spend \$55 on just a license. After two years, this license would expire, and I would have to pay \$55 again. This is why libraries can't keep up with eBook demand - paying \$110 for an eBook over and over again devastates our digital materials budget.

I urge you to support HB 6800 and its work toward setting fair contract terms for eBook licensing. It would help authors, as they receive royalties on a per-copy sold basis, and this would allow libraries to purchase more copies. It would help patrons, because they would receive their eBooks in a timely manner. And it would help libraries build meaningful and complete collections that meet the demands of their community.

We want to support authors and publishers. We want to build robust digital collections. We want to serve our communities through equal access. Thank you. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer
is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers | By Margi Esten

This column is a shout out to my good friend and fellow mystery reader, Dave Pattee. He religiously reads all my columns but has yet to pick up one of my recommendations. Well Dave, this one is for you.

I often talk about somewhat obscure novelists – and British mystery/crime writer Minette Walters is one. Although she has earned the title "Queen of British Crime Fiction", her novels have been published in 35 different languages, and she is a consistent bestseller around the world, I have yet to meet anyone else who reads

her here in the U.S. She is quoted as saying, "I believe you should write what you enjoy reading. If you attempt to write something you don't like, you'll go mad." Her stand-alone psychological novels explore the "dark heart beating below a calm surface". And she has the unique quality to bring crime uncomfortably close to home.

Beginning in 1992, she has written 20 (!) novels, and I have only worked my way through about five of them. So, so many to choose from, but here are just a few. *A Dreadful Murder* is a very quick

read based on the true story of a shocking murder which took place in Kent in 1908. *The Chameleon's Shadow* has a complicated plot involving police investigating three murders which appear to be motivated by extreme rage. *The Devil's Feather* - isn't that a terrific title? – is another very complicated plot line involving deeply buried secrets and unmasking a serial killer.

And there are so many more; all different and all, I believe, taking place in England. ■

It takes a village A Connecticut foster family builds lasting bonds and a network of support | By Deb Kelleher

Please note: names have been changed to protect privacy.

We're all familiar with the saying, "It takes a village." For one Connecticut foster mom, her "village" is truly a godsend, enabling her to care for children whose needs would overwhelm most parents.

Alicia always wanted to be a foster parent, her whole life. As a single adult, it seemed like a good way to experience parenting and, even, under the right circumstances, form a permanent family. In 2017, she completed the training through CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) and began her foster care journey. For the first two years, Alicia cared for a number of kids, all of whom either returned home to their parents or moved on to another family. Along the way, Alicia became certified to care for children with complicated medical issues. She'd found her calling. In July of 2019, Alicia received the call to care for a 5-month-old baby boy with medical issues. Little did she know that this boy would remain with her forever, beginning a journey that also would include reuniting him with his two older sisters, all of whom are now adopted by this single mom.

Alicia is the kind of woman who loves hard, a woman with a soft place in her heart for children in need. This description would embarrass her, as she desires no recognition for her selflessness. Shortly after the adoption of her three children, while chatting with a foster parent friend, Alicia heard about another little boy in DCF care who desperately needed a family – a 7-year-old little boy named Phillip with very

significant medical needs. As a special education teacher, Alicia was likely more comfortable with children whose needs can be complex and challenging, but the hands-on care – that was something entirely different. What Alicia knew though, was that this little boy needed a family and DCF was struggling to find the right fit for him. She wondered if the right fit could be her. This drove her to stretch out of her comfort zone, take a leap of faith that help would be there when she needed it, and ask about bringing Phillip into her growing family. Alicia reached out to the DCF supervisor.

Jean Norvig is the supervisor for the foster care division unit in DCF supporting Alicia. Jean has done this work for many years and has deep relationships with many of the families who foster children from the Greater Danbury area. Jean and Alicia and Alicia's support worker, Jerry, as well as Phillip's DCF team of workers and supervisors met and talked about Phillip's needs and Alicia's ability to meet those needs. One advantage Alicia has is that as a special education teacher, she has summers off, making some of the challenges around childcare a bit more doable. She is also comfortable with children with differing abilities. They talked about how the department could help find support for Alicia given the big job she was willing to take on. Between all of them, they figured out how to make it work so Phillip could be cared for by Alicia. Ultimately, a decision to place Phillip in Alicia's home was made, and Phillip came home in January 2022.

Phillip is a sweet child. He is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair.

He is fed through a feeding tube, and he requires assistance with all activities of daily life from bathing to dressing. He has an ongoing relationship with his dad and his sister, which Alicia supports as she does for each of her children. Alicia's girlfriend, Yvette, was a part of the decision to care for Phillip. Like Alicia, she has known Phillip since he was two, and Alicia says, "Yvette was fully supportive and onboard for bringing him into our family." Even though they do not live together, Alicia and Yvette consider themselves family. Yvette also is a part of Phillip's "care team." She went to the hospital and completed the same training Alicia received so that she could care for Phillip. She frequently takes Phillip to doctors' appointments. She is regularly in the home and always lends a helping hand. She is an occupational therapist, and so well-suited to meet Phillip's needs. She provides overnight care on the rare occasions when Alicia treats herself to a little self-care.

Here's where the rest of the village comes in. Many of Alicia's friends and colleagues agreed to jump in when needed. Two different foster parents care for the children when there are early dismissals at school and during the four teacher in-service days over the school year when Alicia is required to work. Phillip needs one-on-one support with daycare as well as after-school care. Another friend helped out after school. Early morning care became the last hurdle. And after a few bumps in the road, Jean came up with the perfect plan – a "retired" foster mom named Darlene. Alicia, smiling, recalls it

Continued on page 10

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THE NATURAL WORLD

Trees under siege

Efforts to halt the damaging effects of insects and diseases in Connecticut forests

By Donna Christopher

Exotic insects and diseases are a constant threat to the trees and forests in Connecticut. Roughly 20% of Redding forest has been lost since the emerald ash borer (EAB) killed large numbers of ash trees.

The insect was first found in Connecticut during the week of July 16, 2012. The EAB is a green buprestid, or jewel beetle, native to northeastern Asia that feeds on ash species. Females lay their eggs in the crevices of the bark of ash trees, and larvae feed beneath the bark, blocking the flow of nutrients and ultimately leading to the death of the tree within two to five years.

Sean McNamara, owner of the Redding Nursery and the Town's former Tree Warden, remembers when he first heard about the EAB while on a trip in the Midwest.

"I first heard about the emerald ash borer while camping with my family in Michigan. It later spread over the Hudson River and within a few years, the insect had caused the death of millions of ash trees across the country, including Connecticut. It is disheartening to witness such a dramatic decline in the ash tree population," he said.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture among other national, state, and local agencies are coming up with ways to slow the spread of the insect to help minimize its impact. One of these strategies is releasing the ash borer's predator, a wasp known as *Spathius galena*, in the eastern part of the state. These wasps were released as an experiment in 2019 and 2020, as reported by



Photo by Dr. Victoria Smith, CT Agricultural Experiment Station
Markings made by the emerald ash borer.

Connecticut Public Radio.

The parasitic wasp from the Russian Far East attacks emerald ash borer in Russian forests but does not kill trees in its native range, according to the article.

To date, the State has not released the wasp in Redding, according to the Town's Tree Warden Charles Hyatt, founding partner of Evergreen Arborists.

Invasive insects and diseases present frequent risks to the trees and forests of the state. Over the past century, Connecticut's woodlands and urban forests have been hard hit by the gypsy moth, Dutch Elm Disease, and the hemlock woolly adelgid, among other pests. More recently, the state has been bracing for the possibility that the Asian longhorned beetle will be found in Connecticut.

McNamara recalled back in the 1970's and 1980's when the State released a bacterium to keep the gypsy moths under control.

"Although gypsy moth infestations may still occur periodically, the bacterium that controls them is activated by rainfall, effectively eliminating caterpillars before they can cause substantial damage. Additionally, many insect populations will naturally decline once it has consumed all available food, leading to a crash in their numbers. This, in turn, allows the trees to regenerate and recover from the damage caused by the infestation," McNamara said.

Dutch Elm Disease did a lot of damage in the 1940's and 1950's when it "killed most of the elm trees in New England," McNamara related.

"New Haven is called 'The Elm City', but few of the old elm trees survived. When Dutch Elm Disease arrived, arborists started cutting down trees in an attempt to prevent the spread. That was a disease that was brought over from Holland and spread to trees



Photo courtesy of Forestry Images
An emerald ash borer.

by an insect. I've seen Dutch Elm Tree Disease two or three times. It's under control, because there are fewer elm trees around that survived," McNamara said.

Meanwhile, the emerald ash borer is here and will remain until it exhausts its food supply, local tree experts say.

"The insect will eventually destroy itself, eliminating the current food source, and enabling the growth of a new generation of sapling ash trees, which regenerate quickly in areas with available sunlight," explained Hyatt. "Redding, which used to be farmland, underwent a transformation as forests replaced fields; however, the dense forest canopy creates a challenging environment for many animal and plant species that require sunlight. Fortunately, the treatment that was successful in controlling the woolly adelgid that affected hemlock trees offers hope. The

State will play a critical role in this endeavor, though it will take a generation until ash trees reach the canopy again."

The majority of Redding's ash trees have already been killed by the emerald ash borer, Hyatt noted.

"We just don't know the long-term effect this loss will have," said Hyatt. "Our big fear now is, will the loss of the forest canopy and the increase of sunlight to the understory set off a situation for invasive plants to further take over the forest? Or possibly, could this be a positive catalyst for the reproduction of native trees and plants that need natural disruption and sunlight to germinate? We hope the latter," he continued. "Still, there's an optimistic outlook."

"I believe ash trees will ultimately survive," McNamara said. ■

It takes a village / Continued from page 9

like this: "Jean had been reaching out to all her contacts. And then she remembered Darlene, a former foster mom, so Jean reached out to her. And it ended up working, and she got trained. Pretty sure she fell in love with all four kids."

Darlene and Jean had met close to 21 years ago when Darlene became licensed to care for infants. Darlene describes herself as "a helper who likes being in the background." Caring for babies in foster care was a perfect fit for her. Over her 21 year "career," Darlene cared for 21 infants, the longest one for three years, each baby either returning home or moving on to adoption. Recently, she retired her license, explaining that she felt it was the right time to step down. Jean approached her about Alicia's need for before-school care, and after some thought, Darlene agreed to help. She missed her foster care work, and this seemed like a good match for someone who no longer wished to provide full time care. Darlene explained, "You know, it's hard just to stop doing something like that." Darlene lights up when she talks about Phillip. Thinking back to when she first met him, Darlene said, "I was a little nervous, because I wasn't exposed to Phillip's disabilities, but he's the

cutest little thing. And even though he doesn't speak, he's non-verbal, he communicates with his eyes. It's hard not to fall in love with him."

At first, Darlene just provided before school care. But within two weeks, this connection morphed into more than just childcare. Darlene explains, "I'm a foodie. I've been cooking for people for a long time. That's how I care about people." For years, Darlene was a stay-at-home mom. She says, "When I went out into the workforce, I went into catering. It's hard to understand the emotional and physical strains on Alicia. She's just amazing to me. So, I talked to her workers to see what I could do to help her, besides caring for Phillip. They said, 'Oh, she's very self-sufficient.' And, you know, 'she doesn't really require anything', but I know the stronger you show yourself, the less people offer to help you."

When it turned out that Darlene was needed on Monday afternoons for after school care as well, this all came together in her head: Monday night dinners. Initially, she worried that she might insult Alicia, so she reached out to Jean for advice. "She thought it would be okay to ask Alicia. And she

said 'no' right away. But I told her that I wanted to help, that I know how much is on her plate. And so, she finally said 'okay'. So now I'll cook breakfast for the kids occasionally and bring it in the mornings. Because she has to get four kids ready, and she seems like she's good, but everyone can use help." So, Darlene now also regularly prepares Monday night dinners for Alicia and her kids.

Darlene likens these dinners to her time as a foster parent. "People that don't foster say that 'you're taking care of somebody's kid and you're giving (him/her) up?' I don't know how many times I heard that. 'I don't know how you do that. I would get too attached.' Well, I'm not a selfish person." Darlene believes that this did not win her a lot of friends, but she is comfortable with her life's work. She goes on to say, "It's not about us. It's about them. Help the children, don't help me." So, this is what she does. She sees this as not only helping Alicia, but as a way for her to continue to help the children.

Alicia really appreciates the meals and everything Darlene is doing for her. And Darlene is thrilled to be able to cook and bake for her little "adopted" family.

She takes great pride in trying to think up new and interesting meals – and especially desserts – Darlene's favorite to make. On Hanukkah, Darlene made a beautiful spread for the family, including homemade applesauce. Alicia texted her over and over that evening to say how delicious it was, so it is on Darlene's list to repeat again. Darlene loves to bake, so each Monday comes with a delicious dessert. Recently, she made black and white cookies. Alicia says, "Darlene also made everybody individualized Christmas presents. She sews, so I asked her to adapt some clothing for Phillip, and she did that as well. She's multitalented." Alicia goes on to say, "And I think she empathizes with me as well. So, it's nice to have that person there supporting us."

Alicia, like all foster parents, does not know how long Phillip will be with her, but for the time being, Alicia and Darlene and the rest of Alicia's village will pour all their love into Phillip allowing him to live his best life.

Foster care is a labor of love and commitment. No one can do this kind of "job" entirely on their own. Most foster parents, like Alicia, develop a "village" of

supporters, all helping in different ways. When a burden can be shared, almost anything is doable. There are over 3,000 Connecticut children just like Phillip and Alicia's other children deserving of a "village" to meet their needs. When we each do a little, a lot can get done. And these children deserve our best.

For more information on all the different ways you can help a child in foster care, please visit anniec.org or give our office a call at 475-235-2184. Gift cards for Darlene and other helpers like her are needed and welcome. Donations can be made via Venmo to @AnnieCCourt. Volunteers to provide a meal or respite are always in short supply and truly appreciated. Connecticut needs more foster parents like Alicia, and all our foster parents need their own village of helpers. In the words of the writer, James Baldwin, "For these are all our children, we will all profit by or pay for what they become." Let's be their village, let's love them and care for them and help them achieve their highest potential. ■

Deb Kelleher is Executive Director, Annie C. Courtney Foundation

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

ARTS

**Monday, Jan. 9 -
Friday, Mar. 24**

Easton Arts Council Winter Celebration of the Arts + Member Art Show
Check eastonlibrary.org for open hours.
Works by 50 artists and photographers from Easton and neighboring towns. Contact Elizabeth Katz at katz.elizabethi@gmail.com with questions.
Easton Public Library
691 Morehouse Road
Easton
eastonartscouncil.org

Thursday, Mar. 23

Easton, Redding, and Region 9 School Districts Concert
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Carpooling is encouraged
Joel Barlow High School
Lower Gym
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Tuesday, Mar. 28

Comedy Night in the Backspace
6:30 p.m. Doors open
7:00 p.m. Show
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
nodhillbrewery.com
\$, R

CHILDREN, TEENS

Saturday, Mar. 25

Children's Fair
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Bounce house, face painting, games, crafts, and more.
Trinity Lutheran Church
21 Robert Treat Parkway
Milford
trinitymilfordct.org
\$, R

Saturday, Mar. 25

RES PTA International Festival
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Celebrate culture and traditions from around the world, with entertainment, crafts, food trucks, and more.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
E-mail questions to
respta4kids@gmail.com

Monday, Mar. 27

Pirate Party! (Ages 4-6)
3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Pirate crafts, stories, snacks, and cartoons.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Sunday, Apr. 2

Family Campfire
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Theme: Animal Sounds
Make s'mores and meet an animal ambassador at this fun, family-friendly campfire.
Earthplace
10 Woodside Lane
Westport
earthplace.org
\$, R

HOLIDAY

Saturday, Mar. 25

Easter Egg Hunt in the 25Y Pool
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Wilton Family YMCA
404 Danbury Road, Wilton
wiltonymca.org
R

Tuesday, March 28

Easter Egg Trees
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Decorate hand-blown eggs and create an Easter tree.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Friday, Mar. 31

Free Flashlight Egg Hunt (Grades 3 - 5)
8:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Arrive by 7:45 to check in
A twist on the traditional egg hunt by Ridgefield Parks & Recreation
Recreation Center Fields
195 Danbury Road
Ridgefield
ridgefieldparksandrec.org
R

Saturday, Apr. 1

Free Annual Egg Scramble
11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Children will collect eggs, meet the Easter Bunny, and enjoy springtime in the park.
Co-sponsored by Ridgefield Parks & Recreation and the Ridgefield Rotary Club.
Ballard Park
485 Main Street
Ridgefield
ridgefieldparksandrec.org

Friday, Apr. 7

FairfieldMoms 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt
Egg Hunt 1: 10am (Ages 5 and under)
Egg Hunt 2: 10:45am (Ages 5 and under)
Egg Hunt 3: 11:30am (Ages 10 and under)
Egg Hunt 4: 12:15pm (Ages 10 and under)
Silverman's Farm
451 Sport Hill Road, Easton
eventbrite.com/e/fairfieldmoms-easter-egg-hunt-2023-tickets-559567620817
\$, R

NATURE

Tuesday, Apr. 4

Connecticut's Reptiles
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
R

Tuesday, Apr. 4

Nick of Time: DDT and Raptors
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Zoom
Mark Twain Library
marktwainlibrary.org
R

**Friday, Apr. 14 or
Friday, May 5**

Spring Migration: Birding with Joe Bear
7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
R

Saturday, Apr. 29

Frothy Forage
Rain date: Sunday, Apr. 30
2-hour time slots beginning at 12:00 p.m.
A hiking and beer tasting experience with activities for the whole family. Tickets on sale March 29.
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road, Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org
\$, R

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom)
44 Portland Avenue
bethlehemplutheranct.org

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

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

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

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

Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart) and 5:30 p.m. (St. Patrick)
Sundays: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (St. Patrick); 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (Sacred Heart); 12:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart - Latin)
Weekdays: 8:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays (St. Patrick); 8:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays (Sacred Heart); 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays (Sacred Heart - Latin)
Eucharistic Adoration: 7:00 p.m. on Mondays (Sacred Heart); 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays (St. Patrick)
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
30 Church Street
St. Patrick Catholic Church
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

Temple B'nai Chaim
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.
82 Portland Avenue
Wilton
templebnaichaim.org

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, Mar. 23

A Thriller Author's Guide to Getting Published
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Library / Maria Parloa Community Room
189 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
bethellibrary.org
R

Saturday, Mar. 25

48th Annual RVNAhealth Wellness Fair
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Community event providing health screenings, expertise, and information.
East Ridge Middle School
10 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield
rvnahealth.org

Wednesday, Mar. 29

5th Annual Speak Up
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Hosted by the League of Women Voters of Redding, this is an open community forum for key leaders to answer questions from community members.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
lww.org/local-leagues/lww-redding

Wednesday, Mar. 29

History & Culture of the Mohegan Tribe
7:00 p.m.
Presented by Tribal Elders Beth Regan and Bruce Bozsum.
Easton Public Library / Community Room
691 Morehouse Road
Easton
eastonlibrary.org
R

Thursday, Mar. 30

Amazing CT Tales - A Podcaster's Journey
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Learn from Mike Allen, storyteller and former journalist, about his decision to start a podcast on Connecticut history.
In-person and Zoom
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Monday, Apr. 3

Creating Cohesive Community: A Positive Way Forward for Families of Children with Special Needs
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
New Canaan Library / Community Room
151 Main Street
New Canaan
newcanaanlibrary.org
R

Wednesday, Apr. 5

The Aftermath – Finding Hope & Empathy in a Caring Community
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Led by Muhoza Rwabukamba, Redding resident and survivor of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.
In-person
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

MEETINGS

Thursday, Mar. 23

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

Monday, Mar. 27

Board of Finance
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Zoom (Hybrid)
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Mar. 28

Planning Commission
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Mar. 29

League of Women Voters 5th Annual Speak Up
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 3

Annual Region 9 District Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Monday, Apr. 3

Park and Recreation Commission
7:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 3

Board of Finance
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room (subject to change to virtual or hybrid)
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 3

Republican Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Apr. 4

Economic Development Committee
8:30 a.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Apr. 4

Redding Board of Education
7:00 p.m.
John Read Middle School
486 Redding Road
er9.org

Tuesday, Apr. 4

Conservation Commission
7:30 p.m.
Old Town House
23 Cross Highway
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Apr. 5

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

Refer to townofreddingct.org for up-to-date location and meeting information.

This Week's Featured Events

RES PTA International Festival

Saturday, Mar. 25
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Celebrate different cultures and traditions around the world with crafts, games, and food.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
Questions e-mail respta4kids@gmail.com

Easter Egg Hunt in the 25Y Pool

Saturday, Mar. 25
2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wilton Family YMCA
404 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonymca.org

5th Annual Speak Up

Wednesday, Mar. 29
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
An open forum for leaders to answer questions from community members hosted by the League of Women Voters of Redding.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

Want to feature an upcoming event?

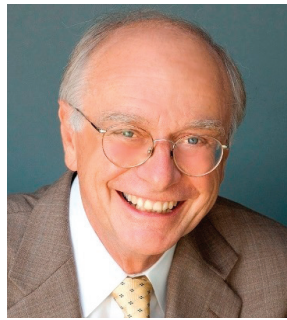
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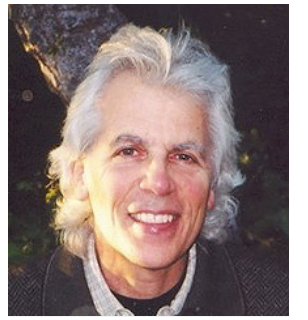
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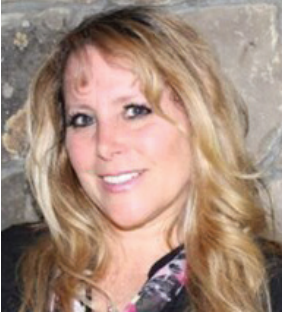
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