



# REDDING SENTINEL

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## Redding outlines kindergarten entry process for next school year

By Jessie Wright

Clarity on the exemption process for families affected by the kindergarten eligibility age change next school year has been provided by ER9 (Easton, Redding, and Region 9) school districts.

Following the passage of Public Act 23-208, the cutoff date in Connecticut for a child to turn five years old and be eligible for kindergarten enrollment changed from January 1 to September 1, effective in the 2024-25 school year. The change left families and districts uncertain of the budget, enrollment, and academic implications of this shift, with a cohort of approximately 9,000 students throughout the state no longer automatically eligible to enroll in kindergarten next fall.

The new law does include the provision, however, that a school district may admit a child who has not yet turned five by September 1 if the parent makes a request in writing and the school district conducts an assessment to determine the child's developmental readiness for school. Districts have since been determining what assessment criteria they will use to guide their exemption process, which has been largely left up to each district's discretion.

ER9 schools recently announced their transitional plan for kindergarten enrollment in the 2024-25 school year. They will generally continue to accept children turning five between September 2 and December 31, 2024 into kindergarten if their parents make a request in writing to the building principal after considering kindergarten readiness milestones and guidance provided by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The recommended kindergarten readiness milestones deal with several areas of development, including social/emotional learning, cognition, language, literacy, numeracy, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills.

"The decision regarding readiness for kindergarten is guided by many factors, only one of which is chronological age," reads the letter to families from ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol sent in November. "While children often grow, develop, and learn in many ways, developmental milestones provide helpful guidance for parents and educators."

Kindergarten enrollment at Redding Elementary School starts at the beginning of March. Redding Elementary School will hold an information session for parents

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Photo by Hugh Holt

Putnam Pond, on one of the few sunny days this winter. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, with credit of course, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

## Property assessment appeals due by February 20

By Jessie Wright

The annual period to file a property assessment appeal with the Town of Redding is open now through Tuesday, February 20, 2024.

While there was no revaluation process in 2023 to adjust assessed property values, (the most recent was in 2022 by Vision Government Solutions, Inc.), property owners may appeal their assessments in any year, provided they have not already received a reduction within the same revaluation period (in other words, anyone who successfully appealed and secured a reduction last year will have to wait until the 2027 revaluation to do so again).

Last year, the Board of Assessment Appeals received 88 appeal applications and conducted hearings on 77 (nine applicants either withdrew their application

or did not attend their assigned hearing). This number represented roughly double the Board's usual volume, as property owners reacted to the results of the 2022 revaluation, which saw residential property values increase by an average of 28 percent.

At the time, Greg Stackpole, Chair of the Board of Assessment Appeals, told the Sentinel that often the Board will see even more appeals the second year following a revaluation once property owners have received their updated tax bills and understand the financial impact of the new assessments.

Assessment appeals can be filed in February on several types of property: residential, commercial, personal property, and motor vehicles (registered on or after October 1, 2022).

Property owners wishing to appeal their assessment must gather and submit information at their formal hearing to support their opinion on the fair market value of the property as of October 1, 2022. Both John Ford, Town Assessor, and Stackpole recommended supplying sales data and assessment values from comparable homes in the area, which are all available through the online VGSI database at [vgsi.com/connecticut-online-database](http://vgsi.com/connecticut-online-database)

Assessment appeals must be received by e-mail or hard copy by Tuesday, February 20, 2024, after which the Board of Assessment Appeals will schedule and assign hearing appointments. The appeals form is available at [townofreddingct.org/about-redding/forms](http://townofreddingct.org/about-redding/forms)

## REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

### Saugatuck Falls Natural Area and Firehouse Trail

By Cole Tucker-Walton



Photo by Cole Tucker-Walton

Like a lot of people, my relationship with Saugatuck Falls Natural Area centers on the cascades, the hemlocks, the pool, and the cliff I knew as Chicken Rock (and chicken I was). Only the Great Ledge comes earlier in my memory of Redding's Big Outdoors. Actually, rather than centers on, I should say my relationship has been limited to the falls. Until a year or two ago, I had barely looked at a map of the whole preserve.

Today – another cold, dry day – I mean to change that, even starting at the side entrance, off Diamond Hill Road. As my wheels crunch gravel past The Pootatuck Archers range, I see a man testing the draw of his glossy black bow, face bright with excitement.

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## Developer seeks solution amid delays at historic Side Cut Road property

By Donna Christopher

Partial demolition and construction work to create three retail units and two large second-floor apartments at 3 Side Cut Road have been delayed for more than a year, due to planning obstacles, supply chain backlogs, and structural issues.

Owner SC-3 LLC of 3 Side Cut Road bought the historic property for \$400,000 from the Estate of Barry Finch in April 2022.

In January 2023, Hendric R. E. Vogt, Managing Director of Greenwich Property Partners, Inc., said progress had been made following planning-related obstacles that deferred the start of the project.

At that time, demolition permits were in hand, but the developer was waiting for the Town to approve the building permit. However, other unexpected delays have occurred throughout the process, according to Vogt.

"As we know from the past, various suppliers faced difficulties in delivering essential building materials, such as windows. We hope that there won't be any further delays this spring," he said.

There is also a "severe backlog" with Eversource for the electricity distribution between the individual units, according to Vogt, with waits of nearly a year.

To date, part of the building permit has been obtained. It's a "rolling process", said Vogt in an e-mail with the *Sentinel* last week. This is primarily because there are structural issues in the southern part of the building, on the side closest to the railroad tracks.

"We assessed that we intend to take this part of the building down," said Vogt. "We are taking the historical aspect into consideration and had several revisions in the architectural plans which were finished only in December 2023."

Preparations to proceed are ongoing, with hopes to start the part of the demolition over the course of the next weeks.

"The project remains intriguing in terms of flexibility," said Vogt. "We envision bringing in sustainable businesses which will profit newcomers as well as long-term residents of the area."

Meanwhile, the developer plans to get the building operational with a temporary solution.

"When there will be no further delays in terms of the construction supply chain, we are certain to have an opening soon," Vogt said. ■

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## EDITORIAL

When my husband and I found out we were expecting a daughter this year, my first reaction was surprise – then a wave of anxiety. Even though I am one of three sisters and have thirteen nieces, I admit that I am apprehensive about how the world has changed for young girls growing up, particularly regarding the role social media plays in their lives.

Maybe this anxiety is unfounded – the world and day-to-day technology will certainly look different a decade from now by the time my daughter enters middle school, and my son will face the same online landscape and pitfalls as his sister (or maybe my worries should be doubled??) I also know that it is an exercise in futility to attempt to shut Pandora's box and not acknowledge how deeply integrated social media apps have become in young people's social interactions, education, understanding of current events, and connections to their passions.

However, with more and more research finding a connection between teens' social media use and rates of depression, feelings of isolation, body image issues, and suicide, I can't help but worry.

The Pew Research Center conducted a study in 2022 on social media use amongst U.S. teens and found that 92 percent of teen girls report using YouTube, 73 percent say they use TikTok, 69 percent say they use Instagram, and 64 percent say they use Snapchat. According to 2023 data, the average teenager in the U.S. spends roughly seven-and-a-half hours a day in front of screens. While the largest share of that time is spent watching TV or videos, about an hour-and-a-half of that is on social media platforms.

The question of responsibility for and regulation of these adverse effects was front-and-center last week during the U.S. Senate Judiciary Hearing with several of "Big Tech's" leaders and CEOs. The evidence is certainly compelling that technology companies have not done all that they can to limit harm to their youngest users – and the market certainly doesn't incentivize them to do so. Some see Congress as part of the answer to putting up essential guardrails for kids' online activity. Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut is one of the co-sponsors of the bipartisan "Kids Online Safety Act", which many child safety advocates, parents, and lawmakers are hoping will pass into law. The act calls for social media platforms to provide tools for both parents and children to opt out of certain content and provide information on how their algorithms, which often reinforce the viewing of harmful content, work.

Even with all my apprehension, however, I'm not convinced that government regulation has the agility or clout to make a substantive difference for our kids. So where does that leave me, a concerned parent imagining the day my children beg me for their very own smart phone?

As I'm discovering with almost everything parenting-related, I can't remake the world to be entirely safe for my kids. What I can do, however, is try my best to teach them to be confident, resilient, and critical – and, maybe most importantly, when to ask for help or support. That process doesn't happen in a vacuum, and I'll be counting on our family, friends, and neighbors to help. I'll also be on the lookout for resources and advice – including the upcoming event at Mark Twain Library on Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m. called "Digital Parenting: Tips and Triage". Co-sponsored by both the elementary and middle school PTAs, I am hoping it's a useful starting point for me as I consider these challenges. Fittingly, it is being held both in person and online via Zoom. ■

## Heritage Center proposes modest increase in 2024-25 budget

By Rocco Valluzzo

To help meet demand for special events as well as its regular offerings, the Heritage Center is requesting an increase from \$45,000 to \$50,000 to run its senior programs as part of its proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-25.

Overall, this is part of a total proposed budget increase for the Center of \$8,798 (2.8%)

"If we jump to the bottom line, it's a very modest increase," said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton. "You're doing incredibly well with the budget."

According to Director of Social Services Angelica Fontanez, turnout for special events has been high. Fiscal year 2023-24 marked the first where some programs had waiting lists for registration.

The Heritage Center now offers 13 wellness and exercise classes, up from approximately five classes seven years ago. Participants now include those who are in their 80s and 90s.

"It's really, really expanded," said Fontanez. Some would come in with their aids. These were seniors that normally wouldn't come to a Tai Chi or yoga class."

The Center's art and music programs also have waiting lists. They now offer painting, ukulele, and quilting lessons. Games such as bridge, canasta, and mahjong are also popular.

Fontanez noted that to run each program it offers, the Center typically is expected to come up with 50% of the revenue. To date, it has generated close to \$13,000 of the \$20,000 revenue goal in the 2023-24 fiscal year, and she expects to meet that goal in the next three months.

"So, we're on track," she said. "We're doing pretty well. We've been creatively using all of our resources."

The Center's need for space has also increased, which has become a limitation on program growth as Fontanez hopes to expand its programs without cutting any.

"Seniors like the consistency," she said. "If you cancel programs

one week and another week it becomes very disruptive. We wouldn't want to see a disruption with those types of programs. Once you get them there, you want to be able to continue that consistency."

About two years ago, the Center received a \$2,000 grant from Ridgefield's Meals on Wheels program to start a pilot program of providing lunches once a month. The turnout ranged from 20 to 30 seniors each time.

"I think the fellowship thing is key," said Commission on Aging Chair Ruth Moran. "Every time we have something that has food, you have people hanging around afterwards. That is key to us in terms of programming, to try to have opportunities for people to come to the Heritage Center."

The largest line item increase was \$16,223 (19.8%) in salaries and wages for other full-time employees. Funds the Town received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) program were gradually used to move a part-time employee to full-time. Fiscal year 2024-25 will be the first year in which the Town will fully fund that position.

Overall, Social Services (excluding Heritage Center expenditures) is proposing a 0% increase in its proposed budget for fiscal year 2024-25. It has also received a small state grant to help with oil assistance.

Some families need energy assistance and some are on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Others need help with summer camp or extended day program costs, and Social Services works closely with Park and Recreation to secure a 50% discount, according to Fontanez. ■

## Hundreds attend forum against hate at Riverbrook Regional YMCA

By Anne Young Albanese



Photo by Anne Young Albanese

Secretary of the State of Connecticut Stephanie Thomas spoke at the "Confronting Acts of Hate in Our Community" event at the Riverbrook Regional YMCA on Sunday, February 4.

On Sunday, February 4, more than 240 attendees gathered at the Riverbrook Regional YMCA to attend a forum addressing antisemitism, Islamophobia, ethnic exclusion, racism, and LGBTQ+ Hate. The event was organized by Georgetown's Temple B'nai Chaim's Social Action Group in partnership with the Riverbrook Regional YMCA and Wilton Library to educate attendees about the dangers of antisemitism and hate.

Speakers included Cantor Harriet Dunkerley, the spiritual leader and Director of Education at Temple B'nai Chaim, and Sohair Omar, the Director of Institutional Research and a lecturer at Connecticut State Community College who also serves on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Chapter of the Council on Amer-

ican-Islamic Relations and is a co-founder of Afghanistan-Pakistan Women's Economic Empowerment.

Another speaker, Rachel Simon (she/they) is the Executive Director of the Triangle Community Center and the Chair of the Westchester County LGBTQ+ Advisory Board. Father Reggie Norman is the Pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Church. He is also a member of the Priest Advisory Committee, the Wilton Interfaith Clergy, and the Wilton Rotary. The final speaker was Sarvesh Damle. He has dedicated the past 15 years volunteering with various Hindu organizations.

The event was moderated by Stephen Hudspeth, an adjunct professor at the University of Connecticut's School of Business. Elected officials also attended the event and spoke. These included U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Congressman Jim Himes, Secretary of the State of Connecticut Stephanie Thomas, and Wilton First Selectman Toni Boucher.

While instances of hate speech and actions in the state have increased since the attacks on Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023, this event was in planning long before last fall. The forum highlighted various cases of verbal or physical hate experienced throughout the U.S., though many of the most disturbing stories were those that took place right here in Fairfield County or were shared by attendees who have personally experienced hate.

The first speaker, Dunkerley, started by defining antisemitism, "It's a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews." She added, "Antisemitism frequently charges with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for why things go wrong." Antisemitism may take the form of speech, writing, visual forms, or actions. The one commonality is that they employ sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Antisemitic criminal acts target people, property, buildings, schools, places of worship, and cemeteries. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the largest United States organization dedicated to fighting all forms of bias and hate, antisemitic acts are up 400% from the same time as last year.

The next speaker was Sohair Omar. She began with saying, "Every human life is precious." She continued, "It's important for us, during these difficult times, to hold fast to our shared values and principles."

Since the recent conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Council on American Islamic Relations has reported more than 2,000 complaints of bias within two months. According to Omar, these include hate speech, hate crimes, bullying in education, employment discrimination, as well as challenges to rights of free

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## Building Department proposes capital items for next fiscal year

By Rocco Valluzzo

While several operating expenses are not projected to rise for the Building Department in fiscal year 2024-25, there are a couple of capital request items proposed for the upcoming budget.

One project is the retrofit of the sprinkler system in Town Hall at a cost of \$350,000. According to Chief Building Official Shaun Donnelly, when renovations to Town Hall were completed in the 1990s, the design of the sprinkler system did not consider any storage space for water. The fire code requires more water-per-minute than what is currently in the sprinkler system.

"We're talking about changing out the sprinkler heads, maybe changing the orientation of the sprinklers," Donnelly said at a Board of Selectmen budget workshop on January 12. "The tanks will use less water for the same coverage. If we change some sprinkler heads, that will give us a plus on the volume of water that's required. If we could reduce it enough so that we could slide in a couple of little flat tanks in the

crawl space, we don't need to go outside the building, and we don't need to worry about burying the tank."

"As we complete the redesign work on the Town Hall sprinkler system, it then becomes almost imperative that you continue to move forward on the current code deficient system," said Finance Director Jim Sanders. "That's why Shaun in his fiscal year 2024-25 capital request has now prioritized the continuation of the sprinkler project. Once we have the design we really should move forward."

Another item is \$150,000 to replace the roof of the Redding Community Center. It is now 23 years old and will need to be replaced soon.

In operations areas such as clerical assistance/relief, car allowance/maintenance, professional development, printing and duplicating, and office supplies there are no proposed cost increases. New equipment costs are expected to decrease by 72% next year due to the purchase of a large printer/scanner last year.

There is, however, a proposed 103.1% increase in salaries and wages due in part to Assistant Building Official James Swift moving to a full-time position.

Overall expenditures are also not projected to increase at certain Town facilities, such as the Town Annex, Transfer Station, and Highway Department. These costs are projected to decrease by 2.8% (\$1,537) for Town Hall and increase just 0.8% (\$2,496) for the Community Center.

Revenue is also expected to decrease for the department in fiscal year 2024-25 to \$225,000, a decrease of \$25,000 (10%). Despite this, 455 permits for construction were issued by the Department from July to December 2023. Coupled with building inspection fees, revenue during this time frame totaled \$187,407.

"There's been a significant uptick in terms of building inspection fees," said Sanders. "This isn't something that will obviously continue unabated. But we're still in a period where we are seeing pretty solid income." ■

## LEGAL NOTICE

The Redding Board of Assessment Appeals will be meeting Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Town Hall to set hearing dates and review appeals applications from the tax assessments on the grand list as of October 1, 2023. Anyone wishing to make

an appeal must obtain an application from the Tax Assessor's office or Town website, fill out the required information and return it to the Tax Assessor's office by Tuesday, February 20, 2024. Once the application is received, a hearing date will be scheduled for all eligible applicants. Only applica-

tions completed and returned by February 20, 2024 may be considered for a hearing. ■

Greg Stackpole, Chairman  
Redding Board of  
Assessment Appeals

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We pledge to donate all profits to local community organizations.



# Redding preps for early voting ahead of April 2 primaries

By Rob Sample

As the date of the April 2 Connecticut primary approaches, it will also be the start of something brand-new in the Nutmeg State: early in-person voting.

In addition to Tuesday, April 2, early voting will take place on four days: Tuesday, March 26; Wednesday, March 27; Thursday, March 28; and Saturday, March 30. The hours for early voting will be from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

This is the same schedule statewide and was configured to accommodate the Good Friday holiday on March 29. All early voting in Redding will take place at the Heritage Center: for those who might be new to town, it is part of the Redding Community Center at 37 Lonetown Road.

In November of 2022, Connecticut voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing for early voting, and last May, the Connecticut House of Representatives passed the state's early-voting measure. Until that time, Connecticut was one of four states that did not have early voting. That list has since shrunk to two states: Alabama and New Hampshire.

From a logistical standpoint, the work that used to be done in just one primary day will now encompass five. So, people in the Registrar of Voters Office have been busy laying the groundwork for this new week-long voting period.

"Fortunately, we do have a good list of tried-and-true poll workers," said Lisa Bartro, the Town's Democratic Registrar, who runs the office with her Republican

counterpart, Michele Meschi, along with two deputies from both parties.

"We also have a sign-up area on the Town website for new poll workers," Bartro added. "We're now awaiting some final directives from the Secretary of State's office, and we'll soon receive training materials for early voting."

The training for poll workers is expected to take one to two weeks and will take place later this month. Meanwhile, the Registrar of Voters staff must coordinate with the Heritage Center on which rooms will host early voting. "For regular voting days, we have always used the gym or community room at the Community Center," she said. "But because of the expanded number of days, we have to do things a bit differently."

One thing the early voting team won't be doing ahead of primary day: feeding ballots into the Town's tabulation machines. "Early ballots will be treated much like absentee ballots," noted Meschi. "The ballots will be kept sealed, and at 6:00 p.m. each night, they'll be transferred over to the Town Clerk's office. We will give them a final count, the Clerk's office will verify the count, and we will both then sign an affidavit attesting to its accuracy," she said.

"On April 2, the ballots will be separated from their envelopes, and the ballots will be put into the tabulator," Meschi continued. "At no time are the ballot and the envelope visible at the same time. This preserves the ballot's anonymity."

The Town Clerk must retain

those envelopes separately should there ever be questions about the vote's accuracy. There's also a lot of education to do. Many who are expected to take advantage of early voting have never filed an absentee ballot before and could be unfamiliar with how early voting will work.

The upcoming primary will be a test of sorts for the elections team. "We're going to be as prepared as we can, but we will be watching carefully to see what happens," said Meschi.

The registrars will then apply those lessons learned to the early voting scheduled for the August 13 congressional primary and the general election on November 5. The latter will have the longest early voting period of all: 14 days.

Voter turnout in many places has historically been relatively low for anything other than the November general election. So, one of the goals of early voting laws has been to make it easier and simpler for people to vote in person; the larger the number of people casting votes, the more that vote accurately reflects the will of the people. ■

*To assist with the process, the Town Clerk and the Registrar of Voters Office have prepared a step-by-step guide to early voting on the Town of Redding website at [townofreddingct.org/early-voting](http://townofreddingct.org/early-voting)*

*If you are interested in signing up to be a poll worker, visit [townofreddingct.org/government/town-administration/registrar-voters/become-a-poll-worker](http://townofreddingct.org/government/town-administration/registrar-voters/become-a-poll-worker)*

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## Redding outlines kindergarten entry process for next school year / continued from page 1

on March 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the kindergarten readiness milestones further and to meet with staff members. Families with children who have birthdays between September 2 and Decem-

ber 31 will receive a form with the readiness milestones and are asked to submit an observational checklist by March 28, 2024 if they wish to file an exemption request. ■

# Families flock to Take Your Child to the Library Day



Photos by Lisa Goldstein

On Saturday, February 3, Mark Twain Library celebrated "Take Your Child to the Library Day" with breakfast snacks, toys, craftmaking, and book browsing. The international initiative encourages libraries to provide programming for families on or near the first Saturday of February to help children and their parents get familiar and utilize the resources a public library can provide throughout their lives.

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## Hundreds attend forum against hate at Riverbrook Regional YMCA / continued from page 2

speech and expression.

Omar finished with a quote from the prophet Mohammad, "When you see a wrong, correct it with your hand," meaning – do something about it." The quote continued, "If you can't do that, correct it with your tongue." The quote continued, "if you can't do that, correct it with your heart."

Blumenthal followed Omar. According to Blumenthal, "We do have to act. We have to speak out." He added, "Silence is complicity, and we have to pray." Blumenthal plans to continue to act against hate through federal legislation. He also noted that the education system has a powerful role to play in teaching young people about the history of discrimination and modeling no-tolerance for hate.

Simon discussed the damage that can be done to children who experience gender identity that differs from their birth gender and sexual orientation that differs from heterosexuality. According to the Trevor Project, LGBTQIA+ youth attempt suicide once every 45 seconds. This is four times the rate of cisgender and heterosexual juveniles.

Simon explained how the Triangle Community Center helps LGBTQIA+ youth through programs like a food pantry, shower and laundry facilities, support groups, and activities that allow the Center's members to meet others who share their interests. She finished her address challenging the audience to think about ways to get involved and have an impact within the local community and beyond.

Himes began by comparing hate speech and actions to a deterioration in our national and individual character and political discourse. He added there is, "a

deterioration in decency that we all hold as one of the key values of our country." He also noted that, "a child is taught by its parents before it becomes conscious of its mayor or senator or congressman, governor, president."

Father Norman began his participation with a quote from Coretta Scott King. "Hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than the hated." He added, "There is not a month of my life that I can think of that I didn't see some form of racism." He urged attendees to think of the times they may have experienced racism or hatred and commit to not spreading that experience to others. "I must never stop and oppress another person. So, I must eliminate the oppression. We must stop the hatred; we must stop the racism," he said.

The final speaker was Damle. He pointed out that while we hear about many different stories about hatred, we don't hear a lot of anti-Hindu speech or behavior, due to lack of reporting. Damle said, "In the last six months, nine different Hindu temples across the United States were vandalized. Even the Wilton temple was vandalized in 1996. Hindu children experience bullying in school. Because their food is different, and many use their hands to eat because it is a cultural behavior."

Attendees were also given an opportunity to ask questions and share their own experiences. There was anger, there were tears, and there were questions about how white, Christian, heterosexual allies can help. If you are interested in getting involved in further work addressing hate actions or speech, e-mail [kulanu@templebnaichaim.org](mailto:kulanu@templebnaichaim.org) ■

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## SPORTS

## While turnovers decrease, scoring must rise *Girls basketball* | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High's Avery Vanderburg is guarded by New Fairfield's Caity Flanagan, left, and Caitlyn Rea during a girls varsity basketball game on Thursday, February 1. Barlow lost 41-33.

Taking better care of the ball played a big part in the Joel Barlow High girls basketball team staying within reach of New Fairfield last week.

The Falcons had fewer turnovers on Thursday, February 1, when they took on the Rebels at home. What they needed was a few more players breaking into the scoring column in what resulted in a 41-33 loss.

"They're a top four team in the league," said Barlow Head Coach Joe Carollo. "We were right there. I think it was anybody's game to win."

Due in part to missing several layups, Barlow netted just six points in the first quarter, with Sarah Ashgar (one three-pointer) and Avery Vanderburg accounting

for their scoring. At the other end of the court, Barlow's defense allowed just two of the Rebels to score, but with Kaitlyn Mangan and Caitlyn Rea each netting five points, their team led 10-6 after one frame.

Barlow picked up the pace offensively in the following quarter, as four players found the net. The Rebels, however, were propelled by their ability to sink several three-point shots by Caity Flanagan and Brenna Romanello to increase their lead. Barlow's Agnes Davis hit one of her own, and the Falcons were also helped by baskets from Mackenzie Sickinger and Mia Tartaglia but trailed by ten (27-17) at halftime.

In the third quarter, the Falcons' defense forced several turnovers

and managed to hold the Rebels to single-digit scoring, with only four points coming on field goals, all by Rea. With Davis and Vanderburg each sinking five, as well as Tartaglia adding a free throw, the Falcons got within striking distance of their opponent as they trailed just 34-28 after three frames.

Starting the fourth quarter with a three-pointer by Tartaglia, the Falcons cut the lead to 34-31, causing the Rebels to call a timeout. Unfortunately for the hosts, they would net just two more points for the rest of the game (also courtesy of Tartaglia), despite getting a number of good looks at the basket. Barlow was also called for several fouls, and the Rebels responded by sinking five of eight shots to keep their lead safe.

"We did some really good things," said Carollo. "And we did some things that we have to do better in order to win against a very good team."

Vanderburg led Barlow with ten points; Davis and Tartaglia each sank eight, the former getting two three-pointers and the latter one. Sickinger finished with four points and Ashgar had three.

"We didn't have as many turnovers as we've had in a couple of our losses, which is great," said Carollo. "I had five girls score. I wish we could've gotten some other people in the scoring column."

Barlow visits Weston on Thursday, February 8 and is home to Brookfield on Tuesday, February 13. Tip-off for both games is at 6:00 p.m. ■

## Barlow takes third, ninth at conference finals *Indoor track and field* | By Rocco Valluzzo

Standout performances in several events, as well as numerous personal best times and distances would propel the Joel Barlow High indoor track teams at the South-West Conference championships last week.

The Falcon girls would take eight medals in all on Saturday, February 3, at the Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven. Totalling 59 points, they tied for third out of 14 teams, a marked improvement from a ninth-place finish a year ago.

Newtown was the winner with 95, recapturing the title it last won in 2022. New Fairfield was runner-up with 66.

The Falcons struck gold early with a victory in the 4x200-meter relay. Vika Abukhovich, Sedonia Holub, Olivia Taylor, and Jenna Najjar combined to post a winning time of 1:48.5, more than two seconds ahead of runner-up Newtown.

Barlow took fifth in the 4x800. Stephanie Bardani, Eleanor Walker, Katie Kinyon, and Clara Mehner posted an 11:14.12.

In the 1,000 meters, Alex Bardani took fifth as well, coming in 3:21.47, a season record. Two medals came the Falcons' way in the 55-meter hurdles. Phoebe Cora Smith's time of 9.16 was second only to Newtown's Aashni Petty and also a personal best. Jordan Carr took the bronze for the Falcons in 9.52.

Two competed for Barlow in the 1,600. Olivia Kotula's 5:44.98 took ninth, and Alex Bardani immediately followed in 5:49.27, a personal record.

Lauren Klein Wassink, Isabelle Wildgoose, Mehner, and Sydney Borofsky ran for

Barlow in the 1,600-sprint medley relay (SMR), taking eighth in 5:14.67. Najjar claimed the silver medal in the 300 meters in 42.44, a personal record and less-than-a-second behind Brookfield's Olivia Walters. Abukhovich also scored for Barlow, taking fourth in 43.31, also a personal record.

Kotula went the distance for Barlow in the 3,200 meters in 13:30.86, taking ninth.

Barlow captured two medals in the field events. Its second gold was in the pole vault, with Carr reaching a height of 12' 2". In the long jump, she leaped 16' 1" for sixth, and Smith was 11th with 14' 6.5".

Klein Wassink took the silver in the shot put with a toss of 33' 11", a personal record. She also competed in the high jump, clearing 4' 2" for ninth.

The Falcon boys faced a more competitive field. While they did bring home a couple of medals, they took ninth out of 14 teams with 16 points.

Defending champ Bethel was the winner again, this time with 143 points. Weston was runner-up with 77, and Newtown took third with 49.

Both of Barlow's medals came in the distance events. Jackson Sobelman clocked a 4:31.85 in the 1,600 meters, taking the silver and finishing second only to Bethel's Evan Bureau.

Barlow's other medal was in the 3,200. Taking the bronze, Devin Tala had a third-place time of 10:05.51, also a personal record.

The Falcons' lone relay team competed in the 1,600-SMR. Ile-Eso Ahiokai, Jackson Ohnemus, Lucas Jandura, and Jack Decker took ninth in 4:27.21.

Barlow will next take part in the state Class M finals on Saturday, February 10 at 4:00 p.m., also in New Haven. ■

### Redding's Big Outdoors: Saugatuck Falls Natural Area and Firehouse Trail / continued from page 1

I park and set out on the Burn Trail. Of course, I stop immediately, marveling at the countless tulip poplars, so tall and straight, straight even for this straight-growing species, and so close together! Opportunists after the eponymous burn, I guess? Then, as an overture to the whole visit, I pass a swamp grey with summersweet shrubs to my right and a hill green with mountain laurel to my left.

Soon, shallow streams blacken the slope beside me. I follow their accumulated murmur up a steeper path, through a narrow split in the hills where a stream runs harder, louder. At the top, sudden quiet. Cresting a small hump onto Hardwood Trail, I see a swamp dotted with young maples, birches, and hickories. The plentiful shrubs with a reddish cast to their twigs prove to be highbush blueberry.

Across a chunky stone wall, I reach open sky. Powerlines cross my view southwest, over a reed-filled marsh. The trail is dry, hard, and mossy; I cross under the transmission towers, where the mountain laurel is covered with rosy buds.

I glance at the time, and the trail app, and think I better walk a little faster. The trail drops into mature sassafras, then curves to the right over a slope of wiggly, swaying beeches. Around another shady, shallow pool under witch-hazel, hornbeam, maple, and elm, I reach the next junction. The wooden signs are almost too weathered to read. I forego the Wall Trail and keep on Hardwood Trail, past oaks and tumbling boulders.

Making my way carefully down a big hill, I hear cars on Route 53 below, and a truck clattering by. Across the faintest hint of the Saugatuck River, I see the backyards of those pretty old houses north of the middle school. The path turns. Another moment of decision: do I have time for the Firehouse Trail? Just a speed run, I tell myself.

I approach the border of the Town-owned preserve and cross into Aquarion forest, shaded by hemlocks. The Saugatuck rushes over a stony bed, but just upstream, a slower branch encircles a swath of reeds. To my left, I spy a cozy-looking hole under a rock; to my right, over the water and high on a cliff, is a much bigger house. I hear the train horn, notice I'm starting

to sweat – but at least this time I'm not hiking on an empty stomach.

I clamber over roots and rocks, past a wide and gentle stretch of the river. It must get less gentle, sometimes: these boardwalks are contentedly sitting off-trail at entirely inhuman angles. I manage without them and enter a healthy stand of white pines – skinny, wide, skyscraper, ankle-high – where the trail is rusty orange with old needles.

Then, an incredible sight. Around the bend is a great wide swamp, its trees as pale and smooth as bones in the diffused daylight. Here on the shore, glowing white oaks are framed by feathery pines. I circle the swamp, passing below a house with big sliding doors, and take a springy boardwalk across the verge. Alders arch overhead and the crimson trunks of silky dogwood stretch away to my right, infinite. I can smell – decay, I guess – rank, but sort of pleasant, sweet – intoxicating – wet.

A chipmunk chatters on the stone wall, and a downy woodpecker flits through the witch hazel and up an oak. Forget the river, give me a house by this tangle of life! Ducks are quacking, skunk cabbage is poking up everywhere, my boots are sinking into the muck.

I pause over a whitish-blue sheen on the puddles. I pick up a stick, prod the surface – the sheen crackles and breaks apart, not slithering oil but the output of natural bacterial digestion.

A clearing appears to my left, the backyard of the Fire Department. Sure, I remember zipping around that field at the cookouts. This trail must've been black and muddy then, too, waiting behind the bushes.

Another woodpecker hammers the branch he's sitting on, though it's hardly a quarter-of-an-inch thick. I make my way slowly. Raccoon prints cross the mud and crows caw overhead. Invisible birds zip through the terrible roses – canes not too terrible to make a little nest in, evidently. The boardwalk tilts side to side, cracked, and then barred by a fallen tree. Grey sky, black mud, birds and plants in the water – Cole there too, standing still.

A little while later, after retracing my steps and crossing greener, dryer land, the toe of my boot catches on a rock; I guess I'm

getting tired. The hill is steeper in reverse, but I regain the Hardwood Trail. I turn left for a wide view of the Saugatuck and head downhill under birches, tulip poplars, and oaks. Neon moss rolls down to the river, silky dogwood casts a maroon haze on the opposite shore, and a receding sea of pale green mountain laurel covers the hill before me.

I lurch forward, pretty much exhausted, and laugh at the sight I must be: stumbling behind a screen of brambles on the narrow, muddy bank, scarf untied and swaying in front of my feet – lost student of the twigs!

A thick old hornbeam still dangles a few seedpods over the path, and a wild azalea holds dry, delicate fruits eight feet in the air. Around massive outcrops sheared into cliffs, I re-enter the woods along an old stone wall. Knapp Way (a highway in the nineteenth century, according to the Book of Trails) carves a tunnel through more mountain laurel. I pass Falls Trail and Oak Trail, sidestepped dried horse poop, then turn left where a metal Open Space sign is being bent and swallowed by a yellow birch.

I can see why this land was chosen, in 1968, to be the Town's second purchase for conservation. Not even on a peak, I simply glance to my left and am thrilled by the view: straight through the trees to Gallows Hill, blue in the distance. I was tired, but now I don't want it to end. I cross the powerlines, with another view toward Gallows Hill, then pass through a forest of red oaks. Oaks give way to white pine, and the mountain laurel thins out, squats low. I take a step toward a massive, multi-trunked pine – the white flag of a deer snaps up and is yanked back into the shade.

Downhill, through hemlocks and oaks again, I hear water. To my right is one of the dark, mucky flats I passed on the Burn Trail. Now on the opposite side of the first summersweet swamp, I cross a gentle golden brook and see the back of a house. The trail relaxes, I pass private property signs and privacy cedars, and then, across one last patch of mud, I reach my car. ■

*Cole Tucker-Walton is a member of the Redding Land Trust Board of Trustees*

## Barlow Debate continues successful season

### Top finish in January Regional State Open | By Randall Smith



Photo by Randall Smith

The Joel Barlow debate team at the Regional State Open in January.

Debating the usefulness of environmental litigation, Joel Barlow junior Cade Fravel was the number one varsity speaker at the Regional State Open Debate on Saturday, January 6 hosted by Fairfield-Warde. Fravel finished on top of a field of 60 speakers from 16 schools, and he and his partner Griffin Speck were the second-place varsity team.

Junior Diez and first-time junior Trevor Steinke won the 4th place varsity team awards. In the novice category, sophomores Kosta Nani and Andrew Jortner won the 5th place team awards. Thanks to the January break schedule of several colleges, Barlow debate team alumni Emma Downey, Ben Fligelman, Catie Gutowski, and Judah Friedman also attended the event. ■

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## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Doom City Bakery

*Boutique baked goods with a personal touch* | By Justin Reynolds



Photos by Maisie Todd Wallick

When most people think about naming a bakery, “Doom City” probably isn’t a phrase that’s top of mind.

“It’s an unusual name for a bakery, right?” Wallick said. “It’s actually the name of my son’s LEGO city — no added cups of doom, don’t worry. One day this fall when I was sitting at my kitchen table trying to think of a name, my son, Charlie, walked in and announced what he was working on in Doom City, and he said, ‘Doom City needs a bakery, so I’m going to build one.’”

She loved the way “Doom City Bakery” sounded. After spending a lot of time thinking about it and asking her friends for advice, she ultimately realized it was the perfect name for her business.

“I loved the juxtaposition of those words; I’m playful and creative in my approach to baking and packaging,” she said. “Whatever is going on, good or bad, I’m here to make something good out of it.”

Wallick’s specialty is cookies, and she loves putting custom cookie boxes together for people.

“This January, I started monthly subscription cookie boxes, which has been lots of fun,” she said. “January was PB&J sandwich cookies and a chocolate and vanilla sandwich cookie. After the holidays and all those fancy cookies, I wanted to do something very familiar and comfortable.”

In addition to cookies, Wallick also makes simple dinner party-type cakes, caramels, peppermint bark, and “savory bakes”.

“I just made a lovely cornbread and cheddar jalapeño and chive madeleine, which is perfect in this weather,” she explained.

Originally from Massachusetts, Wallick grew up “surrounded by cooks and bakers.” Her father was an editor, and her parents loved to entertain, so her house was always filled with writers and amazing food.

“Parties with writers are always really interesting,” she said. “Our house was always the house where everyone gathered. I’ve never been to a Thanksgiving with fewer than 30 people. Now that I’m all grown up with my own family, still

nothing makes me happier than a table with my family and friends around it.”

After college, Wallick worked for magazines as a photo editor for 20 years. Once she had kids, she wanted to stay home with them, and was “fortunate enough to do so for the last decade or so.” While raising kids, she used her free time to develop as a baker and an artist while being active in the community.

“All of this has led me to this new venture,” she said. “I love reinvention.”

What sets Doom City Bakery apart from other bakeries?

“I spend a lot of money and time sourcing the best ingredients,” Wallick said. “And I work slowly, carefully, and with precision in everything I do, and every step of the way. I think a lot about the experience of eating everything I make — texture and ratios, which cookies need to be small and delicate, and which need to be big and decadent. And though it may sound silly, I really think about who is eating them and when and where. It’s the whole experience.”

Recently, Wallick fulfilled an order for a friend en route to Vermont for her daughter’s snowboarding competition. She broke the order up into two boxes, one for the kids and one for the parents, individually labeled, with a note of encouragement for the girl competing.

“I bake with a lot of love and thought,” Wallick said, adding that her friend sent a video of her daughter winning the race and joked that it must have been the cookies.

While Wallick is cooking out of her own kitchen for now, she hopes to have a commercial space someday so that her family “can use the kitchen again.”

“When you place an order, I personalize it,” Wallick said. “I like to know who it’s for and where and when it will be eaten, so that I can take all of it into consideration and really make it special. I hand-stamp all the labels with playful words and images. The whole experience is so important to me. I want everyone who receives my treats to feel really special and loved, and I’d love to be able to grow so I can do that for more people.” ■

To learn more or place an order, visit @doomcitybakery on Instagram, e-mail maisietodd@gmail.com or call 917-696-4346

## Explore memory through the concrete and the abstract

*Local artists showcase “What We Keep” through February 24* | By Pamela Brown



Helena Kiely (left) and Kathy Coe (right) at the opening of their show “What We Keep” at George Billis Gallery in Fairfield.

Kathy Coe’s insightful artwork incorporates the tangible into the realm of memory, celebrating meaningful objects throughout different times in her life. “I keep lots of things. I love to look at things that remind me of happy times, experiences that need healing, things that make me laugh and people that I love who inspire me, and also things that I find that are beautiful,” said Coe, an 18-year Redding resident. Her two-person show, “What We Keep,” a collaboration with Helena Kiely, of Weston, recently opened at the George Billis Gallery in Fairfield. The show runs through February 24.

“The title refers to the things we keep with us along the way, that hold meaning and memories. It’s also the stories and secrets that we keep,” explained Coe. Kiely added, “The show is about memory and choosing what we wish to memorialize; those things or moments that molded us or that remind us of who we are. These things can be comforting, inspiring, or disturbing; they mark a significant moment in time and space.”

The show features Coe’s oil paintings and drawings and Kiely’s sculpture work. “It’s a collaboration of the work of two friends and artists. We share a similar approach and philosophy, even though my work is realism and Helena’s is abstraction,” said Coe, who gets to know objects better through her artwork. “There’s a history and psychology to draw from or a story that they bring forth. It’s almost always a subconscious and surprising experience.”

One of Coe’s pieces is “The Cookie Tin,” an old silver tin that resonated with her because it shows some wear but retains its beauty and purpose. “I like to work from life, which means from actual objects or people who sit for me. The natural light changes, so there are always new surprises to see and moments of magic which excite me and keep me fascinated and in the moment. I also love to explore color,” she said.

Conversely, Kiely views a subject through abstraction. “The process of abstraction consists of synthesizing the form with the goal of discovering the essential gesture or idea in the subject matter,” she explained. “The creative process reflects an understanding of the world using the language of art to interpret the perceptions that life

provides.” One of her sculptures, titled “Ondine” was inspired by Jean Giraudoux’s play after the Greek mythological figure of Undine, the naiad who left her home in the sea to become human. “The sculpture portrays the moment she falls back into the water, leaving behind her human form and memory.”

Coe hopes the show offers people a meaningful experience. “It’s always wonderful when people connect with the work that I do. I hope it makes them feel good and draws them in,” said Coe. “Art is rewarding for me when I see someone connect to what I have made. I also love to share art through teaching and art therapy. When I see people create amazing work, I feel excited for them.”

Coe has always been creative. As a senior in high school, she attended an afternoon art program and went on to win a scholarship to duCret Center of Art in New Jersey. “I had a wonderful three-year foundational program and wonderful teachers. I met Furman Finck there, an amazing teacher and portrait artist who became a mentor to me,” said Coe, who then attended the National Academy of Fine Art and Design in NYC for five years where the focus was on painting in oil from live models.

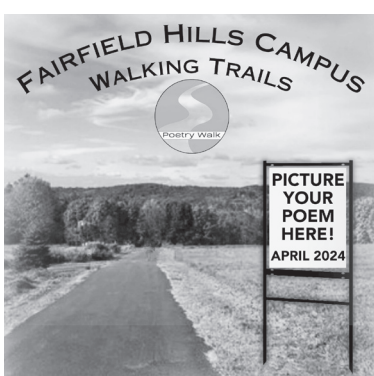
Kiely was born in Santiago de Cuba and studied sculpture and fine arts in Europe in her late teens. “I worked as an apprentice in Madrid under the tutelage of Spanish artist Hortencia Nuñez Ladeveze while studying classical drawing at Academia de Dibujo Peña and stone and wood carving at Facultad de Bellas Artes Universidad Complutense Madrid,” said Kiely, who continued her fine arts studies at Parsons School of Design in New York City before settling in Connecticut. “Being here allowed me to create larger pieces including bronze casting, which I produce at Polich Tallix Foundry in New York, and I also began exploring painting at Silvermine Arts Guild.”

For Coe, art is about seeing. “Sharing my work is about sharing what I see and feel,” she said. “Georgia O’Keefe said that ‘Nobody sees a flower really, it is so small. We haven’t time, and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.’ Through close, quiet, and constant observation, I hope to share how much there is to see.” ■

For exhibition information and hours visit [georgebillis.com](http://georgebillis.com)

## Poetry Walk contest seeks submissions

By Pamela Brown



explained organizer Shari Merrill, Adult Services Librarian at the C.H. Booth Library. The Library received a special grant from the Friends of the C.H. Booth Library to offer the Poetry Walk.

“The Walk is self-guided, so people can experience it at their own pace,” said Merrill. The walk will take place on a picturesque 1.5-mile-long trail at the Fairfield Hills campus in Newtown. The poems will be placed on metal signs in multiple locations alongside the trail.

In 1996, National Poetry Month was launched by the Academy of American Poets, a national organization with a mission to support American poets at all stages of their careers and to foster the appreciation of contemporary poetry. Since it was launched, National Poetry Month has become one of the largest literary celebrations in the world to celebrate poetry and its place in American culture.

“I think self-expression and viewing the world from a new perspective are both essential to our wellness,” said Merrill of the importance of setting aside a month in honor of poetry. “Writing

poetry provides an outlet for expressing creativity, emotions, ideas, and thoughts, while reading poetry provides a new way of thinking about something.”

Twenty poems will be selected for the upcoming Poetry Walk. The acting Director of the C.H. Booth Library and other staff members will make up the judging committee. “There is no theme, and we’re asking that the content be family-friendly,” said Merrill, adding, “We’re looking for poems using language and ideas that tap into the readers’ imagination, senses, and emotions.” One requirement is the poems must be short enough to fit on an 18” x 24” page when printed in large font. The poems will then be laminated. The organizers plan to have all the poems on display by the first week of April and keep them in place through the end of the month.

Many Poetry Walks are based on The StoryWalk Project that was initially established by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Its purpose is to promote early literacy, physical activity, and family time together in nature. The StoryWalk

Project inspired Merrill to create the Poetry Walk. “In a different position, I organized a StoryWalk for children. Then, a few years ago, I participated in a StoryWalk organized by the C.H. Booth Library at Fairfield Hills with my daughter,” said Merrill. “I love the healthy combination of literacy, physical activity, and programs for all ages, so thought it might be fun to create a walk with poems, and possibly visual art in the future.”

Merrill views the Poetry Walk as a way to bring people together to experience nature in a creative way. “The people who regularly use the trails will have the opportunity to enjoy a new experience with the addition

of the poems. People who have never visited the trails might be encouraged to walk them so they can experience the Poetry Walk,” she said. “Ideally, people will be inspired, entertained, curious, and engaged when attending. We hope to provide an uplifting experience for the community.” ■

For more information and guidelines, visit [chboothlibrary.org/calling-all-poets-to-complete-the-poetry-walk-form](http://chboothlibrary.org/calling-all-poets-to-complete-the-poetry-walk-form) and submit your poem for consideration. You can also hand deliver or mail your submissions to: ATTN: Poetry Walk, C.H. Booth Library, 25 Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470



## REMEMBERING REDDING

## Local Black History: Walter Francis White | By Bruce Nelson



Photo courtesy of National Photo Gallery  
Walter Francis White in 1950.

Redding has had more than its fair share of famous people call the town home; some for many years, while others for only a short time. Mark Twain, Mary Travers, Charles Ives, Hume Cronyn, Leonard Bernstein, Barry Levinson, Elsie Hill, Anna Hyatt Huntington, Jasha Heifetz, Edward Steichen, Eliot Janeway, Stuart Chase, and dozens of other well-known personalities have all lived in Redding at some point in their life. But as we observe another month dedicated to Black History, I was hard pressed to think of any well-known persons of color who have lived here.

That was until I pulled the 1950 United States Census report and scoured every single name while researching an entirely different subject – Black home ownership in Redding. One name stood out that would pull me down a different rabbit hole: Walter F. White. Not only was Mr. White listed as a “Negro” in that census, but he was listed as a “writer and lecturer” in the occupation column, and in the industry column, he was linked to “newspapers and race relations.”

I must confess that his name rang no immediate bells. I then pulled a 1951 Redding map and began looking in the area where I knew some of Mr. White’s fellow census neighbors should have lived. The name Poppy Cannon White soon appeared at the corner of Umpawaug and Seventy Acre Road. Poppy was a well-known author of cookbooks and a regular on the 1950s television program Home on NBC where she was recognized as the first network TV chef. But who was her husband, Walter F. White?

As I soon discovered, Walter White was one of the most



Press Photo  
Walter Francis White (third from right) with President Truman in the Oval Office.

important and influential men in the civil rights movement in the early part of the 20th century. He was the head of the NAACP from 1930 until his death in 1955.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 1, 1893, Walter White was the son of George W. White and Madeline Harrison White. He was the middle of seven children. They resided on Houston Street in Atlanta in an all-Black neighborhood. The 1900 U.S. Census identified the family as being “White,” while the 1910 Census identified their race as “Mulatto.”

Walter’s parents were among the last generation of Black Americans born into slavery. Throughout the years, there had been many enslaved Black women who had given birth to children that were a product of an illicit encounter with their white owners. Those women had no protective rights, and their white owners were free to have their way with them. As a result of those encounters, there were thousands of fair-skinned, light-haired Americans who were born of mixed heritage.

Walter White’s parents both bore light complexions and were often perceived as being Caucasians. If the story of Walter’s mother’s often stated heritage is accurate, in the 1830s, her grandmother had been a slave of William Henry Harrison, and she had birthed six children fathered by him. In 1840, Harrison was elected as the ninth president of the United States.

Likely at least as a partial result of their light pigmented skin color, both of Walter’s parents received a college education – a real rarity in the late 19th century South. George became a mail carrier and Madeline, a teacher.

Much of what is known about

Walter’s early life comes from his 1948 autobiography, *A Man Called White*. According to A. J. Baime, the author of *White Lies: The Double Life of Walter F. White and America’s Darkest Secrets*, at least some of White’s self-described youth was likely embellished. White’s description of his recollection of the events of the 1906 Atlanta race massacres was recalled by Baime in a March 30, 2022 Fresh Air interview on NPR radio:

“And on the second night of the riot, Walter’s in his house with his family. And he’s on the second floor looking out the window when a mob of white people carrying torches approaches the house. And he can hear the screaming. And they’re talking about burning this house down because they believe that this house that the Whites are living in is too nice a house for a Black family to live in.

“According to Walter’s story, his father hands him a shotgun, and he’s 12 years old, and he’s looking out the window. And his father says, ‘Walter, don’t shoot until the first man puts his foot on our lawn, and then keep on shooting as long as you can.’ And this is the sort of foundational moment of Walter’s mythology, his whole life story. And he says to himself, after that night, ‘I knew I never wanted to be a white man. I knew which side I was on.’”

According to Baime, White’s own sisters denied the part about Walter ever wielding that shotgun. What isn’t an embellishment is the fact that Walter White considered himself a Black man from that point on.

After graduating from Atlanta University in 1916, White joined the Standard Life Insurance

Company as a cashier. On his 1917 draft registration, he identified his race as “Negro” and the registrar recorded the color of his eyes as being “blue” and the color of his hair as being “golden.” In an era where Caucasians would have had a tremendous advantage over Blacks in obtaining military assignments in a segregated United States military, White might have easily identified his race as being “White” but he chose not to do so. The promise he had made to himself as a child to always identify with the Negro race would be forever kept.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded on Lincoln’s birthday in 1909. Initially consisting of only sixty liberal intellectuals – fifty-three of whom were White, the organization was mostly focused on writing letters to government officials, urging them to change policies that were racially discriminating.

In 1918, after contacting the NAACP about an attempt in Atlanta aimed at eliminating the seventh grade in schools in Black neighborhoods, White was invited to New York to join the fledgling organization. There, he met W.E.B. DuBois, one of the group’s founders and most influential writers. After less than two weeks on the job, White read about a Black man in Estill Springs, Tennessee who had been attacked by a white mob and burned at the stake. Cases such as that in the Jim Crow South were seldom investigated and almost never resulted in any convictions, something that the organization was trying to alter. Walter offered to travel to Tennessee, pose as a white traveling salesman, and attempt to learn the facts of the case.

After only a few days in Estill Springs, White returned with all the facts and penned an article that was published in the organization’s nationally distributed magazine, *The Crisis*. It caused such a buzz, that people, both Black and white, began to join and support the NAACP in greater numbers. White would go on to investigate and report on over forty more such incidents during the 1920s.

In 1930, Walter White was elected to the office of executive secretary, the highest position within the organization. He would serve in that capacity until his death in 1955. He successfully

lobbied against the appointment of avowed segregationist Judge John J. Parker to the Supreme Court. He became influential with President Franklin Roosevelt and his socially activist wife, Eleanor. He promoted the Harlem Renaissance. It was his friendship and support of President Truman in 1948 that led to the executive order that finally ended segregation within the United States military.

In his personal life, Walter White met and married Gladys Leah Powell, a Black singer who worked as a stenographer for the NAACP at its New York headquarters. According to Randolph Stakeman, the author of *The Walter White Project*, White’s biographer wrote, “Gladys and Walter were not equal partners in this marriage; White appeared to want someone who would serve in a supporting role and help him penetrate the world of culture.” Gladys made a comfortable home for Walter, bore him two children, and helped turn their 409 Edgecomb Avenue Harlem apartment into a salon to which people like George Gershwin dropped by at one time or another.”

Stakeman also writes that in 1928, White met Poppy Cannon, a white South African by birth. Their friendship led to an on-and-off-again affair, during which time Cannon married three times, producing a child with each of her three husbands. Poppy purchased a home in Redding prior to World War II. Located at the corner of Umpawaug and Seventy Acre Roads the estate was named “Breakneck Hill”.

After suffering a heart attack in January of 1947, White came to the realization that Poppy was the real love of his life. But it wasn’t until Poppy divorced her third husband that Walter left his first wife of 27 years. After his divorce from Gladys became final on June 30, 1949, he and Poppy wed on July 6 of that year.

Walter and Poppy would live in Redding with Poppy’s children until Walter’s death in 1955 at the age of only 61. ■

Bruce Nelson is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding and Co-Founder of the Redding CT History Project

## Student essay contest on voting rights

### League of Women Voters launches competition for middle and high schoolers

By Tom Kilbourn



Democracy is not a spectator sport, and the Redding League of Women Voters has a new opportunity for high school and middle school students to get into the game.

The Redding League of Women Voters is sponsoring the first of what it hopes will be an annual essay contest to encourage students at John Read Middle School and Joel Barlow High School to give broad attention to the rights and responsibilities of being citizens in a representative democracy. The focus for this first year’s contest will be on the topic voting/voter rights.

Essay information packets containing the guidelines, suggested essay topics, and submission forms for this first-year contest have been distributed to the two schools. Interested students at John Read should see Ms. Jennifer Desmarais, Principal, and students at Joel Barlow may contact Mrs. Angela Staron, Humanities Chair, or any of their English or Social Studies teachers.

The submission deadline is

April 2, 2024. The essay authors will be anonymous to the assessors; name and school will be recorded on the submission forms. Cole Tucker-Walton, writer and a regular contributor to the Redding Sentinel, will be in charge of a team of volunteer readers who will assess the submissions.

A monetary award will be given to the top three essayists in the two schools: for Joel Barlow students, \$200 will be awarded to first place, \$75 to second place, and \$50 to third place. For John Read Middle School students, \$100 will be awarded to first place, \$50 to second place, and \$25 to third place.

The first-place essays from Joel Barlow and John Read will be published in the Redding Sentinel.

The Redding League of Women Voters hope this activity will encourage emerging citizens to play a more active role in local, state, and national politics. That has been and is the fundamental purpose of the non-partisan League of Women Voters. And, further, there is an attendant

hope that this essay contest might foster membership in the Redding League of Women Voters.

#### Essay prompts:

- Your Vote is Our Future
- Is voting a privilege, a right, or a responsibility?
- Your own topic on the issue of voting

**Format:** The essay must be 250-500 words and include a title. Any citations used are not included in the word count. Please double-space your essay and use 12-point font and submit it as a PDF or Word document. (If you prepare your essay in Google Docs, use the export to PDF function to save it.) Do not include your name or other identifying information on your essay.

**Submission:** Please submit completed essay by April 2, 2024. Submission details will be provided – check with your school administrators. Essays will be judged by a panel of Redding LWV members and winners will be notified by May 3, 2024. ■

## OBITUARY

### Thomas Matthew Swenson Passed away January 18, 2024



Thomas Matthew Swenson, aged 58, beloved son, brother, cousin, and friend, passed away peacefully on January 18, 2024, at Yale New Haven Hospital. Born in Bridgeport and raised in Redding, he was the cherished son of the late Priscilla “Pat” Handy Swenson and the late Sidney Richard Swenson

(US Army Sgt, Ret.).

Tom attended Joel Barlow High School and received his BA from Southern Connecticut State University. Tom was an Army veteran and reservist. Survivors include a sister, Anne Swenson (Ken) Horowitz; nieces Jessica (Will) Carey and Kelsey (Jeff) Holder; grandnephews Lucas Holder and Zachary Carey; and grandniece Charlotte Holder. Tom is also survived by his first cousins Rob, Dave, and Mike, in addition to his Aunt Lore Handy of Redding. He was predeceased by his brothers Paul R. Swenson, Jon C. Swenson, and Steven R. Swenson, and a sister, Mary Elin Swenson.

A private burial will be at the Redding Ridge Cemetery in the spring. ■

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Picasso's War How Modern Art Came to America

Crown / 480 p.p. / \$20 | By Hugh Eakin

The vocabulary of art, like the vocabulary of wine, seeks adjectives and phrases to describe the unfamiliar or completely original, and it can be pro or con. In America of 1911, critics of Picasso called his work, “astonishing travesties on humanity” and “emanations of a disordered mind.” In the same year, when photographer Alfred Stieglitz offered a collection of Picasso drawings to the Metropolitan Museum for \$2,000, Bryson Burroughs, the Met’s curator of paintings, responded, “Such mad pictures would never mean anything to America.”

Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th century, America was culturally unsophisticated almost to the extent that it was materially advanced. But also, “America’s breakneck modernization had an almost pathological phobia of modern art.” Henry James, returning to America after many years in Europe, saw that “the Metropolitan Museum was in the business of buying civilization, not making it.” John Quinn, New York attorney and early collector of modern art and literature, understood “... how hidebound American taste had become.”

*Picasso’s War*, by Hugh Eakin, is a chronicle of cultural change. It is the story of how a handful of advocates awakened a nation’s sensibility to new expressions of culture, and how an artist at the center of upheaval became a hero in America. The players in this drama are the artists, collectors, and dealers – gallery owners – all with different needs and calculus (it might be useful for readers to first review the thumbnail biographies in the epilogue and become familiar with the major names). Fear argues threat. A segment of the population will always resist the new and be prepared to censor what it sees as menacing to any number of attitudes.

Largely forgotten, John Quinn was an early collector of art and manuscripts and helped to organize the Armory show of 1913 in New York, where modern art from Europe was first given wide exposure and publicity. When John Quinn died in 1924, Alfred Barr (a founder and first director of the Museum of Modern Art) took up the mantle.

Not immediately, but eventually, the Museum of Modern Art established a permanent home for paintings and sculpture that otherwise existed in anonymity. It is daunting to reflect that lending art for exhibitions overseas was impossible during the two World Wars, when travel everywhere came to a standstill. There are many names and accounts of those gathering as a force for change, how they formed boards to attract funds, how they gradually overcame timorousness of collectors and the public.

In 1939, the Museum of Modern Art established a long-running Picasso exhibition: *Forty Years of His Art*. Eakin writes: “For Barr, it was precisely the difficulty – the ways that Picasso’s work was continually at war with the existing order, and with itself – that underscored his importance. Like Quinn, who had followed Picasso through all of his phases, he had come to view the artist as the elusive, complicated, throbbing center of the new art.”

In a 1945 interview with veteran art critic Elizabeth McCauseland by Frank Kleinholz, host of the weekly radio program *Art in New York*, she discussed the opening mind of American critics. Picasso: *Forty Years of His Art* had become one of the longest running and most talked about, modern art shows in history. McCauseland said, “The past fifteen years have seen a tremendous change in aesthetic values.” “But what does [the Museum of Modern Art] have to do with Picasso?” Kleinholz asked. “Everything,” she said.

An early, but perhaps definitive, statement of modern art was given by John Quinn about the often-bewildering images of cubism and poet impressionism. “They are not storytelling pictures, they point to no moral, they are not part of the ‘uplift’, and the artists are not interested in any movement outside painting and sculpture. But they are alive.” ■

Review by Tom Casey  
Tom is the author of *Human Error and Stranger’s Gate*

Editor’s Note: *Picasso’s War* will be the topic at the non-fiction book club on Thursday, February 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Byrd’s Books, 178 Greenwood Avenue, Bethel

## MUSIC NOTE

### Lyrics Coffeehouse will feature New Middle Class February 9

By Jessie Wright



Photo courtesy of New Middle Class

The Lyrics Coffeehouse live music series continues this week at the Redding Community Center with a performance by award-winning folk duo New Middle Class.

Barbara Borok (lead vocal) and songwriter Mike Borok (guitar/vocal) will bring their self-described “playfully serious, heartfelt, and slightly bent” acoustic pop style to the Coffeehouse event Friday, February 9 at 7:30 p.m., where residents can bring their own beverages and snacks while enjoying live music by local artists.

New Middle Class’s original songs walk a thin line between the funny and the serious. They sing about relationships and current events gone awry, the origin of the universe, life, death, and dessert.

For the Lyrics Coffeehouse show, they’ll be joined by Bill Strohm on bass.

The band won the grand prize in the Music To Life song contest at the prestigious Kerrville Folk Festival, and was featured in the Emerging Artists Showcase at the 2023 Falcon Ridge Folk Festival. Other mainstage or featured performances include the South Florida Folk Festival, New Jersey Folk Festival, Lake County Folk Festival, Danbury Summer Music Festival, and the Northeast and Southwest Folk Alliance conferences, as well as venues like the Town Crier Café, The Turning Point, and many others.

Lyrics Coffeehouse is a Redding Park and Recreation program in its 19th season offering original music in an environment conducive to listening. Admission is \$15 or \$12 in advance for each show, with reduced prices for seniors and students. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own beverages and food; free coffee and soft drinks and dessert items for purchase are available. ■

For more information, call (203) 938-2551 or visit [townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/lyrics-coffee-house](http://townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/lyrics-coffee-house)

## LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

If you’ve been in the Mark Twain Library this week, there’s a good chance you’ve heard some hammering. That’s because two building improvement projects are currently underway. We are having all our lighting fixtures converted to LEDs, thanks to several corporate donors through the State of CT’s Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program.

And if you’ve tried to read or study in our magazine and newspapers area, you’ve probably noticed folks installing the new door which will eventually lead to our outdoor patio. With sup-

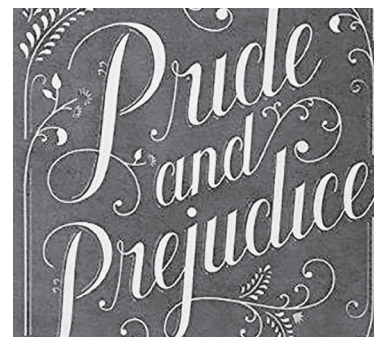
port from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) administered by the Town of Redding, we plan to break ground on our outdoor patio project in the coming weeks. The new door is fully accessible and will be a worthy transition from the Library’s reading room out to the patio.

In order to receive our ARPA funds from the Town, we have to have the project significantly completed by June 30, 2024. So, the next few months will see a lot of action on the patio. In a town-wide survey distributed by the Library in late 2019, residents identified

outdoor space as one of the Library’s greatest needs. Then the pandemic hit, and the need for a place to gather outdoors became even more evident. Public, open space is the reason many people move to Redding, so shouldn’t the public, open library have some of that too? Stay tuned for big changes to our outdoor area over the next few months and get ready to enjoy reading a book in the dappled sunshine this spring while listening to the waterfall. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

## Good books for good readers | By Margi Esten



Let’s read some classics! Almost impossible to know where to begin, but I’ll start with a few of my not-to-be-missed favorites:

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: If you don’t know who Mr. Darcy is, it’s time. “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” Published in 1813, it is of course a novel of manners and norms of that society, but with Jane Austen, it is so much more; social standing and wealth are not always advantages, ineffectual parents, inheritance, and, perhaps most importantly, the search for self.

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte: English writer Charlotte Bronte

first published this novel under her pen name Currer Bell in 1847, and the first American edition was published the following year. Written in the first person, it often addresses the reader, creating immediacy and connection. Jane is an unconventional heroine for the times, independent and self-reliant as we follow her growth to adulthood and her love for Mr. Rochester – the brooding, and very secretive, master of Thornton Hall.

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte: Born in 1818, Emily was the most enigmatic of her three famous sisters. This is her first and only novel, published under her pen name Ellis Bell also in 1847. While this concerns two families

of the local gentry living on the West Yorkshire moors, the Earnshaws and the Lintons, the love affair between Catherine and Heathcliff, which transcends their earthly presence, is all encompassing. While it is considered to be one of the greatest novels ever written, it was originally met with controversy due to its depictions of mental and physical cruelty and for its challenges to Victorian morality, religion, and the class system.

Oh, so many more... the next installment of “classic books to read at least once in your lifetime” to come soon! ■

## Nod to the pod

### Buried Bones, “High School Sweethearts: Part 1” | By Amy Maloof

Each week, a one-episode recommendation from a podcast you might love.

*Buried Bones* uses a modern lens to examine historical crime cases. Retired investigator Paul Holes and journalist Kate Winkler Dawson host the show, focusing each week on a new and gripping true crime story from the past, some solved and some cold.

“High School Sweethearts” tells the chilling tale of a teenage couple in 1970s Oregon who go missing during a fishing trip. Both of their bodies are quickly found by searchers, but the hunt for their killer is not as straightforward. The case unfolds like a film, spanning

decades before valid suspects begin to emerge.

Holes and Dawson use their expertise to walk listeners through what detective work looked like in the 1970s, and what it looks like now, highlighting the forensic advancements that have developed over the past 30 years. Especially interesting is their discussion of forensic genetic genealogy, a burgeoning field that’s put uncaught killers on alert; cases that once felt unsolvable have finally been cracked. Tune in to see if this was one of them.

On the drive to Barlow the other morning, I was describing the show to my daughter, telling her about an interesting (and gory) case from

the 1800s. She liked the premise. “Because it’s so long ago, it’s just a story instead of something I need to worry about.” That’s not exactly how my mind works (every true crime case I hear about is added to a running mental list of “Things That Could Happen To Me Or My Loved Ones”), but I know what she means. There’s a sense of removal when we’re listening to stories from the past, no matter how gruesome. But with a skillful hand, these hosts help listeners feel connected to each victim and their story, bringing them back to life with careful research and elevating this podcast above the typical true crime fare. ■

## Valentine’s Day in Redding

### Logic puzzle | By Jessie Wright

Laura, Tim, and Jonas have all made plans to celebrate Valentine’s Day next week with their sweethearts in and around Redding. The Redding Roadhouse offers a cozy dinner date, the West Redding Firehouse is hosting a “Valentine’s for Veterans” craft party, and Nod Hill Brewery will hold their weekly boisterous trivia night. Attendees enjoy candy and treats at each event.

Using the clues below, determine where each neighbor goes to celebrate Valentine’s Day, what they eat, and with whom. ■

		Laura	Tim	Jonas
Location	The Redding Roadhouse			
	West Redding Firehouse			
	Nod Hill Brewery			
Treat	Candy Hearts			
	Licorice			
	Chocolate Truffles			
Date	Jamie			
	Lee			
	Avery			

- Laura and her date did not make Valentines at the West Redding Firehouse.
- The couple that went to trivia night at Nod Hill Brewery enjoyed licorice.
- Tim did not eat truffles or candy hearts on his date.
- The Redding Roadhouse served truffles to its guests on Valentine’s Day.
- No couples share the same first letter of their names.

Happy Valentine’s Day! Answers available at [reddingsentinel.org](http://reddingsentinel.org)



# Barns of Connecticut

By Dan Souza



The Zalmon Read Barn, located on Lonetown Road.

According to a statewide survey conducted by Preservation Connecticut in 2006 – 2010, there were over 8,000 historically significant barns in Connecticut. Redding barns identified and mapped in the survey numbered 54. Since then, barns continue to be at risk of disappearing from Connecticut’s landscape as development takes its toll. With the loss of each barn to decay or demolition, a piece of our agricultural history is lost. Here is some background on the barns of Connecticut worth noting as our barn population faces an uncertain future.

## Why are there so many barns in Connecticut?

For centuries, since pre-Revolutionary times, agriculture was the life-sustaining activity in Connecticut and New England. In the agrarian setting of the day, the barn played a central role in people’s lives. It was where hay was kept dry, livestock housed, cider pressed, beer brewed, grain stored, and tools were kept. It was in the barn that cows were milked, hens laid eggs, pigs were raised, horses bred, and manure was collected for fertilizer. Every family needed a barn - a critical tool in sustaining farm life including the provision of food, income, and shelter. Hence the barn has been a quintessential and ubiquitous feature of our region for a long time.

## Why are Connecticut barns painted red?

Several theories have been proffered, among which, based on multiple sources, one seems most plausible. The early farmers did not have much money to spend on paint, so most barns remained unpainted in the earliest days. By the late 1700s, farmers began looking for ways to shield and preserve their barns from the elements and experimented with ways to make their own protective paint. They discovered that a cheap and lasting paint could be made with a mixture of skimmed milk, lime, and iron oxide from red clay which created a rusty red color.

The use of this paint recipe grew in popularity at a time when pre-mixed paint was not yet available, affording New England barns the distinctive red hue that continues to this day. If necessity is the mother of invention, the early settlers deserve full marks for their inventiveness.

## Where did Connecticut barn designs come from?

The early colonists brought with them barn designs from England. The typical English barn most common in the 17th and 18th centuries was a simple design built with a timber-frame construction that had large double-carriage width sliding doors on its lateral side along the eaves. The colonists’



**New Pond Farm Education Center**  
WINTER-SUMMER 2024

**SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Wild Harvested Easter Egg Hunt**  
Saturday, April 13, 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Join us for a special Easter Egg Hunt in the woods. We'll have a scavenger hunt for wild harvested eggs. Prizes for the best egg!

**"EAT ABOUT EYE!" A Play Reading**  
Friday, April 19, 7:00pm - 8:30pm  
"Eating About Eye" is a play about the importance of eating healthy. It's a fun and informative play for all ages!

**BIOLITZ**

**For the Love of Gardening**  
Saturday, April 27, 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Join us for a day of gardening. We'll have a variety of plants and seeds for sale. It's a great way to get started on your garden!

**Planting Potatoes**  
Saturday, May 4, 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Join us for a day of planting potatoes. We'll have a variety of potato varieties for sale. It's a great way to get started on your potato patch!

**Spring Equinox Campfire**  
Friday, May 10, 7:00pm - 8:30pm  
Join us for a special campfire on the equinox. We'll have a variety of s'mores and drinks. It's a great way to celebrate the season!

**Big Harvesting: Wild Natural Dyes**  
Saturday, May 18, 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Join us for a day of harvesting wild natural dyes. We'll have a variety of plants and seeds for sale. It's a great way to get started on your natural dye collection!

**It's a Wonder World!**  
Saturday, May 25, 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Join us for a day of wonder. We'll have a variety of plants and seeds for sale. It's a great way to get started on your wonder garden!

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design was approximately 30 by 40 feet with a “threshing floor” in the center of the barn, where crops like wheat were threshed to separate the grain from the chaff. The rest of the barn would be divided into animal stalls and grain storage. The early barns normally had no basement or loft space and stood on level ground.

## Have barn designs changed?

As time passed, barn designs and construction methods evolved. Later farms became specialized in dairy, fruit, grains, tobacco, poultry and the like, and barn designs were adapted for functionality and efficient use of space. For example, the gambrel roof with two slopes on each side maximized headroom in the upper level, as compared to the single slope on each side of the gabled roof.

## What is the design of Redding’s Zalmon Read Barn?

According to the National Register of Historic Places, the Zalmon Read Barn is “a good, well-preserved example of an English-style barn, with central doors and threshing floor and box lofts to the sides.” Built circa 1760, the Zalmon Read Barn

is representative of the English design of the colonial period. The structure was previously located on the property of Captain Zalmon Read (1740 – 1801) before it was relocated to, and painstakingly reassembled at, its present location at Lonetown Farm in 1980. The Barn is currently sited steps away from its companion structure, the Lonetown Farm and Museum, which was first occupied by Zalmon’s sister Esther Read and her husband Daniel Bartlett who married in 1788.

## What is the significance of the Zalmon Read Barn?

The Zalmon Read Barn is an iconic historical structure that embodies the heritage of Redding. This eighteenth century barn is

the most historically significant barn of its vintage bearing the Read name that still stands today. Zalmon’s grandfather was John Read (1680 – 1749), founder of the Town of Redding, after whom the town is named. With the support of the Town and affirmative vote of Redding residents, a federal grant was awarded in 2023 to the Redding Historical Society for the partial repair and restoration of the Zalmon Read Barn. Additional funds will be needed in 2024 to complete the restoration. ■

Dan Souza  
is a Board member of the Redding Historical Society

# THE NATURAL WORLD

## Animal control officers, DEEP, and residents come to bald eagles’ rescue near Sunset Hill

By Donna Christopher



Two bald eagles were found in the brush in the Sunset Hill Road area last month. Animal control officers guessed they had fought in the sky and fallen to the ground after their talons became entangled.

Redding’s Animal Control Officer Mike DeLuca has been called upon to help troubled hawks and owls before, but never an eagle until two were found entangled on a residential property last month.

The caller, Kate Wagner, had been outside with her three dachshunds when she noticed something in the brush and then heard a cry.

At first, she thought it was a paper bag that got one of the dog’s attention, but then she heard the sound and moved closer and saw two eagles with their talons entangled.

“I thought eagles were endangered, not in the wild,” she remembered thinking and called Redding Animal Control.

DeLuca headed to the home in the Sunset Hill area and was “amazed” at what he saw.

He’d already called animal control officers in Bethel and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) for help with the “threatened” species, which is a state designation.

Officers from both agencies responded and, along with Wagner, cut into the prickly brier with clippers to get at the troubled birds.

“Once we cleared everything away, we called Pete Reid of Westport Animal Control. Pete is affiliated with Wildlife In Crisis,” DeLuca noted. The non-profit on Route 58 in Weston is a wildlife and land conservation organization that rehabilitates injured or orphaned native animals, including birds of prey, at their facility.

“I thought if they needed to be rescued, didn’t fly away, he could



Animal Control Officer Mike DeLuca was called to assist the birds of prey.

take them there,” DeLuca said.

As the rescuers got closer to the eagles, however, they disentangled themselves and flew away.

That’s when Wagner realized how large eagles are. “The wingspan” was a surprise, she said.

They probably would not have survived if Wagner didn’t contact him, DeLuca said.

He sees his role in the successful outcome as a facilitator. “She was the hero in all of this for making the call. I only orchestrated everything,” he said.

“If I didn’t do anything, they would not survive,” Wagner said.

DeLuca can’t be sure why the birds ultimately were able to release themselves, but thinks possibly the fear of people getting closer as the officers cut into the brush was a motivator.

Ultimately, he said it was a



Photos by Louise Wagner

The birds were able to disentangle themselves and fly away as animal control officers drew closer.

relief. “It was the best scenario possible. Those talons are extremely dangerous.”

“It was brave of the animal control officer to get close enough for those huge birds to attack the men with their strong sharp talons and large sharp breaks,” said Kate’s mother, Louise Wagner, who witnessed and photographed the birds’ ordeal.

One of the officials said eagles look for roadkill by the reservoirs in the area. DeLuca said he’s only seen them in Redding a few times, but in the air, never on the ground or in such a predicament.

According to CT DEEP, “The bald eagle was removed from the Federal Endangered Species List. However, bald eagles are still protected on the federal level by the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 and

the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.”

The CT DEEP website further states, “Wintering eagles come to Connecticut looking for open water in which to feed when the land and waters in Maine and Canada are frozen. If harsh weather in Connecticut causes any open water to freeze over as well, the eagles continue to migrate farther south. Up to 100 eagles winter in Connecticut, from December to early March, along major rivers and at large reservoirs.” ■

Redding Animal Control  
may be reached at  
203-938-2525



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies  
R = registration required

## This Week's Featured Events

### Lyrics Coffeehouse - New Middle Class

**Friday, February 9**  
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
BYOB and enjoy an evening of local, live music.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/lyrics-coffee-house

### Park and Rec Bus Trip to *Spamalot* on Broadway

**Saturday, February 10**  
9:00 a.m. Bus leaves  
Community Center  
2:00 p.m. Show  
Redding Community Center (Bus leaves and returns)  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/trips

### Art and Jazz in Georgetown!

**Sunday, February 11**  
3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Enjoy the Jazz Quartet "Steps Behind" at the art gallery.  
Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center  
5 Main Street  
gtownarts.com

### Organics with Sal Gilberti

**Monday, February 12**  
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Learn about the value of growing and eating organic greens with the Redding Garden Club.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
reddinggardenclub.org

## ARTS

**Saturday, January 20 – Saturday, February 24**

**Kathy Coe "What We Keep" Art Exhibition**  
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Wednesdays-Sundays  
Redding resident Kathy Coe and Helena Kiely's exhibition of oil paintings and sculpture.  
George Billis Gallery  
1700 Post Road, Fairfield  
georgebillis.com

**Friday, February 9**

**Lyrics Coffeehouse – New Middle Class**  
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
BYOB and enjoy an evening of local, live music.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/lyrics-coffee-house  
\$

**Saturday, February 10**

**Park and Recreation Bus Trip to *Spamalot* on Broadway**  
9:00 a.m. Bus leaves Community Center, 2:00 p.m. Show  
Redding Community Center (Bus leaves and returns)  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/trips  
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**Sunday, February 11**

**Art and Jazz in Georgetown!**  
3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Enjoy the Jazz Quartet "Steps Behind" at the art gallery.  
Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center  
5 Main Street  
gtownarts.com

**Tuesdays February 13, 20 and 27**

**Beginner Watercolor Course**  
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Free 3-week watercolor course for beginners. Materials will be provided.  
Heritage Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
E-mail mstillman@townofreddingct.org or call (203) 938-9725.  
R

## CHILDREN | TEENS

**Friday, February 9**

**Superintendent Movie Night and Coat Drive**  
6:30 p.m.  
Watch *Tangled*, participate in a photo competition, and donate gently used coats.  
Joel Barlow High School  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
tinyurl.com/er9movie  
R

**Saturday, February 10**

**College Application Timeline Workshop**  
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
Recommended for 9th-10th graders and their parents.  
Zoom – presented by Mark Twain Library  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

**Monday, February 19**

**Presidents Day LEGO Workshops**  
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
For grades K-4  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation  
\$, R

**Friday, February 23**

**Parents' Night Out**  
6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
For grades K-6. Drop your kids at the Community Center for activities and fun and enjoy a night out.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation  
\$, R

## CRAFTS

**Sundays, February 18 and March 3**

**Knitting by the Fire: Cable Knit Cowl**  
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Two session course, all supplies provided.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

## FOOD | WINE

**Saturday, February 10**

**From Prep to Plate - Dairy Delights**  
2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Hands-on butter making workshop  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Saturday, February 10**

**In the Kitchen, cooking (Grades 2-5)**  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Valentine Treats  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Saturday, March 2**

**Troop 306 Gourmet Pancake Breakfast**  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Registration now open.  
West Redding Firehouse  
306 Umpawaug Road  
zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/e5c2d514-7a7a-441e-8505-505049b98910  
\$, R

## HEALTH | WELLNESS

**Tuesday, February 13**

**Yoga Nidra**  
Heritage Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
Register by e-mail  
mpilato@townofreddingct.org or call (203) 938-9725  
R

**Tuesday, February 13 and 27**

**Fireside Yoga**  
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
Bring mat, towel, and water bottle.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Thursday, February 15**

**Sit to Be Fit: A Chair Yoga Series with Viki**  
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.  
Zoom  
Mark Twain Library  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

## HOLIDAY

**Friday, February 9**

**Valentine's Day Music & Comedy Fundraiser**  
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
Join Ridgefield Lions Club for live music, comedy, and food.  
3 Keys Restaurant  
19 Main Street  
inridgefield.com/events/valentines-day-music-comedy-fundraiser  
\$, R

**Saturday, February 10**

**Valentines for Veterans**  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Make cards with the West Redding Fire Department for military heroes.  
West Redding Firehouse  
306 Umpawaug Road  
Registration recommended at president@westreddingfiredepartment.org  
R

**Saturday, February 10**

**Valentine's Tea**  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Carriage Barn at Ambler Farm  
257 Hurlbutt Street  
Wilton  
amblerfarm.org/event/valentines-tea  
\$, R

## NATURE

**Saturday, February 10**

**Winter Tracking and Tree Identification Walk**  
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Woodcock Nature Center  
56 Deer Run Road  
Wilton  
woodcocknaturecenter.org  
R

**Monday, February 12**

**Organics with Sal Gilberti**  
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Learn about the value of growing and eating organic greens with the Redding Garden Club.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
reddinggardenclub.org  
\$

**Tuesday, February 13**

**Rewilding Your Yard**  
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Saturday, February 17**

**Pruning 101**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Saturday, February 17**

**Astronomy: Viewing the Night Sky**  
Check website for times  
Dress for the weather, all ages welcome.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

**Wednesday, February 21**

**Nature Book Club: *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden***  
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Presented by New Pond Farm Education Center, Mark Twain Library, and Redding Land Trust.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
Register at marktwainlibrary.org/calendar  
R

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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

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

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

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

**Long Ridge United Methodist**  
Sundays at 11:00 a.m.  
201 Long Ridge Road  
Danbury  
longridgeumc.com

**Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish**

**Sacred Heart Church:**  
Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.  
Saturday Eucharistic Adoration: 6:00 p.m.  
Sunday Mass:  
9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
12:00 noon LATIN  
Weekday Mass:  
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.  
Wednesday 6:00 p.m. LATIN  
30 Church Street  
**St. Patrick Church:**  
Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.  
Weekday Mass:  
Monday – Friday at 8:30 a.m.  
Mondays and Thursdays  
Eucharistic Adoration: 7:00 p.m.  
169 Black Rock Turnpike  
sacredheart-stpat.org

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**Tuesday, February 13**

**Digital Parenting; Tips & Triage**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Both in person and on Zoom.  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
\$, R

**Thursday, February 15**

**Yale Science in the News: Made to Connect**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Learn about neural networks, individual actions, and collaborations with an impact on the world.  
Zoom  
Mark Twain Library  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

**Thursday, February 15**

**Where did the Internet, Vaccine, GPS, and Covid mRNA stealths come from? The role of DARPA in Fostering Disruptive Technologies**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Wilton Historical Society  
224 Danbury Road  
wiltonhistorical.org  
R

## MEETINGS

**Thursday, February 8**

**Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee**  
6:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room and via Zoom  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

**Thursday, February 8**

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

**Monday, February 12**

**Board of Selectmen Special Meeting**  
6:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

**Tuesday, February 13**

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

**Tuesday, February 13**

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

**Wednesday, February 14**

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

**Wednesday, February 14**

**Region 9 Curriculum Committee**  
1:30 p.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Room A106  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
er9.org

**Wednesday, February 14**

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

**Thursday, February 15**

**Historic Review Committee**  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
Subject to virtual or hybrid if needed.  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

**Thursday, February 15**

**Region 9 Board of Education with Budget Presentation**  
7:00 p.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
er9.org

**Tuesday, February 20**

**Conservation Commission**  
7:00 p.m.  
Old Town House  
23 Cross Highway  
townofreddingct.org

**Tuesday, February 20**

**Board of Selectmen**  
7:30 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

**Wednesday, February 21**

**Board of Assessment Appeals**  
4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

**\*Note: Town offices will be closed on Monday, February 19 for Presidents Day.**





# COLDWELL BANKER | REALTY



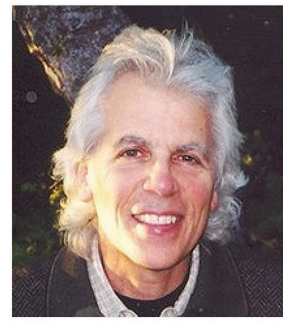
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**Peri Bartro**  
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**Tim Dent**  
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**Margi Esten**  
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**Marilyn Sloper**  
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O: (203) 974-5253

[tim.martin@grarate.com](mailto:tim.martin@grarate.com)

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