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New airports and airlines bring options for Redding travelers

By Rob Sample

In the recent past, Redding residents who planned an airplane trip were limited to three distant airports: John F. Kennedy (JFK) International, LaGuardia, or Hartford's Bradley International. A fourth – Westchester County – was much closer if one didn't mind taking a connecting flight.

Time flies, and times change. Travelers now have a much more robust range of choices from three small, but growing, regional airports. And thinking small can save travelers some unwelcome aggravation: on Thursday, February 21, a small fire in an electrical panel shut down power for more than 24 hours at JFK's busy Terminal 1. The daylong outage stranded thousands of passengers.

The outage came on the heels of Southwest's late-December meltdown, which lasted more than a week. Ultimately, it led to the cancellation of more than 16,700 flights and grounded two million passengers looking to travel home for the holidays – primarily at the nation's big airports.

Still, as with any decision regarding consumer goods or services, the adage "caveat emptor" applies. Let the buyer beware. Veteran fliers often will proclaim that low-cost fares can be very tempting – but often come with a sacrifice in in-flight service and schedule reliability.

Heading east

Perhaps the most significant development for Connecticut air travelers was the arrival in 2020 of Avelo Air at Tweed-New Haven Airport. Its inaugural flight from New Haven to Orlando took place on November 3, 2021. Prior to that, Tweed travelers were limited to three daily flights on American Eagle to Philadelphia. American Eagle's service ended two months prior to the initial Avelo flight.

Tweed-New Haven Airport isn't Redding's closest airport: that distinction belongs to West-chester County Airport. Still, Tweed is just 36 miles from Redding via Route 58, and it's an easy ride on the Merritt Parkway and Interstate-95. It is on New Haven's eastern end, and part of it lies in East Haven. Getting there takes about 49 minutes by car.

As airports go, Tweed is tiny with a mere two boarding gates. And you may – or may not – board via a jet bridge. Avelo is its sole carrier and offers service from Tweed Airport to 14 cities: Baltimore, MD; Savannah, GA; Charleston and Myrtle Beach, SC; Chicago, IL; Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Orlando, Sarasota/Bradenton, Tampa, and West Palm Beach, FL.; Nashville, TN; and Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington, NC.

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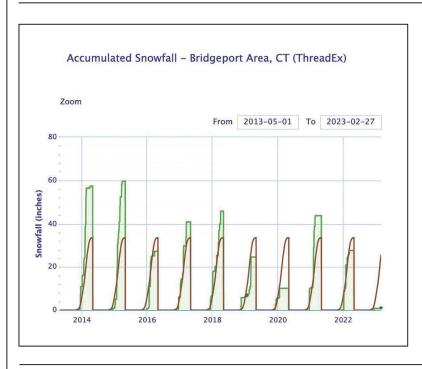


Photo by Susan Clark

Most of Redding received 4-6 inches of snowfall this week, according to the National Weather Service, this winter's first snow accumulation over 1 inch. If you have a photo you'd like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

Finally... snow!

By Jessie Wrigh



After a winter with some of the lowest snowfall in recent memory, Redding finally received a postcard-worthy blanket of snow on February 27 and 28.

According to the National Weather Service, a "normal" total accumulation of snow by March 1 in this meteorological area is 26 inches. Before this week's snowfall, the area had only seen a total of 1.1 inches this winter.

By March 1 of last year, the area had seen a total of 25.7 inches, and by March 1 of 2021, it was a whopping 43.8 inches. Before this year, 2020 held the distinction of "lowest snowfall" in the decade, coming in at only 10.1 inches by March 1.

Redding's Big Outdoors

Trotting on the trails

Expanding access for equestrians in town

By Jessie Wright



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Jensen

"Horses and Redding have always belonged together," reads *The Book of Trails*, a guidebook to the use and protection of open lands in Redding by the Redding Land Trust and Redding Conservation Commission. "Even long after the introduction of the horseless carriage, the Town's dirt roads and great distances demanded something more reliable than a sputtering engine."

As time has passed, however, horseback riding in the area has decreased. The Redding Land

Trust is now in the early stages of exploring how to increase access to equestrians in the Town's open spaces and on trails.

This effort is part of the Redding Land Trust's "Decade of Stewardship" Master Plan, developed in 2022 to identify specific items for research, review, and implementation to further the Land Trust's stewardship of the land and increase the diversity of use and access.

The Plan includes several areas of action with regard to trail development, including initiatives to build additional interconnections between trails and creating additional mini trails for those with limited mobility or time. Access for horseback riding falls under the Plan's "Explore Additional Recreational Opportunities" initiative, which also includes exploration into additional access for mountain biking in some areas.

Redding Land Trust Board Member Bruce Given and Kate Perry, Chair of the Horse Subcommittee for the Redding Land Trust, discussed the initiative at the February 21 meeting of the Conservation Commission. They are embarking on this exploration with an eye towards protecting wetlands, increasing connectivity to lengthen trails, and problemsolving around space for horse trailer parking.

Perry has identified several potential trails and properties – both public and privately held open spaces – that could be suitable for equestrian use.

"I think connectivity is a big piece of this potential project," Perry said. "I have dreams of riding to Georgetown, which I know is a stretch, but it speaks to the opportunities we have in Redding to expand horse use."

Given noted that while there are currently several approved properties within Redding for horseback riding, most of the trails' red blazes are no longer visible or significantly faded. Stuart Green, Lead Trail Tender and member of the Conservation Commission, agreed, adding that the trails that have been approved tend to be "high and dry" to protect surrounding wetlands.

Given said the Land Trust was discussing the development of a horseback riding code of conduct, which would outline behaviors for

Continued on page 10

Selectmen wait to adopt budget figure

By Rocco Valluzzo

With both the Board of Finance and the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Board voting on February 27 to include a \$200,000 OPEB Trust contribution to the operating budget for fiscal year 2023-24, the Redding Board of Selectmen will likely make adjustments to its latest figure.

A budget of \$16,079,554 was proposed by the Selectmen at their February 21 meeting, but the number did not include any OPEB funding. This represented an increase of 3% (\$467,896) over the current year's budget of \$15,611,657.

In an earlier meeting, the Selectmen proposed an increase of 2.73%, but this figure did not address the deficit to the regional paramedic program Redding shares with Bethel. Due to the cost of operating out of Danbury Hospital, the program is running a deficit that it can no longer carry for the Town. Redding will have to fully fund its share of the program next year, which is an addition of about \$50,000 to the proposed budget.

"The wages for paramedics have skyrocketed," said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton. "So we are paying market rate."

Now that the OPEB funding has been recommended and voted upon by the Board of Finance, the final Selectmen budget total will likely increase slightly.

According to Redding Finance Director Jim Sanders, "OPEB" typically refers to medical and dental insurance that is provided for Town employees who have retired, or people who have left service but had attained a certain number of service years for age. These "Other Post Employment Benefits" provide a way for these former employees to bridge their healthcare until they are eligible for Medicare. Depending on the employee group, the Town provides a contribution.

"It was set up several years ago, and it's really consistent with best practices," Sanders explained. "You should think of OPEB benefits as no different from a pension plan."

The 2023-24 budget development process is beginning to wind down, with both the Selectmen and Board of Education discussing close-to-final proposed numbers in recent and upcoming meetings. Times and dates for additional budget discussions can be found at townofreddingct.org/events – the public is encouraged to attend.

The Selectmen will determine a final figure for the proposed budget by the time the Board of Finance holds its public hearing on the matter on March 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Redding Community Center.

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Editorial

Despite how it may feel with fresh snow blanketing the area this week, summer is right around the corner. Like many towns, Redding comes alive with activity in the summer months, with camps, special events, property maintenance, and outdoor recreation kicking into full gear.

For many of these activities, some of our youngest residents play an essential part. Students on break from their months in the classroom and those returning home for the summer from college provide an important labor force for many of our local businesses and organizations. The summer months also provide many students with their first professional experiences, creating opportunities for training, skill development, and income as they move from adolescence into adulthood.

A strong job market as the country rebounds from the Covid-19 pandemic has meant even more opportunities for teens seeking employment the last two summers, with more openings and better pay than in past years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a strong summer job market through 2026 in industries with spikes in seasonal employment, and the Pew Research Center has reported a slow, but steady comeback in summer employment amongst teens following a sharp reduction in the summer of 2020.

The Connecticut Department of Labor reports on their Youth Employment site, "The economy is great for job seekers, including young people seeking summer jobs, part-time employment, or full-time work." The State invests between \$13-\$15 million dollars each year to connect young people with employment opportunities.

In our upcoming March 16 issue, the Sentinel will help to do the same thing. We will publish a special "summer job fair" section, where both local students and local households/employers can submit listings for jobs this summer. If you have a child or family member looking for work – encourage them to write up a short description of their skills or the type of job they are seeking this summer. If you yourself need help around the house, yard, or at your place of employment – consider submitting a "help wanted" listing.

These listings (100 words or less) are free to submit and should be sent to summerjobs@reddingsentinel.org by March 10 to be included.

Short Survey

We want to hear your thoughts on short-term rental properties in Redding and whether you think they should be regulated. Please scan the QR code below or visit surveymonkey.com/r/reddingrentals to let your voice be heard.



Legal Notices

The Brunissen Trust for Redding Senior Citizens, Inc. will meet Saturday, March 4, 2023, 9:30 AM at the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road, Redding, CT. ■

Barbara L. Roche President

The Redding Board of Assessment Appeals will be meeting on the following dates in the Town Hall Hearing Room of the Town Office Building for the scheduled hearings and deliberations of eligible appeals for tax assessments on the grand list as of October 1, 2022. New applications for appeals will not be accepted. Applicants must appear in person for

their scheduled hearing. Meeting dates for March 2023 are Thursday March 9, 4-7 pm; Friday March 10, 3-7 pm; Saturday March 11, 9 am -2 pm; Wednesday March 15, 4-7 pm; and Thursday March 16, 4-7 pm.

Greg Stackpole, Chairman Redding Board of Assessment Appeals

At a meeting of the Redding Conservation Commission on 2/21/2023, the following actions were voted:

App'1#23-01, Petr and Kristina Gorlich, 14 Whortleberry Rd. Approved with conditions an application for residential construction located within 500' of a vernal pool to include: abandon septic tank and leaching field, improve gravel driveway to asphalt drive, install drainage system, install private septic system, perform tree removal, grading, topsoil and seed within the regulated area.

App'l #23-02, William and

Jane Quirk (owner), Nazzaro, Inc. (agent), 11 Diamond Hill Road. Approved with conditions an application to restore pond to its original depth and shape.

App'l #23-03, Town of Redding (owners), Nazzaro, Inc., 132 Partners LLC (agent), 130 Redding Road. Approved with condition an application to restore pond to its original depth and shape.

The above-referenced files are available for inspection at the Redding Land Use Office. ■

David R. Pattee Chairman

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,

I am writing this letter to talk about basketball courts in Redding. There are not enough that are open all day, every day, such as the Boys and Girls Club. I enjoy playing basketball, and a lot of people in town do as well, but there are not many courts that are outdoor accessible that aren't on school grounds or private property, where use would be considered trespassing.

Most people don't have their own hoop in their driveway, so they cannot play whenever they would like to. There should be more outdoor basketball hoops in Redding that are accessible without memberships or that don't close at a certain time. All of these hoops should also have lights, so that players can see during the evening hours and not waste car battery power keeping the car lights on.

Thank you! ■

William Morris Meadow Ridge

To the Editor,

A home is probably one of the most expensive assets we will own in our lifetime. The complexities that surround the purchase and sale of these assets require attention from many different agencies, including the government. Although homeowners are required to maintain their own records, it is often necessary to rely on town agencies for records to facilitate purchases and sales. As homeowners, we often tend to rely on real estate brokers, town clerks, lawyers, and title insurance companies to help us maintain and keep track of these records.

This month, I decided to sell my family home of 30 years. I employed a real estate broker to initiate the process, only to find out that two building permits had not yet received their certificates of occupancy, one of which was existing prior to me even purchasing the property. Fortunately, Redding instituted a new law that after nine years, open old building permits would no longer be required to have CO's for purposes of a house sale. Although this was very helpful to me, I chose to remedy the issues as I wanted a clear certificate at time of closing.

However, one law that is statewide is that if you have an oil tank removed, the health department must inspect the site and do tests to make sure that there was no leakage. I had my tanks removed years ago and had all the inspections and tests done as required. These records were all kept in a drawer in the Health Department office at Town Hall which was recently flooded out due to a pipe failure. When my broker went to acquire the necessary records for the closing, attention was brought to the fact that my records (along with others) were ruined from the flood and were sent to an out-of-state facility for drying out – however, this facility has not yet returned the paperwork, and there is some speculation that some of the papers will not be able to be repaired because they were too damaged.

For those homeowners that are in the predicament I am in, these records will not be available for their closing as required by state law. I am fortunate enough that I kept original paperwork, so I will be fine; however, there are many homeowners who will be surprised when they go to a closing to find out that their records were ruined in the flood.

It is my recommendation and suggestion to the Town of Redding that they bring themselves up to the 21st century and stop maintaining records on paper in drawers that could be potentially destroyed by fire and water. All these records should be digitized and kept off-site and backed up as required by other insurance requirements. It surprises me that the Town has not been required to keep their records backed up off site. I'm writing this letter in hopes that the Town will recognize that this is just one disaster that has happened and can happen again. The Town really needs to upgrade their record keeping policies to prevent this from happening again.

Candy Wood Pheasant Ridge Road

Litter issue raises call for action

By Rocco Valluzzo

The amount of litter in recent months found along roadsides in Redding has prompted a call for increased efforts to deal with the problem and how the funds generated from the sale of mini liquor bottles ("nips") might help.

"We're not the only town that has this problem," Sandi Martin of Fox Run Road told the Board of Selectmen at its February 21 meeting. "But unlike other towns, we don't seem to be doing a thing about removing the litter or developing a long-term solution."

Citing a January 20 webinar provided by Sustainable CT, a non-profit that provides tools and certifications to Connecticut towns for becoming more sustainable, Martin noted that the program discussed the use of "nips" funds to reduce waste and how Ridgefield and other communities are taking the problem seriously and are working toward a solution, both in the short and long term.

"I would expect nothing less of Redding," said Martin.

In October 2021, Connecticut passed a law specifying that when a local retailer buys miniature liquor bottles ("nips") from a wholesaler, the wholesaler retains a nickel fee on each bottle sold. That money then gets distributed by the wholesaler back to each town where the retailers are locat-

ed. These miniature bottles are not part of the State's deposit redemption program.

Public Act 21-58 of the Connecticut General Statutes states that payments received by a municipality from these fees shall be spent on environmental measures intended to reduce generation of solid waste or reduce the impact of litter caused by such solid waste.

Martin asked if a Sustainable Redding Committee has been established and if any portion of the miniature bottle revenue has been earmarked for litter removal. She also requested greater community involvement and to learn what methods are being employed by other towns to deal with the problem.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton replied that Redding is a member of Sustainable CT and established a Sustainable Redding Committee, which also has its own page on Facebook. The committee did have a few meetings but did not move forward for several reasons, including personal commitments.

"Without volunteers to move the committee forward, the work has not continued, but I have tried to reconstitute it," Pemberton said. "I have asked for volunteers in the community who would like to participate, but it is a volunteer effort, and we are required to have a committee of volunteers to carry out this work."

Pemberton added that there was a presentation from Sustainable CT at a meeting of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments last month. Much of the discussion involved the amount of work required of town staff without support from volunteers.

"In order for us to really make an effort that is sustainable, we have to rely on residents in town who are interested in working on it," said Pemberton. "It's about keeping the sidewalks clean, it's about keeping the roads clean, but it's also about a lot more - long-term sustainability. If you're interested, please let me know. We're very serious about moving this forward."

Redding currently has received a little more than \$3,000 in revenue from nips bottle sales. This is in the Town's recycling fund and will be used for clean-up date purposes; however, any additional clean-up events other than the annual Earth Day clean-up are not yet specified.

"It would be my hope that we would have a committee that would organize them quarterly if not more often," said Pemberton. "I think quarterly is reasonable."

Election Day May Feel Far Away...

VOTERS! THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE!

Check your mail for the Notice of Canvass!

The Town of Redding is required by law to ensure quality voter rolls. This work is typically conducted by utilizing the National Change of Address system via the USPS. This year it is being conducted by hand to create a more accurate database. We need YOU! Please fill out the pink form and return it in the addressed, stamped envelope within 30 days of receipt.

Questions? Contact the Registrar's office at: registrar@townofreddingct.org (203)938-5016

NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE???

Your Vote is Your Voice!

Registering is easy!

Go to https://voterregistration.ct.gov/
or follow the QR Code below!

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Publisher, Susan Clark Managing Editor, Jessie Wright

Managing Editor, Jessie Wright Creative Director, Debora DeCarlo Rosa Assistant Graphic Designer, Connor Feeney

Reporters:

Donna Christopher Rocco Valluzzo Pamela Brown Robert Sample Printed by Trumbull Printing Telecommunications provided by CCi Voice www.reddingsentinel.org 203.938.3800

Contact us at: editor@reddingsentinel.org advertise@reddingsentinel.org subscribe@reddingsentinel.org publisher@reddingsentinel.org

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

Selectmen give update on Georgetown redevelopment | By Rocco Valluzzo

Citing the efforts of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee in recent months, the Board of Selectmen provided some background information on the group at its February 21 meeting.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton explained that the committee was created at a time when the Town was receiving a \$200,000 grant to push forward into the next phase of a longterm development project in Georgetown that will benefit the community. Comprised of chairpersons of several Town boards and commissions, as well as members of the community at large with subject matter expertise, the Gilbert & Bennett Advisory Committee is managing that process.

"It's a very focused, very skilled group of individuals," noted Pemberton.

To date, about half the grant has been spent on an environmental

site assessment conducted by Tighe & Bond, a Middletownbased engineering firm. Pemberton expects the second phase of the environmental investigations to be completed this spring and hopes to hold a public forum in late April or early May.

She added that the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development's Brownfield program has recently announced remediation grants for up to \$2 million. The committee will be meeting with a representative from the Brownfield program along with the Town's consultant from Tighe & Bond on how to best position this project to receive another

"We know from the work that's already happened that there is additional contamination that was not previously discovered - things like asbestos that just were not documented - that are there," said Pemberton. "We could potentially

use funds to remediate and begin to pick away at some of the derelict buildings and repurpose

Currently, Redding receives revenue from numerous tenants in certain buildings on the property, the National Park Service being the highest profile. In the first year after the Town took ownership of the property in February of 2021, a few utility companies were also tenants, and the Town was receiving close to a quarter of a million dollars a year in rental income.

As of last month, the net revenue was \$355,000 over the last two years. That money accumulates in a fund specific to the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill.

The committee meets the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in-person and via Zoom. The next meeting will be Thursday, March 9. ■

Assessment appeal applications double

By Jessie Wright

Stacks and stacks of yellow folders - all containing personal property assessment appeal applications - covered the conference room table in Town Hall on Tuesday, February 21 as the Board of Assessment Appeals met to prepare for a busy month of hearings.

The Board received 88 appeal applications this year, including one commercial property, two motor vehicles, and 85 residential properties. Members of the Board remarked at the February 21 meeting that this represents roughly twice the number of applications as last year.

The increase in the volume of applications follows the 2022 revaluation process, with Redding residential property increasing by an average of 28 percent.

The Board estimated the hearings alone would take over 20 hours, not including deliberation time, giving each applicant the customary 15 minutes per hearing. After some discussion around the volume of applications, the Board decided to approach this year's hearing process by splitting its members into two groups of three; the two groups will hear applications concurrently over three days, and then come together for two days to report back to the Board in its entirety and to

Greg Stackpole, Chair of the Board of Assessment Appeals, noted that many towns split the load in this way, with the City of Stamford (for which he serves as Assessor) using individual members of its Board to hear a case, with each person then reporting their findings back to the group for deliberation.

With the addition of Jennifer Hunt, made official by

appointment by the Selectmen later that evening, Stackpole noted that the Board of Assessment Appeals now has six members (three members and three alternates), making the plan to divide-and-conquer a workable solution.

"It's important to give good, equalized representation," Stackpole said. "It's better to have two or three sets of ears listening to an appeal, perception, that sort of thing."

The group then finalized the dates of the hearings, which will take place Thursday, March 9; Friday, March 10; and Saturday, March 11; with deliberations slated for Wednesday, March 15 and Thursday, March 16. The group will reach out to applicants ahead of those dates to schedule individual appointments. ■

New members, alternates join Town boards By Rocco Valluzzo

Filling a few empty spots, the Board of Selectmen made several unanimous appointments to various Town boards and commissions at its meeting on Tuesday, February 21.

Chris Howard was appointed as an alternate on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Howard will serve from February 21, 2023 until November 18, 2025.

Two individuals were appointed to vacancies on the Park and Recreation Commission. Patrick Schuchard will fill the vacancy created by Kevin Jones, who resigned recently. Schuchard will serve from February 21, 2023 until June 30, 2023. Jaymie Massaro will serve from February 21, 2023 until June 30, 2026. This

marks the first time in more than a decade that the Park and Recreation Commission has been at full membership.

"I am just so pleased that we have people who are willing to do this work," said Selectwoman Peg O'Donnell. "There's a lot going on in Park and Rec. They both come highly recommended. I'm pleased we have people to do this."

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton added that the Park and Recreation Commission now has nine members, making it the largest board or commission in Red-

The Selectmen also approved a recommendation from the Redding Democratic Town Committee that Jennifer Hunt be appointed to the Board of Assessment Appeals as an alternate. She will serve from February 21, 2023 until November 18, 2025.

Pemberton noted that it is a busy time of year for the board, which had its first meeting the same evening. As of that meeting, there were 88 assessment appeals before the board.

The Selectmen also reappointed three current members on the Water Pollution Control Commission who indicated they would like to serve another term: Kirby Klump, David Faulknor, and Peter

"Again, an important commission," said O'Donnell. "People are working hard." ■



Buried manholes to be raised along Cross Highway | By Jessie Wright



Photo by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

Residents along Cross Highway may have noticed several new spray-painted areas along the roadside in the last week, which mark "call before you dig" sites ahead of utility work.

The spray paint identifies areas where there are buried manholes, according to Redding's Director of Public Works, James Gracey. "When we re-paved at some point, we must have covered them," Gracey explained.

A private cable company is

preparing to run fiber optic cables along the road and received a permit to access to the manholes to run their cables through. The company will uncover and raise the manholes, according to Gracey, bringing them flush with the surface of the road. It will be important that the manholes aren't raised too high, however, as the snowplows could then catch on the covers. "I'll be keeping a close eye on it," said Gracey. ■

Eversource tree trimming to start soon

As part of its annual tree maintenance plan in Connecticut, Eversource will be trimming along 98.65 miles of overhead power lines in Redding this year, as reported in the February 16 issue of the Sentinel and announced at the February 21 Board of

Selectmen meeting. Each year, the company trims or removes trees near approximately one quarter of its more than 16,000 miles of overhead lines in Connecticut. The work planned in Redding is based on a four-year cycle, as Eversource trims by the electrical circuiting. As a result, the majority of Redding fell into the plan for 2023.

This trimming is separate from the company's proposed Resiliency Program for a 3.7-mile section of lines that includes part of Cross Highway, a section of Redding Road (Route 107), and Hill Road.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton plans to meet with Eversource officials soon regarding the trimming. A map of the work areas will also be posted on the Town's website.

"This will still go through the Town Tree Warden and the permitting process," said Pemberton. "The way Eversource has conducted this work in the past is if you have trees on your property that touch wires, you will receive a visit from Eversource. They will leave a door hanger on your door if you are not at home, and you will have the opportunity to see the work that they are planning to do and to make comments and, in some cases,

even refuse service."

Along with the Eversource also provided a copy of a town "scorecard", a new program that was first used last year. Eversource has provided the scorecards to each town to show the number of miles scheduled for tree work, how trees have affected electric service or caused blocked roads in that community, and an explanation of the scope and importance of the work planned.

Work begins in the spring, continues through the summer, and ends in the fall or until it is complete.

"We'll start as soon as the weather permits," said Pemberton. "This has generally been very uneventful in town. Maybe a handful of residents expressed some concerns about particular trees."

Later in the February 21 meeting, Pemberton said she is waiting to hear feedback from the Town's legal counsel on the new draft of the Town's proposed tree ordinance, which has also been submitted to the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission.

"I took a look at it again, went back through it, made some significant edits, and put it in a legal format," she said. "There are things that we took out that he had mentioned concern about, that related to a town ordinance impacting trees and private property, and also based on some concerns from the Tree Warden not wanting to get involved with decision making on private property." ■



call 203.938.3800 to learn more.

Western New England Greenway

Cycling route signs installed By Jessie Wright



Photo courtesy of Western New England Greenway

The Western New England Greenway (WNEG), also designated as U.S. Bicycle Route 7, is part of a multi-segment, multistate bike route that connects New York City and Montreal.

According to the Adventure Cycling Association, "The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a developing national network of bicycle routes connecting urban and rural communities via signed roads and trails. Created with public input, U.S. Bicycle Routes direct bicyclists to a preferred route through a city, county, or state - creating opportunities for people everywhere to bicycle for travel, transportation, and recreation." The WNEG corridor brings cyclists up from Norwalk, passing through Redding along Route 53, and continues up through Bethel and north towards New Milford.

On February 22, the WNEG announced that new road signs have been installed along the Bethel segment of the corridor, marking the route cyclists should follow. Residents may notice these new, green signs (shown here) as they travel along Chestnut Street, Nashville Road, and Route 53 through Bethel.

For more information and maps of the WNEG cycling route, visit wnegreenway.org

Lacrosse clinics – with a side of pancakes

By Jessie Wright

A hearty breakfast and a chance for younger players to hone their lacrosse skills are on the menu at the Barlow Lacrosse Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 11.

Students in grades K-8, both boys and girls, are invited to drop in for a lacrosse clinic run by the Barlow varsity lacrosse teams. The girls clinic runs 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. and the boys 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Volunteers will be

flipping pancakes in the cafeteria in the meantime, providing a "carbo-load" before or after play.

Players should bring their own equipment (but note, as the clinics are indoors, no cleats). There will also be a clothing and equipment swap, where families can bring equipment that a player has outgrown and exchange it with other participants of different ages and sizes.

"It will be a fun, community building event," said Lenore Pranzo, a member of the Boys Lacrosse Booster board. "Families will be able to socialize with other parents and send their kids to a clinic to get them ready for the start of the season. They will also get a hardy breakfast and Freddie the Falcon (Barlow's mascot) will be there to say hello. What more could you ask for?"

New airports and airlines bring options for Redding travelers / Continued from page 1



Photo by Rob Sample

Rows of cars parked at Westchester County Airport with the garage at capacity.

Most options

Westchester County Airport is the closest option for air travelers from Redding: it's about 32 miles, via Routes 53, 57 and the Merritt Parkway, and King Street in Port Chester, New York. It will take you 46 minutes (depending on traffic) and is the fastest route.

In recent years, Westchester County Airport has added a host of new airlines and destinations. In fact, during busy holiday periods you can sometimes experience long lines at the airport's small security checkpoint and witness vehicles parked on the grass by the parking garage.

On American Airlines, travelers can fly direct to Charlotte, Chicago, Miami, and Washington, D.C. Delta now offers nonstop options to Atlanta, Boston, and Detroit. United also flies nonstop to Chicago. Once considered a newbie, Jet-Blue service from Westchester has grown in recent years and now includes nonstop service to Nantucket, MA, as well as Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Orlando, Tampa, and West Palm Beach, FL.

A true startup, Breeze Airlines launched on May 21, 2021, and began flying from Westchester last April. It is based in nearby Darien and currently offers service to Jacksonville, Sarasota-Bradenton, and Vero Beach, FL; Savannah, GA; Charleston, SC; Los Angeles, CA; New Orleans, LA; and Norfolk, VA.

Rounding things out is small carrier Cape Air, which flies daily from Westchester to Lebanon, NH.

Another recent startup – Elite Airways – no longer flies from Westchester.

Physically, Westchester Airport can seem a bit of a throwback to the days of smaller air terminals. On busy days, there is often a queue to use the restrooms before departure and after arrival. It has six boarding gates, all connected to the building by jet bridges: walking across the tarmac isn't always necessary.

Travelers should check online to see if parking is available at the airport's multilevel parking garage and overflow parking lot, as both are known to fill to capacity on occasion. A nearby parking service, Purchase Park 2 Fly, shuttles passengers from a lot at SUNY – Purchase, approximately two miles away, and runs about \$17 daily.

Heading west

Newburgh, New York Stewart International Airport is 54 miles away, and is thus the farthest of the three regional airports from Redding. It's now operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and has eight departure gates, all with jet bridges. Parking at Stewart remains abundant.

Though its flight mix took a big hit during the pandemic, Stewart has been on the rebound since then. Flight service is now dominated by two carriers: Allegiant and Frontier. A third, Play Airlines, has reinstated flights from Stewart to Reykjavik, Iceland.

Allegiant Airlines recently resumed service from Stewart to

Myrtle Beach, SC. Allegiant also flies to Orlando, Daytona Beach (more accurately to Orlando/Sanford, which is about 27 miles from the actual Daytona airport) Punta Gorda, St. Petersburg, and Tampa in Florida. Frontier Airlines offers nonstop service to Orlando and Fort Lauderdale, with seasonal service to Atlanta and Tampa.

Both Allegiant and Frontier are noted for ultra-low fares, though as with the case with any air travel, it usually will save you a lot of money if you plan well ahead. What's trickier about both airlines is that not every destination is available every day. Frontier offers flights on Mondays through Fridays from Orlando, with return flights as well; however, it only flies to Fort Lauderdale on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Returning flights are later those same days.

Late last year, Frontier eliminated its customer-service phone line; travelers with issues are instead now directed to the company's phone app. The company issued a breezy message at the time about customers "preferring online communications." Still, a planeload of passengers on a cancelled flight might have a less generous opinion about noodling with an app in such a pinch.

Allegiant's service to Myrtle Beach is almost daily, with just Tuesday having no flights there. Allegiant's service to and from Orlando/Sanford and St. Petersburg is limited to four days per week, and three days per week for Punta Gorda.

Need more information?

Check out these airports' websites for more details. Pay particular attention to flight schedules, extra fees for items such as carry-on bags, how much reservation changes will cost, and – very important – the cancellation policy for each carrier.

- Tweed New Haven Airport: fly-tweed.com
- Westchester County Airport: airport.westchestergov.com
- New York Stewart International Airport: swfny.com ■

Batter up!

Spring baseball registration open at the Boys & Girls Club

By Jessie Wright





From the T-Ball Division to the Majors, baseball players of all skill levels ages 4-12 can register for a spring season of "America's pastime" through the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton. The baseball teams are open to both boys and girls, with the season typically running from mid-April through mid-June. Games are played on the weekends and some weeknights, with weeknight practices depending on the player's age and division.

Redding Baseball has offered these programs for local kids for over 70 years. The teams are offered as part of the international Cal Ripken Youth Baseball Organization, which are locally run under the charter of the Jesse P. Sanford Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton.

The deadline to register for this year's spring season is March 9, 2023.

The divisions include:

Majors (Grades 5-7)

Players will play all their games on a 50/70 field (50 feet from pitcher's mound to home plate and 70 feet between each base) with 50/70 field rules. This division is for all eligible 7th, 6th, and 5th graders. Majors teams are fully integrated with Easton Baseball, and will be proportionally balanced between the two depending on overall registration.

Minors (Grades 3-5)

Played on the traditional 46/60 field, this division features full kid

pitch, stealing, etc. Minors teams are also fully integrated with Easton Baseball. Eligible fifth graders can choose to play either in the Minors or the Majors divison.

Rookies (Grades 1-2)

Also played on the traditional 46/60 field. Rookies division features a combination of coach pitch/machine pitch. Games are played with outs, score is kept, and players bat in a continuous lineup. The Rookies is organized as a Redding-only division, with all game and practices occurring in Redding (most often at Redding Community Center).

T-Ball – (Pre-K - Kindergarten)

Played on a smaller-sized field with smaller team sizes (usually six to eight players). Batters hit the ball off a tee while learning the fundamentals of the game including positions, batting, fielding, and throwing. This division is also Redding-only, with all practices and games held in town. Any child who turns 4 by April 30, 2023 is eligible for T-Rall

Redding Baseball teams are coached by volunteer coaches, and volunteers are welcome for all divisions this year. T-Ball volunteers are needed to begin the season. If you are interested in being a coach or assistant coach, e-mail ERbaseball.leagueCT@gmail.com

For more information or to register by March 9 for a team, visit **rbgcbaseball.org.leag1.com**



STUDENTS

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are looking for or help you need
in 100 words or less.

Week-long February break to return in 2023-24 Boards of Education approve school calendar

By Jessie Wright

ER9's three boards of education (Easton, Redding, and Region 9) approved the school calendar dates for the 2023-24 school year at their recent meeting on January 31. Notably, students will have a week-long February break next year for the first time in several years, which will encompass Presidents' Day and the four weekdays following.

Region 9 Board of Education member Mike D'Agostino said during the meeting that the Calendar Committee was recommending the re-instatement of a week-long break based on survey results from parents in all three districts.

At a February meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission following the school calendar's

approval, Park and Recreation Director Rob Blick indicated that his department would also bring back a week-long day camp program in February 2024 to coincide with this break, for families interested in care and activities for their children while school is out of session.

REDDING SCHOOL DISTRICT | 2023-2024 CALENDAR

T (Teachers) = 185 days; S (Students) = 180 days

Approved: ER9 Joint Boards of Education

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8:05 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.

8:05 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Early Dismissal for Fall Conferences 8:05 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Early Dismissal for Spring Conferences 8:05 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Early Dismissal for Professional Development TBD

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Family 5

Classes and groups for singers of all styles By Jessie Wright



Photo courtesy of Music on the Hill

Recent research has shown a positive impact on children's development through engaging in singing and musical activities. Professor Graham Welch at the Institute of Education at the University of London cites physical, psychological, musical, social, and educational benefits to singing, claiming, "Singing is important because it builds selfconfidence, promotes self-esteem, always engages the emotions, promotes social inclusion, supports social skill development, and enables young people of different ages and abilities to come together successfully to create something special in the arts."

From crooning and serenading to belting and harmonizing, Redding is host to several extracurricular opportunities (in a range of styles and approaches) for kids of all ages to get their "sing" on. Below is this month's Family 5 round-up of a few of those options.

1. The Music Shed (Rock and band)

75 Sherman Turnpike musicshedct.com

The Music Shed is run by David Morgan, a long-time professional musician, producer, and educator, who runs programming that focuses on teaching "the art of playing in a band." The Music Shed's spring program, running from January through June, places beginner to advanced musicians into bands of no more than 6 members based on skill level who practice 90 minutes per week for 20 weeks. Vocalists are among the many musician types, along with players of guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, strings, and horns.

Students at The Music Shed learn team building, self-esteem, improvisation, communication, harmony, theory, listening, rhythm, and form in a supportive environment.

2. Music on the Hill (Choral)

531 Danbury Road, Wilton

musiconthehillct.org

Music on the Hill is a non-profit, secular musical organization just over the border of Georgetown in Wilton. In addition to several adult ensembles, it offers a free Community Children's Chorus for children in third through eighth grade. The Community Children's Chorus meets on Wednesdays from 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. with performance opportunities throughout the year.

In the Community Children's Chorus, children learn music from a variety of genres and cultures; learn vocal production, breath support, and other skills; read music and ring handbells; build teamwork and leadership skills; build confidence and have fun.

3. Wiremill Academy (Musical theater)

12 Old Mill Road wiremillacademy.com

As featured in last week's Business Spotlight, Wiremill Academy is located in the same building as Wire Mill BBQ in Georgetown (yum!) Founded by three professional actors, it provides performing arts-based

education by teachers who have years of Broadway, touring, and regional singing, acting, and dance experience. Wiremill Academy offers 12-week courses (both individual and group), that include voice lessons as well as musical theater, in addition to acting, improv, and dance instruction. They are also producing three "summer camp" shows this year, where kids will put on 101 Dalmatians Kids! (Grades 1-5); Seussical Kids! (Grades 3-9); or a Musical Theater Revue (Grades 6-12).

Wiremill Academy says that their number one goal is to "help children realize how valuable and unique they are, and to inspire them to explore their creativity with confidence." Kids will learn new skills while also easing stress, boosting confidence, a gaining a sense of belonging.

4. Phoebe Madden (Private voice lessons) 30 Black Rock Turnpike phoebemadden.com

Redding has several teachers for private voice lessons, one of whom is Phoebe Madden. A professional actress and singer for many years in NYC and on tour, she opened her voice lessons studio in 2000 in Rhode Island. Now a Redding resident, Madden works with voice students of all ages across several musical styles. Students at her studio come together as an ensemble for two concerts each year, along with several other performance opportunities.

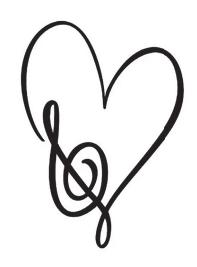
Madden explains that "I emphasize the importance of being able to sing many different styles merely by 'changing your hat,' so to speak. My students' versatility allows them to sing musical theater, jazz, pop, folk, opera, rock, and even to create original songs." She works to develop each student's voice in a healthy way and encourages collaboration among her studio's singers.

5. Redding's houses of worship (Religious)

Various

Singing and faith have gone hand-in-hand for centuries. Many of the churches and other faithbased organizations in Redding have both adult and children's choirs who perform on a regular basis during services and in concerts. If your family has been thinking about becoming a member of a church in town, this may be a wonderful way to get your kids singing as well.

A list of religious services and contact information can be found on the Sentinel's Calendar of Events on page 11. ■



The Georgetown story – its past, present, and future

Part One: How it all began | By Brent Colley

Twelve miles between Norwalk and Danbury exists a special place that early settlers began making their way to in the early 1700's. They came here to start new lives inspired by open spaces, farmland, river access, and their personal hopes and dreams. Many of us can relate to that in the present day, as our local towns still balance outdoor beauty and tranquility with amenities, financial opportunity, and employment. For what would become known as "George's Town" or "Georgetown", there were two important ingredients - the first, improvements to the main travel route between two pioneer settlements; the second, the Norwalk River.

The improvement of the ancient Native American footpath was essential to the migration of coastal settlers into the interior. The main south-to-north footpath ran from Norwalk up to Old Mill Road, Main Street, Route 107, Umpawaug Road, and Route 53 into Bethel and Danbury. traveled Native Americans these footpaths for thousands of years, making their way between villages, plantations, fishing places, and hunting grounds. Danbury settlers were the first to follow it, and once they converted the Native American plantations and villages into a European settlement, the "Northwalk path" grew into a bigger and wider path that added travelers and freight. The increase in the volume of people and freight traveling this transportation conduit nurtured and opened a gateway for new local opportunities for those we call entrepreneurs today. Turnpike companies, taverns, and stagecoach services are most visible to those researching Georgetown's early years, but water power industries are ultimately what fueled early Georgetown's expansion and its namesake.

The Norwalk River runs approximately 20 miles from Long Island Sound up into the interior; between itself and the tributaries that feed it, it is very important to the communities it snakes along. It was important then and it remains important now. Staying on topic, the Norwalk River provided



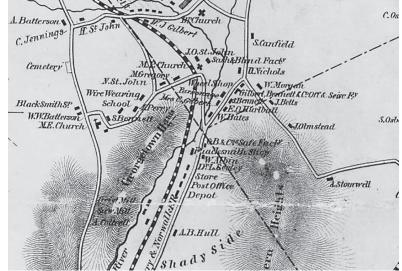
Georgetown multiple resources but, in its establishment, the most important was fueling water wheels. Grist mills and sawmills first, followed by wheels that would fuel leather straps which powered machinery that created more important products than the world had ever imagined.

George Abbott came to the village from Westchester County, New York in the 1760's. In the timeframe he arrived, the hamlet had different names for different reasons: Osborntown, Honeyhill, St. Johns Corner, Sugar Hollow, Burrs Hill, Jack Street, etc. Like any small town, the sections were named based on who lived there or what that section was most well known for. George changed all that, purchasing a grist mill on the Norwalk River soon after he arrived and doing well enough to next purchase a sawmill on the Norwalk River. Then, with the support and help of his wife, Lucy, they established a tavern on that very same road. This road stretch, locally known as Old Mill Road, would eventually become the most significant part of turnpike in the local region and later the location closest to the Norwalk-to-Danbury Railroad. Everyone knew George or knew of him, and soon people started referring to the hamlet as "George's Town", because he had cornered the most significant markets of that time period. According to local historian Wilbur F. Thompson, on the Fourth of July many, many years ago:

"It was voted to name the hamlet Georgetown in honor of the local miller, whose name was George Abbott."

The next significant milestone in Georgetown's history was the arrival of Benjamin Gilbert. Gilbert initially worked with leather, but as all entrepreneurs do, he was always looking for new opportunities and found one via horse and cattle hair. The business started small, in the basement of his house with his wife and daughters weaving hair while he shaped wood rings to form the rims of his sifters. The horsehair sifter market not proving as large as he had anticipated, Mr. Gilbert increased his business by adding the use of curled hair – this was used for carriage cushions, mattresses, and furniture. Next, Gilbert invented and put into operation the first machinery ever used in picking hair. The hair picker straightened matted and tangled hair and made it suitable for stuffing mattresses, as well as cushions for carriages and furniture. Because of this innovation, the business grew, and a short time later, he decided to lease a small part of an old sawmill at the corner of Old Mill Road and present-day Route 57. Soon after, he formed a partnership with his son-in-law, Sturges Bennett, forming the firm of Gilbert &

Gilbert and Bennett's next innovation and the arrival of the Norwalk-to-Danbury Railroad transformed the small hamlet





into a thriving village full of diversity and community spirit. This innovation was woven wire, which proved to be more versatile than anyone within Gilbert & Bennett could have imagined. New products and uses exploded once the company perfected the looms and the process of weaving thinly drawn wire. This effort began in roughly the late 1830's, and when the railroad arrived in 1852, they quickly jumped from face-to-face sales to the worldwide marketplace. Within one year, Gilbert and Bennett opened a store in New York City and began interviewing new immigrants on the docks outside Castle Garden. With worldwide market exposure and the capability to import newly arriving immigrants hungry for a new life and highly skilled in the

specific needs of the company, Gilbert & Bennett and Georgetown had found a winning combination that very few towns of similar size would ever have.

Georgetown's story tells the history of American business from 1818 to 1998, and we're excited to share it with you. Keep an eye out for the next segment of this series... Part Two: A Civil War, the Window Screen, and Great Governance.

> Brent Colley is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding

Jo Fuchs Luscombe – there's no stopping her

From a childhood in Venezuela to the halls of the General Assembly

By Pamela Brown



Jo Fuchs Luscombe at Meadow Ridge.

Josephine "Jo" Fuchs Luscombe has never sat still, and even as she turns 90 this spring, she remains as active as ever. "At every stage of my life I've always been a busy person," said the Meadow Ridge resident, looking back on her life as an exciting adventure. "I was, and am, an ordinary woman, but everything I've done in my life one way or another has been extraordinary and interesting and I have loved every inch of it."

Living in Westport for 50 years, Luscombe was involved in politics, serving five terms, from 1987 to 1997, as a Republican Representative in the State General Assembly, under Connecticut Governors William O'Neill, Lowell Weicker, and John Rowland. She also served as Republican minority whip, the second highest-ranking individual in the minority party. "I liked helping people and opening doors for people wherever possible,"

said Luscombe, fondly recalling how she helped a local family navigate an adoption and assisted a veteran in finding a nursing home. "I was good at that type of work. It made me the person I am."

Luscombe represented the 136th District, which includes Westport and parts of Norwalk. "I learned the legislative process and understood the needs of a city and how to sail through all of the bureaucracy. It was a wonderful learning experience. I wish I were younger so I have time to do more," she said. Following local, state, and national politics, Luscombe still happily fields phone calls from others seeking help. "With pleasure and pride, I'm happy with whatever I can do to make life better for others."

Community service was important to Luscombe who served as Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Chairman of the School Building Committee, longtime member and President of the Westport Woman's Club, member of the Board of the Friends of the Westport Senior Center, and the first woman to become President of a Rotary Club of Westport. She also raised funds for The Westport Library and was on the advisory council of the Westport Historical Society and the Board of Trustees of the Westport Family YMCA, serving on numerous non-profit boards including The Norwalk Symphony.

Luscombe's civic-mindedness goes back to her childhood in Venezuela, where her father worked for an oil company. "I grew up speaking both Spanish and English, and we often traveled, so I learned how to get along with people in all walks of life," she explained. "That's important, because it keeps you on your toes and makes it possible for you to live and let live. I think that's what's lacking in our world today."

She returned to the States as a teen and soon after married an oil man who "whisked her off" to Libya, then moved to Washington and had a family by the age of 20. She settled in Westport in 1969.

Luscombe is now happily retired in Redding. "Redding is a beautiful town and Meadow Ridge is an incredible place. The residents and staff are always willing to go the extra mile to

make us feel needed and wanted," said Luscombe. She has two sons, four grandchildren, and one great grandson.

Proudly celebrating Women's History Month this March, Luscombe knows she did her part to support equal pay and equal opportunity for women. "I support women, because I learned firsthand at every level of my life and everything that I was involved in that women are willing to go that extra mile," she said. "I always believed women can do anything they put their minds to, as long as they're willing to go a little further and work a little harder and longer.

I think it's good for everybody to do as much as they're capable of doing and to keep learning."

Despite an already full life, Luscombe is ready to explore new ventures. "Life does offer a lot of good opportunities, and you have to be ready and willing to grab at them when they knock at the door. I'm good at doing that," said Luscombe. A former long-distance runner in elementary school in Venezuela, she added with a laugh, "At almost 90, I'm still running (with a cane!)" ■

"Spring is the time of plans and projects."

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OBITUARY

Jerome Robert Kern

Passed away February 11, 2023



Jerome Robert Kern

Jerome Robert Kern, 74, of Wilton passed away peacefully at home on February 11, 2023. He was a resident of Wilton since 1966. Jerome was born in the Bronx, New York.

Beloved husband of Janice L. Kern and father of Matthew J. Kern, Jerome is survived by his beloved sister Victoria Kern and brother Vincent Kern. He is also survived by many nieces and

Jerry was known for his wit and sense of humor. He had a great love of family and home.

Jerry was a Millwright, Carpenter, Mechanic, and Welder until his retirement in 2013.

Jerry served in the Army as a Field Artillery Mechanic and served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. For his acts of valor during his service, he was awarded the

Bronze Star with "V" device and two Purple Hearts.

A Catholic mass will be held at 12 noon at Sacred Heart Church in Redding on March 4th, 2023. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in memory of Jerome Kern to "Wounded Warriors Project" online at "WoundedWarriorProject.org/ donate" or "PAWS Animal Shelter" online at "pawsct.org/ donate" ■

> To offer online condolences please visit: www.boutonfuneralhome.com

Paula Elaine Johnson

Passed away February 18, 2023

Paula Elaine Johnson, age 78, formerly of Redding, passed away peacefully surrounded by her daughter and son on February 18, 2023. Paula fought a long and brave battle against Rheumatoid Arthritis right until the end. Her children and those who knew her admired her strength and resilience, especially throughout recent years.

Paula was born in Norwalk to Axel Carlson and Hilda Jaderlund. She grew up in Georgetown along with her brothers Wayne and David Carlson. Paula graduated from Joel Barlow High School and then went on to be a secretary at the Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill and then as a cafeteria worker for the Redding Public School system. Even though she could've done anything she wanted with her career, she chose this path, and it reflected her love and commitment to her family as she could be home with her children when they were not at school.

Paula married her soulmate and partner in crime, Daniel Johnson of Wilton, in September 1965. They went on to build their first house together in Redding, which included one of the largest vegetable gardens in Fairfield County at the time. Lilac bushes adorned the property, which were planted by Danny as these were her favorite. Paula was an avid reader and keeper of trivial knowledge, and a devoted fan of the game show Jeopardy.

She is survived by her daughter Melanie Ough, Kent, and son Neil Johnson, Bristow, VA and her grandsons Logan and Gavin Johnson, and Gunnar Ough. She loved being a Nonnie and had so much fun playing with her grandsons and making memories with them.

There will be no viewing services, and the family plans a private graveside service where Paula will be laid to rest next to her beloved Danny. Although the burial is private, please feel free to visit her at Hull Cemetery in Redding. I am sure Paula would like that. If the mood strikes, watch an episode of Jeopardy in her honor. Sympathies may be sent and extended to Melanie Ough and Neil Johnson at senora_o@yahoo. com where her kids would enjoy hearing a story or two about her.

Dermot Francis McBrinn

Passed away February 22, 2023



Dermot Francis McBrinn

On February 22, Dermot "Derry" Francis McBrinn passed away suddenly at the age of 86, in his home in Wilton.

Born in New York in 1936 to Francis and Emily McBrinn, Derry was the oldest of four children. Derry took pride in being an example of hard work and responsibility. He grew up during difficult times in meager surroundings, and thus, Derry was forced to pave his own way. His determination and family loyalty pushed Derry to begin working a paper route at the age of only seven. His goal was to help navigate his family through tough times with whatever he could offer. His strong work ethic remained with him for the entirety of his life.

Derry served in the United States Air Force from 1954-1957, when he received an honorable discharge to help care for his family due to his father suffering

Derry had a love for people, and as a natural leader, education became the perfect career choice. After receiving his bachelor's degree, he became a schoolteacher, and spent over forty-five years in his profession. He motivated students and changed lives. While teaching he continued his education and received a master's degree. Even after retirement, he continued to substitute teach well into his seventies. He was adored by his students, staff, and colleagues and left a lasting impact in the hearts of many.

In his spare time, Derry continued to serve others. He created and developed a recreation program for children with disabilities and directed the program for over forty-five years. These kids had a special place in Derry's heart, and he enjoyed supporting and mentoring them. He was able to cultivate special relationships with each of the program attendees, and each felt that special bond. Derry was also very active in the swim program at the Special Olympics, and a longtime member of The Lion's Club.

Family and friends will remember Derry as a giving and compassionate man, who always put others before himself. He was a man who easily made lifelong friendships and made sure those around him were heard and felt important. He was a person who truly never met a stranger, and his unyielding patience, service and

love will be sorely missed. Derry is survived by his lovely wife of fifty-five years, Susan; two sisters Mary and Sheila; children Derry, Patrick, and Ellen; grandchildren Coen, Grayson, Preston, and Blaine, and countless family and chosen family members.

"May there be comfort in knowing that someone so special will never be forgotten" - Julie Herbert ■

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Our Vision and The Lion's Club. www.ourvisiondisabilityct.org (disability-based rec programs and special Olympics participation). To offer online condolences please visit: www.boutonfuneralhome.com

Care for the caregivers

Classes, groups for those supporting people with mental illness By Donna Christopher

Parents, children, siblings, spouses, relatives, friends, or anyone supporting someone with mental illness endure their own emotional suffering, experts say.

Regardless of whether a person with mental illness seeks or has access to professional help, or even has a diagnosis of his or her condition, it is important for the people in caregiving roles to seek their own supportive care.

"Parents have limited help available when their teen or young adult (or adult) child needs mental health treatment," said Liz Jorgensen, owner and director of Insight Counseling in Ridgefield. "They often face prohibitive expenses and/or a family member who is refusing help due to a fascinating symptom that many people with the most serious mental illnesses have, Anosognosia, the complete unawareness of symptoms or denial of symptoms."

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) provides advocacy, education, support, and public awareness "so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives." There are over 70 support group meetings offered through NAMI in this month alone, including meetings for family members called Family Support Groups and NAMI CAN (Child and Adolescent Network) for

These meet both online and in-person, with 16 such groups localized in Fairfield County.

The virtual meetings, a byproduct of the Covid-19 pandemic, remains a robust option, though many of the groups are back to meeting in-person in towns and cities throughout the state. Locally, there are groups that meet in Brookfield, Darien, Greenwich, Fairfield, and Norwalk, among others. There are also Danbury, Ridgefield, Southbury, and Wilton Zoom groups, so anyone from any location may attend a virtual support meeting.

"Zoom provided a very convenient way to reach out to the people who need us most when we could not meet otherwise," explained Bob Cornell, President of NAMI Southwest Connecticut. "We are anxious to get back to normal and provide our services in person, but we see distinct advantages to both formats.

Family members of those with mental illness can often face similar challenges. NAMI support groups provide a confidential, "safe", place for family members to discuss their issues and come to understand "they are not alone," said Cornell.

"We face stigma, discrimination really, in just about everything we do, from school to employment to treatment," explained Cornell. "We are faced with finding very scarce professional treatment and equally scarce affordable housing options. In some cases, our loved ones do not want treatment due to stigma and side effects."

Treatments that are very expensive or not covered by insurance that "although they may make symptoms better, are not cures," are also among the many challenges families face, he continued.

"Often this is the only place they can discuss the topics that they are unable to discuss with their loved ones, their loved ones' doctors (HIPAA), friends (stigma), or even family members that don't understand the impact of mental health conditions on them and their families," Cornell said.

The benefits of these resources for caregivers can range from a reduction in feelings of isolation and hopelessness to giving caregivers new relationships and tools to help manage the care they give their loved ones.

"Because the non-profit and state resources for people with mental illness are so limited and private care so expensive, many parents live with abuse from their adult children and attempt to manage their rages and psychosis by indulging the person's demands and lack of initiative or willingness to get care," said Jorgensen, who is also a founding member and Co-Chair of the Easton Redding Community Coalition.

"I only recommend NAMI for parents dealing with a child with mental illness. They are the best," she continued.

Angelica Fontanez, Redding's Director of Social Services and a licensed clinical social worker, agrees with the importance of these resources. "Family members need support. Whether a person is supporting a child or young adult or senior they need help and need to know the resources. They themselves develop anxiety and depression so if they're not taking care of themselves, they wear themselves out."

Shaniel Chamanlal, owner of Healing Spring Wellness Center in Plantsville, has seen the need for mental health services grow since October 2020 at her wellness center. Back then, she was the only therapist at the center. She has since added 14 more.

"As a caregiver of someone who has a mental illness, it can be emotionally and physically taxing, and it can feel as though all your focus needs to be on that person who is sick," said Chamanlal. "Taking care of yourself is important. They (NAMI support groups) can reinforce self-care and putting up boundaries."

In addition to their support groups, NAMI also offers a free eight-week course, "Family-to Family" for family, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. One of these courses will begin March 11 at Greenwich Hospital.

Cornell said that among the feedback the local NAMI chapter has gotten about the course, one mother said, "Before I took the course, I felt alone and overwhelmed dealing with my daughter's mental illness. By taking this course, I have met others who are going through the same things I am and have learned about many resources that I never knew existed."

Groups and classes are run by trained facilitators with lived experience, which means they too have someone close to them with a mental illness. NAMI Connecticut provides facilitator training for anyone wishing to lead a support

NAMI Connecticut also offers support and recovery groups for individuals with mental health challenges. These include Peerto-Peer, Young Adult Connection, NAMI Connect Recovery Support, and Rainbow Connections, an LGBTQ+ Community Group. ■

> For more information, visit namict.org/calendar

Manifest this By Lisa Tancredi

There's a lot of talk out there about manifestation. It's the new buzzword, the new thing to do. It's what the cool kids are doing after school. You know what I mean? So, I thought I would take a moment and talk about it directly. One on one. Mano a mano. As it were. (Even if I was never a member of the cool kids.)

Often when I hear people talking about manifestation, they're referring to something specific, as in, "I manifested a

new job," or "I want to manifest a new relationship," or "I'm going to manifest a great vacation for myself." They talk about one specific goal, one thing they're focused on, and one thing that would reveal their ability to manifest. Even if they don't know what that really means. Or what exactly they're doing to make it happen.

For many people, their ideas about manifestation come from The Secret, both a book and a movie about the power of positive thinking, the power of focus, and how it is that the energy we send out comes back to us. For example, if we want something particular in our lives, like a particular house, we need to keep our focus on this house in a positive way.

But this approach applies to a single, isolated event, as if when you're not focused on a particular goal in a positive way, you're in a neutral space of non-energy, nonconnection, non-manifestation.

Just living your life, having no effect on the other conditions of your life, no particular responsibility for or ability to do much about your fate.

The truth is that you're manifesting all the time. Every single moment. In fact, you can't NOT manifest. You can't not manifest because you can't ever not have an energy, a vibration — a feeling. There is never a time when you are not resonating at a certain frequency - whatever

that frequency might be: high or low. Even as you read this, you're reading it in a certain vibration. And that energy is going out and finding other similar energies to bring more of that originating energy back to you. What you manifest is a response to your energy, your vibration. In other words, you manifest the conditions consistent with how you feel, consistent with the energy you are experiencing right now.

Business Spotlight

Two friends craft unforgettable events with Bella Soirée By Justin Reynolds





Photos courtesy of Bella Soirée

After months of being cooped up inside during the pandemic, Kelly York and Heather Cody had an idea. The two friends, both Redding residents, loved to throw parties, and they wanted to bring people together to safely celebrate during such a difficult time.

So, they created Bella Soirée, a custom design event styling business that prides itself on making every soirée as "special, unique, and unforgettable as possible," York said.

Initially, the company focused on outdoor events. But the business model has since been updated to include indoor events, too.

What sets Bella Soirée apart from other events companies is "the attention to detail and love we put into every event," York said. "Every event is personalized. No two are the same."

Over the years, York and Cody have worn many hats professionally. They've worked in the event space, and that's where their passion lies.

Years ago, York and Cody lived in the same apartment building in New York City at the same time. But their paths didn't cross until years later when their children met

"Our children met in 2015 at school and became instant friends," York said, "as did we."

Today, the friends and business owners serve clients primarily in Fairfield County, but their work sometimes takes them to farther

destinations.

"We've done events as far as Virginia, and we've had a request for an event in Italy, so we're willing to travel for the right job," York explained. "We set up in people's homes, restaurants, country clubs, hotels, and schools."

Their website showcases some of the impressive and intricate designs Bella Soirée can bring to the table.

"Many hours go into planning and prep for our events, because we're always looking for new details to add for our clients," York continued. "Set-up times vary depending on how elaborate the soireé is. From start to finish, we spend an average of 17 hours on each event."

Bella Soirée owns much of the furniture and props they use for their events.

"Oh boy, we have a lot of them," York said. "We have a storage facility to house it all. Of course, for bigger events, we bring in rental companies."

When customers engage the company, they usually have an idea in mind of what they're looking for or have seen something the company has created and wants to work with that aesthetic.

"We'll talk through the elements of the soirée and understand who it is for and who will be attending," York said. "We like to get some background from the person we are celebrating in order to personalize

After that, York and Cody get to work.

"This process evolves in the run-up to the event," she said. "We don't have any tools to be able to

share our final design, and that's kind of part of our charm. We want the client to be blown away because we haven't shared any details." For the most part, clients trust York and Cody to "create

something beautiful and are happy to let us lead and work our magic," York said. "Sometimes, there's a client that wants to make sure they are involved in every detail, and of course we are happy to share

To date, Bella Soirée has worked with many types of clients - some "very high profile," York

"We're more tailored toward clients looking for a unique, outof-the-box soirée," York said. "We are happy to do any type of event, although we do have a minimum requirement."

Bella Soirée's costs are on a case-by-case basis.

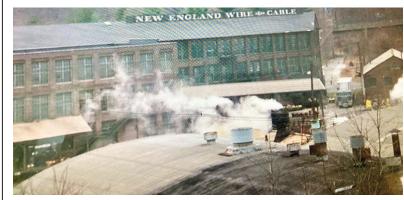
"We are not your standard package type of business," York said.

> For more information, visit bellasoiree.com or call (917) 488-5512.

Movie Series

Other People's Money

By Donna Christopher



A frame of a scene at the fictional New England Wire & Cable company, filmed at the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site in Georgetown.

Danny DeVito complimented a Redding police officer's leather jacket, among other memorable moments on set, during the Georgetown filming in the early 90's of Other People's Money.

The actor played Lawrence Garfield ("Larry the Liquidator") in the 1991 romantic comedy-drama. Based on a play by Jerry Sterner, the film was directed by Norman Jewison, written by Alvin Sargent, and starred DeVito, Gregory Peck, Penelope Ann Miller, Dean Jones, and Piper Laurie.

Mark O'Donnell, now Chief of the Redding Police Department, recalls having lunch on set with Peck, Miller, and Jones.

"All the actors we met were very nice, very genuine, not snooty - regular people," O'Donnell said. "We were there for security purposes. We were there aroundthe-clock. We signed up for it."

"Lunch was catered on the set," O'Donnell continued. "Gregory Peck was a very nice man. He was very genuine. I was thrilled to meet him. I told him my father liked watching his movies. I remembered his war movies. He was a very humble guy. He had on a pair of corduroys and a collared shirt and a sweater vest. He had a deep voice."

brief After having conversation with DeVito, O'Donnell described him as "a very funny man."

"I said, 'I'm Mark. I hear you're looking for pizza places. There's one in Derby off (Route) 34 called Roseland. It's been there since the '40s,' I told him. He was looking for an Italian-type meal. I also recommended Sally's. Others working on the set suggested

Pepe's," O'Donnell said.

"I know who you are. I like the jacket," DeVito said to O'Donnell, O'Donnell recalled.

Other People's Money is about a Wall Street corporate raider, Lawrence Garfield, who buys up shares in a struggling company but falls in love with the stepdaughter (played by Penelope Ann Miller) of the founder's son who is hired to defend the company against him. A battle ensues between Garfield and the hard-working, New England factory owner (Peck) who cares about his workers and the family

An iconic speech to shareholders helps to define DeVito's character.

"Your company is dead. I didn't kill it. Don't blame me. It was dead when I got there. It's too late for prayers. For even if the prayers were answered, and a miracle occurred, and the yen did this and the dollar did that, and the infrastructure did the other things, we would still be dead. You know why? Fiber optics. New technologies, Obsolescence. We're dead alright."

According to the Los Angeles Times, Peck described filming Other People's Money as "like a trip into the past where families have been here for three and four generations, living in the houses their grandfathers built, and working the mills where their fathers worked."

The movie was filmed primarily in New York City, with scenes at the story's New England Wire & Cable company shot at Seymour Specialty & Wire and the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site in Georgetown.

Houses that make Redding Special

A history of dynamic women in a Craftsman house | By Grace Whitmore









Photos by Margi Esten

According to the late Charley Couch, former Redding Town Historian and home researcher, the Craftsman/Adirondack-style home located at 34 Lonetown Road "represents both a house of local architectural significance and a house of unique provenance."

Built in 1906, this home is perhaps the earliest known surviving example of Craftsman architecture in Redding - and one of Redding's most significant Craftsman style homes. This distinctive country retreat is essentially an integration of three different structures; two historical sections of the house that have been renovated and one that is relatively new construction, all of which have been expertly merged together in the Craftsman style. The result is a unified, large, rambling (yet warm), inviting, and comfortable home.

Originally built on a 43-acre parcel by Manhattanite Grace Armory at a time when Mark

Twain's villa-style "Stormfield" was under construction less than two miles away, the Armory home was representative of an era in the Town's history when both literary and wealthier urbanites found Redding's rural charm a reasonable commute from New York City during the summer months.

At the time, the land was likely all open meadow and very different from the forested landscape now encompassing the area. In fact, it was the children of the nearby Burritt Farm who later coined the term "In-A-Field" for the house due to it's appearance from a distance. Prior to construction, Armory had a cellar dug and a modest dwelling, located where the present-day Redding Center Post Office now sits, moved (likely by a team of oxen!) to its present location where it now serves as the kitchen of the house. The original house consisted of a dramatic 72foot front porch with overhanging eaves and four rooms with floor to

ceiling stone fireplaces; diamond-English cottage-style windows; Mission-style board and batten wainscoting, banisters, and trim; and hand-cut woodwork and exposed ceiling beams. Apparently, the property was used as a horse farm and then a hunting lodge as the owners did not live there full time.

The home was sold to Florence Reynolds in 1928, the daughter of a prosperous Chicago insurance company owner who provided his daughter with a considerable income. She worked at the exclusive girls school, Andre Brook, in Tarrytown and was best known as the close friend and benefactor of Jane Heap, the avant-garde co-publisher of a small modernist magazine, "The Little Review" from 1914 to 1929. Heap, along with her partner Margaret Anderson, provided a literary forum for such authors as Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, and William

Carlos Williams. Sadly, Reynolds ended up losing the home to foreclosure after the Depression, and it was sold to yet another woman - Johanna Murphy. She and her husband, a Danbury physician, raised their children there and eventually subdivided the property, one section of which was a parcel known as "Murphy's Swamp" - which would become one of Redding's first open space purchases and subsequently renamed "Lonetown Marsh".

The current owners, Jonathan and Margi Esten, purchased the property in March of 2000 from its final single female owner, Joan Fisher, who was the wife of the late Carl Fisher, a successful Broadway production manager whose shows included West Side Story, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Fiddler on the Roof, and Cabaret. And indeed, many Broadway actors attended lavish parties hosted by Joan Fisher over the years at 34 Lonetown Road.

With all of this incredible history, the Estens were keen to keep the character of the original home intact, while incorporating, in 2002, a 2,000-square-foot addition maintaining the Craftsman design. They also swapped Brazilian cherry for the original pine board and batten wainscoting throughout the house and kept one wall of original William Morris wallpaper going up the main stairway. The original 1700's cottage attached to the back of the house included a spiral staircase to a second floor; when the Estens decided that needed to be removed, they also added a soaring two-story foyer with cathedral beadboard ceiling and a second story 31-foot x18foot paneled game room in lieu of an attic. Jonathan Esten was quoted in a 2009 article on the home calling it "a work of art" and completely "magical at night."

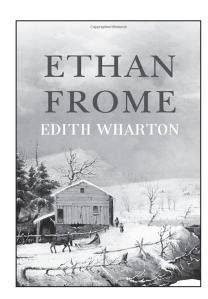
This thoroughly unique home which sits on seven level acres is indeed, enchanting. ■

BOOK REVIEW

Ethan Frome

By Edith Wharton

105 pages / Amazon / \$5.89



Ethan Frome, by Edith Wharton, is a literary masterpiece published in 1911, and a nearly perfect novel (or more properly, novella). The author presents a frame narrative story-within-a-story that ends where it begins, a short, tight, circular structure, artful as a poem. Frome's tale is reported by a stranger to the scene, a device which allows us, the readers, to see with a stranger's eyes. We are given selective particulars, the way a lifetime is told in an hour. Wharton's towering achievement is how her narrative of passion and consequence delaminates private emotion on a stark landscape (Starkfield!) in winter. Snow makes a beautiful but obscuring (and, as we know, ephemeral) metaphor. The job of fiction is to convince you of its truth. In this portrayal of passion and dilemma, tragic results are easily believable, and so evermore dreadful. Wharton shows how bad fate can result from a lack of imagination as much as from ignorance or penury. This is literature at its thoughtful best; its undergirding theme: the ironic relationship of character to truth in the telling of destiny.

Ethan Frome's chronically ill and complaining wife, Zenobia, returns from a visit to a doctor in a neighboring town and announces: "I've got complications." Zenobia has "complications" to be sure, but they are mostly mental - what we would call existential - difficulties

that foment a grim destiny in which she has a powerful hand. Ethan later observes: "His wife looked so hard and lonely, sitting there in the darkness with such thoughts." It is 28-year-old Ethan, with poetry and passion in his soul, who is mangled by his ignorance, diffidence, and penury. And finally, it is Mattie Silver, object of Ethan's passion, who suffers most acutely. This painful possibility: it might have been different for all of them. This painful truth: it was not.

Norman Mailer's observation about shorter fiction is worth acknowledging: "A short fictional piece [read here novella] has a tendency to look for climates of permanence - an event occurs, and a man is hurt by it in some small way forever. The novel moves as naturally toward flux. An event occurs, a man is injured, and a month later is working on something else. The short story likes to be classic. It is most acceptable when one fatal point is made."

Wharton makes several resounding points in Ethan Frome. Life is various and mistakes are made; poverty can be tragic; dreadful things can happen to decent people who, from inward fear and incomprehension (and with a nod to Robert Frost, who also described snowy New England), themselves scare with their own desert places. Frome's loveless, hardscrabble existence seems excruciating and unnecessary. It stands as a cautionary tale of desert places as the final dwelling for chemistries of fear and ignorance that harken unfulfillment. Human passions, thwarted and ill-understood, make a sour resting place for life's promise, but this is precisely where psychologically crippled failed farmer, Ethan Frome, and his family, call home. ■

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

LIBRARY CORNER

By Elaine Sanders

This week, we started a new book club at the Mark Twain Library – but it's really more than a book club, it's part book club and part culinary tasting! The new club, which had its first meeting on Wednesday, is called the MTL Cookbook Club and explores cookbooks from the Library's own collection. The group is guided by Librarian Kathryn Zimmerman, who helps curate the Library's delicious cookbook collection, and is a wonderful way for people who enjoy food, cooking, and reading cookbooks to gather, share dishes, and discuss.

"I've always loved cookbooks and the Library has a great cookbook collection!" said Zimmerman. "I had read about other libraries hosting cookbook clubs and thought it sounded like a fun way for people who share a love of cooking to meet and talk about cookbooks."

Each meeting of the club will highlight a different cookbook. Prior to the meeting, copies of the cookbook will be available at

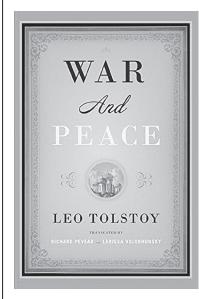
MTL's front desk. Group members are invited to read the book and then select a recipe that interests them to cook and share with the group. On the day of the Cookbook Club meeting, participants will come together to enjoy sampling one another's culinary treats and discuss the cookbook. The discussion at the meeting will evolve around what they liked and did not like about the cookbook and a review of the recipe they chose to make. Most importantly, this will be an opportunity to bring people together for a joyful experience.

The cookbook selected for the first meeting on March 1 was *Treasures of the Mexican* Table by Pati Jinich. The book highlights Mexico's rich culinary history with regional specialties passed down through generations. Members of the club enjoyed tasting an array of recipes including Spring Onion and Tomato Soup with Melty Cheese, Potato and Poblano Sopes, and Classic Flan. After discussing the current book and tasting some samples from that book, members will pick the book for the subsequent book club meeting.

This really is a fun way to highlight what the Library has to offer - it's a place to find good books, learn something new, gather with friends, or meet and share ideas with new faces - and who doesn't like trying some tasty food too?! The MTL Cookbook Club will meet again on Wednesday, May 3 at 12:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join us for some entertaining and delectable conversation and delicious food. For more information on the chosen title and to register to attend, please visit our website, marktwainlibrary.org or call the Library at 203-938-2545.

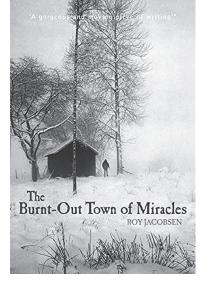
> Elaine Sanders is Adult Program Coordinator, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers | By Susan Clark



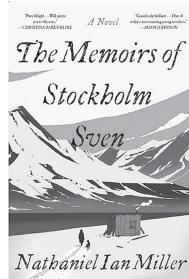
It's late in February as I write this, supposedly the snowiest month of the year. For those of us who love snow and cold and "proper" winters, this one has been a huge disappointment. So, while the usual author of this column is sunning herself somewhere warm, I will tell you about some books that will immerse you in snow and cold and frozen tundra and perhaps help you remember what winter is

I won't say much about the most obvious, War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, because if you're going to read it, you probably already have. Just to let you know, there was a very fine new



translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky that came out

Next up is The Burnt-out Town of Miracles by Roy Jacobsen. Jacobsen is a Norwegian writer, short-listed for the Man Booker International Prize for *The Unseen*, the first book in his Barrøy trilogy. The burnt-out town of the title is a desolate village in Finland during a winter of World War II. The town is evacuated as the Russians invade, but the town woodsman stays behind. When the Finnish townspeople return at the end of the war, had the woodsman been a traitor? You'll be chilled to the bone as you read.



Reviewed in the Sentinel last year, another wintry book is The Memoirs of Stockholm Sven by Nathaniel Miller. Miller grew up in Redding, back in the day when we still had winter, and now lives in Vermont. Sven is a misfit Swede who travels alone to Svalbard as a young man to figure out an independent life. You'll freeze along with Sven as you encounter ice floes, polar bears, a dog companion, and a wise guide.

And finally, Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton. A classic of New England literature, reviewed to the left this week by Tom Casey. ■

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Manifest this / Continued from page 7

If you want to know what frequency you're resonating at, look around you. Your life, your friends, your situation, your moods, your attitudes, your reactions all reflect your frequency in some way.

This brings us to the million dollar questions: Are you aware of the energy you're putting out into the universe? Are you creating this energy consciously or unconsciously? Are you deciding and actively pursuing the energy (aka inner state or feeling) you want to experience? Or are you making your inner state dependent on outer conditions? This comes down to your ability to master your creative powers.

We all have four creative powers: our thoughts, speech, actions, and feelings. These are not just the tools we use to navigate this world. They are the tools of creating. And they are creating all the time. At different levels. In different ways.

Your creative powers create according to your inner state. When your inner state is calm and balanced and orderly, you say, think, feel, and do calm and balanced and orderly things – and you bring to yourself things that are calm and balanced and orderly. When your inner state is chaotic and anxious and fearful, you say, think, feel, and do chaotic, anxious, and fearful things and thus bring to yourself things that are chaotic and anxious and

fearful.

When we aren't conscious of how we're using our creative powers, we create haphazardly by the whim of the outside world. And we get inconsistent results. So, the biggest challenge we have is in being able to be consistent in maintaining a calm, balanced, and orderly inner state. No matter

This means we have to stop thinking about things we don't want to have happen. For example, let's say you're worried about how your daughter will do on her driver's test. She has already taken off the front bumper when she hit the tree by the driveway. So, you feel justified in worrying about her future performance based on this evidence.

But, by constantly worrying - and telling your friends that you're worried, and posting on social media that you're worried, and telling her teachers that you're worried — you build more things to be worried about. You are sending out the "I'm worried" vibration, and you get back more things to worry about. This energy will also affect your daughter, the object of your worry. She receives more and more of your energy of doubt and fear which will contribute to her smashing the back bumper as well.

So, what do you do? Pay attention to what you're paying attention to. If you are focusing on things that bring you more pain and misery and frustration,

drop these ideas as soon as you can. Stop talking about them. Stop reliving them. Stop thinking about how you might act in a similar situation in the future. When you talk about, imagine, or relive these things, you are experiencing them right now. Again. And this lowers your vibration. Which brings more misery into your life.

Take a break. Take a nap. Take a bath. Relax. Listen to music. Call a friend. Take a walk. Breathe. Find a way to turn the vibration around and reclaim the inner beauty,

balance, and order you want. You don't have to think positive. You don't have to pretend to be happy when you're not. Just stop thinking about things you DON'T want to have happen. And see what sort of miracles start to manifest in

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Thank you

THE NATURAL WORLD

Seeds want to grow By Susan Clark

This is the time of year when gardeners' hands start to get active in ways other than putting on warm gloves. For some, fingers hover over a keyboard looking at seed company websites. For others, the season begins with pulling seed-starting supplies out of the basement or storage shed. (Those of us who start our plants from seed already have far more seeds than we can use and have no need to order more. Note: this does not stop us from buying more.)

There are many books and YouTube videos on seed starting. Most seed companies also give tips on starting seeds - Johnny's Selected Seeds (johnnyseeds.com) is a particularly good one. Most companies' seed packets also give basic seed starting instructions for the seeds inside. Therefore, this article won't pretend to offer a comprehensive guide to starting seeds.

Instead, I'd like to share some tips from my many years of starting vegetable, herb, and flower seeds for my garden. I hope to get you excited about giving seed-starting a try while saving you time and perhaps heartache.

Which seeds to start, and when?

- Begin with the plants you really like, whether vegetables, flowers, or herbs. There's no point in going to the trouble of starting seeds for plants you're lukewarm about.
- And then, control yourself! Only start the seeds you really need to start indoors. For example, you CAN start peas indoors, but there's little to be gained by doing so. They'll thrive when planted in the soil outdoors after the March frost. Same for zucchini and other summer squash (except they get planted in the ground once the soil warms up).
- Don't start too many of each variety. You really don't need 200 leeks, nor 48 celeriac. Trust me.
- Do start one or two new varieties each year because, why not? Focus on ones you can't buy at the grocery store or farmers market.
- When to start? Not too early! This is the biggest rookie mistake. Seeds want to be outdoors and if you start them too early, they'll languish in the imperfect conditions inside and need to be potted on to sequentially bigger containers to thrive. Read each



Photo by Susan Clark

seed packet about timing and believe it.

What basic equipment do you

- Use small containers rather than big trays. Big trays encourage you to start many more plants than you need. Also, if you plant multiple varieties in one big tray, inevitably some will fail to germinate, some will wash away, and you'll have half a tray unused, taking up muchneeded space.
- Be sure your containers are washed with a light bleach solution and have holes (at least 6) poked in the bottom. I find mushroom containers from the grocery store to be the perfect size.
- Do not use garden soil or standard potting soil for starting seeds. There lies the path to heartbreak. Garden and potting soil contain nutrients seeds don't need and may not be sterile. They are unlikely to have a fine enough tilth. So, buy a good quality seed starting mix. You can also make your own. I dump used soil from repotting plants into a lidded pail all summer. When seed-starting time rolls around, I fill roasting pans and put the used potting soil in a 200F oven for an hour to sterilize it. I then run it through a sieve and have all the seed starter I need.
- Buy some wooden popsicle sticks for labels. Or eat a lot of fudgicles and save and clean the sticks. Use pencil, not pen, to write plant names. Pencil lasts, pen often does not. Many seedlings are hard to tell apart – see celery vs. celeriac.

What else would be useful?

- A heat mat or two is a good investment. Not all seeds like a warm bottom - onions and leeks, for example, do not - but warm climate plants like tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers certainly
- A strong light source is important if you don't have large, south-facing windows. You can buy small all-in-one seedling units, or make your own set-up with a rack and LED lights if you're handy. After years of using a big rack in the basement with fluorescent lights and timers, I have now switched to tabletop all-in-one units that I keep on my kitchen counters. Either system works fine.

Now what?

- · Fill a container with the seed starter mix to within 1/4-inch of the top.
- Set the container in a pan of warm water. The warmth helps the starter mix absorb the water.
- Have a small container of the seed starter mix nearby.
- Once the mix in the container is moist, remove the container from the pan of warm water and put it on a tray. The clear plastic lids from takeout food are perfect trays for this.
- · Check your seed packet to see whether the seeds need light to germinate. Open the packet.
- · If the seeds are large, use a pencil to make holes in your container of starter mix, about 1.5



Photo by Andrew Elliott



Photo by Andrew Elliott

- inches apart. Put one seed in each hole. Tamp the soil firmly around and on top of the seeds, and water lightly from the top. Use your extra starter mix to top off the container if the material has sunk too much.
- If the seeds are tiny, and therefore likely need light to germinate, scatter them lightly on top of the mix. Use a tiny bit of the extra mix just to dust the top of the container. Press lightly to firm the seeds into the mix, but don't cover them. Lightly spray a bit of water on top – be sure not to use an open spout that will dislodge the seeds, or you'll end up with all of them in one corner of the container.
- Find a dry cleaner bag or similar plastic and cut some slits in it. Put a couple of popsicle sticks standing up in your planted container, then put the slitted plastic loosely over it.

• Put the container in a spot that reflects the temperature the seeds need. It doesn't have to be exact. You'll find that information on the packet.

Now wait. Be patient. Some seeds will sprout in a day or two, some take a month or longer. Keep the soil moist but not wet. Those slits in the plastic are important as you want some air circulation. As soon as they sprout, remove the plastic. The seedings will now need good light.

Repeat these steps for the rest of your seed packets.

Keep in mind the title of this article: Seeds want to grow. They really do. All you're trying to do is make it easy for them. Have fun.

I'll write again in a few weeks to tell you what to do with all your baby seedlings. ■

Have you seen Kyra?

Recent sightings reignite hope for lost dog | By Pamela Brown



Photos courtesy of Susan Glendinning

MISSING DOG! Those are two words a dog owner never wants to hear. Sadly, Kyra, a ten-year-old mixed breed, has been lost since November 23, 2022 from her great," she tearfully added. Portland Hill Road home when her owner, Jacqueline Glendinning, let

her out in the late evening. When she didn't return as usual, Glendinning went to the door. "It smelled strongly of skunk outside, so we assume she must

have been sprayed and then must have run," said Glendinning who has been endlessly searching for her beloved pet. "I miss her. She's

In December, Glendinning hired a professional dog tracker whose two dogs tracked Kyra from two different locations to the old Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill area, but soon after lost the scent. The trail had gone cold for



about a month, but then, Kyra was spotted on February 1 and 4 at the Nod Hill Refuge and then again, on February 7 in the Twin Ridge's area. On February 9, she was seen on Deer Hill Road and on February 12, her scent was found on South Salem Road, about four miles from Glendinning's home. "We confirmed her scent, and we know it was her. She seems to be in this area. We're hopeful we'll



get another sighting, but it's on the New York border, so we're worried," said Glendinning, who is also concerned about the threat of coyotes.

The search is ongoing, with Glendinning and her mother reaching out on social media, hanging posters, checking in with veterinarians, shelters, and animal control departments. "On any day off, we try to hike around

and get our scent out there for her. We've been putting our clothing on property in the area and in the woods because we learned dogs look for their pack's smell," said Glendinning who, after having Kyra for ten years, tearfully confessed she feels so heartbroken coming home to an empty house.

Rescued from a Native American Reservation, Kyra is a mix of a Carolina Dog and a Dingo. She has a white face and legs and a lighter color body (the black has receded). Although 35 pounds when she went missing, most likely Kyra will now appear leaner. There is a \$1,000 reward for her return. If you do spot her, Glendinning urges people not to approach her, but to take a photo of her and immediately text it to (203) 313-5364 along with the time and location. Glendinning said Kyra loves people. "But she has to know them," she said. "Right now, she's in cautious survival mode." ■

Expanding equestrian access in open spaces / Continued from page 1

riders to help protect wetlands and respect other users of the trails.

Perry is full of other ideas for how to expand horseback riding access in Redding, from creating a group of "equestrian trail tenders" to approaching private property

owners whose land abuts existing open space areas and could provide key linkages between trails. Before moving ahead, however, Perry and Given wanted to ensure the Conservation Commission was on board with the idea.

"Before we embark on opening up other areas, is (horseback riding) still a thought that the Conservation Commission is in support of?" Given asked.

Commission members nodded, with some giving a thumbs-up

In an area of the country where horseback riding is prevalent, Perry noted that increasing accessibility for the activity has provided a large draw for neighboring communities.

"I feel like the same could be said for Redding, especially based on our historical horse use," said Perry. "It's one more thing that Redding could have in its pocket that's a selling point for the town." ■

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

Friday, Mar. 3 -Saturday, Mar. 4

Spring Awakening

8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Winner of eight Tony awards put on by an all-volunteer, non-profit community theatre. Brookfield Theatre for the Arts 184 Whisconier Road Brookfield brookfieldtheatre.org

Sunday, Mar. 5

Connecticut Master Chorale Spring Concert

3:00 p.m. Program featuring To Hope! A Celebration! by Dave Brubeck and I'm Gonna Sing! by André Thomas

First Congregational Church 164 Deer Hill Avenue Danbury \$

Thursday, Mar. 9

The Allen and Helen Hermes **Arts Series presents: Compton and Newberry**

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. An evening of new and traditional American music, with roots in bluegrass, early country, blues, gospel and string band music. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R

Sunday, Mar. 12

Danbury Concert Association Daedalus Quartet

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.Chamber ensemble concert, free for anyone under 18 WCSU Visual & Performing Arts Center 43 Lake Avenue Extension

Danbury danburyconcert.org \$

Sunday, Mar. 12

Music on the Hill -**March Winds**

3:00 p.m. Festival Chorus, Jubilate Ringers, and the Community Children's Chorus will perform in this spring concert.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport 10 Lyons Plain Road Westport musiconthehillct.org

CHILDREN, TEENS

Friday, Mar. 3 -Friday, Apr. 14

Caregiver & Child Series

(Ages 18 - 35 months) 6 Fridays from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (no program on April 7) New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

Saturday, Mar. 4

Succulents: Terrarium Workshop (Middle and High School)

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

Sunday, Mar. 5

Monthly Robotics Workshop (Grades 4-6)

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R

Sunday, Mar. 5

Monthly Robotics Workshop (Grades 5-8)

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org

CRAFTS

Friday, Mar. 3

Introduction to Laser Engraving and Cutting

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Create your own personalized tea strainer while learning the basics of laser lithography. Bethel Library 189 Greenwood Avenue Bethel bethellibrary.org R

Saturday, Mar. 4

Annual Rug Hook-In

10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Hook rugs for the day or watch rug hookers work. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org

Sunday, Mar. 5

Knitting & Spinning by the Fire

12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon of knitting projects with Nutmeg Western CT Spinners Guild. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org

Sunday, Mar. 12

Basketry Workshop 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Open to ages 15+ Intermediate basket-making workshop with birch bark. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

Food

Monday, Feb. 27 -Sunday, Mar. 5

Bethel Restaurant Week

All day Eat at various Bethel restaurants and enjoy specials and deals to support the Bethel Chamber of Commerce Bethel bethelchamberofcommerce.com

Saturday, Mar. 11

Gourmet Pancake Breakfast

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. BSA Troop 306 fundraiser features pancakes, omelets, juice, coffee and tea Snow/rain date Sunday, Mar. 12 West Redding Fire House 306 Umpawaug Road reddingtroop306.org \$, R

Religious Services

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom) 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemlutheranct.org

Calvary Independent Baptist Church

Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 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 25 Cross Highway firstchurchredding.org

Long Ridge United Methodist

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

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.; 12:00 p.m. (Latin) Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. (Latin) 30 Church Street sacredheart-stpat.org

St. Patrick Catholic Church

Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. Sundays at 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 8:30 a.m. 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. 2

Seen & Unseen - Conversations: Truth, Myth & Democracy 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Mark Twain Library Zoom marktwainlibrary.org

Friday Mar. 3

Chat & Chew with Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon

8:30 a.m. Join Superintendent of ER9 schools Dr. McKinnon for a 2023-2024 budget presentation, bagels, coffee and Q&A. Sponsored by the JRMS PTA and Mark Twain Library In-person and Zoom Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R

Thursday, Mar. 9

Madam President: Women Leaders in Higher Education

7:30 p.m – 9:00 p.m. Learn from a panel of leaders, including the presidents of Barnard College, Pratt Institute, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and Spelman College. Grace Farms 365 Lukes Wood Road New Canaan gracefarms.org \$, R

Sunday, Mar. 12

2nd Annual Seed Exchange and Give-away

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Bring seeds to share, or come get seeds you need. All are welcome. Redding Grange #15 399 Newtown Turnpike E-mail seeds@phineus.com with any questions

Monday, Mar. 13

Plant Propagation for the Home Gardener

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Redding Garden Club's March meeting for members and guests. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road reddinggardenclub.org \$, R

Thursday, Mar. 16

Nature Talks with The Nature Conservancy: Oceans, Our **Global Watchdog**

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Grace Farms 365 Lukes Wood Road New Canaan gracefarms.org

Saturday Mar. 18

Gardening Basics: Planting Cold Weather Crops

2:00 p.m - 4:00 p.m. Drop-in program New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org

MEETINGS

Thursday, Mar. 2

Redding Safety Committee 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Zoom

townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Mar. 2

Region 9 Board of Education Budget Workshop Special Meeting

7:00 p.m. JBHS Library **Learning Commons** Joel Barlow High School 100 Black Rock Turnpike joelbarlowps.org

Monday, Mar. 6

Park and Recreation Commission

7:00 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org

Monday, Mar. 6

Republican Town Committee 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Mar. 7

Economic Development Committee

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

Tuesday, Mar. 7

Redding Board of Education 7:00 p.m.

John Read Middle School 486 Redding Road johnreadps.org

Tuesday, Mar. 7

Conservation Commission 7:30 p.m.

Refer to town website for up-todate location information townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Mar. 8

Commission on Aging

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

Wednesday, Mar. 8

Zoning Commission 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Mar. 9

Board of Assessment Appeals 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room

100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Mar. 9

Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee 6:00 p.m.

Town Hall* / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Mar. 9

West Redding Fire District Commissioners Meeting

7:00 p.m. West Redding Firehouse 306 Umpawaug Road westreddingfiredepartment.org

*Refer to townofreddingct.org for up-to-date location information.

Chat & Chew with Superintendent

Dr. Jason McKinnon Friday, Mar. 3

8:30 a.m. Attend a 2023-24 budget presentation with breakfast and Q&A with ER9's Superintendent. In-person and Zoom Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road

marktwainlibrary.org

Meditation for International Women's Day

Wednesday, Mar. 8

1:00 p.m. A heart-focused, breathing meditation in celebration of International Women's Day led by Mary Decker Bottero. Heritage Center, 37 Lonetown Rd. RSVP to (203) 938-9725 or

mpilato@townofreddingct.org

2nd Annual Seed **Exchange and Give-away**

Sunday, Mar. 12

This Week's Featured Events

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Bring seeds to share, or come get seeds you need. All are welcome. Redding Grange #15 399 Newtown Turnpike E-mail seeds@phineus.com with any questions

Want to feature an upcoming event?

E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.



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Deb Haws



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Charlie Knoche 203.731.7770



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Jodi Langford 203.733.8804



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Joseph Porricelli Branch Vice President 203.515.6310 joe.porricelli@cbrealty.com Ridgefield Office 398 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 | 203.438.9000

Redding Office 16 Old Mill Road, Redding, CT 06896 | 203.544.9591



