

REDDING SENTINEL

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Red light and speed cameras now legal tools to address speeding

By Rocco Valluzzo

Taking advantage of new legislation that went into effect on January 1, Redding is looking into the possibility of installing red light and speeding cameras to help cut down on speeding in certain areas of town. Additional speed signs have also been installed on a couple of roads with demonstrated speeding issues.

The legislation, House Bill 5917, gives Connecticut municipalities the option to install automated stoplight or speeding cameras at local intersections to capture license plate images and automatically send citations.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton cited the crossings at Redding Elementary School on Route 107 and John Read Middle School on Route 53, as well as Route 107 in Georgetown at the crossing between Main Street and the Wire Mill Saloon & Barbecue, as locations for speed cameras.

“We’re not talking about a red light camera on rural roads,” she said. “School zones, however, are on state roads, so you have to meet very specific parameters.”

When the Police Department conducted its recent speed studies on high traffic road in town, one area where it found a significant problem was Umpawaug Road, where the data did bear out a significant speeding problem. Another speed sign was put in place at the crest of the road where it starts to head downhill.

Pemberton noted that prior to the repaving of Umpawaug Road, there were natural traffic-calming measures, such as a large boulder underneath it. When the road was repaved, however, the boulder was removed, and the road smoothed out.

“It used to be that if you were speeding coming south on Umpawaug, and you hit that, you would literally go airborne,” she said. “There is at least a flashing light that makes you aware that you’re speeding.”

Peaceable Street has also been a constant concern for residents, because it is so narrow and also sees significant through traffic. According to Pemberton, Google Maps will route traffic on Peaceable Street.

“I think it’s an inappropriate road for Google to route commuter traffic through,” said Pemberton. “There’s also no sign at the end of Peaceable that says no through traffic. I’m fairly certain there was one.”

She recalled a major accident several years ago at the intersection

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Photo by Kim Bonnell

A double rainbow to mark the close of another year, captured behind Giles Hill Road in the early morning of December 27. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, with credit of course, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

First snow proves forecasters wrong

By Jessie Wright



Photo by

Toni Ann Lupinacci-McClenny

The first snow accumulations of the winter season, shown here on Whortleberry Road.

The first significant snowfall of the 2023-2024 winter season came on January 6 and 7 as Winter Storm Ember lumbered up the East Coast. Though the storm dropped a foot or more of snow on some parts of northern New England, predictions for Redding of five to eight inches proved to be overestimates, with local weather stations recording only four inches at the deepest points in town, according to data from the National Operational Hydrologic

Remote Sensing Center.

Still, the blanket of white was enough for sledders to revel in some winter fun on Sunday, January 7, including at the large hill at Collis P. Huntington State Park. The Highway Department plowed and treated the roads, and no major utility outages were reported in town, according to the Eversource outage tracker. Municipal offices and schools were open for regular hours by Monday, January 8. ■

REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Trail Tenders greet 2024 with agenda of new projects

By Rob Sample



Photo by Jessie Wright

Lead Trail Tender Stuart Green (left) with First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at the ribbon cutting for the new boardwalk through Lonetown Marsh last March.

When Redding Land Trust acquired the Barbara and Anthony Delia Preserve in November, it added 30 acres to the town’s network of open space. Even better, a dedicated team of local volunteers will soon make the bucolic parcel adjacent to Old Mailcoach Road accessible to residents and visitors alike.

These people are the Trail Tenders, a group of more than 50 volunteers who keep Redding’s 70-mile network of trails safe and enjoyable for use by all ages. The Trail Tenders also forge new trails in response to significant open-space acquisitions – such as the new Delia Preserve, and the adjacent Mary Anne Guitar Preserve which was acquired in 2016 through funds from Redding Land Trust, Aquarion, and a grant from the State of Connecticut.

“Trail Tenders is a year-round endeavor, though our work usually does slow down in the winter,” said Stuart Green, lead Trail Tender and a member of Redding’s Conservation Commission. “Winters can often be forgiving in terms of trail maintenance. If you have a brushy trail, when all that dies back in the winter, you get a break from trimming and cutting.”

“Nonetheless, 2023 was a difficult year because of cycles of heavy rain and warm temperatures. After such storms, we ended up with a lot of windfall and debris

on the trails,” Green added. “Fortunately, we always seem to get lucky when it comes to signing up people who are handy and have good carpentry skills.”

With almost 34-percent of its land devoted to open space, Redding is noteworthy in Western Connecticut. The trail network is perfect for walking, hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing across those wide-open spaces.

Trail usage saw a huge upsurge during the pandemic-shutdown of 2020-21 – and it hasn’t slowed since. “During the pandemic, a lot of municipalities closed their public parks, so trails became the place to get outside in fresh air,” recalled Green. “At that time, it was fun to drive by some of our less popular trails and see a crowd of parked cars. It’s been heartening to see that popularity continue.”

While there are no recorded statistics, the trail network has anecdotally also served as a draw for people moving into Redding. Here, they have quick access to

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Superintendent predicts 10-year enrollment uptick for Region 9

By Rob Sample

The Region 9 Board of Education got a sneak peek into the future at its December 19 meeting. While enrollment at Joel Barlow High School will drop slightly in the short term, trends in elementary and middle-school enrollment for both Redding and Easton point to a strong upturn in enrollment for Barlow in the next 10 years overall.

“At Joel Barlow this year we have approximately 737 students,” said Dr. Jason McKinnon, Superintendent for the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 School Districts (ER9). “We have 182 students in ninth grade, 170 students in tenth grade, 192 students in 11th, and we will have 193 graduating seniors.”

McKinnon said Barlow’s enrollment is expected to dip slightly, to about 700 students, over the next two years. After that period, however, enrollment will go up, based on enrollment trends at the elementary- and middle-school levels. Though pre-K through grade 8 enrollment in Easton declined from 2007 through 2020, it has since rebounded to 882 students this year and is expected to be 893 next year.

“Over the next 10 years, enrollment is going to increase by 234 students in Easton, for a total of 1,137 students,” he said. “In Redding between 2012 and 2020 [K-8] student enrollment declined from 1,132 students to 804 students, but it has rebounded this year to 864 students. Student enrollment in Redding is projected to increase by 417 students over the next 10 years and will reach 1,281 students.”

“The story is that our pipeline is very strong, and it’s only expected to grow,” McKinnon continued. “You’ll see that growth in about two years at Joel Barlow and for the rest of the decade when it gets up to 855 students.”

As those students and families move through the school system into high school, the district is also working on additional tools to help them plan their courses of study. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol gave the Board a presentation on web-based curriculum pathways, which are set to debut on the ER9 website. While it presents some middle-school-level course information, it primarily concerns curricula at Joel Barlow High School.

The presentation covered course sequences in mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, art, and English,

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EDITORIAL

Just before the holidays, *The New York Times* published “The Rebirth of Local Journalism” in its The Morning daily newsletter. The piece included an optimistic view on how to re-energize and fund local newspapers and online new outlets, as well as a round-up of some of the editors’ favorite articles written in local news sources over the past year. From pinball festivals to impossible school bus routes, municipal corruption to battles of unpasteurized milk, the featured articles are worth a read (you can visit nytimes.com/2023/12/22/briefing/local-journalism.html to peruse).

We received many e-mails and calls after the newsletter was published from *Sentinel* subscribers and supporters, happy to see the spotlight being shone on the importance of local news. And, as the start of any new year tends to inspire, I got to thinking about the year just behind us, looking back on the work our team of reporters and writers have put together for the community.

Below are just a few of the pieces in the *Sentinel* that have stuck with me through 2023. Everyone will have their own list of articles that resonate. Feel free to jump into our online archive (reddingsentinel.org/archive) or the stack of hard copy back issues on your nightstand (or is that just me that has those?) to revisit the stories from the last year that speak most to you.

- “As egg prices rise, locals go straight to the source” by Justin Reynolds
February 23, 2023
- “Guest Editorial” by Jaime Bairaktaris
February 23, 2023
- “Redding’s Big Outdoors: What lies beneath” by Scott MacMillan
April 6, 2023
- “A Buddhist, a treehugger, and a trapper walk into a bar” by Cole Tucker-Walton
May 25, 2023
- “Falcons win first league championship in three decades / Baseball” by Rocco Valluzzo
June 1, 2023
- “Why Redding? A breather from the bright lights of Broadway” by Pamela Brown
June 22, 2023
- “Remembering Redding: Finding Abel Sanford” by Bruce Nelson
August 10, 2023
- “Redding attorney plays key role in opioid case” by Rob Sample
October 19, 2023
- “Four trees wrongly cut down along Cross Highway” by Donna Christopher
October 5, 2023 ■

LEGAL NOTICES

THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY AND 1st Installment SUPPLEMENTAL MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES ON THE GRAND LIST OF OCTOBER 1, 2022, IS DUE AND PAYABLE JANUARY 1, 2024.

TAXES DUE JANUARY 1, 2024, MUST BE POST-MARKED OR PAID ONLINE, NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 1, 2024, TO AVOID PENALTY. TAXES ARE DELINQUENT FEBRUARY 2.

Payments postmarked, Paid in Person or Paid online, on or after February 2, 2024, are delinquent and will carry an interest penalty. Interest is charged at the rate of Eighteen (18%) percent annually or one and one-half (1.5%) percent per month, from the January 1, 2024, due date.

Supplemental Motor Vehicle Taxes are due in full January 1, 2024. Failure to make payment in accordance with the above will result in suspension of registration privileges in addition to the

interest charges. Delinquent Motor Vehicle Taxes must be paid in cash, certified check, money order or online by credit card, to obtain a registration clearance.

FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF TAX OR PENALTY.

Oldest outstanding taxes must be paid prior to paying current taxes.

Taxes can be paid or viewed at www.townofreddingct.org. Credit card payments are not accepted in person at the Tax Office. You may call (866) 923-8245 to make a credit/debit card payment.

Town Hall hours may vary due to weather conditions. However, due dates do not. Verify the Town Hall is open and the department you need is open before coming in person. The Town Hall is closed on Fridays. We are located at 100 Hill Rd, Redding, CT; Telephone: 203 938-2706. ■

*Patricia J. Moiso,
C.C.M.C., C.C.M.O
Tax Collector
Town of Redding*

ELDERLY TAX BENEFITS

The application period for the Town of Redding Elderly Benefit and State of CT Homeowners Program is beginning February 1, 2024.

Redding residents aged 65 years or older may apply for both benefits provided they meet the qualifications listed below.

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN OF REDDING ASSESSOR’S OFFICE OR ONLINE AT TOWNOFREDDINGCT.ORG. 203-938-2626. APPLICATION PERIOD IS FEBRUARY 1, 2024 – MAY 15, 2024

1. State of CT Homeowners Program

1. Must be 65 years of age by December 31, 2023

2. Must be a homeowner with a principal residence of Redding as of October 1, 2023
 3. 2023 total income must not exceed \$43,800 for unmarried persons, and \$53,400 for married couples.
- After April 15, 2024, application must be made in person.

2. Town of Redding Elderly Benefit

1. Must be 65 years of age by May 15, 2024
2. Must be a homeowner in the Town of Redding since May 15, 2021
3. The property for which the benefit is claimed must be the legal domicile of such person, and occupied more than 183 days of each year.
4. Copy of CT drivers license ■

Red light and speed cameras now legal tools to address speeding /
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of Umpawaug and Peaceable. The sign may have been damaged and removed because of that accident.

Preventing through traffic is difficult to enforce. Police cannot stop vehicles if there is no traffic violation.

“No through traffic doesn’t

mean that if you’re on one side of Umpawaug you can’t use it to go through,” she added. “It’s supposed to mean that if you’re traveling from Bethel to Wilton, you don’t take Umpawaug. That’s the definition of through traffic.” ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

I read with interest Redding Historical Society’s ad in the December 21, 2023 issue of the *Sentinel* appearing on pages dedicated to “Celebrating the Season of Giving” showcasing organizations in town worthy of our donations and membership.

I would like to know how they fulfill their mission to educate, preserve and to promote Redding, Connecticut’s rich historic heritage. Are their archives digitized, as they are at the Ridgefield and other Historical Societies, so that people can know what they have in their collection? Do they allow researchers to visit their archives and assist them with finding what they are looking for as they do at the Ridgefield, Danbury, and many other Historical Societies? Do they have a knowledgeable historian who is able to assist people in learning more about Redding history? Do they have regular membership meetings so that members can be apprised as to what is currently being planned? Are their board meetings open to the public, as they are at the Danbury Historical Society? Is the museum open on a regular basis for tours so that interested people can see the house and learn about the original inhabitants? Do they host educational talks, such as the one recently presented by the Ridgefield Historical Society by the author of the newly published book *God Save Benedict Arnold*, or the talk given by Cheyney McKnight, the Manager of Living History at the New York Historical Society, presented by Westport Museum for History and Culture? Do they offer school programs or summer camp as they do in Ridgefield and Bethel?

What are the benefits to joining the Redding Historical Society? ■

*Terrie Roese
Drummer Lane*

Curbside Christmas tree pick-up
January 16 – January 19



The Department of Public Works will be picking up Christmas trees left curbside at Redding addresses from Tuesday, January 16, 2024 to Friday, January 19, 2024, weather permitting.

Trees must be put out curbside (at the end of each driveway) before the pick-up dates. No wreaths or anything with wires,

lights, garlands, ornaments, or tree stands can be picked up – all decorations must be removed.

Residents can also drop their trees at the Redding Recycling Center and Transfer Station (located at 84 Hopewell Woods Road) during its operating hours if they miss the curbside pickup. ■

Redding welcomes new police officer for field training



Photo courtesy of Redding Police Department

Left to right: Captain Tim Succi, Officer Benjamin Coppock, Chief Mark O’Donnell. Officer Benjamin Coppock graduated from Milford Police Department’s Regional Police Training Academy last month and will now spend the next several months on field training in Redding. Officer Coppock, who grew up in Redding, was sworn in as a Redding police officer on June 14 after a retirement and internal promotions created a vacancy on the force. Coppock completed 26 weeks of training at the Academy, which included Criminal and Motor Vehicle Law, Crisis Intervention Training, and Firearms.

SENTINEL WINTER PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

The next issue of the *Sentinel* will arrive to subscribers and hit newsstands on
Thursday, January 25,
after which we will resume our regular, weekly publishing schedule.

Please submit any event information or letters to the editor by the Sunday prior to the publication date.

Visit reddingsentinel.org/publishing-schedule for a complete list of 2024 issue dates.

Contact us at publisher@reddingsentinel.org with any questions.

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

How to use Town “windfall” funds?

Board of Finance weighs options for surplus | By Susan Clark

At the final Board of Finance meeting for 2023, held on December 20 at Town Hall, the Board focused their discussion on possible uses for what were described as “windfall” funds in the Unidentified Fund Balance.

Financial performance of the Town of Redding this year has been strong. Unaudited results thus far show revenue above budget by \$1.7 million and expenses better than budget by \$652,000. With other adjustments, there is approximately \$5.5 million to allocate. Town officials are setting aside \$2.5 million as a prudent reserve for potential claims. That leaves \$3 million to spend or save after ensuring 16.67% of the Town’s budget is maintained in reserve as recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association.

In attendance at the meeting were all members of the Board of Finance, all Selectmen, Finance Director Jim Sanders, and Treasurer Wes Higgins. While no

final decisions were made, nor expected, the meeting shed light on Board members’ priorities and points of view and therefore provided a good starting point for budget discussions which begin in earnest in January. Members of the Board of Education were not present, because their budget discussions happened after the Board of Finance meeting.

Higgins, who has advocated for the Town to pay for road maintenance and repair as the need arises (“pay as you go”) rather than through bonding, presented a chart showing the near-term hit to Town budgets and the longer-term savings if this approach were adopted. (Easton follows the pay-as-you-go practice.) Part of the \$3 million might be used to mitigate the short-term cost of transitioning to this financing approach.

Another option for the use of the funds is stabilization of buildings in the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill complex. Both Jennifer Wyss and Karen Gifford supported

use of the funds for investments – such as roads – that have a known return over unknown projects like the Wire Mill. Gifford specifically added that she would allocate funds for mitigation of liability in the Wire Mill buildings. One approach would be to do the minimum to reduce liability and set the stage for the investment of others.

Robert Dean, who is also a member of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee, felt that expenditure on roads is less urgent than the clear need to stabilize the Wire Mill buildings. Jamie Barickman suggested his preference was to return the excess funds to taxpayers in the form of a lower mil rate.

There was consensus that the Town should avoid bonding in the current high interest rate environment, although none wanted to be seen as a forecaster of interest rates. There was also consensus that not all the funds needed to be allocated and should only be used for the worthiest purposes. ■

Avoiding side-swipe collisions on narrow roads

By Donna Christopher

While there have been no alarming incidents of side-swipe crashes in Redding in recent history, these types of collisions resulted in 14 deaths in Fairfield County since 2015.

A “mirror to mirror” collision happened recently on Chestnut Woods Road on a narrow section of the roadway. No one was injured. In the November 30 incident, according to the Redding Police Department, but the accident serves as a reminder for drivers to slow down and stop if necessary on some of Redding’s narrowest roads.

“We have a lot of small country roads here. It depends on the type of vehicle and the road width. They both clipped each other’s driver’s wing mirrors going down a narrow part of a road. The low-boy trucks have wide extended mirrors. Another road you don’t pass on is Simpaug Turnpike,” Redding Police Chief Mark O’Donnell said.

“It’s not a (regular) occurrence, but when we have the mirror-to-mirror accidents, it’s on the narrow roads,” he continued.

O’Donnell suggested that drivers in these incidents should stop and pull the mirror in.

Eric Jackson, the Executive Director of Connecticut Transportation Institute, runs the crash data repository at UConn and provided the following statistics.

Since 2015 in Fairfield County, there have been a total of 59,450 crashes, 423 fatal, and 210,468 with property damage only. The occurrences of swipe (same direction) crashes were 3,667 with injury of any type, 10 fatal, and 35,972 with property damage only. The sideswipe opposite direction crashes total was 1,085, four fatal and 5,996 with property damage only.

“Side-swipe in the same direction has remained relatively constant, except in 2020, when traffic volumes bottomed out and opportunities for side-swipe crashes were just not there,” Jackson explained.

The Fairfield County data for 2021-22 shows side-swipe opposing directions crashes have decreased. Statewide shows a similar trend.

“What is really disturbing is the rapid increase in the number of head-on collisions that have almost tripled over the last eight years,” Jackson added. ■

Attention shoppers: Connecticut’s bottle deposit fee is now 10 cents

By Justin Reynolds

Have any empty bottles or cans you bought last year waiting to be recycled? You can now earn 10 cents for each of them — all without having to drive to Michigan like Kramer and Newman in the classic *Seinfeld* episode.

Originally passed into law in 1978, Connecticut’s so-called “bottle bill” is one of 10 container redemption programs in the country. Since going into effect in 1980, shoppers in Connecticut have been paying a nickel for each eligible container they purchase — including items like soda cans, beer bottles, and plastic water bottles.

To boost recycling rates and incentivize folks to redeem more of their used containers — a nickel certainly isn’t worth what it was 44 years ago — Connecticut shoppers will receive a dime for each eligible bottle or can they return starting January 1, 2024, even if

they only paid a nickel deposit when they bought the item.

If you have a cache of empty bottles and cans in your basement, recycling them now would be a seemingly surefire way to get a quick 100% return on investment.

The flip side of this, of course, is that shoppers will also start noticing 10-cent deposits added to cans and bottles they purchase in the future; expect the next six-pack you buy to cost 30 cents more (assuming the price of the beer stays the same).

Under state law, retailers that sell drinks with deposits must redeem empty bottles and cans of brands they carry. While retailers like Caraluzzi’s have had self-service machines for redemption for quite some time, the new law also requires larger retail chains — including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, and Target — to start offering those machines, too.

According to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Connecticut residents redeemed over 758 million bottles and cans in 2022. That figure represents a redemption rate of just 44.3 percent — roughly two-thirds of the 65 percent rate neighboring New York boasts.

Since the bottle bill’s inception, unredeemed funds have flowed to the State’s general fund. Now, wholesalers can collect a portion of those proceeds as well.

As is the case with any piece of legislation, the new law is not without its share of naysayers. Critics say that the higher fees may encourage folks to cross state borders to buy impacted beverages and that more folks will try to recycle out-of-state returns, which may threaten the bottle bill’s long-term viability. ■

Town to apply for SHPO matching grant

By Rocco Valluzzo

To help with the stabilization of historic buildings on the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property in Georgetown, the Board of Selectmen approved an application in December for a \$20,000 grant from the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The application also includes a resolution by the Town stating it will match the same amount.

According to Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee Chair Amy Atamian, a report of building stabilization, exterior/interior restoration, and fit-out needs for six buildings was done in 2015 with an estimated cost of \$400,000. In her Committee’s annual report to the Selectmen in October, that figure was adjusted to \$500,000.

“The scope of work that was outlined in 2015 I don’t think would change,” she told the Selectmen at their December 18 meeting. “I think maybe the extent of what needs to be done has probably changed because of deterioration over time. The general scope I think is consistent with what would need to be done.”

The next step would be to have plans and drawings to specify what that stabilization should be so that it can go out to bid. The earlier study, however, did not include the main office building, the post office, or the mechanical building.



Atamian hopes to conduct a new assessment of those three buildings that is comparable to what had been done earlier.

However, the priority is to do the building stabilization to the extent that it can be done with \$40,000 so that the buildings don’t further deteriorate.

“I’m concerned that if we try to do an assessment of the post office and the main office it may be over the amount to do the building stabilization,” she said. “I really want to look at the building stabilization as the priority. But, no matter what we do, we need to start, and the \$20,000 match that the Town could authorize to help us get that grant would go a long way in either direction to look at the assessment or the stabilization.”

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said the grant application does not commit the Town to anything. If the grant is approved, the Selectmen would determine if the Town would accept it and from where the matching funds would come.

SHPO will be issuing another grant round in 2025 that includes a \$200,000 restoration grant. Atamian noted the Town should get an assessment of the buildings done in advance of that. If the Town is in a position to apply for the grant, it could look at either the main office or the building where Weir Farm currently rents space, which would receive hazardous building materials abatement. ■




New Pond Farm Education Center

Best Wishes to our Redding Friends & Neighbors for a Happy & Healthy Holiday Season!


If you are still looking, we have some fantastic holiday gift ideas for you:

- A Family Membership to the Education Center!
- A week of summer camp adventures
- Our beautiful wall calendar!
- Skeins of yarn from our Romney Flock
- A half gallon of delectable chocolate milk
- Cards featuring native birds or wildflowers

Please call for more information 203.938.2117



101 Marchant Road
West Redding, CT 06896
203-938-2117
newpondfarm.org



New Pond Farm Education Center 2024

Redding’s Big Outdoors: Trail Tenders greet 2024 with agenda of new projects / continued from page 1

the great outdoors – something that’s not always easy to find in other places. Those newcomers have had an added benefit for the Trail Tenders: new volunteers.

“We’ve gotten new volunteers from new families moving into town,” said Green. “From the perspective of those of us who have been in Trail Tenders a long time, younger backs are stronger backs!”

The main tool of choice for each Trail Tenders volunteer is the branch lopper, though some volunteers will bring along a weed trimmer as well. The work outings usually take about two hours, and most trails require visits once or twice each month. More involved work – such as removing

fallen trees – requires the skills of Assistant Trail Manager Jeff Morgan or other people who have had training in the operation of chainsaws.

Invasive plants are often a problem in any open-space area, and Redding’s trails are not immune. One invasive plant that’s become more and more prevalent along local trails is a fast-growing weed called Japanese Stiltgrass. This plant can become tall and dense if it’s not trimmed aggressively, making it difficult for people to walk on a trail.

Another invader from Japan is the common barberry bush. For both types of plants, volunteers often rely on a more advanced sort of trimmer that incorporates a

small, spinning blade.

Besides its work at the Delia Preserve, the Trail Tenders are replacing a variety of large and small wooden signs that delineate the trails. They are also upgrading some of the informational kiosks on Redding Land Trust property.

“Much of this signage was put in many years ago,” noted Green, “so this will be a major effort for us.” The Trail Tenders, along with the Land Trust and the Town’s Conservation Commission, will also tackle the replacement of some of the “half-shed” kiosks that dot the trails and provide maps and other information to visitors.

“The Town also wants to replace some of the informational signs at trailheads, which recognize the

people and entities that have helped us to preserve our open space and operate the trail network,” said Green. The cost will be borne by funding from both the Land Trust and the Conservation Commission.

Here, too, the groups have plenty of volunteers at the ready. One of the volunteers who helps to craft the new wooden signs is Aimee Pardee, Redding’s Land Use Director. Another is volunteer Phil Capezio.

A larger endeavor involves refurbishment – and, in some cases, replacement – of the boardwalks that traverse wet areas. While Trail Tenders volunteers can often handle this type of work, larger projects will involve hiring professional construction firms

and their crews.

Green is especially enthusiastic about the work soon to take place at the Delia Preserve. “That’s going to be great, and because this is a Class 1 watershed, it’s quite significant that this land will be preserved,” he noted.

“And even though we now have more than 50 volunteers, we still need more,” Green added. If you are interested in becoming a Trail Tender, send Stuart Green an e-mail at shgreen@optonline.net ■

SPORTS

Falcons hold off Wave in double overtime

Boys basketball | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High's Will Gregor is guarded by New Milford's Evan Perrenod, left, and Ryan Esposito during a boys varsity basketball game on Tuesday, January 2. Barlow won 57-51 in double overtime.

Despite a number of missed shots earlier in the night, the Joel Barlow High boys varsity basketball team would make up for it later in double overtime when it visited New Milford last week.

Both the Falcons and the Green Wave struggled to find the basket last Tuesday, January 2. The visitors, however, hit some key shots down the stretch, forcing things into double overtime before winning 57-51 for their first victory of the season.

“Both teams were turning the ball over,” said Barlow Head Coach Pat Yerina. “We missed a lot of shots. I don’t think they made a lot of shots.”

Despite some difficulties, the Falcons fared better than the competition in the first quarter. Although New Milford’s Ryder Gee put his team up early at 2-0,

the Falcons responded with 11 unanswered points, including seven by Grayson Vanderburg to close out the quarter in seemingly good shape.

New Milford closed the gap in the next frame with a nine-point run, while Vanderburg and Jack Lippoth each hit three-pointers to help keep the Falcons in the lead. Gee later hit two free throws in the last minute-and-a-half to bring the Green Wave to within six (23-17) at halftime.

When play resumed, the Falcons sank less than 16% of their shots in the third frame. Lippoth’s field goal, another three-pointer by Vanderburg, and two free throws by Joey Bonanno put them up 30-21 with 2:47 left, but the Green Wave then reeled off eight straight points and trailed by just three (32-29) after three frames.

John Balzi’s free throw midway through the fourth quarter cut the gap to one (37-36), and with Gee’s steal and subsequent layup, New Milford had its first lead since early in the night. Field goals by Will Gregor and Lippoth regained the lead for Barlow, but with 1:20 left to play, Kelvin Mendoza sank a three-pointer to tie it at 41-41. Both sides got off shots in the time remaining but failed to break the stalemate.

Two free throws by Gee early in the first four-minute overtime put the Green Wave back on top. It widened the gap to 47-42 with 36 seconds left, but Vanderburg hit a key three-pointer to get Barlow within striking distance.

Still down by two, the Falcons were forced to foul with 8.4 seconds left to stop the clock. Esposito missed two free throws and the Falcons had enough time for Lippoth to sink a final shot down low to tie it at 48-48 as time expired.

Ben Noome’s field goal, plus Vanderburg’s steal and layup, put the Falcons on top for good in the second overtime. They also hit five of six free throws in the last minute to preserve the lead.

Vanderburg led Barlow with 29 points, including five three-pointers and went six-for-six from the line. Lippoth scored 11 with one three-pointer.

“Our two guards, Jack and Grayson, were stalwarts the whole game,” said Yerina. He also praised the play of Gregor (six points) and Noome (seven).

Barlow, now 1-4 overall, has a rematch with New Milford at home on Thursday, January 11 at 7:00 p.m., is at Bethel on Saturday, January 13 at 2:00 p.m. and hosts Bethel on Tuesday, January 16 at 7:00 p.m. ■

Several players step up for Barlow in victory

Girls basketball | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High School's Mia Tartaglia, left, tries to get around Bassick's Yulisa Cacho during a girls varsity basketball game on Friday, January 5. Barlow won 47-34.

With its offense setting the tone early, the Joel Barlow High School girls basketball team put itself in good shape right from the start when it hosted Bassick of Bridgeport last week.

The Falcons built a double-digit lead before their opponent even sank its first shot on Friday, January 5. On the other side of the court, their defense also kept things in check for a 47-24 non-league victory.

Led in part by a pair of three-pointers by Sarah Ashgar, the Falcons went up 6-0 early in the game. Some quickness on defense resulted in back-to-back steals by Avery Vanderburg; the first she turned into a layup, and the second was a feed to Ashgar for the score and a 12-0 Barlow advantage.

It was not until the 4:24 mark of the first quarter when the Lions finally scored, courtesy of Armani Parker. Dasire Simmons followed with the put back of a rebound, but the Falcons closed out the frame with an 18-4 advantage.

Bassick stepped up both offensively and defensively for the rest of the half, but the Falcons still increased their lead with a three-pointer by Agnes Davis, along with field goals by Allie Odgen, Ashgar, and Vanderburg to go up 27-10 at the break.

With a couple of players in foul trouble by the time the second half got underway, the Falcons were not as aggressive underneath the basket as they wanted, and were outscored 10-7 in the third quarter. Ogden’s three-pointer, with Vanderburg and Mia Tartaglia each sinking shots as well, preserved the

lead at 34-20 after three frames.

“Bassick’s players did a great job pounding the ball inside,” said Barlow Head Coach Joe Carollo. “They had some size and they used it. That’s part of what got us in foul trouble.”

In the final frame, the Falcons continued to use the three-point shot to their advantage, with Davis and Vanderburg each hitting threes early. The latter added a second to put Barlow up by 21 (45-24), and it never looked back.

“To their credit, their defense bothered us later in the game too,” said Carollo. “I did have some girls in foul trouble, so I had people at different positions and different people in, playing more minutes than usual.”

Ashgar led the Falcons in scoring with 16 points, including two three-pointers. Vanderburg was right behind her with 15 and also had a pair of threes as well.

“Vanderburg has been double digits in all our games except one, scoring-wise,” said Carollo. “She did it again tonight.”

Ogden had seven points (one three-pointer) and Davis netted six, all coming on three-point shots. Tartaglia finished with three.

“Agnes and Allie, they were great tonight in their roles,” said Carollo. “That’s the only way we are going to win is everybody doing what they do for the team. I love when it’s coming from more than one or two or three people.”

Barlow, now 5-3 overall, visits New Milford Thursday, January 11 at 6:00 p.m. and hosts Bethel on Tuesday, January 16 at 5:00 p.m. ■

Knights fall behind early in loss

Hockey | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow/Weston/Abbott Tech's Kris Neiger guides the puck toward the goal during a hockey game against Newtown/New Fairfield on Wednesday, January 3. JBWA lost 3-0.

A slow start on Wednesday, January 3 was something the Joel Barlow/Weston/Abbott Tech (JBWA) hockey team would later pay for in its game against Newtown/New Fairfield.

Less than a minute into the action, the host Knights were already trailing the competition. Breaking through their opponent’s defense was also a challenge, as they fell 3-0 at the Danbury Ice Arena.

“We have a way of not starting games firing on all cylinders,” said JBWA Head Coach Bob Stearns. “I think the same thing happened tonight on the very first shift.”

The Knights found themselves having to play catch-up quite early. Only 31 seconds after the opening face-off, Newtown’s Patrick Moody was open in front of the Knights’ goal. Taking a pass from teammate Ryan Anderson, he sent it past Knight goalie Connor Thomas for the score with 14:29 left to go in the first period.

JBWA was called for a couple of penalties later in the period. Although successfully killing them off, it could not muster anything at the other end of the ice and still trailed 1-0.

Newtown/New Fairfield goalie

Garrett McCollam repeatedly turned away Knight shots in the second frame, including one by JBWA’s Wes Arees on a breakaway with 3:08 left. Theo Spitzer and Chris Nesto were also turned away as the score remained unchanged.

“McCollam in the net played phenomenally, especially late in the second and in the third period,” said Stearns. “He made some great saves.”

It appeared that the Knights would even up things in the third period when they scored with 11:12 left, only to have the play called off as the goal came loose from its moorings. Six minutes later, they came close when a shot by Spitzer slid under McCollam but went wide right of the goal.

“Those are the breaks, and that’s what happens,” said Stearns. “There’s not much you can do about it.”

After being held at bay since their early goal, the Nighthawks broke through again with 3:42 left when Alex Schmidt redirected a pass from John Kenny to give his team some breathing room.

In the last minute of play, the Knights pulled Thomas to give themselves an extra skater, but the Nighthawks managed to take advantage of the open net and Schmidt scored unassisted with 45.3 seconds remaining to ice the game.

“Newtown came out, and they beat us to every puck,” said Stearns. “I give them a lot of credit. They played a good, hard game.”

JBWA, now 2-3 overall, hosts John Jay Thursday, January 11 at 8:15 p.m., is home to Cheshire on Monday, January 15 at 3:00 p.m., and is home to Masuk on Wednesday, January 17 at 5:30 p.m. ■



Seasonal ice rink at Redding Community Center | By Jessie Wright

Though the ice rink has been set up in the Redding Community Center parking lot for a couple of weeks, it has not yet opened for the season due to warm weather and recent rains. As soon as temperatures drop to ensure the ice is ready to be skated upon, the Park and Recreation Department will announce the rink’s opening through both an e-mail and a Town of Redding Facebook post.

Once open and weather permitting, the rink will be available for

skating from dawn until dusk for Redding residents or guests accompanied by a resident.

“Sticks and pucks” times are Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Otherwise, the rink is open for recreational skating – please note skates must be worn on the ice surface. Once the rink opens for the season, call the Park and Recreation cancellation line at (203) 938-5036 X 3 before heading over to find out if the rink is open that day. ■

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Small town life, but in need of a village

New parent support group launches

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Maisie Todd Wallick

Participants of the first session of the It Takes a Village parent group on Friday, January 5.

On Friday, January 5, a group of young moms pulled their chairs into a circle for the inaugural meeting of “It Takes a Village” in Redding, a new weekly support group for parents of young children in town. Punctuated by trips to the coffee table and occasional meltdowns from their toddlers playing with blocks outside the circle (mine included!), the women introduced themselves and shared what they were working through at the start of the new year. From sleep deprivation to considering benefits of certain sibling age gaps, the group enjoyed introducing themselves and an open discussion on the challenges of parenthood.

Friday’s session was the culmination of nearly a year of preparation by local mom Maisie Todd Wallick, who has been working on bringing a program like this to town ever since participating in parent groups through the non-profit It Takes a Village when she was a new parent living in Western Massachusetts.

“I don’t know why this doesn’t exist in every, single town,” Wallick said at the start of the meeting on Friday. “If your town has a post office, it should have a group like this.”

It Takes a Village was first started over a decade ago in Massachusetts and modeled after a group called Many Mothers in Santa Fe. Its approach is peer-led and takes the form of three main activities: parent groups, volunteer home visits, and offering a community closet for children’s clothing, gear, and toys.

“We had one mama who was having a baby, and she had what she thought was all her support ready to go and set up – and like so many of us, she had the baby and realized she knew not a thing about what she needed,” explained Mollie Hartford, Development

& Outreach Director and Co-Executive Director of It Takes a Village in Western Massachusetts. “She was really struggling – a friend came over and just randomly helped out with things around the house, brought her a cup of tea, held the baby while she took a shower, and said, ‘I’ll see you next week.’” This experience prompted the young mother to pay it forward and help her neighbor who had a baby a few months later – and thus, It Takes a Village was born.

Wallick reached out to Hartford last year to inquire about how someone might bring this model to their own community. The answer was, “go for it – and we can help you brainstorm ways to get started.”

“I think people look at our bigger model and wonder how to start – but it doesn’t need to be that way. It literally can be one mom showing up to one mom. Or one parent who thinks, ‘I think a group would be great. Let’s find a place to meet’, ” said Hartford.

Wallick posted on a local Facebook group early last year with her idea to start a group like this – and the interest was immediate and overwhelming. Within 12 hours of her post, dozens of people had reached out to be involved in some way. One of those people was Jess Tyson, who has signed on as facilitator for the weekly group.

Tyson, who lives in Georgetown and is mom to a four- and two-year-old, said she struggled with a really challenging post-partem experience after her son’s birth and hopes to create a network of support for other parents to help ease those challenges. When looking for parent groups herself, she kept running into offerings that ran for only a limited series of weeks or were paid.

“The idea of something like this – where it is more drop in, you

ER9 begins 2024 by celebrating award-winning Tanya Beyer and welcoming new IEP Coordinator Stacia Piskura

By Anne Young Albanese



Tanya Beyer, a special education teacher at RES, was nationally recognized as the 2023 Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Educator of the Year.

While Redding families were enjoying their winter holidays, the Easton-Redding-Region 9 districts’ (ER9) special education departments were hard at work. A Redding Elementary School (RES) teacher was honored with a prestigious national award before the break, and ER9 hired an Individual Education Program (IEP) Coordinator, a new position for the three districts.

Ms. Tanya Beyer, a special education teacher, consultant, and Section 504 coordinator at Redding Elementary School (RES), has been awarded the 2023 Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) Educator of the Year. The annual honor is awarded by CHADD to one educator in honor of outstanding service and dedication to the attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder student community.

CHADD honored Beyer because of her support to students at RES. She has been successfully collaborating with colleagues and parents to help children with ADHD to maximize their potential by identifying challenges, developing solutions, and providing support. She was nominated by a local Redding family with whom she has worked.



Stacia Piskura is joining ER9 from Fairfield Public Schools as IEP Coordinator, a new special education position for the three districts.

“I was very surprised, since I didn’t even know I was nominated,” said Beyer. “Being nominated was such a wonderful honor.” She found the ceremony humbling, not just because of others who were represented, but also because of the new resources she discovered at the awards event.

One of her greatest accomplishments was her contribution to the formation of the Junior Bridge Program. The program empowers students with ADHD through access to educators and support staff, tools to regulate, and a place for team members to coordinate. It also helps younger students with ADHD to develop strategies earlier in their school careers, a critical time to promote engagement with learning.

“Those of us who have had the pleasure of working with Tanya recognize her exceptional skill and commitment,” said Katherine Metz, Director of Special Education for ER9. “We are so proud to see her recognized at the national level. It is much deserved.”

Beyer has worked at RES for the past 19 years. Prior to that, she was a special education teacher in Seymour. She earned her bachelor’s degree in special

education and general education and her master’s degree in special education from birth to three, both degrees from Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.

Stacia Piskura, the new IEP coordinator, joined ER9 from Fairfield Public Schools where she was a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Facilitator. She was responsible for chairing PPT meetings, fostering collaboration between school teams and families, and ensuring best practices in IEP development.

“I hope that this position will help to create systems and processes that are consistent across all the schools including facilitation/participation in professional development related to IEP/PPT best practices,” said Piskura. “I hope that this position will allow me to be a support for families and staff and help streamline the PPT process across the tri-district.”

“Piskura’s experience and values align with the superintendent’s strategic plan for special education in ER9,” said Metz. “We’re very much looking forward to her joining the special education leadership team. Her work will be vital to realizing our special education strategic plan.”

Piskura earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Boston College, a master’s degree in elementary education from the University of New Haven, and a master’s degree in comprehensive special education from Southern Connecticut State University. She is currently pursuing an intermediate administration certification (092) at Sacred Heart University, which she expects to complete in June 2024.

Additional information on ER9’s special education offerings is available by contacting Metz at ER9’s central office or by contacting the special education department at the school of interest. Information on the ER9 strategic plan and how it is progressing can be found at er9strategicplan.org. The strategic plan covers all five schools in the three districts. ■

don’t even have to register, you can bring your kid, you can not bring your kid, that just was really appealing,” said Tyson. “Everyone can resonate with the idea of ‘it takes a village’ – that’s what we were told, is that it takes a village, and yet here we are, without a village.”

Tyson is also the President of Redding Neighbors & Newcomers and runs their monthly children’s playgroup. She is the founder of No Panic Management and the newly-opened co-working space Georgetown Collective. She sees all these activities as complementary to one another and sees her role as helping people make connections with others in

town.

“I’m in a season right now where I feel like I can give more – but that’s not always the case,” said Tyson. “We all need to have this push and pull to each being able to support each other when we need it.”

Wallick hopes that over time, “phase two and phase three” of the program can be introduced in Redding. She would love to organize a group of volunteers, often retirees or parents with older children, who sign up for home visits to support new parents. She’d also love to find a location for a local community closet, where people can drop off and pick up clothing and

gear for kids. For now, though, she is thrilled to see the parents group get underway.

The group meets weekly every Friday at the Mark Twain Library from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. – parents and caregivers are welcome to attend with or without their children. The program is already an example of local connections and partnerships – the Library is offering up their space for the program, and the Town of Redding is providing the funding.

“To have a community say, ‘We support you in this way, during this time which is so crucial and can be isolating. Here’s your community.’ That to me, is what every community should do,” said Wallick. ■

Dear Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Redding Historical Society, I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! May 2024 be a peaceful, healthy, and joyous year for you and your loved ones. I take this opportunity to give you a preview of some of the exciting events and activities the Society has planned for 2024 as we embark on a new year following a successful 2023.

Beginning in the spring, our Lonetown Farm Museum will be open on regular hours for visits and tours. Additionally, a new lecture series will be launched with speakers on topics of historical interest to Redding and our region.

The launch last year of the 1714 Guild, an initiative of the Society, has generated enthusiastic responses. This year, we expect to significantly increase membership in the Guild. The Guild welcomes and brings together owners of historically significant homes as de facto ambassadors of Redding’s history as their properties embody our history since colonial times.

Following last year’s award of Federal funds to partially restore the Zalmon Read Barn, this year will be dedicated to completing the Barn’s full restoration. A Capital Campaign to Save Zalmon Read Barn, Redding’s most significant historical structure bearing the Read name, will be launched to augment the funds on hand and fully complete the restoration in a timely fashion.

Apart from these highlights, the Society will continue to organize its regular events such as, for the eighth consecutive year, the family-favorite Rock ‘N Roots fireworks and music extravaganza to celebrate our country’s Fourth of July birthday.

Finally, to keep our community abreast of the Society’s activities, a new position of Director of Communications has been established to enhance communications with you. We would welcome your interest in the Redding Historical Society and invite your ideas and suggestions.

We can be reached at the Redding Historical Society, P.O. Box 1023, Redding, CT 06875 or by phone 203-938-9095. Take a stand for history, after all, history happens every minute! Join Redding Historical Society – where history comes alive.

Best wishes, Janice Dimon, President / Redding Historical Society



OPINION

The Idea Dynamo come to life

AI and the threat to intellectual property rights | By Robert E. Moran



A 1923 cartoon by H.T. Webster captioned “In the year 2023 when all our work is done by electricity.”

In 1923, cartoonist H.T. Webster drew a cartoon for *New York World* that showed a cartoonist standing next to an “Idea Dynamo” machine that is drawing a cartoon. Prescient to a fault, Webster’s “Idea Dynamo” presages the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the open-ended tech able to generate virtually anything of note by simply inputting, text, sound or visual prompts as needs warrant. From “writing” research papers magically dealing with quantum mechanics to effortlessly generating detailed 3D photo-realistic art, AI is changing our reality, whether we like or not.

The treachery of images

Hamlet: *Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?*
Polonius: *By th' mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.*
Hamlet: *Methinks it is like a weasel.*
Polonius: *It is back'd like a weasel.*
Hamlet: *Or like a whale.*
Polonius: *Very like a whale.*

Seems Shakespeare was indirectly channeling AI, news, and social media where people preach to their choir, believing almost anything as long as it aligns with their own world view. Enter the existence of “deepfakes”, which are now everywhere. Just go to almost any website and see nonsense, usually in full color, residing on the right-hand side or on the bottom of the web page, saying something patently ridiculous regarding a celebrity, news event, or “scientific” fact, accompanied with a clickable AI graphic showing said tidbit to be “true”. See how believable it is that Pope Francis might bundle up in a white, puffy winter coat like in the AI-generated photo above.

Copyright & public domain

Even before the abilities of AI flooded the national conversation, I have often spoken about intellectual property rights vis a vis copyright, and the disaster perpetrated on the United States by the late Sonny Bono and his work to pass the “Mickey Mouse Protection Act” in 1998. As a California congressman, Bono extended the length of copyright to life plus 70 years, and for works



An AI generated image of Pope Francis wearing a puffy winter jacket.

of corporate authorship to 95 years from publication or 120 years after creation – which means, for example, that Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity, written in 1905, could theoretically remain outside of public domain until 2025, as Einstein died in 1955. Steamboat Willie, the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, debuted in 1928 – 95 years later, it has only just entered the public domain this year.

How many chimps does it take to write Hamlet?

For AI to advance, it needs to Hoover up our data – lots and lots of data. The tech giants at the forefront of AI development categorically state the content acquired is theirs, not ours, thus potentially able to be copyrighted. Suddenly, our content’s not ours anymore.

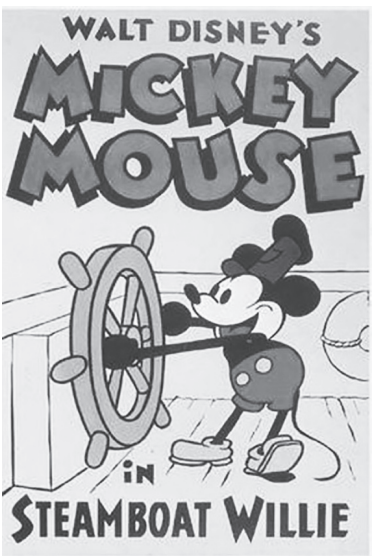
Google is explicitly saying the company reserves the right to scrape just about everything you post online to build its AI tools. If Google can read your words, assume they belong to the company now, and expect that they’re nesting somewhere in the bowels of a chatbot.

A battle is brewing in the US Copyright Office over AI’s use of copyrighted material — and Big Tech is spending millions to ensure they win. “Over the last decade or more, there has been an enormous amount of investment — billions and billions of dollars — in the development of AI technologies, premised on an understanding that, under current copyright law, any copying necessary to extract statistical facts is permitted,” Andreessen Horowitz wrote in a comment to the Copyright Office.

The gift of Prometheus

In Greek mythology, Prometheus steals fire from the Olympian gods and gives it to humanity, gifting them with technology, knowledge, and the basis of civilization. For this, he was brutally punished. Prometheus has come to represent human striving and the quest for scientific knowledge and the risks of unintended consequences.

When reading *MIT’s Technology Review’s* article discussing the possible emergence of super intelligent AIs going rogue, the



Steamboat Willie, the original version of which has just entered the public domain after 95 years.

notion of Prometheus’s gift of fire to man resonates.

“Instead of building the next GPT or image maker DALL-E, Sutskever (Ilya Sutskever, OpenAI Co-founder & Chief Scientist) tells me his new priority is to figure out how to stop an artificial superintelligence (a hypothetical future technology he sees coming with the foresight of a true believer) from going rogue.”

In a recent episode of *60 Minutes*, Geoffrey Hinton, the “Godfather of AI” and a former Google fellow, expressed his alarm at the real possibility of AI escaping its own creators’ understanding within the near future.

Scott Pelley: *Does humanity know what it’s doing?*
Geoffrey Hinton: *No. I think we’re moving into a period when for the first time ever we may have things more intelligent than us.*
Scott Pelley: *You believe they can understand?*
Geoffrey Hinton: *Yes.*

A wicked problem

In conclusion, the abuse of copyright created by Bono and the courts, combined with the abuses of the tech giants regarding intellectual property when feeding their AIs our online content, means we have lost ownership of our data – but more importantly, the tech giants have lost control of AI. If one doesn’t know how said tech works, then controlling it is impossible.

Postscript - the world of pretend

A good friend of mine wrote an incredible piece of music titled *The World of Pretend* detailing the career of Veronica Lake, an extremely talented woman who decided to go off grid, only to be seen in the various film noir flicks she appeared in in the 1940s. To this writer, the age we are living in indirectly relates to hers, as the emergence of AI is creating an alternative reality in which we all live 24/7. It is important to remember that there is no morality in tech – it all depends on who’s creating said tech, something we should all recognize as we move further into the 21st century. ■

Robert E. Moran is CEO of Digital Constructs Inc.

On the menu with . . .
Debora Cabral, of Monroe’s Terra Cafe

By Pamela Brown



Debora Cabral, owner of Terra Cafe in Monroe.

At the start of a new year, the common refrain is "New Year, New You." It's a constructive way to look at life, but it can be stressful when thinking of a whole new makeover. Take a page from Debora Cabral, owner of Terra Cafe in Monroe, who has a more measured approach. “The new year symbolizes a fresh start and the opportunity for positive change,” said Cabral. “Making mindful food choices contributes to both physical and mental well-being and promotes a better quality of life.”

To help you along the quest toward mindful eating, Cabral offers the recipe below for Honey Mustard Pecan Crusted Bacalhau, a dish that’s delicious, satisfying, and nutritious. Bacalhau, the Portuguese word for dry-salted cod, is known for its health benefits and being rich in vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats. It also offers protein and is high in vitamin B12 and a good source of vitamin B6. “One of the main dishes of the Azore Islands is fish, and Bacalhau is a very popular dish in Portugal. The tradition of cod dishes can be traced back to Portugal’s seafaring history,” explained Cabral, who was born and raised on the Azores. “Our traditional Bacalhau dishes symbolize various aspects of my culinary philosophy, such as versatility and deep respect for culture and tradition.”

With such a fondness for her heritage, in 2018, Cabral and her husband, Manuel Rocha, opened the quaint local cafe to introduce the community to the food of her heritage. “It was our goal to combine our passion for fresh, healthy, organic food with our experience in the rich Azorean/Portuguese culinary cuisine,” said Cabral, who noted the word “Terra” means “Earth” in Portuguese. “Azores cuisine is characterized

Honey Mustard Pecan Crusted Bacalhau

Ingredients:
4 - 5 oz fresh wild cod fish loin
1 cup crushed pecans
1/2 cup bread crumbs
2 servings cauliflower rice
2 servings broccoli rice
1 small organic parsley bunch, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1 small lemon

Honey Mustard Seasoning
4 tablespoons organic extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon organic Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon honey, preferably local
1 teaspoon sea salt

Directions:
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

by its reliance on fresh, locally-sourced ingredients and a blend of Portuguese and regional influences. The cuisine of the Azores reflects the islands’ natural abundance of fish and vegetables and the culinary creativity that has evolved over generations.”

Terra Cafe’s robust menu features a variety of vegan, gluten-free, and other healthy yet delicious options for breakfast and lunch. “Introducing exciting and nutritious recipes can turn the perception of healthy food from boring to enjoyable,” said Cabral, noting some of their customer favorites are the homemade vegan BLT; a scrambled tofu burrito; Holy Frijole, a homemade black bean burger; and a buffalo cauliflower chickpea wrap. In winter, their focus is on warm, cozy food such as soups and hot sandwiches, and in spring, they highlight salads and acai bowls. In addition, the cafe offers house-made pastries and carries many types of Portuguese products, such as cheeses from the Azores Islands and Portugal, organic olive oils, high-quality tuna, sardines, Piri-Piri sauces, and honey.

“No matter what you’re craving you’ll find it at Terra Café,” she said. “It’s a place where friends from near and far reunite over healthy food and great company.”

Cabral shared more about her life and cooking philosophy in this New Year’s Q&A.

Who has influenced your cooking?

My beautiful mother and my training in Madeira Island with a great head chef, Leonel Silva, who runs a five-star hotel and two other high-end restaurants on the island.

Favorite healthy pick-me-up?

Our Alvocano – it’s our avocado toast with tomatoes, cucumber, fresh basil, and cayenne pepper combined with Mocha 6 mushroom latte and pastel de nata for sweet.

Resolution for the new year?

Be healthy and happy.

What is your go-to indulgence when you need something not-so-healthy?

Our pastries are delicious.

Where do you find your peace and calm?

With my beautiful husband and grandkids. ■

Place the cod fish in a baking dish. In a bowl, combine all ingredients for the Honey Mustard Seasoning and spread on the fish. Set aside, and prepare the pecan crust. In a bowl, add the pecans, bread crumbs, chopped parsley, salt, and pepper. Add a little drizzle of olive oil and mix well.

Spread the crust on top of the cod fish and place it in the preheated oven for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the oven.

While the fish cooks, prepare the rice. In a saucepan drizzled with olive oil, combine the cauliflower rice with the broccoli rice and sauté together. Season with a little salt, pepper, and lemon zest to taste. Once heated and combined, place the rice on the plate and top with the cod. ■

Cheers! New book club for men features reads and brews

By Pamela Brown

“Books and beer” is the premise of a new men's book club offered at the Georgetown Sacred Heart Oratory.

“Especially in churches, it can be hard for men to find a place where they feel like they belong. I decided to focus my efforts on forming a small men's group that would provide what men in my church were looking for,” said Father Perrella, facilitator of the new Books & Beer Book Club. “The objective is to provide a place where meaningful connections between men can form, where men can discuss the big questions that really matter, and where we can help each other grow closer

to Jesus through both the human connections and the thoughtful discussion.” Father Perrella is a priest associate of the Oratory who also offers assistance at the parish and serves as the Spiritual Director/Chaplain at All Saints Catholic School in Norwalk and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Fairfield.

The book club is free and open to adult men of any age, but Perrella especially encourages younger men to attend. “We can all benefit from each other's perspective and wisdom. There aren't many opportunities for, say, a dad with young kids, to connect and hang out with other men their own age,”

he said.

Starting Thursday, January 11, Books & Beer will meet weekly, every Thursday, from 7:00 p.m – 8:00 p.m., for eight weeks through March 7 (except February 22). Meetings are held in Pryor-Hubbard Hall at 30 Church Street. The focus of the club is C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* with discussion approaching the book from a Catholic perspective.

“The book is meant to be a collection of letters written by a senior demon in hell to his nephew, a younger, less experienced demon. Screwtape advises his nephew how best to tempt a certain human so that they can capture his soul

forever in hell,” said Perrella, who chose the book. “It’s very interesting to note both what the demons do and do not care about. Some things we mere mortals tend to obsess over as if they have great importance, and the demons aren't particularly concerned about them as far as tempting us to damnation. But there are other things many of us may overlook which the demons zero in on as points of critical weakness for ensnaring humanity.”

Books & Beer met for the first time in November, and Perrella was pleased with the active discussion. “We tend to focus on spiritual topics, but there were several times where the conversation shifted to

applying a more abstract spiritual topic to everyday life,” he said.

After attending the first meeting, parishioner Mike Nicolosi, of Danbury, came away with a new perspective. “The way Father Perrella broke it down to us from his point of view, it makes sense. It was very interesting. He took us down a path I didn’t expect us to go down, and the topic was amazing,” said Nicolosi. “He’s such a young, vibrant priest. I like Father Perrella’s intellect and personality. He has a fresh take on things.” Nicolosi is grateful the book club offers a space for men to discuss faith-related ideas. “It’s

Continued on page 7

REAL ESTATE

Year-end 2023 real estate report

A look at trends in the local housing market | By Bill Whitehead and John Talley

If you were a seller in 2023, it was likely a good real estate year, as tight inventories coupled with resilient demand and multiple-offer contests continued to push prices upward with the average price of the houses sold in Redding increasing by eight percent over 2022.

For the year, houses in Redding sold an average of four percent over their list price, with the price-per-square-foot of the houses sold increasing by 16-percent, or \$339 per-square-foot, versus \$293 a year ago. Of course, on an individual basis, each property for sale represents its own unique set of characteristics and value propositions.

In December, nine Redding properties sold, bringing the total for the town to 108 properties sold in 2023. Year-over-year, this represents a 26-percent decrease in overall sales volume, with 38 fewer homes sold in 2023 than 2022.

As of January 4, there were 21 properties for sale in Redding, (seven under \$1 million and 14 over \$1 million). Average “Days on Market” (DOM) of the current inventory is 135 days. ■

Bill Whitehead and John Talley are REALTORS® with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services New England Properties

December 2023													
Town	Current Inventory	Homes Sold		Average Days on Market		Average List Price		Average Sale Price		Percent Sale Price >/< List Price		Average Price/SqFt	
	As of 1/4/24	December	2023	December	2023	December	2023	December	2023	December	2023	December	2023
Redding	21	9	108	67	43	\$1,316,661	\$944,983	\$1,287,889	\$979,329	-2%	4%	\$360	\$339
Ridgefield	22	21	326	34	44	\$953,948	\$1,066,242	\$972,310	\$1,083,166	2%	2%	\$345	\$388
Weston	22	11	159	36	47	\$1,155,809	\$1,281,007	\$1,202,327	\$1,327,707	4%	4%	\$342	\$364
Wilton	11	15	229	25	39	\$1,074,053	\$1,066,212	\$1,105,435	\$1,122,642	3%	5%	\$372	\$376
Easton	17	5	91	49	48	\$887,600	\$946,721	\$898,100	\$957,415	1%	1%	\$355	\$315
Bethel	17	12	192	24	42	\$503,067	\$495,115	\$506,167	\$504,265	1%	2%	\$256	\$258
Newtown	39	20	331	47	46	\$633,174	\$604,199	\$628,903	\$613,081	-1%	1%	\$262	\$269
Average	21	13	205	40	44	\$932,045	\$914,926	\$943,019	\$941,086	1%	3%	\$327	\$330

REDDING SOLD - December	Sale Price	List Price	%/ List Price	Price/Sqft	Days on Market
183 Old Redding Rd	\$401,000	\$440,000	-9%	\$448	39
69 Topstone Rd	\$715,000	\$615,000	16%	\$265	8
67 Deer Hill Rd	\$750,000	\$810,900	-8%	\$218	49
49 Seventy Acre Rd	\$820,000	\$865,049	-5%	\$260	68
34 Gallows Hill Rd	\$850,000	\$845,000	1%	\$333	68
40 Turney Rd	\$850,000	\$829,000	3%	\$463	55
44 Umpawaug Rd	\$1,230,000	\$1,200,000	3%	\$376	41
30 Mark Twain Ln	\$2,225,000	\$2,495,000	-11%	\$353	145
118 Mountain Rd	\$3,750,000	\$3,750,000	0%	\$524	129
Average	\$1,287,889	\$1,316,661	-2%	\$360	67

REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft	Days on Market	REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft	Days on Market
93 Black Rock Tpke	\$499,900	\$505	33	4 Hemlock Trl	\$1,650,000	\$358	29
28 Great Meadow Rd	\$549,000	\$247	2	258 Poverty Hollow Rd	\$1,695,000	\$640	45
20 Little Boston Ln	\$669,000	\$345	111	32 Foundry Rd	\$1,750,000	\$387	200
79 Cross Hwy	\$715,000	\$360	43	65 Umpawaug Rd	\$1,875,000	\$469	513
3 Bartram Dr	\$775,000	\$317	22	710 Redding Rd	\$2,200,000	\$470	72
21 Stepney Rd	\$849,900	\$329	41	273 Newtown Tpke	\$2,995,000	\$538	43
32 Blueberry Hill Rd	\$886,200	\$210	78	45 Sidecut Rd	\$2,995,000	\$713	206
45 Great Pasture Rd	\$1,095,000	\$275	175	67 Umpawaug Rd	\$4,750,000	\$896	163
195 Umpawaug Rd	\$1,150,000	\$398	82	241 Black Rock Tpke	\$6,750,000	\$454	227
14 Lonetown Rd	\$1,200,000	\$297	13	229 Umpawaug Rd	\$8,500,000	\$1,265	582
65 Umpawaug Rd	\$1,450,000	\$426	163	Average	\$2,142,810	\$471	135

Historical Society welcomes new president, plans for future

By Donna Christopher



Photo by Jessie Wright

Janice Dimon, new President of Redding Historical Society, addresses the group at its fall 2023 annual meeting.

The start of a new year brings new leadership to the Redding Historical Society (RHS), with longtime member Janice Dimon assuming the role of President after Robert Moran announced he would be stepping down from the position at the group’s annual meeting this fall.

Moran has been instrumental in putting on the major RHS fundraiser, Redding Rock ‘n Roots Revival, each July after former President Charley Couch began the event in 2015. This year’s Revival was the biggest one yet, according to Communications Director Bert Webbe.

Dimon views her role as one to “encourage and facilitate

historically relevant preservation projects and educational events, keeping the Society focused on its mission: the preservation, education, and promotion of our town’s history.” Of interest to Redding residents, she believes, is information that offers “historical narratives of the town’s events, its people, its architecture, and its historical objects of work and play” which can help give important perspectives of the community’s heritage and evolution.

Dimon’s involvement in RHS traces back to 1998, when her lifelong love of history and a desire to become involved in the community and to meet Redding neighbors led to an opportunity to

volunteer with the group.

Along with Dimon’s appointment, the new position of Communications Director was created (which Webbe now fills), to help increase connections with the community about RHS’s work.

With this new leadership team come plans to engage more interest in RHS in the coming year. Being an all-volunteer organization, RHS needs people to head up activities. “The first thing we’re going to try to do is encourage more membership and volunteer participation,” said Webbe.

Webbe, who moved to Redding eight years ago from Easton and who had previously been involved in the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, joined the RHS Board last year.

“Bob Moran, who I’ve known for about 10 years, asked me to become a member to serve on the Board last year,” he said. “Part of the discussion we had from the beginning of last year was that we wanted to wake this sleeping asset, make some big changes, and that came about during the year. We have some momentum going into this new year.”

Last fall, the Town of Redding designated American Rescue Plan Act funds in the amount

of \$40,000 to help restore the structural integrity of the Zalman Read Barn, which the RHS maintains on Lonetown Road. A capital campaign this year to raise an additional \$60,000 for ongoing maintenance and final restoration of the 275-year-old barn is planned.

The group has a strategic plan to create a more dynamic organization that will create more value to the community.

“The recent revitalization of the Lonetown Farmhouse and Museum this past fall is just one of the indicators of our commitment to serve the community, “ Webbe said in a recent e-mail.

The Museum, located at 43 Lonetown Road, will be open regular hours this spring, a new offering. RHS also plans to support a lecture series as part of its commitment to education. Denise Jankovic, a retired teacher and the group’s current Treasurer and Chair of the newly-formed Education Committee, will oversee that effort.

The group also recently launched the 1714 Guild, a new initiative of the Society that welcomes and brings together owners of historically significant

homes and structures as de facto ambassadors of Redding’s history.

In a phone call, Webbe said the organization will also carry on its annual programming, including the eighth Redding Rock ‘n Roots Revival with music and fireworks, student Education Days, and the Redding Garden Club Sale. RHS plans to partner with other local organizations to support their programs and activities throughout the year.

A History prize to be awarded to a Joel Barlow student with an interest and aptitude for history and internship programs are also on this year’s agenda.

Streamlining and increasing communications are also (naturally) functions of Webbe’s new role. A new feature that will be available to members and friends with the creation of new social media profiles and a refreshed website.

“Our presence on multiple platforms will be more attractive and our website will see a little more efficiency,” Webbe explained. “We will promote membership growth and participate in everyday history.” ■

For information e-mail info@reddinghistory.org

Cheers! New book club for men features reads and brews / continued from page 6

a guys’ night, but it’s a fellowship-type night, and that’s sorely needed in today’s world. It’s a nice place for like-minded Catholic men to get together for fellowship, prayer, and discussion.”

This isn’t the first foray for Perrella in bringing people together outside of mass. When Perrella was

in graduate school, he looked for a way to connect with others his age to have discussions about topics that mattered. “Especially topics that men don’t readily have occasions to talk about – faith, prayer, where God is in our lives, how to know what’s right and wrong, how to make the right choice when the

world makes it difficult to do,” he said, prompting him to lead other book clubs. “I love providing the simple pleasures of a few drinks, some down time, lively discussion, and human con-nection for men that live busy, stressful lives. I love watching the men in the group grow to be holier, wiser, more virtuous

men.”

Coupling the book club with beer was a way to offer a casual, laidback atmosphere. “That helps people to connect and open up. In a way, beer and books are just an excuse to be together and talk about things that matter to us,” he said, adding, “I want the participants to

leave each meeting feeling filled up, connected, and happy they spent an evening ‘with the guys.’ I already saw the seeds of meaningful new connections in our first meeting. I look forward to watching those connections grow as the men get to know each other more and find what they have in common.” ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Little Gray Barn Farm: An alpaca fiber farm in West Redding

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Little Gray Barn Farm

When MaryEllen Imbrogno retired after a career in nursing, she decided she wanted to “do something of the earth” in the next phase of her life. So, she and her husband David moved from Mahopac, NY to Redding in 2013 and launched Little Gray Barn Farm — a small fiber farm that raises alpacas — the following year.

“We were originally going to get sheep, but they have a lot of parasites which they leave in the pasture, and those parasites can cross to people,” Imbrogno said. “Alpacas are less apt to have parasites, and they don’t destroy

the ground like sheep do, so we decided to go with them. Alpacas are smaller, fine-boned animals that usually aren’t aggressive.”

Located at 139 Picketts Ridge Road in West Redding, Little Gray Barn Farm sells a variety of products made from alpaca fleece — which is a “step above cashmere” and, unlike wool and other materials, does not itch at all, Imbrogno explained.

“Their fleece, in general, is waterproof, fireproof, and hypoallergenic,” Imbrogno said. “There aren’t any barbs in it. If you wear an alpaca sweater, you don’t need to wear anything underneath

it, unlike a wool sweater.”

The farm’s top-selling product is dryer balls made from alpaca fleece.

“They’re made directly from our animals and can reduce dryer time by 30%,” she said. “Our animals are sheared once a year, and that fleece goes to a mill where it’s scoured, combed, turned into a finer material, and sent back.”

Some folks use wool dryer balls made in China for the same purpose, but Imbrogno says it’s impossible to tell how pure those products are.

“You can come to our farm and see the animals where our dryer

balls come from,” Imbrogno said.

Little Gray Barn Farm is home to three alpacas — one black, one gray, and one fawn — along with two donkeys that keep the alpacas safe from coyotes and other threats.

“We’re very ecological,” she continued. “There’s never any dye or chemicals in our products.”

Other popular products include natural soap bars, natural wood bowls, alpaca headbands, tote bags, stuffed animals, and alpaca felt boot liners — which “make your boot or your shoe into an Ugg.”

Additionally, the farm also sells so-called alpaca “beans” — manure — which is “a great fertilizer.”

“We put it under the orchard trees, and none of the deer go after the fruit,” Imbrogno said. “I’ve been selling a lot of manure to local people.”

Alpacas have a unique stomach that has three compartments; “beans” are fermented inside the alpaca before they’re released, creating a nutrient-rich fertilizer filled with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, all of which contribute to healthy plant and vegetable growth.

Unlike other manure, alpaca droppings have a “mild and inoffensive” odor, a near-neutral pH level, and a low pathogen risk, since alpaca stomachs operate at high temperatures, which neutral-

izes pathogens.

“I wouldn’t call us a not-for-profit, but all the money we make we use to sustain our farm — buying hay, grain, and paying for vet care,” Imbrogno said.

In addition to selling products, Little Gray Barn Farm offers hour-long educational visits. Products are available online at littlegraybarnfarm.com; orders can either be picked up onsite or shipped anywhere in the United States.

“If you’re coming by to pick up products you bought, you can absolutely swing by with your kids to check out the animals,” Imbrogno said. “Just call ahead.”

The farm has a presence at several local events throughout the year; most recently, they attended the Redding Grange Second-Annual Agricultural Fair.

“The farm is always open,” she said. “We are very open and very for the community. We want to teach people that you don’t have to go to Macy’s and buy a sweater for x dollars that’s mostly polyester. Call ahead and make an appointment. That way, I can make sure the animals are ready, the donkeys are brushed up, and everyone’s in a good mood.” ■

For more information, visit littlegraybarnfarm.com, e-mail contact@littlegraybarnfarm.com, or call (203) 938-5416

Winter farmers markets help provide local goods year-round

By Pamela Brown

Although an abundance of fresh, local produce is on pause as fields rest and recuperate at area farms, there are several farmers’ markets that still offer tasty eats and handcrafted wares when the weather gets cold. Many markets are year-round, others are outdoor markets that have moved indoors, while some offer an honor system and ordering via a touchscreen kiosk. Here are some various locations that offer a variety of items that will keep your pantry well stocked throughout the season.

Aspetuck Valley Apple Barn
714 Black Rock Turnpike, Easton
(203) 268-9033

This quaint, old-fashioned year-round market for Aspetuck Valley Orchards is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. In winter, you can pick up freshly-made pasteurized cider in addition to a large selection of apples and pears. It also carries a variety of classic and more unusual jams and jellies, cheese, pies, specialty food items, fresh baked goods, and seasonal plants.

Bethel Farmers’ Market
67 Stony Hill Road, Bethel
(914)532-4444 or bethelfarmersmarket.org

A year-round market that is open on the second and fourth

Saturdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. during January – April; and weekly from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. during May – December. The market is located at the Fairfield County Agricultural Extension Center in Bethel's Stony Hill section. In winter, you’ll find meat, eggs, vegetables, fruit, honey, maple syrup, and some packaged goods.

Halas Farm Market
28 Pembroke Road, Danbury
(203) 746-4606 or halasfarm.com

This fourth-generation farm is known for its year-round farm market that offers a diverse range of products. “I believe it’s crucial to stay connected with our customers who rely on us consistently throughout the year,” said Mike Halas, owner. The market is open Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00p.m.; Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; and Sunday: 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. It carries artisanal foods, including cheeses, fruit preserves, and condiments, in addition to gourmet items such as chocolates, Arethusa Dairy products, cookies, farm-raised meats, Halas eggs, bread mixes, and numerous other items. “We have our own organically grown produce in season, and on the off-season, we supplement with other local produce as well as produce grown with the highest quality from other growers,” Halas added.

A charming gift shop features trending products, beautiful home and seasonal décor, fashion accessories, candles, diffusers, soaps, fashion jewelry, and children's gift, while its greenhouse carries houseplants, pottery, and seasonal materials. To prepare for inclement weather, the market has supply bags of military-grade salt and firewood by the bundle or the cord. Throughout winter, the market also takes registrations for its 2024 CSA/Farm share that starts approximately the third week in June and runs sixteen consecutive weeks.

New Pond Farm Education Center Dairy Annex
101 Marchant Road
(203) 938-2117 or newpondfarm.org

Named one of Connecticut’s Dairy Farms of Distinction and a state-licensed dairy, New Pond Farm’s Dairy Annex sells freshly pasteurized and bottled milk and chocolate milk from the Farm, in addition to its own yogurt and fresh eggs. The Annex is open seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. The milk is pasteurized but not homogenized. Only check or cash accepted. The Dairy Annex is attached to the eastern side of the main barn; parking is in the circular driveway between the yellow barn and the white farmhouse.

Newtown Community Center – Winter Farmers’ Market
8 Simpson Street, Newtown
(203) 270-4349 or newtowncommunitycenter.org

This monthly Winter Farmers’ Market runs through February. Open to the public, it’s held indoors in the Community Center lobby – its last two markets of the winter will be on Tuesday, January 16 and Tuesday, February 6, from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. A wide variety of locally sourced products from New York and Connecticut will be available, including micro-greens and mushrooms, fresh farmed fish, meat, and eggs as well as prepared meals, kombucha, dumplings, chocolates, teas, and herbs (subject to availability). Current participating vendors include Balms Apothecary, Carrot Top Kitchens, Cosmic Coffee & Smoothie Bar, Cross Culture Kombucha, Daffodil Hill Growers, Delavignes Gourmet Foods, Emalyn’s Sweets, The Grumpy Dumpling, The Healing Herb Garden, Healthy Eats Farm, Ideal Fish, Nick’s Catering, ProBrothers Farm, Waldingfield Farm, and Why Not Farm.

“We’re excited to bring this new opportunity to Newtown. said Jennifer Cebry, Market Coordinator. “We see this as a great way to continue the Farmer’s Market giving access to local farmers and foods throughout all seasons.”

Shaggy Coos Farm
53 Center Road, Easton
(484) 788-1769 or shaggycoos.farm

The southernmost dairy farm in New England, Shaggy Coos offers a year-round, self-serve Dairy Store every day from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. “There are a lot of great farms in Redding, Easton, Newtown, etc. We want to let people know local farms are still making super high-quality products in winter. These farms are working incredibly hard,” said owner Jake Conover, who runs the farm with his wife, Brittany. The Farm features freshly-made milk and chocolate milk bottled and pasteurized on-site. They also sell USDA-certified beef, pork, and poultry, including ground beef, pork tenderloin, and steaks of all kinds. Other items for sale include hand-collected eggs and gelato, featuring different rotating flavors. “It’s important to be aware of where your food comes from. Brittany and I can tell you, with confidence, that we eat these products and know how it’s raised.”

The Hickories Farm
136 Lounsbury Road, Ridgefield
(203) 894-1851 or thehickories.org

The Farm Store for this 100-acre farm is open in winter on Wednesday – Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., running on the honor system with a self-checkout. The store offers preserves, pasture-raised meat and eggs, wool items, native seeds, and seasonal vegetables. In addition, the store carries some dairy from Arethusa Farm and maple syrup from Horseshoe Farm. “We keep our farm store open year-round to help connect our community to local farms and eat seasonally,” said Jaclyn S., Farm Manager, noting the mission of the farm is to produce safe and nutritious products grown with respect for soil, animals, and people. “While not as wide a selection of produce as the main growing season, we hope that people can enjoy what can be produced locally, even in the winter.”

Wells Hill Farm
43 Wells Hill Rd, Weston
(917) 602-1383 or wellshillfarmweston.com

This small, organic family farm has limited hours in winter; call and schedule an appointment for pick-up. In winter, you can pick up fresh eggs and garlic. “Our mission is to teach people to eat seasonally,” said Michelle Fracasso, owner. The farm also offers farm encounters with animals, including sheep, goats, and chickens year-round by appointment. “It’s nice for families to do something outdoors and to see and learn about the animals,” said Fracasso.

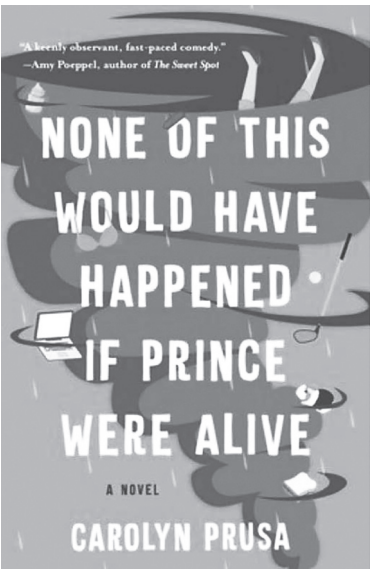
Westport Farmers Market
7 Sylvan Lane, Westport
westportfarmersmarket.com

Since 2010, the Westport Farmers Market has expanded to serve shoppers throughout the colder months, bringing its beloved farmers market into year-round service. From November 16 – March 7, visitors can head to Gilbertie’s Herb Gardens on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. to shop a variety of delicious eats and locally sourced goods, including baked goods, beers and spirits, juices, coffees and teas, prepared foods, ice pops, herbs, and more. Note: leave your furry friends at home for this indoor market, per the local health department. ■

BOOK REVIEW

None of This Would Have Happened If Prince Were Alive

By Carolyn Prusa / Simon & Schuster / 320 p.p. / \$18



My first read of 2024 checked a lot of personal boxes: Does the author live in Redding? Check. Is the protagonist a young working mom sometimes struggling with the juxtaposition of who she is now with who she once was? Check. Is there an ardent passion demonstrated for my hometown of Minneapolis’s greatest creative talent? Check. Is it smart, funny, and incisive? Check, check, and check.

None of This Would Have Happened If Prince Were Alive is the debut novel of Carolyn Prusa, a newly-minted Reddingite who moved here last year with her family from Savannah, Georgia. Close readers of the *Sentinel* may recognize Prusa’s characteristic wit and playful style from her “Impressions from an ‘alien’ in Redding” essay in our November 16 issue a few months ago.

The novel follows Ramona, a mom of two whose marriage and job are both on the rocks, over a 48-

hour period as a hurricane – both literally and figuratively – bears down on her life. The story jumps backwards in time throughout the chapters in satisfying vignettes, giving the reader an ever-expanding understanding of how and why she got here. Judgement calls that seem simple to make on first read receive thoughtful layers of complexity with these flashbacks, realistically and humorously demonstrating how complicated real life can be.

The story is quixotic, as Ramona tries to hold things together and evacuate before the hurricane, only to be diverted by side missions and challenges thrown her way. Only people who have raised young kids will understand the comparable stress of potty training a toddler on the go to batten down the hatches for a Category 5 storm – the potential for leaks is everywhere. How Ramona manages not to have a complete mental breakdown amidst the deluge of false starts and demands on her attention is probably why this story sits squarely in the realm of fiction.

The novel is a comedy with heart and was a great way to kick off my year of reading. Lucky for those in Redding, we’ll have the opportunity to get to know Prusa even better next week, as she and Mark Twain Library Director Erin Dummeyer will host the event “Let’s Talk: Modern Motherhood” on Thursday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Library. After reading her book, I have no doubt that laughs and insights will abound. ■

Review by Jessie Wright

Long Ridge Library
A little 104-year-old hidden gem

By Justin Reynolds



Everyone who lives in Redding knows about the Mark Twain Library, no doubt an incredible facility the town is lucky to have. But many Redding residents might not be aware that there’s another library within striking distance: Long Ridge Library, located at 191 Long Ridge Road in Danbury, just three minutes down the road from West Redding.

A true hidden gem, Long Ridge Library has been operating independently in Danbury for more than 100 years. Founded by Marietta Tibbitts and Frances Abbott on June 19, 1919, the library is housed in a small 179-year-old building which, back in the day, served as a one-room schoolhouse for 45 years and was later donated to the non-profit organization by the City of Danbury.

“Long Ridge Library is a small, homey library,” said Librarian Barbara Fulton, who leads a team of four regular volunteers who contribute every week for one reason: they love books. “Long Ridge Library is different from other libraries because of its historical background and our ability to bring locals together into our community.”

The library is home to all kinds of books, including both rare books and new bestsellers. It’s open only on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

“We are open to anyone who wants to visit and join us — especially those in the local area

such as Danbury, Bethel, Redding, Ridgefield, and all over the state,” said Fulton, who grew up near a library in Greenwich and has lived in Danbury since 1969.

While Long Ridge Library is certainly a place to explore books and read them, it’s also more than that.

“We host events based on holidays, monthly book club meetings, and our biggest event, our anniversary,” Fulton said. “Our atmosphere is homey, friendly, and welcoming since, of course, the more readers in our world the better.”

Danbury funds Long Ridge Library through grants, which cover things like heat, electricity, and insurance. But Long Ridge is currently beginning to fundraise for “big changes coming soon,” said Fulton, who’s the type of librarian who knows most people who come in by name and knows what they like to read, too.

“We are currently attempting to digitize our library, which is a long process,” she said. “If we could get more volunteers, that would be amazing. Stop by to learn about our history, to have tea, or just to read.” ■

To learn more about Long Ridge Library, follow them on Instagram @longridgelibrary_191 or visit longridgerdlibrary.wixsite.com/danburyct

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

When I woke up on Monday, December 18, one of the first things I did was check Facebook. There were many Redding residents checking in to see who had lost power, which roads were closed, and where there were down trees. All of us were preparing for our morning commutes. Hyper-local social media chatter is how I got that first inkling that the Library may not be able to open that day. Next, I texted our caretaker who lives quite close to the building. He came in to check for leaks, down trees, and whether we had power. Unfortunately, like much of the town, we did not, and Ever-source could not provide an estimate of restoration time. At least this made my decision to close the Library an easy one, even though it left me disappointed.

I was working at Darien Library when Hurricane Irene hit, and about a year later, Hurricane Sandy hit Connecticut. The Library lost power briefly during at least one of those storms, but it was always one of the first buildings in

town to have its power restored. I was told this was because it was “near a main power grid” or something like that. This meant that the Library was the hoppin’ place to be during any kind of storm when residents lost power. We would always quickly extend our hours and operate with a skeleton staff from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. Tables would be filled with people working away on laptops. I remember our custodian heading to Home Depot to purchase every last surge protector, and it still was never enough. Multi-generations would hover around outlets charging their electronics. Trader Joe’s donated cases of water for us to give out to patrons. The First Selectman of Darien hung out at our Welcome Desk until 11:00 p.m. talking to constituents and giving them updates about power restoration.

After Hurricane Sandy, many people in town lost power for five, six, seven days. We had the idea to host a community potluck because the people who now had their power back wanted to help out their

neighbors. Hundreds of people came and packed our community room. Not to diminish the damage that this Hurricane caused, but it was one of my favorite times to be a librarian. We were doing exactly what libraries are supposed to do – be there for their community.

This was, of course, possible because Darien Library had power. I know we disappointed a lot of people when the Mark Twain Library lost power on Monday before the holidays. I received so many texts from folks wondering if we would be open. We had voicemails on our phone asking the same question, and many people pulled into our parking lot at 10:00 a.m. hoping for the best. So, here’s a goal for 2024 – to make a plan to install a generator so that the next time this happens, people can come hang out at the Library and enjoy our extended hours until their own power is restored at home. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

On this next-to-final day of 2023, I wish all of you a very happy and healthy New Year.

Among all the wonderful presents I received on Christmas morning there were, of course, books (mostly from my well-read bookseller/daughter-in-law) and a few of them made it to the top of the to-be-read pile. So, I thought it appropriate to share a few of them here with you:

I picked up the newest Kate Christensen *Welcome Home, Stranger* and read it in almost one sitting. She is arguably one of my favorite authors, as her books are less about the plot and more about relatively ordinary people involved in relatively ordinary things but, most of them, are usually behaving badly. But somehow, she makes it difficult not to care about

them and not to read on to find out what finally happens to them all. Whether it’s a dysfunctional family, life on a cruise ship, an artist collective in NYC, or sisters coming together after the death of their mother, Christensen’s use of language and detailed description of character and environment just make for wonderfully entertaining, yet thoughtful, reads. A few of her previous novels I’ve loved are *The Epicure’s Lament*, *The Great Man*, and *The Last Cruise*.

As a murder mystery enthusiast, I was thrilled to also receive the just published *Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone* by Benjamin Stevenson. And while I rarely quote book jacket descriptions, I simply can’t sum up this book any better than this: “*Knives Out* and *Clue* meet Agatha

Christie and *The Thursday Murder Club* in this fiendishly clever blend of classic and modern murder mystery”.

And finally, unable to let go of the Christmas season completely, I just started reading *Mistletoe Malice* by Kathleen Farrell. According to Wikipedia, Farrell, who died in 1999, was a British novelist of the post-World War II period who was known for her unsparing and sometimes bitingly funny studies of character. *Mistletoe Malice* is the story of a dysfunctional family (aren’t they all?) who reunites for the Christmas holiday from hell... a perfect way for me to spend my last two days of MY holidays. Happy New Year and cheers to all the new books we get to look forward to in 2024. ■

Nod to the pod

This is Love, Episode 79: “Let’s Give it a Whirl”

By Amy Maloof

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

Last year, I put forth an episode from *Criminal*, hosted by the incomparable Phoebe Judge. I’ll begin 2024 by recommending her other podcast, *This is Love*, a show that highlights Judge’s softer side and examines love’s many dimensions through (you guessed it, my favorite) narrative storytelling. Its tagline: Love is more than you think.

After a long estrangement, Brad and his grandmother Joy reconnected when he called her up and asked if she’d like to join him on a trip to Great Smoky

Mountains National Park. She said yes without hesitation. The trip was a success, sparking their idea to visit all 63 of the U.S. National Parks together. After a seven-year journey, they achieved their goal last year, and at 93-years-old, Joy is now the oldest living person to have visited all the National Parks. The duo has now embarked on a new challenge: Visiting all seven continents. To say their story is inspiring and heartwarming is obvious – and also an understatement.

During my college years in the early aughts, I spent a spring break with my grandmother, just the two of us in Hilton Head. We stayed on the ocean in a timeshare with ‘80s

decor, taking little walks along the shore and eating spaghetti in front of *Dateline*. It wasn’t exciting (or, at 21, even that much fun), and my Gram and I didn’t have the heart-to-hearts Brad and Joy enjoy, but we shared time together. We were in the same space doing the same things, and it was memorable. At 41, I love knowing it happened.

It’s simple, but not easy, to make room for those moments, and I think sometimes we push it off until the opportunity has passed. As we embark on a new year, I think Joy sums up my resolution beautifully: “If somebody asks you to do something, don’t say no. Say yes.” ■

Superintendent predicts 10-year enrollment uptick for Region 9 / continued from page 1

among others, beginning with the relevant feeder course at the middle school level. Of note, the slides depicted multiple levels of courses and electives, noting prerequisites where appropriate.

“We think this will be a really helpful tool for families to use as they’re thinking about their four-year planning process at the high school,” said Pierson Ugol. “So, we’ve worked with our high school leaders to develop more consistent visuals.”

The curriculum graphics – which were developed using a free, web-based software system called Canva – aim to portray the progression from one course to another in a straightforward manner. The challenge is there are quite a few elective “detours” students can make based on their own interests – particularly at the high school level.

“There is a fair amount of text to describe the different variations

you could go down,” said Pierson Ugol. “I am certainly open to more ideas of how we could make this more clear to families.”

In the public comments section of the meeting, Redding resident Shirley Melnyk suggested that curriculum materials for Barlow students be more explicit about the number of students required for a course to take place.

“If kids knew that you didn’t need a full complement of 20 to run a class – [perhaps] a minimum of 10 – there might be some interest in these electives or at least it would give you an option to keep the elective on your program of studies,” Melnyk said.

Among other business covered at the meeting, the Region 9 Nest project recently received bids for design and engineering work. The Nest project aims to create a building with a host of upgrades at the sports fields at Barlow. Chief among them are ADA compliant

bathrooms, team rooms, an area for trainers to treat injuries, a concession area, and an automatic external defibrillator (AED) station.

One agenda item that failed to receive a definitive action was the vote on a new slate of officers for the Region 9 Board of Education. With eight Board members voting, the tally was evenly split 50/50 between nominees Todd Johnston and Jon Stinson for Chairman of the Board. Accordingly, Chris Parkin moved to keep the officers who held their positions at the time of the November election temporarily until their successors are elected in accordance with the Board’s bylaws. The motion was passed unanimously. ■

OBITUARIES

Jillian Sarah Goldman
Passed away December 15, 2023



Jillian Sarah Goldman, 28, formerly of Redding, passed away on December 15, 2023 in Boston, MA. Jillian was the daughter of Irve and Susan Goldman of Redding.

Jillian was born in Bridgeport and graduated from Joel Barlow High School in 2013. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Communications in 2017 from the University of Vermont. She had recently relocated to Boston from Burlington, VT to pursue paralegal studies at Boston University and a paralegal career, and to be closer to her older brother, Daniel. Jillian had an infectious laugh, boundless energy, and was a kind, caring, and loving daughter, niece, cousin, and friend. Among the inner circle of the family’s friends, she earned the phrase, “Everyone Loves Jillian.” She loved music, attending concerts with her brother and friends. She enjoyed hiking in the Vermont mountains and had a passion for downhill skiing, which she mastered at a young age on the

slopes of Jackson Hole, WY and continued to enjoy while on the Joel Barlow high school ski team and the mountains of Vermont. She also had much affection for her adopted cat, Cooper. Jillian will be forever missed by her parents, her brother, Daniel, and her many aunts and uncles and cousins and friends. She was predeceased by her older brother, Alex, her grandparents, Alan and Ann Goldman and William and Mary Lacy, and her uncle Richard. Funeral services for Jillian will be held in private. To share a condolence message, please visit www.greensfuneralhome.com. Memorial contributions may be made in her memory to the Connecticut Humane Society, 455 Post Rd E, Westport, CT 06880, cthumane.org ■

Margot McLachlan Robinson
October 2, 1945 – December 19, 2023



Margot McLachlan Robinson passed away peacefully in Highlands Ranch, CO, surrounded by family. Margot is survived by her daughter, Tracy Robinson Cotsamire (Justin) of Littleton, CO, and son, Frederick "Doyle" F. Robinson

III (Gina) of Manhattan Beach, CA, and four grandchildren: Colin and Mia Cotsamire; and Matthew and Thomas Robinson. She is also survived by her sister, Katherine McLachlan, and nephews, Tom and Tyler Lee. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frederick "Rick" F. Robinson Jr., and her brother, G. Randal McLachlan, and sister, Mary Lee. Margot was born to the late Marcella and G. Randal McLachlan of Danbury on October 2, 1945. She attended St. Peter's School and was a graduate of Danbury High School. She received her associate’s degree from Mount Ida College in Newton, MA. After college, she moved to New York City to work in advertising. On May 10, 1974, she married Rick at St. Peter's Church in Danbury.

Not long after their wedding, Margot and Rick settled in Redding. There, they met lifelong friends and Margot became involved in the community. She was the first female president of the Redding Boys and Girls Club. Her love of tennis flourished through the Redding Country Club and later with the Valley Tennis Girls. Margot could often be found out socializing with friends and countless cousins over her favorite beverage, ice-cold Coors Light. She was fiercely loyal to those close to her and eager to help when others were in need. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Michael J. Fox Foundation at michaeljfox.org to support Parkinson's Disease research. ■

Paul Bennett Jenison
March 25, 1952 – December 10, 2023

Paul Bennett Jenison, 71, passed away on December 10, 2023 in Redding, surrounded by loved ones. Paul was born on March 25, 1952 in Providence, RI to Richard and Myrtle Jenison. He grew up in Cranston, RI before attending Brown University, and went on to earn his MBA at University of Pennsylvania - The Wharton

School in 1978. Paul was a Financial Consultant and held his last position as Managing Director at Finacity. His professional career included Senior Managing Director of Jenison Financial LLC and Executive Director of UBS Investment Banking. In 1989, Paul married the late Cynthia (Wheeler) Jenison, and together they made their home in the Princeton, NJ

area. In 2016, Paul and his family moved to Redding. Paul is survived by his three children: William of Redding; Emily of Somerville, NJ; and Samuel of Toronto, CA. He was predeceased by his parents; his sister, Pricilla; and wife. He will be dearly missed by all who loved him. ■

Dorothy Agnes Mary Lang Kammer
September 18, 1928 – December 11, 2023



Dorothy Agnes Mary Lang Kammer, beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother was called to heaven by God and received into the loving arms of her beloved Mama and Papa on December 11, 2023. Born September 18, 1928, in the Bronx, NY, she was the eldest daughter of Mary Klemens Lang and Edward Lang. She was predeceased by her parents; husband, Raymond Kammer; siblings, Alyce Lang Duffy, Edward Lang, and Joe Waide; and many beloved tantes, onkels, cousins, family, and friends. The daughter of immigrants from Austria and Germany, her mastery and love of the English language began in grade school as she taught her parents and siblings to read, write, and speak English. As a young girl, Dorothy spent

many happy summers at her Tante Agnes and Onkel Henry’s farm in Old Saybrook, with her siblings and cousin Willie. It was here that a girl from the Bronx fell in love with the quiet country life, often remarking later in life that she would much rather fall asleep to the songs of peepers than car horns. And although she would one day make her home in the country, she enjoyed all the city had to offer – playing in the city streets, roller skating around the neighborhood, even in the subway, and dancing with friends in dance halls. A woman of many talents, Dorothy excelled at secretarial school, receiving honors and typing an unbelievable 120 words-per-minute. It was in the dance halls of her youth that Dorothy fell in love Ray – a gentle man from Queens who traveled so often across the bridge to court his future bride, she often joked he had "bought the bridge by the time they married." Married on August 25, 1951, the young couple worked hard and moved to Redding to raise their children – Christine, Karen, Stephen, and Doreen. It was here Dorothy traded in her roller skates to embrace quiet country life – building stone walls using the skills her stonemason Papa

passed down to her, swimming in her pool, and falling asleep to peepers. She also enjoyed reading, crosswords, puzzles, Scrabble, cards, and dancing with Ray. A devout Catholic, Dorothy attended Mass regularly, belonged to the Rosary Society, volunteered at special feasts, and participated in the Prayer Chain until she was no longer able. As a young mother, she belonged to the Mothers' Club raising funds to send the parish children to Saint Mary's Elementary School in Ridgefield. Dorothy spent her later years doting on her eight grandchildren – Eric, Leah, Rory, Jared, Christopher, Matthew, Stephanie, and Kyle; and four great-grandchildren – Brooke, Julian, James, and Isla. She loved singing them German lullabies, bouncing them on her leg, picking raspberries, and singing with them in the rain. Dorothy also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, Godchildren, and countless family friends. The matriarch of her family, Dorothy will be “always loved, never forgotten, forever missed.” In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Sacred Heart Church, 30 Church Street, Georgetown. ■

What’s in your well water?
Do you even know?

By Justin Reynolds



Photo by Jessie Wright

Whether you’ve lived in your house for decades or you’re new to town, you might not think much about the water that’s coming out of your faucet. But if you rely on a private well for water and care about staying healthy, keeping your appliances in good shape, and enjoying a relaxing shower, you need to start paying attention to water quality. Unfortunately, most homeowners only test their water when they’re buying or selling a property. As a result, it’s not uncommon for the water flowing out of faucets in Redding to be afflicted by any number of issues — some of which might cause health problems and others that are more akin to nuisances. All of this is according to Andrew Hurlbut, Owner and Vice President of Professional Water Systems, a water filtration and purification company located on Route 7 in Ridgefield that’s been serving houses in Fairfield County since 1980. “When on a private supply, the onus is on you, the homeowner” to monitor water quality, Hurlbutt said. “The common issues to Redding, and Fairfield County in general, are hard water, acid water, iron, manganese, radon, uranium, and bacteria.” While radon has always been in local water supplies, testing wasn’t routinely part of home inspections until the late 1990s and early 2000s; only air was tested for radon, Hurlbut said.

Issues in plumbing and fixtures, especially when water is heated,” he explained. “The long-term concern is that the scale builds up on the heating elements in the hot water tank and dishwasher, causing loss of efficiency, pressure, and service life.” Day-to-day signs of hard water are dry skin and hair, white deposits on darker surfaces the water is in contact with, dishes that come out of the dishwasher cloudy, and nozzles and spouts that get crusty, Hurlbut said. Perhaps most importantly, homeowners should be on the lookout for the presence of bacteria in well water because it can cause GI issues immediately upon consumption. “It’s something that should be checked through a lab at least on an annual basis,” Hurlbut said. “In my experience, we see about a 15% positivity rate.” According to Hurlbut, there can be many causes of bacteria: droughts, heavy rain seasons, well structural issues, trades working on the water system, and homeowners changing their own filters. “When present, flushing the well and plumbing with chlorine can be a short-term fix,” he said. “But if the problem is recurring or you want a permanent solution, you should install a UV light system.” While bacteria present an acute issue that needs to be addressed immediately, other well-water issues — like the presence of heavy metals, uranium, arsenic, PFOAS, and other contaminants — are concerns over longer periods of time. “If any of these are present, the typical solution is point-of-use reverse osmosis drinking water systems,” Hurlbut said. “These units are also a better alternative than purchasing bottled water on an ongoing basis. In my opinion, it’s the best money a private well owner can spend because most well owners aren’t testing their water regularly.”

If a home was purchased prior to this period, I would strongly recommend testing,” he said. “If there is currently a mitigation system in place, it’s important that homeowners know that the systems need to be serviced by a professional annually.” If the last time you thought about pH levels was in a high school chemistry class, you should probably reacquaint yourself with the standard measure of water acidity and basicity. Recalling this knowledge could end up being priceless. If the pH value of your home’s water is less than 6.7, the water is considered to be acidic — which could cause serious problems. “This is a corrosive condition that causes copper plumbing to be thinned out over the course of time, potentially creating pinhole leaks,” Hurlbut explained. “On a day-to-day basis, a homeowner may notice a blue-green film build-up in sinks, tubs, and shower pans, which is a sign of acidity.” This problem can be mitigated by having a neutralizer or a chemical feed pump installed, Hurlbut continued. But these systems also need periodic maintenance. Another water quality concern is hard water, a term that describes water with elevated calcium and magnesium levels. “Hard water creates scale

Hurlbut reiterated the importance of getting water treatment systems serviced annually to maintain water quality. “Some systems have wear-and-tear parts that, if not checked regularly, can fail and create leaks or water quality issues,” he said. Hurlbut is the first to admit that his company is not perfect. But they stand behind everything they do and work diligently to ensure their customers have safe, clean water. “When issues occur, we just make sure we make it right,” he said. “Water quality can be tricky, so it often takes a couple of service visits to solve a problem. This is what we pride ourselves on.” ■

To learn more about water quality from Connecticut’s Department of Health, visit tinyurl.com/rmdpf8v2

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Lyrics Coffeehouse - David Zlotnick Friday, January 12 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	Let’s Talk: Modern Motherhood Thursday, January 18 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Join Erin Shea Dummeyer and Carolyn Prusa for a no-holds-barred conversation on modern motherhood. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org/calendar	Bend me, Shape me, Heal me Monday, January 22 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Get in shape for the spring gardening season with Redding Garden Club. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road reddinggardenclub.org	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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ARTS

Friday, January 12
Lyrics Coffeehouse - Dan Zlotnick
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation/upcoming-events/lyrics-coffee-house
\$

Sunday, January 21
Ukulele Paint and Music Party
1:00 p.m.
Customize your own wooden ukulele with paints and get an interactive lesson on how to play, followed by a fun jam session.
Aquila’s Nest Vineyards
56 Pole Bridge Road
Newtown
aquilasnestvineyards.com/service-page/ukulele-paint-and-music-party
\$, R

Saturday, February 10
Park and Recreation Bus Trip to Spamalat 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
\$, R

CHILDREN | TEENS

Sunday, January 14
Activism in Poetry Workshop Series
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Grades 5-8
Poetry seminar for middle schoolers.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Wednesday, January 17
Storytime for Children with Adults (ages 1-5)
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.
Nature stories and related activities.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Wednesday, January 17
Family Bingo Bonanza
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Grades K-4 with accompanying adult.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation
\$, R

Friday, January 19
Parents Night Out
6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Drop your kids (grades K-6) at the Community Center for an evening of supervised fun, activities, and pizza.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation
\$, R

Saturday, January 20
STEM at New Pond Farm (Grades K-3)
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Hands on workshop on geology rocks.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Sunday, January 28
Self Defense Clinic for ages 11+
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Self-defense clinic with Master Fagan, a 5th degree black belt.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation
\$, R

Friday, January 12
Ladies’ Night Out: Sip & Quill
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
BYOB and spend the evening learning how to quill, a fun curled paper art. 21+ event.
WorkspaceCT
16 Trowbridge Drive
Bethel
workspacet.org/event-details/ladies-night-out-sip-quill
\$, R

Friday, January 19
Teen Origami Workshop with Masako (Grades 5-12)
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Learn to make winter-themed origami pieces.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org/calendar
R

FOOD, WINE

Saturday, January 13
Junior Chef Saturday
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Kids in grades 3-8 can create an entire meal and learn about food safety issues and food displays.
Not suitable for children with significant food allergies.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org/parks-and-recreation
\$, R

Sunday, January 21
In the Kitchen, Seasonal Baking
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
(Sessions for both kids in grades 2-5 WAITLIST ONLY and middle/high school students)
Learn to bake winter breads.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Saturday, January 27
From Prep to Plate – Dairy Delights
2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Hands-on yogurt making workshop with Registered Dietician Jessica Pelletier.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

HEALTH | WELLNESS

Friday, January 12
It Takes a Village
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Presented in partnership with the Town of Redding, a support program for new parents. Parents and villagers of all ages welcome to attend.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org

Thursday, January 25
Sleep Tips
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
Email mstillman@townofreddingct.org or call (203) 938-9725
R

Thursday, January 25
12 Tips to Manage Anxiety
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
In person or Zoom
Bethel Public Library
189 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
bethellibrary.org
R

NATURE

Saturday, January 13
Identifying Sparrows: Winter Birding Walk
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road
Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents
R

Saturday, January 20
What’s at Your Bird Feeder?
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Richardson Park
729 North Salem Road
Ridgefield
woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents
R

Monday, January 22
Bend me, Shape me, Heal me
Join the Redding Garden Club to get in shape for the spring gardening season.
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
reddinggardenclub.org

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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

Calvary Independent Baptist Church
Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. / Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 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, January 16
100+ Women Who Care Quarterly Meeting
6:00 p.m. – Networking, socializing, refreshments
6:30 p.m. – Meeting begins
7:30 p.m. – Dinner
Milestone
2 Main Street
E-mail
100WWCFairfieldCounty@gmail.com for more information
grapevine.org/giving-circle/14WCz4/100-Women-Who-Care-Fairfield-County-CT

Wednesday, January 17
Cyber 101 – Part 1: Choosing Devices & Internet Security
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org/calendar
R

Thursday, January 18
Historical Fiction Author Talk with Mark Perlman: The Reluctant Soldier
1:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
RSVP to mstillman@townofreddingct.org or (203) 938-9725
R

Thursday, January 18
Let’s Talk: Modern Motherhood
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Join Erin Shea Dummeyer and Carolyn Prusa for a no-holds-barred conversation on modern motherhood.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org/calendar
R

Thursday, January 25
Trash Talk
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Learn how to reduce waste, save money, and help the planet.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
R

Thursday, January 25
A Black Revolutionary War Experience
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Watch history come to life with historian Kevin Johnson.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org/calendar
R

MEETINGS

Thursday, January 11
Redding Historic Cemetery Committee
2:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, January 11
Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee Special Meeting
6:00 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, January 11
Redding Board of Education
7:00 p.m.
John Read Middle School / Community Room
486 Redding Road
er9.org

Thursday, January 11
Redding Fire District #2 Commissioners Meeting
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, January 11
Republican Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
Followed by Caucus at 8:00 p.m.
The Redding Roadhouse
406 Redding Road
townofreddingct.org

Friday, January 12
Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Location TBD
townofreddingct.org

Friday, January 12
Region 9 Board of Education Special Meeting
6:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Tuesday, January 16
Conservation Commission
7:00 p.m.
Old Town House
23 Cross Highway
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, January 16
Board of Selectmen
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, January 17
Water Pollution Control Commission
7:30 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, January 18
Redding Board of Education Budget Workshop
7:00 p.m.
John Read Middle School / Community Room
486 Redding Road
townofreddingct.org

Sunday, January 21
Community Coffee and Conversation
3:00 p.m.
Join First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, State Senator Ceci Maher, and State Representative Anne Hughes
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, January 22
Board of Finance
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
Subject to change to virtual or hybrid
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

** Town offices will be closed on Monday, January 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



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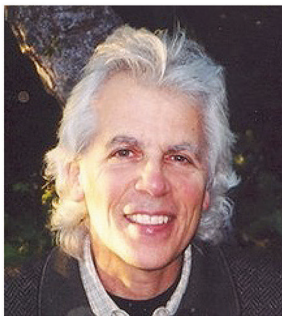
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“We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always right to do right.”
– Martin Luther King Jr.



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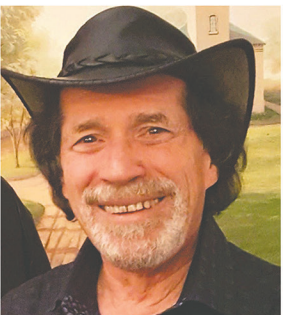
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Applicant subject to credit and underwriting approval (20221021-1745808)
EQUAL HOUSING LENDER Tim Martin NMLS ID: 16273; CT - 1801 - ML-1598647 | GRA NMLS ID #1598647 (Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) • CT - Lic # MCL-1598647

Call Tim to discuss
your mortgage options.



Tim Martin
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