

# REDDING SENTINEL

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## Fiscal year 2024 budget planning begins

*Your questions answered*

By Jessie Wright

The town budget is Redding’s financial blueprint for appropriating funds for the community’s extensive list of priorities each year. The annual process to develop the budget involves all the Town’s governmental departments as well as the input and approval of its residents. Planning for fiscal year 2024 kicks off this month with preliminary review sessions with the Board of Finance (BOF). On Monday, December 19 at 6:00 p.m., the Redding Board of Finance will meet with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and both the Redding and Region 9 Boards of Education (BOE) to hear their perspectives on the main drivers and key issues they expect will impact the upcoming year’s numbers. The budget process will culminate with a Public Hearing on March 20, 2023 and subsequent referendum vote, typically scheduled for early May.

Ward J. Mazzucco, Vice President of the Board of Finance, provided answers to some of Sentinel readers’ commonly asked questions regarding this process.

**Are there any topics or funding areas you anticipate being raised as high priorities for the coming year?**

The pandemic, the influx of new residents, and the expenditure of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds seem to have shifted public attention to the infrastructure needs of the town. Further, the BOS and BOE have assembled a list of capital spending priorities that will generate a lot of attention. These capital proposals are also likely to be on the ballot for public consideration in early May.

**At which points in the town budget process are residents able to participate or have input?**

The BOF schedules public comment at the beginning and end of every meeting. Not many people avail themselves of that opportunity. As more details emerge in the budget cycle (typically in February and March), public comment tends to get more active. By that point in the process, there is less time for the BOF, BOS, and Redding BOE to react, so residents with a particular interest should get involved at an early date. Keep in mind, though, that the Region 9 Board of Education, which governs Joel Barlow High School, is outside of the purview of the BOF. The Region 9 BOE develops its own budget (with its own hearing process) which the taxpayers of Easton and Redding vote on.

**What are the different purposes and formats of the public hearing, the Town Meeting, and the referendum?**

*Continued on page 7*



Photo by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

The Town buildings in Redding Center are decked in holiday spirit, an annual December tradition. If you have a photo you’d like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org)

## Redding town tree lighting rescheduled for December 10

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Douglas Lowe

Persistent rain on Saturday, December 3 prompted the Redding Park and Recreation Department to postpone the annual Tree Lighting event on the Redding Town Green. The event will now take place on Saturday, December 10 from 3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

The festivities will kick off with a performance by the John Read Middle School Select Choir, led by Dave Ebert. Troop 306 will provide Scout-related activities like fire building and reindeer games, along with a bake sale and photos with Santa. The Lions Club will provide hot chocolate for all and expect special appearances from Frosty and Rudolph.

The lighting of the tree will occur at approximately 4:45 p.m., accompanied by a performance by the Joel Barlow Chamber Singers, led by Gwynne Wittmann.

Parking will be available alongside the Redding Town Green on Hill Road and on the right-hand side of the street continuing north towards Redding Elementary School. Parking is also available in the Town Hall and First Church of Christ parking lots.

Be sure to call the cancellation line at (203) 938-5036 ext. 3 before heading over on December 10 in the case of more inclement weather. ■

## REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

### The Firehouse Trail

By Jeanne Ammermuller

The Saugatuck Falls Natural Area across from John Read Middle School is one of the busiest and most popular hiking areas in Redding. If you’d like to explore the area from a new perspective, consider the recently restored Firehouse Trail.

With dozens of downed trees due to Hurricane Sandy, the official access to the Firehouse Trail was closed for years; however, dedicated Trail Tenders, led by Claudio Rodrigo, have brought it back to life, clearing out trees, rebuilding boardwalks across wetlands, and freshening the blazes that mark the trail. “This beautiful and rugged trail is difficult to maintain because long sections require regular pruning or line trimming,” said Chief Trail Tender Stuart Green. “And Claudio is as persistent as the encroaching brambles.”

This entrance is now clearly marked with an official sign along Umpawaug Road between Route 53 and the West Redding Firehouse, on the Firehouse side of the road. There are a couple of small pull-offs for parking along



Photo by Gordon Loery

Trail Tenders Claudio Rodrigo and Stuart Green build boardwalks along the Firehouse Trail.

Umpawaug Road or a very large lot behind the Firehouse.

This is a 2.5-mile, one-way hike from the trailhead on Umpawaug Road to the trailhead across from John Read Middle School. If you’re not ready for a 5-mile hike, you may want to hike with a friend and leave a car at each end. Bringing at least one trekking pole is recommended to

help you keep your balance on some uneven terrain, including a large boulder field in the middle of the hike. Please note, since the trail crosses Centennial Watershed property, no pets are allowed.

For this hike, we’ve chosen to leave from the less-familiar Firehouse end. The first 1.5 miles

*Continued on page 10*

## Redding launches Housing Assistance Fund

By Rob Sample

Redding households in need will soon have access to assistance with housing costs – thanks to a \$50,000 fund established by the Town with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The fund is being administered by United Way of Western Connecticut in coordination with the Redding Department of Social Services. The fund seeks to assist families and households that have fallen behind on rent and mortgage payments during the Covid pandemic. Applications for assistance were due December 1. “When Covid hit, a lot of safety nets were put in place by the state and federal government,” said Angelica Fontanez, Redding’s Director of Social Services. “But when the shutdowns ended and a lot of these programs were removed, many people were still struggling with housing costs.”

Fontanez noted that the housing assistance fund is specifically designated for households that are “sustainable”. “This means that people in such households are back on their feet, with jobs and income, but they are still behind on their rent or mortgage payments,” Fontanez explained. “Though we offer these [income constrained] households assistance through things such as after-school programs and assistance with heating costs, we don’t otherwise have programs for rent and mortgage assistance.”

All applicants must meet ALICE requirements, an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed. The United Way coined the ALICE acronym to describe a growing cohort of its clients: people who work and have incomes above federal and state poverty guidelines, but who nonetheless struggle to meet the basic needs of running a household. Those include providing food to family members, childcare, housing costs, healthcare, and transportation. Fontanez pointed out that many who are in the ALICE category moved to Redding decades ago, at a time when homes cost significantly less to purchase. The housing-assistance program provides a needed helping hand to many established households in the area.

ALICE income limits for Fairfield County vary by household size, including close to a dozen categories. The lowest income limit is for a single adult householder: \$39,904. For a married couple the limit is \$59,796. For married senior citizens, the limit jumps to \$66,092. A family with two adults and two school-aged kids must earn less than \$99,053 to meet ALICE requirements.

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# EDITORIAL

By Susan Clark

There has been a long-lingering issue in Redding, one of those matters of legend. No one seems to know all the facts, and the full history is hard to decipher. Every so often, this issue re-appears, and there is surprise, anger, agitation, and some progress made toward something that may eventually resolve the matter. And then it all goes quiet ‘til next time.

### What is this seemingly endless issue?

#### Water at Redding Elementary School.

Let us assume that no one in Redding would disagree with Board of Finance member Jen Wyss, who said at the BoF meeting in June of this year that “Clean and safe water is crucial to our students and everyone who works at the school.”

So why haven’t we solved the problem? It shouldn’t be beyond the collective capabilities of we reasonable Redding residents to get clean and safe drinking water that doesn’t come in bottles to our elementary school students -- and to the educators and administrators who work at the school.

There are many snippets of information about the water problem at RES, which apparently goes back at least ten to fifteen years.

Perhaps the problem was caused by State DOT using too much road salt on Route 107. Perhaps there’s just too much iron in the ground where the school is situated. Perhaps it is less expensive to use bottled water for decades than it would be to find a solution to water that is brown and not drinkable. Perhaps it’s not so bad since Town Hall doesn’t have potable water either. Perhaps we as a town are so cheap, we simply can’t be bothered to pay for a solution.

We have many bits of information. What we don’t have is hard evidence and data. We’re told digging one or more additional wells is too expensive – but not the price. We’re told bottled water is cost-effective – but not the cost. We’re told nothing can be done now or in the short-term – but there’s no publicly-available study by an independent subject matter expert that explains the options and trade-offs. We’re told “it’s complicated.”

Without a doubt it must be complicated, or the problem would have been solved long ago. But let’s not give up.

Perhaps this time around, we can push for this issue to be resolved once and for all. Our children’s health and well-being depend on it.

Let’s focus on the future, not how we got here, and ask town residents, the Board of Education, and other Boards and Commissions to come together and figure out a solution.

To get us started, before the remainder of Redding’s ARPA funds are spoken for, let’s see if we can use some of those resources to address the issue of the lack of potable water at RES. Our children deserve nothing less. ■

## In case you wondered Digging deeper into the mid-term election

By Susan Clark

Redding voters turned out in the thousands to participate in the November mid-term election and, as previously reported, voted for the winner in all races on the ballot.

Now that the final results have been posted in detail, we can report the turnout by party affiliation in the election.

The total voter turnout in Redding was over 68%. Registered Democrats led the way with 75%

turnout in the election. Registered Republicans turned out at 73%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, just 59% of unaffiliated voters cast a ballot in November.

We often hear political commentators talk about the importance of turnout. Both Democrats and Republicans in Redding showed their dedication to the political process and cast their votes in great numbers. ■

## Sandy Hook memorial opens to the public

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

A permanent memorial honoring the 26 victims of the December 14, 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School is now open to the public in Newtown. The memorial site is adjacent to the rebuilt Sandy Hook Elementary School and includes meditative, spiraling paths leading towards a central granite basin of water, in the center of which is an island with a young tree. According to the architects’ statement on the project, visitors are encouraged to give a candle

or a flower to the water, as an act of bridging the deceased and the living.

At the top of the memorial path, a stone marker welcomes visitors. Encased in the stone is “the sacred soil created from the many items left in spontaneous memorials throughout the town on the days following the tragedy.”

The entrance to the memorial and parking area is located on Riverside Road, approximately one eighth of a mile east of Sandy Hook Elementary School. ■

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the Editor. Please be clear, civil and concise. Publication preference will be given to letters that suggest solutions to challenges identified.

### To the Editor,

Golden lights glittered this past Friday night at the Mark Twain Library as we celebrated 50 years of the Art Show. This annual extravaganza is made possible by hundreds of volunteer hours. This year’s volunteers showed extraordinary creativity, organization, and passion which resulted in a truly magical evening. My heartfelt thanks and admiration goes out to such a talented team.

The Mark Twain Library is a center for life in our lovely town. It serves the needs of so many different people in our community and the Art Show is a very important piece of the fundraising efforts put forth to help the Library thrive. It also provides an opportunity to showcase the deep pool of artistic talent we have right here in our backyard. The art is the reason we have all come together for the past 50 years and this year’s artists did not disappoint!

Thank you to all of those who came out to support the Art Show. It is because of your generosity and love for art that this event has endured. Here’s to the next 50 years!

Sandra Lugar  
Limekiln Road

### To the Editor,

December is a wonderful time of the year to give back and share joy in our community. Many local organizations are supporting clothing and toy drives. I am writing to encourage our neighbors to join in the efforts if you are fortunate enough to have extra clothes, items to share, unwrapped toys, or the funds to purchase new items for great causes.

#### Donate Toys

Stuff a Cruiser! The Redding Elementary School PTA is welcoming new and unwrapped toys to benefit Toys for Tots. Saturday, December 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Redding Elementary School.

The JRMS PTA & OUTREACH are teaming up to benefit both Kids in Crisis and the Boys and Girls Village. Online wish lists are available. Contact jrmsptainfo@gmail.com for more information.

#### Donate Gently Used Clothing

PURGE Before You SPLURGE: Donate to the Savers FUNDrive happening on December 9 and 10, 2022. Help the RES PTA raise funds by donating your gently used clothing and small household items. Contact respta4kids@gmail.com to arrange for a drop off.

Winter Coat Drive Until Dec 21: Stock the bare shelves at The Dorothy Day Hospitality House with menswear (coats, sweatpants, boots, socks, gloves, hats, etc). Drop off items at Westbrook Nature School in West Redding.

Let’s support the student’s efforts to give back and share joy.

Angela Caes  
Deer Hill Road

How do you celebrate the holidays?

Share your holiday traditions and memories with the Sentinel by e-mailing your stories to editor@reddingsentinel.org.

# GET TO KNOW THE SENTINEL TEAM

Debora DeCarlo Rosa, Creative Director | By Jessie Wright



It started with the masthead. As the first issue of The Sentinel newspaper began to take shape last spring, Publisher Susan Clark reached out to local graphic designer and logo specialist Debora DeCarlo Rosa to create a masthead and visual brand for the new publication.

“There’s a newspaper coming in Redding,” Rosa recalls a friend telling her. “Someone is starting a newspaper, and I think she’s your neighbor!”

Rosa has lived on Cross Highway with her husband, Vin Rosa, for almost 25 years, but her path hadn’t crossed with Clark’s before last spring. That initial masthead project evolved into Rosa creating the overall concept and layout design for the Sentinel, which she continues to oversee for each issue. “I said, sure, I’ll do that, I’ll come up with the design and then we’ll find somebody to take it over. And we all know how that went,” Rosa laughed.

The founder of DDC Graphics, a boutique graphic design firm, Rosa has been creating logos, marketing materials, and corporate brands for over 30 years. She has left her mark on Redding already in many ways– she designed the new seal for the Town of Redding, which features the same tree design that runs across the top of the Sentinel front page. She is also the creator of the Redding Garden Club’s logo, which many residents may recognize from the plaques situated in the Club’s planting

sites around town. “When I’m up in heaven, hopefully my logos are still around in Redding,” she said. “It’s kind of fun, isn’t it?”

Rosa’s creativity extends beyond her professional projects. She and her husband live in a log cabin they built after purchasing land in Redding in 1998. Both grew up in Italian families and spend several months each year in the region of Umbria, Italy. Sentinel readers may be interested to know that their local paper is laid out and sent off to the printing house almost ten times each year from the small town of Todi, Italy.

Though Rosa hadn’t initially been looking to take on a project as big as the Sentinel, she says that the work has been very rewarding. “I’m proud that people are appreciating all the work that goes into it and that they are enjoying it,” she said. “Because so many people are happy that we have a newspaper again.” ■

More of Rosa’s work can be found at ddcgraphics.net

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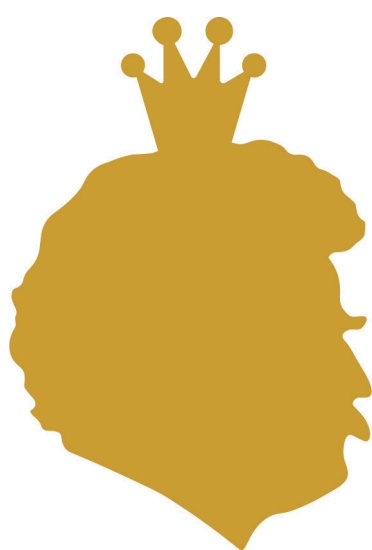
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SPORTS

Falcons advance to state championship

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High’s Charlie Basta is pursued by Cromwell/Portland’s Noah Decker, left, and Ryan Rozich during the state Class SS semifinals on Sunday, December 4. Barlow won 40-35 to advance to the state title game.

Eating up seconds on the clock became more important than another touchdown for the Joel Barlow High varsity football team late in the state Class SS semifinals.

Holding onto a five-point lead over Cromwell/Portland in the last minute of the fourth quarter, the fifth-seeded Falcons were deep in their opponent’s territory and on the verge of scoring again. However, with Cromwell/Portland having no remaining timeouts, Barlow could afford to simply run out the clock for a 40-35 win on Sunday, December 4 at Rocky Hill High School, punching its ticket to the state title game.

This year will mark Barlow’s first trip to a state championship since 2017.

Top-seeded Cromwell/Portland, which won the state Class S title a year ago, went to work quickly at the outset of Sunday’s game after receiving the opening kickoff. The Panthers made use of a strong passing game to advance down field, capping off the drive when quarterback Cole Brisson completed a 13-yard touchdown pass to Jack Nolan. Allen Cohen kicked the extra point as the Panthers went up 0-7 with just under eight minutes left in the first quarter.

“We knew coming into the game they were going to have a lot of players that they could spread the ball around to,” said Barlow head coach T. J. Cavaliere. “They did a really good job of posing us some problems.”

Although the Falcons fumbled

on their first play from scrimmage, Cromwell/Portland eventually had to punt to give them the ball back on their own 21-yard line. Barlow’s running game then went to work, capped off by a 36-yard touchdown run by Dylan Taylor. Cooper Zuccerella kicked the extra point to tie it at 7-7.

Barlow’s defense then forced Cromwell/Portland to turn the ball over on downs on the Falcon 44-yard line, setting up another score. On first down Scott Romano went up the middle for a 16-yard touchdown run. The extra point was blocked, and the Falcons led 13-7 early in the second quarter.

Cromwell/Portland soon regained the lead, however, when Tyler Cippolla returned the ensuing kickoff 79 yards for a touchdown, followed by an extra point, bringing the score to 13-14.

A third touchdown in a span of less than a minute followed when Barlow’s Cole Peterson went 77 yards up the middle for the score and a 19-14 lead.

“The line did a phenomenal job,” said Cavaliere. “They stepped up; they did their job.”

The see-saw scoring battle continued with Cromwell/Portland’s next series. Starting on their own 44, the Panthers made their way down the field with a combination of key runs as well as passes, capped off by a 22-yard completion from Brisson to Alex Hair. Ben Fagan caught the pass on the two-point conversion to put his team up 22 to Barlow’s 19 with 6:10 left in the half.

A 51-yard run by Romano on

Barlow’s next series got it to the Cromwell/Portland 19, setting up a touchdown by quarterback Danny Shaban for a 27-22 lead after the two-point conversion. They soon had the ball back when the short kickoff hit the leg of a Cromwell/Portland player and the Falcons recovered on the Panther 42. They got as far as the 21-yard line but came up short, and the Panthers took over on downs.

The lead returned to Cromwell/Portland yet again before the half ended, as Cippolla caught a 63-yard touchdown pass from Brisson to bring the score to 27-29.

Making a few defensive adjustments at halftime, the Falcons frustrated Cromwell/Portland’s passing game a bit. The move paid off when Mason Leavitt’s interception early in the third quarter gave the Falcons good field position on the Cromwell/Portland 26.

“We were expecting a good passing game,” said Shaban. “We told our secondary they have to play out of their minds, and they did.”

Two plays later, Leavitt came through again, catching a 21-yard touchdown pass from Shaban for a 33-29 lead. Barlow never trailed again after that.

The Falcons held off their opponent on its next series before taking over on downs on their own 45 to set up what would be their final scoring drive. This drive ended on a 14-yard run by Peterson and with the extra point Barlow was up 40-29 early in the fourth quarter.

While Cromwell/Portland was forced to punt on its next series, it made good on the one that followed, a 68-yard scoring drive that ended with a 13-yard pass from Brisson to Ryan Rozich. The extra point failed, and the score was cemented at 40-35.

Recovering the onside kick near midfield, the Falcons marched down the field, eventually reaching their own seven on a first-and-goal situation. Shaban took a knee on the next two snaps as time ran out to seal the win.

Barlow, now 10-2, will play sixth-seeded Valley Regional/Old Lyme for the championship on Saturday, December 10 at 5:30 p.m. at Central Connecticut State University. ■

Girls basketball: what’s ahead

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Members of the 2022-23 Joel Barlow High girls basketball team work on shooting drills during practice. A more mature group this season, the Falcons hope this translates into success on the court.

Between depth and experience, the Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team appears to have a solid foundation to build on as it prepares to start the 2022-23 season.

This season, the Falcons have a large senior class. They also are strong athletically, according to head coach Joe Carollo.

“We have a large group of athletes, so I can shuttle five athletes in and five athletes out,” said Carollo, now in his 15th season as head coach. “That’s our strength. They all play hard for each other.”

A few pre-season scrimmages will give Carollo an idea of how well his team stacks up against the competition, which could also help determine who will start and in what capacity. The real test, however, will be when the Falcons open the season at home on December 12 against Brien McMahon.

“There’s definitely intra-squad competition, which I would like to think would make them push each other,” said Carollo. “I don’t think we are lacking for anything. I like all the pieces we have.”

With about 20 players in all for the varsity and junior varsity programs, the Falcons have a decent turnout this season. A number of the athletes already have varsity experience.

“We have depth at every position,” said Carollo. “We have a center and a backup center; we have forwards.”

Last season was a learning one for the Falcons, who finished

with an overall record of 3-17. Carollo noted the team often committed turnovers, which hurt its chances. A young team, they have graduated only three players since then – former captains Abby Stites and Katie Fletcher as well as Noelle DeEsso.

Barlow will be a more mature group this year with seven seniors. Among them are captains Katherine Czerkowski, Julia Tartaglia, and Marin Kalamaris. Joining them are Emily Green, Charlotte Biehl, Hannah Ashgar, and Sophia Ashgar. Some will return to previous positions and others will assume new roles this season.

“It’s nice having seven seniors,” said Carollo. “Any warm-up drill, offense or defense, they’re on top of it. They know what they have to do. It gives us time to really work on skill building and not as much on team strategy.”

A number of juniors will also see varsity time this year. These include Mackenzie Sickinger, Elyssa Kalamaris, and Kaitlyn O’Brien. Also returning is classmate Keira Gillon, who took last year off after playing soccer in the fall.

From the sophomore class is Sarah Ashgar, who saw a lot of varsity time as a freshman. Freshman Mia Tartaglia is a possible point guard.

“They’re such a great group,” said Carollo. “They want to work hard for each other. I’d like to think we’re going to have a winning record this year.” ■

Redding launches Housing Assistance Fund / Continued from page 1

“There is a huge ALICE contingent living among us in Fairfield County,” said Fontanez. “For instance, there are many widows and single moms who want to stay in their homes, but their incomes are low.” Programs for ALICE-qualified households can help these families to stay put.

Fontanez submitted the proposal to create the \$50,000 fund early in 2022. It got a unanimous thumbs-up from the members of Redding’s ARPA Working Group in March. In an email casting her vote, working group member Mary Dale Lancaster said: “There exists no more important use of ARPA

funds than to assist Town residents who have been directly affected by Covid.”

The eight-person ARPA Working Group began its work in January 2022, initially to solicit ARPA funding proposals from Redding non-profit organizations,

entities, for-profit companies, and other organizations. The group has since researched and evaluated more than two dozen proposals, recommending most for approval by the Redding Board of Selectmen.

Once okayed by the Board of Selectmen, projects go to Redding

voters for their approval at a special representative Town Meeting – the last of which occurred in late October and gave the go-ahead to ten proposals. All totaled, the Town has approved ARPA grants to date of close to \$1.6 million. ■

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# Ben’s Bells teaches the power of kindness *at John Read Middle School* | *By Jessie Wright*



Photo courtesy of Suzen Stewart  
Kindness Coins created in the Ben’s Bells studio.



Photo by Jessie Wright

“Believe it or not, the power you guys have over me right now – it’s tremendous,” said Cody Foss as he spoke to a gymnasium full of energetic students at John Read Middle School (JRMS) on Wednesday, November 30.

Foss, Regional Manager for Ben’s Bells, was the featured speaker at the school’s first large group assembly of the year. Encouraging the group to engage with him throughout his presentation, Foss characterized their participation and attention as powerful acts of kindness. The assembly was part of programming throughout the school year which comes from JRMS’s designation as a “Kind Campus” through Ben’s Bells.

Ben’s Bells is a non-profit organization whose mission is to “teach individuals and communities about the positive impacts of intentional kindness and to inspire people to practice kindness as a way of life.” Founded in 2003 by a mother who discovered the power of small acts of kindness as she grieved the death of her young son, Ben’s Bells provides kindness education programs, art installations, and studio space for community members to create small objects that help spread the power of kindness wherever they are found. The organization was founded in Arizona, but has a studio in Bethel, CT – an expansion that was prompted by the tragic shooting at

Sandy Hook Elementary School ten years ago.

Suzen Stewart, a Math Specialist at JRMS and resident of Sandy Hook, has been the primary driver of bringing Ben’s Bells programming to JRMS. Her first encounter with the organization was a personal one. “After 12/14, Ben’s Bells came, and they belled over a thousand bells in Newtown,” explained Stewart. “And my family and I found a bell. I distinctly remember my youngest walking up to it and discovering it, and we’ve had it hanging in our home ever since. It’s on a door so when people come and leave our house, the bell rings to remind everyone who enters our home to be kind.”

With Stewart’s involvement, JRMS became a “Kind Campus” in 2015. As Stewart explained, “We use materials from the Kind Campus curriculum including the intentional teaching of kindness, assemblies, kindness weeks of special activities, kind challenges, passing Kind Notes, Kindness Chains, and of course the Kindness Coins.”

A Kindness Coin is a small, glazed piece of clay that is given to someone to recognize an act of kindness – no act is too small. The “receiver” then passes the coin when someone shows them an act of kindness. That coin continues to travel from person to person. Kindness Coins are hand-created in the Ben’s Bells studio in Bethel,

made entirely by volunteers who donate their time; every year, JRMS students participate in making coins. JRMS starts the school year with 100 Kindness Coins, releasing them into circulation as students, staff, and teachers interact with one another. “It is our hope that every student gives and receives coins each year,” Stewart said. “Kindness is powerful.”

Redding residents may recognize one of the most visible signs of the partnership between Ben’s Bells and JRMS – the large “Be Kind” mural installed on the front façade of the school building facing Redding Road.

In 2016, Stewart and students in the school’s OUTREACH Club proposed commissioning a mural for the school. “Our administration was in full support,” Stewart recalled. “We worked to raise funds and had support from our amazing PTA when they found out what we were doing. Together we made our dream come true for our students, staff, and community.”

The mural has become part of the identity of the school, proclaiming its commitment to kindness for all who pass by. In Wednesday morning’s assembly, Foss told the students how much of an impact it has had.

“You guys are a like a beacon in this area,” he said.

*To learn more about Ben’s Bells, visit [bensbells.org](http://bensbells.org).*

# Work begins on new boardwalk at Lonetown Marsh | *By Jessie Wright*



Photo by Jessie Wright

The building of a new boardwalk through Lonetown Marsh is now underway, according to Chair of Redding’s Conservation Commission, David Pattee.

The old boardwalk system, which connected walkers through the marsh to an observation platform overlooking the pond area, has been out of commission for a few years. The observation platform remains in good condition, so the bulk of the work will be to the boardwalk itself.

The Conservation Commission has been working towards repairing the boardwalk for many years but had run into delays related to the scope of the project and its funding.

“We ran into some difficulties trying to find someone to do the work, because it’s a bigger project than what our Trail Tender volunteers could actually do in a reasonable period of time,” Pattee explained.

Two years ago, the Town of Redding voted and approved a capital project for the new

boardwalk. Since then, the cost of construction has increased, so the Conservation Commission is sourcing additional funding to fill the gap. In the meantime, work on the project has begun. “We’re kind of hoping that it will be available before next spring,” Pattee said. “It’s a long, slow process.”

Nazzaro Inc., an excavation and construction company based in Georgetown, is performing the work.

Lonetown Marsh was the first open space acquired by the Town of Redding in 1968, and its land and waters are preserved as a wildlife sanctuary. It is located on the east side of Lonetown Road across from Redding Elementary School; it has been used at times as an outdoor classroom and natural laboratory. Redding’s *Book of Trails* notes that, “A slow, quiet approach to the observation platform may reward the observer with a glimpse of one or more of the marsh’s seasonal visitors – mallards, wood ducks, herons, kingfishers, hawks.” ■

# Mark Twain Library Art Show continues through Sunday

By Lisa Goldstein



Photos by Lisa Goldstein  
Top honors were awarded to several entrants in the Mark Twain Library Art Show.



The Mark Twain Library is filled with more than 600 pieces of art on display through Sunday, December 11.



Art Show attendees enjoyed a glittering Preview Reception celebration on Friday, December 2.

Over six hundred pieces of artwork by local and renowned artists from across Connecticut and beyond are available to view and buy at the 50th Anniversary Mark Twain Library Art Show through Sunday, December 11. The exhibit kicked off on Friday, December 2 with a sold-out preview celebration where guests dressed in gold to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of this historic event. Attendees mingled amidst the art, buying as well as bidding on nearly one hundred additional works donated by artists for the Silent Auction. All proceeds from the Silent Auction and a portion from the work sold in the gallery will benefit the Library and its programs.

When deciding top honors, Juror of Awards Peter Seltzer remarked on the exceptional quality of all the work this year, describing the exhibit as an amazing collection of extremely high caliber art. “There were easily more than a dozen other pieces I could have given awards to,” Seltzer said. Seltzer is a Connecticut painter and award-winning Master Pastelist.

The Art Show features an extensive range of works in size and price with plenty still available to purchase. There are only a few more days to enjoy and purchase the work hanging in the exhibit and in the virtual gallery online at [www.mtlartshow50.org](http://www.mtlartshow50.org). The Art Show will conclude on Sunday, December 11 at 5:00 p.m.

In celebration of the 50th year of the Art Show, the Library is offering a special program on Thursday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m. both in-person or virtually called “Gleam, Gossip & Gold: Love and Loss in American Art.” As part of the Art Show’s closing day on Sunday, December 11, Redding’s two Town Historians will share intriguing stories of Redding’s own Connecticut Yankee in the program “A Mark Twain Christmas”. ■

*For more information about the 50th Anniversary Mark Twain Library Art Show, visit [marktwainlibrary.org/fundraising/art](http://marktwainlibrary.org/fundraising/art) or call 203-938-2545.*

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# New President for the Redding Historical Society

## *Bob Moran: “History is present”*

By Donna Christopher



Bob Moran, pictured above and the next President of the Redding Historical Society (RHS), likes to use the Mark Twain maxim that “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme” when asked why history is important.

“History is what you and I are making right now, having a conversation. History is present,” Moran said in a recent conversation.

He makes it his business to preserve the present through a project he created called Redding Channel 79 at [redding79.org](http://redding79.org). For years, Moran has volunteered his time and knowledge as a web designer and engineer to record town meetings and events on the channel. He also records programs for Redding organizations and compiles news and local activities on the site.

Moran first joined the RHS in 2015 when he worked alongside his friend, RHS member and town historian Charley Couch, to bring the first Rock ‘N Roots Revival music festival to Redding. Couch, who died in 2018, started the summer festival on the

grounds of Lonetown Farm to celebrate Independence Day and as a fundraiser for the RHS. “I got involved because of Charlie Couch and Rock ‘N Roots,” Moran explained. “Charlie was an audio guy. He was one of the most interesting, frustrating, ingratiating, and intelligent people I ever knew.”

Brought back in 2022 after a pandemic hiatus, this year’s event in July was “bigger than ever,” Moran said. “The acoustics at RHS are unique,” he continued. “The barn and the house are a perfect distance, so you don’t need a lot of amperages. There’s no other historical society in the vicinity that has the property we have.”

Moran will take over as the President of the RHS from Joe Bonomo on January 1, 2023. Bonomo was elected as the incoming Vice President, Janice Dimon as Secretary, and Denise Jankovic as Treasurer at the RHS annual meeting in September. The new board’s term will run through December 31, 2023.

Moran will bring a background in fine art and technology, as well as music education to his new role. He is the Founder of Digital Constructs, a computer communications consulting company, as well as an award-winning computer graphics designer and retired adjunct professor at Pratt Institute. He earned his undergraduate degree from Lafayette College in English and French with minors in music and art; he also has an advanced degree in jazz composition at the Berklee School of Music. He is a U.S. Army veteran.

Along with bringing more special events like Rock ‘N Roots to Redding, Moran would like to host a talk show through Redding Channel 79. He envisions it as a way to broadcast interview-style programs that would cover topics and people of interest to Redding residents, ranging from “the intricacies of vintage transits to the latest in artificial intelligence.”

“I want RHS to do much more outreach,” Moran said. “I’ve been talking to the library about the possibility of having conversations with people in this town that have done some interesting stuff. Unfortunately, people think history is only 200 years old. I want to talk to various people in terms of science, law, history, etc.”

Moran hopes to work with such organizations as the Mark Twain Library and New Pond Farm to put together engaging events and is already exploring additional arts and cultural offerings including bluegrass, jazz, and classical concerts.

“I want to resurrect the car show because the ease of access for car aficionados is already well known. Sycamore in Bethel is an ideal partner along with the library to make the event a success,” Moran said. “When you do a collaboration some very cool things happen.”

“History is everywhere, impacting everything we do,” Moran said. “It gives perspective as to not only how society functioned in the past, but also in the present as nothing happens in a vacuum. Bringing history into context is key.” ■

# A brief history of the Redding Historical Society

By Donna Christopher

The Redding Historical Society was founded in the 1940’s and incorporated in 1961 with a mission “to educate, to preserve, and to promote Redding’s historic heritage.”

The group started as the History Club of Redding Town in 1940 to foster continued interest in the preservation of Redding’s rich historical heritage dating back to 1711, according to a club flyer citing news items in The Newtown Bee from 1940.

The Club’s first meeting was held on June 3, 1940 to commemorate the holding of the first Town Meeting under the General Assembly Act for Making and Forming the Parish of Redding into a District Town (June 15, 1767). The first President was Earle Balch of the publishing firm G.P. Putnam & Sons.

During World War II, the Club voted to pause formal meetings. An excerpt from the resolution reads: “In view of the fact that war activities of diverse sorts and kinds are preoccupying nearly every member of the community...that gasoline is being rationed and tires are being conserved....not to be construed as a dissolution of the Club.” Informal meetings occurred among members and friends until 1961.

The Club was reorganized in July 1961 as the Redding Historical Society (RHS). Meetings resumed and a new name was adopted

by Mrs. Gerald Ewing and 25 town citizens for “the purpose of gathering together historical material and preserving it for future generations.” The Redding Historical Society was then incorporated, and an official seal was adopted in February 1962.

The Society preserves and maintains three historic sites in Redding: the Lonetown Farmhouse Museum, the Umpawaug Schoolhouse, and the Zalmon Read Barn.

Membership in the RHS is open to residents of Redding, Fairfield County, and anyone interested in Redding’s history. Meetings are open to members and interested parties on the first Tuesdays of each month at the Lonetown Farm Museum.

The RHS hosts event information and historical resources on their website for people to peruse. Among the highlights are recorded historic presentations and lectures on Redding history by the late RHS President and Town Historian Charles Couch. ■

*For more information contact RHS at [reddinghistorical.society@gmail.com](mailto:reddinghistorical.society@gmail.com) or visit [reddingthhistoricalsociety.org](http://reddingthhistoricalsociety.org).*

# HOMES THAT MAKE REDDING SPECIAL

## Board by board, *a 1733 house is relocated and rebuilt in Redding Center*

By Susan Clark



The 1733 house was originally built on a promontory on the Connecticut River in Middletown, as shown here.



Sometime in the 1940’s, the house was taken apart board by board — each board was numbered -- in preparation for its new home in Redding.



Building the front garden was part of the project. Who digs such deep beds these days?

On the Friday after Thanksgiving in 1995, my husband and I were driving from our home on Sherman Turnpike to see family in Ridgefield for a second Thanksgiving gathering. As we neared the top of Sanfordtown Road, I spotted a “for sale” sign in front of my favorite house in Redding. Three months later, in one of the snowiest years in decades, we owned the house and began to discover its idiosyncrasies.

The house, originally built in 1733, lies within the boundaries of the Redding Center Historic District. Yet, as we learned, it is not included among the named properties in the District. How could that be?

We were surprised and

intrigued to learn that the house – indeed built in 1733 – had a prior life in Middletown, Connecticut on the banks of the Connecticut River. Sometime in the 1940’s, the house was taken apart, and the boards and beams were moved to Redding. With a lot of hard and conscientious work (and not a little creativity), the house was reconstructed on land purchased from a neighboring property.

We were told by the family of the house’s previous owner that the Connecticut River had been eroding the bank on which the house stood in Middletown, and so it was sold and moved. We learned that the buyer was a woman (so far nameless) who envisioned a pastoral retreat in Redding and

kept cows in a shed that, by the time we bought the house, had been re-purposed to a cabana. The barn in front of the house – now used as a garage – was also moved to the Redding site, from Danbury.

While the house looks as if it has been sitting here comfortably since 1733, a historian may see something out of place. A house truly that old would have been built much closer to the road, as are the neighboring historic homes.

Each owner of the property has passed on to the next five booklets of black and white photographs which document the house’s move and rebuilding. We bought the house from the estate of Connie Brereton, who served on the Redding Board of Finance and taught at WestConn. Earlier owners included the parents of Sue Davies, formerly of Foundry Road and now Meadow Ridge. Sue and her late husband Ed spent many happy times in the house with their children. One of their daughters, Kim (now O’Rielly), is President of the Redding League of Women Voters and recalls the house serving as the backdrop for years of family gatherings.

“It was my grandparents who built an addition to provide extra room for all those visiting relatives - cousins, aunts and uncles,” O’Rielly said. Some of her favorite childhood memories included “the deep claw footed tub in the garage apartment, which was a thrill to ‘swim’ in on a cold wintery night, and the boxwood garden in a courtyard by the original front door, that for me, as a child, had a magical charm and the feel of those long ago gardens you might find in Williamsburg.”

The photos here are from those booklets passed down by owners. This legacy reinforces how very special the house is. We who’ve been fortunate enough to own the house and live here want to be sure its history is not lost. ■



The back of the house under construction. Note the pine tree at the chimney, placed during a traditional “topping out” ceremony after the roof beam is put in place.



The house looks finished in this snowy photo, but look closely and you’ll see construction braces to the left. The house looks just like this today.



# Concert celebrates the Winter Solstice, feeds your soul

By Pamela Brown



The Winter Solstice marks the first day of astronomical winter in the Northern Hemisphere. To celebrate the shortest day and longest night of winter, Open Sky Yoga Barn (OSYB) in Redding will host its annual Winter Solstice Concert with Crystal Cymbalogy on Wednesday, December 21 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

“This event is community sharing around seasonal change and connects us to the cycles of the Earth and the seasons,” said Co-Host Cathy Whelehan, owner of OSYB. Established in 2011, the Barn hosts monthly events, including sound healing restorative classes and yoga workshops. Though closed during the pandemic, it re-opened to students and events in spring 2022.

Held in the yoga studio, the Winter Solstice Concert offers a unique celebration, including a captivating synthesis of dancing, singing, music, and meditating. “Listening to really beautiful music is nourishing, especially when it’s healing vibration. It’s contemplative and freeing,” said Whelehan.

Lifelong musicians and sound artists Cynthia and Rick Quintanal of Crystal Cymbalogy will be co-hosting the event with Cynthia as the concert’s guide and lead voice. Also performing will be John

Marshall on world percussion, Dave Anderson on bass, and Prémik Russell Tubbs on wind instruments.

The concert will start as a ritual with traditional opening directions and creating sacred space. “We then connect to the energy present in the room which can include you, your angels and guides, your ancestors, and the ancestors of this place,” said Cynthia. “As the musicians, we open ourselves to become essentially the vessels or, if you will, channels for the music to be played. In a way, the audience, which includes more than people plays us. My job is to hold that sacred space and not drop everyone.”

Cynthia has hosted solstice celebrations for more than ten years. “Crystal Cymbalogy is a Sound Healing experience totally improvised in the moment with channeled song, meditation, and drumming. The core is Rick and myself with crystal singing bowls and drums, hand pan, and some other unusual instrumentation,” she said.

Throughout the concert, everyone will find what works for them, Whelehan explained. “You can dance, meditate, sing, lay down, and receive whatever you’re feeling on that night,” she continued. Chairs, blankets, and

bolsters are available for comfort.

According to Cynthia, the goal is for each person to reflect the beauty and love that each person is and brings to the world. “People often say afterward they received messages and visions during the concert. Our intention is simply healing in whatever way each person present needs.”

If the weather allows, OSYB’s 11 circuit, 66-foot energy-healing labyrinth will be lit by candlelight for guests to walk the path and re-connect mind-body-spirit. Guests can set an intention, open their mind and heart, and prepare themselves to receive answers and insights about their life.

“It’s pretty powerful in a group, and doing it on a solstice has more significance,” noted Whelehan. “This is a loving, welcoming space with great energy – it shifts your perspective out of a negative mindset.”

Cynthia believes it’s time for people to honor the ancient wisdom everyone holds within themselves. “Folks are craving something more, something deeper than all of the holiday hoopla we get pulled into,” she said. “We can only hope that we help folks touch into their birthright of their own power and wisdom in the turning of the season to mid-winter and the return to the light.”

Whelehan agrees. “We live in a world of disruption and violence, and I’m hoping people experience a connection to themselves and have some sense of peace, especially in a season that is about peace.” ■

*Winter Solstice Celebration at Open Sky Yoga Barn, 95 Cross Highway. Admission: \$35 at the door; register in advance by emailing: cynsongs@icloud.com.*

## Fiscal year 2024 budget planning begins *your questions answered* *Continued from page 1*

The BOF has scheduled a public hearing on town and school (excluding Joel Barlow High School) spending for March 20, 2023. By then, the budgets will have taken shape, but it’s an ideal time to give the boards feedback. Changes can still be made. A subsequent Town Meeting will then set a date for a referendum, so that residents will have the convenience of being able to go to the polls any time between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. to cast their ballots for or against the overall budget.

**Many residents are interested in the new mil rate following the recent increase in property assessment values. When and how will the Board of Finance determine the fiscal year 2024 Mil Rate?**

The BOF will not determine a new mil rate until the voters approve the budget. That usually takes place in early May. The mil rate reflects the total budget, spread across all the taxable property in Redding.

The good news is that home values in all price ranges tended to rise, since the last revaluation, at about the same level of increase: 28%. That suggests that most people will not notice a sharp increase or decrease in their tax bills. Of course, the value of some individual homes may have increased a lot more or less than 28%, so their tax bills could experience more variation.

**What happens if the budget does not pass in the vote/referendum?**

Taxpayers vote on a single budget that combines town and Redding school spending, including a portion of the Region 9 budget, if it also passes. If that total budget fails, then the BOS and Redding BOE reconsider their portions of the budget and try to determine whether to raise, lower, or sustain the spending levels that they propose. As a practical

matter, however, budgets that fail tend to get reduced.

**What would you recommend for town residents who may be new to the budget process? Any words of wisdom to keep in mind?**

I have heard many voters express surprise that the BOF members do not discuss budgets in more depth by the time they vote on them toward the end of the budget cycle. This is because the many factors that the BOF considers will have already been discussed throughout the year and even in previous years. To be aware of those same factors, residents should tune into BOF, BOS, and BOE meetings whenever possible, to get to know what will influence the level of overall town spending.

The BOF, in particular, has facilitated public access by remaining on Zoom. Seniors who don’t like to drive at night, parents who need to tend to young children, or busy residents who want to grab dinner while the meetings are underway can all conveniently observe – and comment – from the comfort of home. This consequence of the pandemic has been wonderful for interaction with the public.

Although residents often come to budget hearings with a particular item of spending in mind, I hope they will also consider that Redding has many needs. Since the town doesn’t have unlimited resources, we must make certain to allocate enough money for everything from plowing the roads, ensuring adequate police protection, educating our students, repaying debt, and supporting all the other functions that occur at town hall and at the schools. ■

*Additional information can be found at [townofreddingct.org/about-redding/boards-commissions/board-of-finance](http://townofreddingct.org/about-redding/boards-commissions/board-of-finance)*

## Why Redding?

# Space for horses and a love of old homes

By Jessie Wright



Photos by Jessie Wright  
Scott MacMillan and Alexandra Scanlan moved to Redding in August 2020.



Neighbors may recognize the “Riding in Redding” sign on Redding Road.

When Scott MacMillan went to get a library card after moving to Redding, he didn’t need much in the way of identification.

Making small talk with Midge, the woman assisting him at Mark Twain Library, MacMillan mentioned that he had just moved to town and that his wife runs a small horse farm. “Oh, you’re the people with the sign!” MacMillan recalls her saying immediately. “She knew everything about me, just from the word horses.”

Redding’s small-town connections had made the moment possible and are something MacMillan and his wife, Alexandra Scanlan, have enjoyed most since moving here in August 2020. “Midge is the wife of Gordon who is friends with Stuart who we met

through Kate,” MacMillan said, rattling off a list of new friends and neighbors whom they have met since making Redding home.

MacMillan and Scanlan moved to Redding with their seven-year-old daughter after spending five years in the Windsor Terrace neighborhood of Brooklyn. As part of the self-described “class of 2020” – residents who moved to town amidst the surge in relocations during the Covid pandemic – the impetus to move had come from the shutdowns, but the stirrings of leaving the city had begun earlier.

As their daughter began to grow older, they had wondered if life in the city long-term was for them. “You get to that point where around 3 or 4 (years old) you think, ‘wait,

are we apartment/city people, is that what’s happening?’” laughed Scanlan.

“It’s funny because your memory plays tricks on you,” MacMillan said. “When I just look back relying solely on my memory, we decided when the pandemic happened and the shutdown happened... we decided to move then. But actually, if you look back at the e-mail trails, we’d identified this back in January (2020).”

The final push to make the move a reality came with a Fathers’ Day camping trip to upstate New York in June 2020. “When it was time to go back home, my daughter threw a fit,” Scanlan said. “She didn’t want to go back to Brooklyn.” They began seriously house-hunting immediately after their

return.

Scanlan recalled telling their real estate agent, ““We have two boxes to tick – I want horses, and my husband wants – a haunted house.” MacMillan had always thought it would be neat to live in an old house. “Footnote,” MacMillan said, “Be careful what you wish for.” Their new house, built in 1850, was the second one they saw during their search. Its unique scalloped shingles and fully outfitted horse barn in the back yard sealed the deal.

Following her life-long passion for horses and horseback riding, Scanlan gives horseback riding lessons now through “Riding in Redding”, a business which she advertises with a sign many residents may recognize from driving by their new home on Redding Road. In New York, she had given lessons in Prospect Park for several years through Kensington Stables; her family’s move to Redding opened an opportunity for her to start her own business.

“This is for kids who love horses and parents can’t particularly afford it. I think that horses and horseback riding is the most beautiful thing in the world,” Scanlan said. “All I want is for kids to learn how to speak to a horse.”

“Riding in Redding” also has provided the family with connections and new people to meet, something that was sometimes difficult when relocating during the shutdowns.

“It helped a lot that there was a built-in community – at a time when nobody was meeting anybody,” MacMillan explained. “We were very lucky that we soon got to know people.”

MacMillan still has his job in communications with BRAC USA, an international non-profit based in New York City, commuting into the city a handful of times each month. The introduction of remote work at his company made a move to Redding possible. “The whole equation changed,” MacMillan said. “You’re looking at a different radius if you have to go in say two days a week.” He published his first book in August 2022, *Hope Over Fate*, on the life and legacy of BRAC’s founder, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed.

MacMillan has enjoyed Redding’s open spaces and hiking since moving to town. He is now a volunteer “Trail Tender” through the Conservation Commission and Redding Land Trust, maintaining a designated section of hiking trails in the area.

The family finds much of their life in Redding now revolves around work on their property and school activities. They enjoy going to Topstone Park and Concerts on the Green in the summer. And after his initial friendly outing to get his library card, MacMillan continues to enjoy valuable connections through The Mark Twain Library: he will be giving an author talk there on December 15 for his new book. ■

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# Local restaurants celebrate the holidays with creative events

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of The Redding Roadhouse



Photo courtesy of Note Kitchen & Bar / The Giggling Pig

The community is offering many fun ways to get into the holiday spirit this year. Two local restaurants, Redding Roadhouse and Note Kitchen & Bar in Bethel, will host festive events this month for both children and adults.

### Santa at the Roadhouse

The jolly man in the red suit will make a special appearance at The Redding Roadhouse on December 11 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Santa will be welcoming children of all ages to stop by for a visit to share their Christmas list with him. Parents are encouraged to bring cameras to capture the special memories. Tickets to see Santa are \$25 per family and include a hot chocolate bar and holiday refreshments. The admission price also includes a bourbon tasting for adults.

“We’re a local establishment, so an event like this is great for the community and for all the kids in town,” said owner Shawn Reilly on Santa’s second annual visit to the restaurant. “Kids can talk to Santa and share their Christmas wishes.” Throughout the afternoon, Santa will read holiday classics to the children, such as “Twas the Night Before Christmas.

“We try to enhance it each year. People can come and have brunch, enjoy a cocktail, the kids can see Santa, and they can browse the handwork of local artisans,” continued Reilly.

Local craftspeople from Fair- field County, many from Red- ding, will be showcasing a variety of handcrafted gifts and stocking stuffers. Some of the items include hand-poured beer can candles by Candle Collaborative; unique handmade jewelry by Bead Free

Forever and Erin DeLuca Jewel- ry; pet accessories by Stephanie Lauren; and creative hand-paint- ed oyster shell ornaments by Amy Chaple. For dessert lovers, there will be homemade cupcakes by La Comida Social; custom dec- orated sugar cookie from Little Birdie; and sweet treats from Lit- tle Gem.

In addition, the Roadhouse’s General Store will be open and fully stocked with all kinds of sweet treats from local Connecti- cut businesses, including nostal- gic candy, chocolate, and gummy candy, as well as mugs, books, stationery, and flowers.

“Most people make a day of it,” said Reilly. “It’s a fun event. There’s drinking, eating, and all kinds of great stuff to celebrate the holidays.”

*The Redding Roadhouse, 406 Redding Road. To reserve time with Santa, call (203) 938-3388. More information at thereddin- groadhouse.com.*

### Holiday Paint & Party

Novice and experienced artists alike are welcome at the Holiday Paint & Party on December 15 at 7:00 p.m. at Note Kitchen & Bar. Attendees can tap into their creativity by learning to paint a picture of a winter cardinal while spending time with family and friends. Note Kitchen & Bar, in collaboration with The Giggling Pig, both located in downtown Bethel, are co-hosting this second-annual holiday event.

“These events are great fun. Prior to Covid, we offered them monthly and we decided to bring it back,” said Tony Heslin, owner of Note Kitchen & Bar. “We try to collaborate with local business- es and organizations as much as possible – it takes a community.

Sherie (Barge) and The Giggling Pig have a wonderful organiza- tion. They’re always fun to work with.”

A \$45 per person admission fee includes complete instruc- tions, a light appetizer, and a glass of beer, wine, or cocktail. “It’s a time to just eat, drink, laugh, and party,” said Heslin.

Sherrie Barge, studio instructor and professional art teacher, will guide participants step-by-step through the painting process. At the end of the night, participants take home an artistic masterpiece. “Our goal is for each person to have fun and experience some- thing new they wouldn’t do every day,” said Alexandra Loh, owner of The Giggling Pig, an art studio that offers a wide range of class- es, camps, workshops, and parties for every age and level.

“Tony owns a few local busi- nesses and has been such a benefi- cial addition to downtown Bethel. Note has a great appreciation for artforms of all types, so it is the perfect fit for a collaboration between our businesses,” said Loh who has been working with local small businesses and large corpo- rations since 2011. “It’s very im- portant to us to support our com- munity. Our goal is to bring art to as many people as possible and to create an environment where all are welcome and special.”

These events are the perfect way to celebrate the holidays and gather with a group of friends and family, Loh explained. “Hav- ing the painting activity makes the evening perfect for all ages of adults to join the fun and try something new.” ■

*Note Kitchen & Bar, 227 Greenwood Ave, Bethel. More information and tickets are avail- able at notekitchen.com or by calling (203) 917-3411.*

# Christmas light show running this December

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Becca Mowrey

If you love the seasonal twin- kling of Christmas lights, you’ll be mesmerized by the Christmas Light Show Spectacular.

Walnut Hill Community Church in Bethel will present this entertaining event on Satur- day and Sunday nights from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. between De- cember 10-18. Now in its fourth year, this free event features thou- sands of lights timed to Christmas music classics. No registration is required to attend.

“We wanted to offer a free, family-friendly event to bless the community during the Christmas season,” said Becca Mowrey, Di- rector of Worship & Arts. “This proved to be a wonderful event during the Covid-19 season when everything shut down. Families were still able to pile in their cars and enjoy a Christmas show de- spite many other events being canceled that year.”

The show features thou- sands of LED lights hung on and around the church building. “They’re computer programmed and synced up to five different Christmas songs. Most, if not all, will be familiar to viewers. Our lighting technicians program new songs each year to keep it fresh and exciting,” explained Mowrey. Each presentation is approxi-

mately 25 minutes in length with shows running every half hour. The last show starts at 8:30 p.m. Friendly parking attendants will be on hand to offer safe direction into and out of the parking lot. At- tendees will be notified when it’s time to tune their radios to 99.3 FM for the holiday music that ac- companies the show.

The show is perfect for all ages. “It’s long enough to make it worth the drive out and short enough to keep the attention span of little ones! It’s a great way to start or end your night out,” Mowrey said. “Swing by and check out the show before or af- ter dinner with the family. I love stopping by Dunkin and getting hot chocolate for my family on our way to the light show.”

Mowrey said the light show is a wonderful way to get in the spir- it of the holiday season. “With all the hustle and bustle these days, it’s easy to get buried in busy- ness. Take a half hour out of your weekend, sit back, relax, and en- joy the Christmas Light Show.” ■

*Christmas Light Show Spec- tacular, Walnut Hill Community Church, Bethel Campus, 156 Wal- nut Hill Road, Bethel. For more information, visit: walnuthillcc. org/events/*



## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# A touch of the exotic at Old Redding Farm

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Old Redding Farm Catherine and John Kearns



Ayam Cemani chickens at Old Redding Farm

In search of unique gifts for the holidays, warm threads for the winter, or even the start to your very own flock of exotic chickens? Old Redding Farm, an upstart farm run by husband-and-wife team Catherine and John Kearns, has you covered.

In 2019, the Kearns founded Old Redding Farm on a 1.8-acre parcel of land on Old Redding Road, near the intersection with Umpawaug Road. Due to the size of the property and town zoning regulations, however, they could only have up to 50 chickens and five alpacas.

“We started off selling chicken eggs and small flower bouquets at the end of our driveway,” John said. “Now, we sell alpaca products like hats, gloves, dryer balls, and yarn, as well as hatching eggs for exotic breeds of chickens.”

One such breed is the Ayam Cemani, a rare bird hailing from Indonesia. Due to the chicken’s genetics, the animal’s beak, feathers, and even organs are black.

As the farm grew, they began to feel limited by the space. Two years after founding Old Redding Farm, the Kearns came across

a real estate opportunity they couldn’t turn down and moved the endeavor to a 30-acre property in Sandy Hook — right off Route 34, and as luck would have it, near another alpaca farm.

The Kearns started their farm for a relatively straightforward reason: John, a city guy from Norwalk, always wanted to build stuff, and Catherine, who grew up in Fairfield, always had a love for animals.

“At first, we were looking at sheep,” John said. “But one day, an ad for someone selling alpacas came across our desk, and we paid

them a visit. The rest is history.”

Old Redding Farm is truly a family operation. John’s parents recently purchased the property next to the farm, and the husband-and-wife team are working on convincing Catherine’s mom to move up to Sandy Hook, too.

With nearly 10,000 subscribers on YouTube and 3,000 followers on Instagram, the farm has an impressive social media following (both accounts are @ OldReddingFarm). On YouTube, you’ll find all sorts of how-to videos the Kearns have made that teach viewers how to do things like set up an electric fence or build a greenhouse from recycled windows, along with content explaining what it’s like to live on a farm. The farm’s Instagram page is also filled with hundreds of images and stories about the realities of farm life.

Looking to the future, the Kearns have big plans for additional unique offerings.

“Our emus should start laying eggs in the next year, and we will sell hatching eggs for them,” John explained. “I just started getting into chainsaw carving, so hopefully we’ll be offering things like that down the road as well.”

While Old Redding Farm isn’t open to the public for visiting yet, the Kearns hope they’ll be able to do that soon. Interested neighbors and customers can find them this holiday season at several upcoming craft fairs, including the Redding Artisan Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 10, which runs from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at John Read Middle School. ■

*For more information on Old Redding Farm, visit oldreddingfarm.com.*

Are you enjoying the Sentinel?

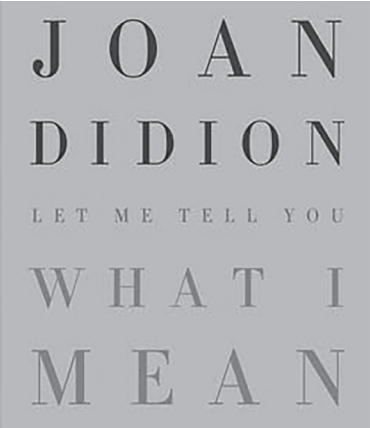
Consider giving a gift subscription to family or friends this holiday season! e-mail subscribe@reddingsentinel.org or call 203.938.3800 and we'll set it up for you.



BOOK REVIEW

Let Me Tell You What I Mean

By Joan Didion 192 pp. Knopf. \$16



Joan Didion had a sharp eye and a keen ear, but her great strength was her voice and how she chose to use it. In these compositions, that voice carries thoughtful perceptions into the stratosphere. *Let Me Tell You What I Mean* is a collection of 12 essays, written between 1968 and 2000, published in 2021 just before she died. These are fortifying features through which her distinctive style brings attitude to insight. By choice of content and a studied way with words, she conveys insight on the power of ironic projection. Once, for example, she described a Las Vegas wedding chapel by its motto: “Sincere and dignified since 1954.” Little need be added to a foretelling of catastrophe contained in that quiet claim. Didion is not immune to self-incrimination. From her essay, “Why I Write”: “...but there’s no getting around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully, an invasion, an imposition of the writer’s sensibility on the reader’s most private space.” Her writing is like a secret passageway to understanding something you didn’t know about,

hadn’t considered, or failed to astutely analyze. Her voice comes forward with the soft authority of that shy but highly intelligent observer in the back of the room. She is a master of the summary observation. Like the child with the last word in Eudora Welty’s *Petrified Man* of 1941 (If you’re so smart, why ain’t you rich?), Didion presents deeper understanding of, say, media misapprehensions of Martha Stewart, who began her empire at Turkey Hill Farms in Westport, CT: “The dreams and the fears into which Martha Stewart taps are not of ‘feminine’ domesticity but of female power, of the woman who sits down at the table with the men and, still in her apron, walks away with the chips.” Didion’s writing has broad appeal. She wrote novels, and with her husband, John Gregory Dunne, wrote successful film scripts, among them a screenplay adaptation of her own novel, *Play It As It Lays* (1971), the screenplay for *A Star is Born* (1976), and a stage play based on her book, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (2007). Over the years, Joan Didion’s work has found a devoted audience. A media figure herself throughout a long career, her essays stand out as exceptional. By positioning that final, piquant observation of Martha Stewart’s success in her last published book, she leaves the reader with inference about her own reputation. In a dominantly masculine world, she not only survived – she walked away with the chips. ■

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

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

As I write this column, our merry band of volunteers are buzzing about the Library, setting up for our 50th anniversary Golden Jubilee Art Show fundraiser. The excitement is palpable, not only because of this special anniversary year, but also because we will be returning to a bit of normalcy that we haven’t seen since 2019. While reading through some pamphlets recently donated to our archive, I came across some remembrances of fundraisers from yesteryear. The first fundraiser for the Library’s building fund was instituted by Mark Twain himself. When he entertained visitors at his Stormfield home, he charged male guests a dollar to retrieve their luggage at the end of their stay. The

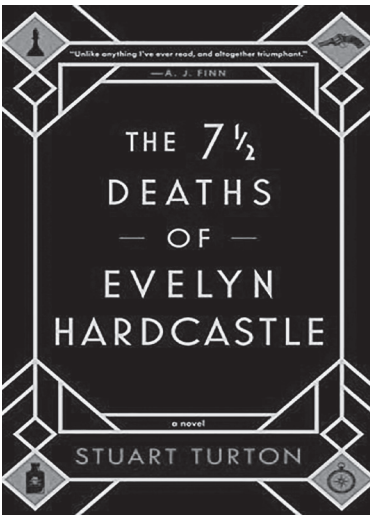
proceeds from this went directly to the Library’s building fund. Twain also hosted several large parties, including one for Helen Keller to publicize her book *The World I Live In*, and a concert featuring his daughter and son-in-law that attracted 600 guests. Around this time in 1908, there was a women’s group that would meet often to sew clean rags into narrow strips that were wound into balls. These were made into rag rugs to later be sold at an annual fair for the Library. The fair would take place at the end of August before Labor Day to attract seasonal residents. Another popular fundraiser of the past was the annual “Library Dance.” This dance took place

the Saturday of Labor Day weekend and marked the end of the social summer in Redding. The bookshelves were removed from the library and the floor polished. Phonograph records provided the music and – especially during prohibition – it was popular to take a swig in a car outside between songs. There is no doubt that the town of Redding has always rallied around the Library to raise important funds to keep us in operation. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten



Stuart Turton

Ah, the holidays! Always fun, but also always busy – so if you just want a good mystery with puzzles, twists, and a little time travel thrown in... *The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* by Stuart Turton is the perfect choice. To quote one reviewer, it is “a breathlessly addictive locked-room mystery that follows one man’s race against time to find a killer, with an astonishing time-turning twist that means nothing, and no one are quite what they seem.” I am not sure I could have summarized it better. This original and utterly unique novel was inspired by Agatha Christie’s work and won numerous awards after its publication in 2018. Not only is it virtually impossible to describe it is also truly impossible to put it down. Have fun! ■

Police round-up

Holiday season brings theft and gifts

By Regan B. Purcell

It’s no secret that the holiday season often coincides with increased criminal activity. Some of the most memorable holiday movies have plot lines that involve breaking and entering, fraud, and theft (*Home Alone*, *Bad Santa*, and *The Ref*, to name a few). As we gear up for the holidays, residents of Redding should remain vigilant to ensure their homes and property are safe, preventing any Grinch-like hijinks that could put a damper on festive cheer. A recent incident of theft occurred on Lonetown Road, with a resident reporting several checks that were stolen from their postal box near the Town Green and cashed. The Postal Inspector was notified of the incident and the police will continue to investigate the matter further. Crimes of opportunity are crimes that are committed without any planning in advance and often happen when a perpetrator sees a chance to act in the moment and takes it. These are some of the most frequently reported incidents in the United States. Tracking all packages and requesting signature upon delivery can help safeguard against these crimes. Asking your neighbors for help collecting mail or receiving boxes if you are out of town will also help stop anyone who might be tempted to “grab and go”.

The holidays also often place an enormous emphasis on shopping. For some, this means buying presents for loved ones and finding the perfect gift that will brighten their day. However, not everyone has the discretionary funds available for purchases they want to make for themselves or others. The Redding Police Department (RPD) has stepped up year after year with the *Operation Blue Santa* initiative, helping the residents of Redding by ensuring that the holidays will be a little brighter for those in need. Every year with the help of the school administration, the RPD chos es two students from each public school in town. They also work with the Department of Social Services to identify three local families and three senior citizens who may need financial assistance. They then purchase toys and presents along with any other items that may be needed for the students, families, and senior citizens. All donations are made anonymously. A large portion of the funds used to purchase gifts for *Operation Blue Santa* come from the annual golf tournament at The Redding Country Club which raises funds for the RPD. Residents and businesses can also participate by mailing a tax-deductible contribution to:

**The Redding Police Fund**  
**Redding Police Department**  
**96 Hill Road**  
**Redding, CT 06896**  
**c/o Blue Santa**

For Redding residents who prefer to take a more active approach to giving back this holiday season, the RPD has joined forces with the Ridgefield Police Department to participate in the Penguin Plunge. The event will support more than 10,000 athletes of all abilities who take part in Special Olympics Connecticut’s sports training and competitions. For those brave enough to enter the frigid waters, the Penguin Plunge will take place at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 18 at Martin Park Beach in Ridgefield. To join in the fun, participants need to be at least eight years old and raise a minimum of \$100. If you prefer to stay dry and support from the sidelines, you can visit [give.soct.org/team/467166](http://give.soct.org/team/467166) to help raise funds. There will be prizes awarded for top fundraiser and best costume, along with incentive prizes for fundraising efforts. All spectators are welcome! Celebrating the holidays is that much sweeter when we support our fellow residents and give back to worthy causes. ■



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Redding Logic Puzzle

By Keara Champagne

Five friends have each had a busy day in Redding. Can you figure out where each person was at what time based on the six clues below? Use the table below to select only one location and one time for each of the five friends - there can only be one friend at each location as well as at each time.

	Julia	Tommy	Lily	Jared	Sarah	9:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.
Topstone										
Mark Twain Library										
Putnam Park										
Boys and Girls Club										
New Pond Farm										
9:00 a.m.										
12:00 p.m.										
3:00 p.m.										
5:00 p.m.										
7:00 p.m.										

- Clues:
1. Neither Julia nor Jared were at Topstone.
  2. Lily was at the Mark Twain Library but not at 3:00 p.m.
  3. Whoever was at the Boys and Girls Club was there at 12:00 p.m.
  4. Sarah was at Putnam Park at 7:00 p.m.
  5. Jared was at his location at 3:00 p.m.
  6. Whoever was at Topstone was there at 5:00 p.m.



THE NATURAL WORLD

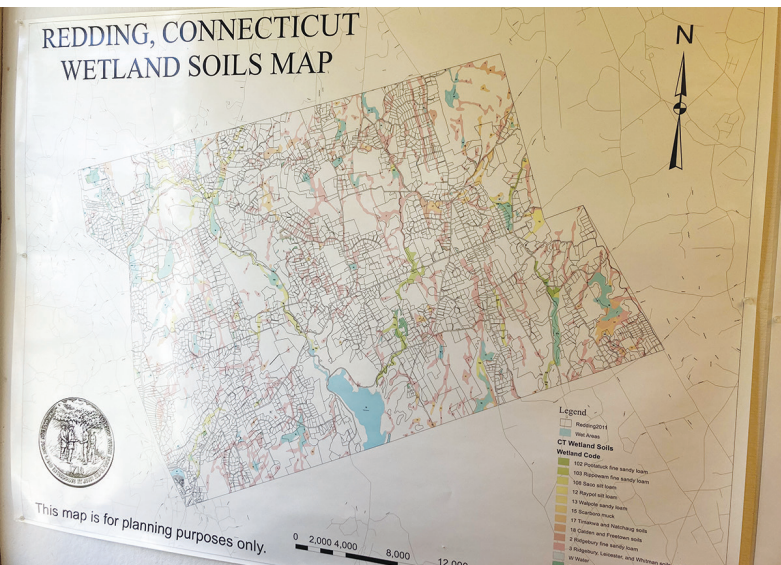
Protecting Redding’s wetlands
The Conservation Commission and its work to preserve our natural resources | By Jessie Wright



Photos by Jessie Wright
The Couch Hill Preserve on Sunset Hill Road.



Redding’s Conservation Commission manages over 2,000 acres of Town-owned open space.



Protecting inland wetlands is the Conservation Commission’s primary focus.

Local bikers, walkers, and trail runners may be familiar with the three connecting fields along Sunset Hill Road just inside the entrance to Collis P. Huntington State Park. Lush with meadow grasses and panoramic sunset views, these fields are favorites of both wildlife and recreational hikers. What may surprise you, however, is that they are part of the Couch Hill Preserve, a Town-owned open space altogether separate from Huntington State Park. As such, their care and stewardship are managed by the Redding Conservation Commission.

“It’s a 34-acre piece of property that the Town purchased years ago,” explained David Pattee, Chair of Redding’s Conservation Commission. “It’s been designated as an important bird area for bobolinks. It’s one of the few in the state that attracts bobolinks.”

Recent years have seen declining numbers of bobolinks nesting in the preserve. Invasive plants like poison ivy have taken hold in certain areas, and the Commission suspects that is affecting the tall grasses where the birds like to nest near to the ground.

“We discovered several years ago that what we really needed to

do was put lime on the fields to essentially change the pH of the soil to discourage some of the invasives that don’t like higher pH conditions,” said Pattee. “So this past summer we did another liming project and we wanted to do some fertilization on the fields to encourage grass growth – and it just cost too much money. I’m planning to try to get enough money in the budget for this next year so that we can do the fertilization.”

This is just one of the many projects that Redding’s Conservation Commission manages in their charge to preserve and protect the town’s natural resources, in particular its inland wetlands. In a town like Redding, which boasts roughly 40% of its area as open space in one form or another, the work of the Commission is all the more important.

“We’re in charge of all the Town-owned open space.... which is over 2,000 acres,” said Pattee. The Commission also manages issuing permits to residents and companies who may want to begin “earth-moving” projects on private property. The Commission ensures that any new project is undertaken with the protection of wetland areas and their natural ecosystems

in mind. “Our primary work really is wetlands, giving people a permit to do work, and making sure that the work is done so that it protects the wetlands or the stream,” explained Pattee.

An inland wetland can be defined in many ways, but in the state of Connecticut, it is defined by soil type. The state has a manual that describes the type and characteristics of soil deemed to be “wetlands soil”. “It depends on the groundwater level creating the type of soil,” explained Pattee. The Commission works with soil scientists all over the state to conduct on-site testing when there is a proposed project to determine where the protected areas lie.

What makes inland wetlands so important? “In addition to essentially having an area that absorbs a lot of water when it rains and releases it slowly, so you don’t get flooding in certain areas, it provides a habitat for certain creatures that don’t live anywhere else,” said Pattee. “So it’s important from both aspects.”

Salamanders, fairy shrimp, wood frogs, and a host of other creatures and plants thrive in inland wetlands. Redding’s regulations are designed to protect these

creatures and their habitats.

“We were the first town in the state of Connecticut to have a specific vernal pool regulation,” said Pattee, “because we discovered a couple of vernal pools on a project.” According to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, vernal pools are seasonal depressional wetlands, which are covered by shallow water for variable periods from winter to spring but may be completely dry during the summer and fall. The Conservation Commission worked with an expert on salamanders upon discovering these vernal pools, who explained that certain species use the pools to lay their eggs in spring and then burrow into the ground nearby.

Protecting the wetlands also has an impact on the quality of water serving the local area. “That’s important here in town because 89% of the town is in the watershed of a reservoir,” explained Pattee. “So we want to try to keep things reasonably pristine and not have a lot of silt and sediment running off and into the streams and into the reservoirs.”

The Commission also manages a group of volunteer Trail Tenders, who upkeep close to 70 miles of trails. They have several projects on the horizon, some engaging professional construction companies as well, including the building of a new boardwalk in Lonetown Marsh and repairs to a few bridges, including the one across the Saugatuck River in the Saugatuck Falls Natural Area, which has boards that are starting to deteriorate.

The Conservation Commission is made up of seven members who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Many are long-time members, some serving for several decades. Pattee, who has lived in Redding for 50 years, and whose background is in conservation and wastewater treatment, is in his 34th year on the Commission. “Most of the time it’s fun,” he said. “I figure with my environmental background it’s a good fit to provide some service to the town, and I enjoy the people who are on the Commission with me. We’ve all known each other for a long time.” ■

Join the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count | By Jessie Wright

Grab your binoculars and participate in a community science project undertaken by the National Audubon Society each holiday season. The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was first started in 1900 by conservationists to promote counting, rather than hunting, birds. Today, it has become one of the Audubon Society’s

longstanding programs, creating an early-winter bird census across the western hemisphere and relying on the involvement of community residents and volunteer bird enthusiasts.

This year, the CBC will take place from December 14 – January 5. Participating regions are divided into established 15-mile diam-

eter count “circles”, within which bird counters go out on one designated day along specified routes and report every bird they see or hear. Participation is free and open to all, though counters must register and arrange their participation before the CBC count begins.

Results from the annual CBC aid bird conservation efforts across

the region and are used in scientific studies and reports. According to the Audubon Society, “CBC data have been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications, and government reports over the decades.”

Redding residents interested in the CBC may want to participate in one of several nearby circles

accepting additional counters. Circles based in Greenwich-Stamford, Westport, Stratford-Milford, Oxford, and Woodbury-Roxbury are each still open for registration. ■

To learn more or to register for the CBC, visit [audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count](http://audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count).

The Firehouse Trail / Continued from page 1

is quite flat and features frequent views of the Saugatuck River and its surrounding wetlands. Expect to see abundant waterfowl, although on a recent cold December morning, there was only one sighting of geese flying overhead. All mileage is noted from the Umpawaug Road end of the trail.

At about 0.5 miles, the trail takes a turn to the left and begins paralleling the Saugatuck River, which is quite full and fast following recent rainfall. This is a very pleasant and easy hike along the river, as opposed to the Falls Trail which can prove challenging.

At 0.75 miles, you’ll encounter a challenging but beautiful boulder field. It can be hard to decide whether to walk on the rocks or between them. Either way, it’s a good idea to stop for a moment. Enjoy the peaceful sound of birds, geese, and the Saugatuck River flowing by.

After walking approximately one mile, see if you can spot the remnants of the old mill and the bridge that once crossed the river to reach it. This is also where the trail begins to get hilly. At about 1.2 miles you’ll turn left onto the Hardwood Trail. From here, start looking for blue blazes instead of white that will guide the rest of the trail. You will also begin to see mountain laurel on either side of the trail, which makes this a beautiful walk in the late spring. A

little further along, the trail turns up the hill and away from the river.

At 1.43 miles, there is an option to turn left onto the Falls Trail, which features a close-up view of the Saugatuck River’s iconic waterfalls. If you’re not comfortable navigating a rocky riverbank after a rain, you can continue straight along Knapp Way, following the white blazes.

At about 1.5 miles, there is a choice between turning left to take the Oak Trail, which traverses the powerlines and up a beautiful diagonal to meet Knapp Way again, or to continue straight. By staying straight and following Knapp Way, the incline is gentler and there is a lovely stone wall for much of the trip. After another 0.15 miles, the trail bears to the left to follow Knapp Way toward the powerlines.

After crossing the powerlines, at the 2-mile mark you’ll see the end of the Oak Trail to your left. Keep walking straight on the Knapp trail. This will take you toward John Read Middle School. As you continue following Knapp Way to the left, you will wind downhill to a beautiful open meadow. At the end of the meadow, turn left to cross the modern-day bridge over the Saugatuck and end your hike across from John Read Middle School. ■



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies  
R = registration required

ARTS

Friday, Dec. 2 —  
Sunday, Dec. 11

**50th Anniversary Mark Twain Library Art Show**  
Consult the MTL website for times and events  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Writing Workshop: Call & Response**  
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Aldrich Museum  
258 Main Street  
Ridgefield  
thealdrich.org  
\$, R

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Exhibition Tour: Out of the Kress Vaults: Women in Sacred Renaissance Painting**  
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Fairfield University Art Museum  
200 Barlow Road (for GPS location)  
Fairfield  
fairfield.edu/museum/kressvaults  
R

Tuesday, Dec. 20

**Community Messiah Sing Presented by Music on the Hill**  
7:00 p.m.  
Wilton Congregational Church  
70 Ridgefield Road  
Wilton  
musiconthehillct.org

CHILDREN, TEENS

Thursday, Dec. 8

**Indoor Kindergarten Hot Chocolate Story Time**  
4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.  
Wintery stories, mini-movies, and hot chocolate  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Children’s Victorian Christmas Tea Party**  
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Benefits the Bethel Historical Society  
1842 Second Meeting House  
40 Main Street  
Bethel  
bethelhistoricalsociety.com  
\$, R

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Family Day: Family Relationships in Renaissance Art**  
12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Children ages 4 -10  
Fairfield University Art Museum  
200 Barlow Road (for GPS location)  
Fairfield  
fairfield.edu/museum/kressvaults/  
R

Saturday, Dec. 17

**Robotics Workshop: Operation Board Game**  
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Grades 4-6  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, Dec. 17

**Robotics Workshop: Create a Tilt Maze**  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Grades 5-8  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org

CHARITY

Monday, Nov. 21 —  
Wednesday, Dec. 21

**Winter Coat Drive**  
All-hours drop-off  
Men’s clothing needed, including L-XL winter coats, sweatshirts, sweatpants, jeans, and size 8-10 work or hiking boots  
Westbrook Nature School in support of Dorothy Day Hospitality House  
7 Long Ridge Road  
westbrooknatureschool.org

Thursday, Nov. 24 –  
Wednesday, Dec. 14

**Coat and Toy Drive**  
All-hours drop-off  
Collecting winter coats, hats and gloves for children and adults; and clean stuffed animals and children’s books  
First Church of Christ, Congregational in support of Dorothy Day Santa’s Workshop event  
25 Cross Highway (lobby collection boxes)  
firstchurchredding.org

Friday, Dec. 9

**Gifting for Good**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Assemble care packages for The Center for Family Justice  
Grace Farms  
365 Lukes Wood Road  
New Canaan  
gracefarms.org  
R

Friday, Dec. 9 –  
Saturday, Dec. 10

**Savers Fundrive**  
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Friday)  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (Saturday)  
Collecting gently-used clothing in boxes or bags, to support the RES PTA  
Donation collections will be near the cafeteria, accessed through the main Redding Elementary School parking lot  
33 Lonetown Road  
reddingelementaryps.org

CRAFTS

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Redding Artisan Holiday Fair**  
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
John Read Middle School  
486 Redding Road

Sunday, Dec. 11

**4th-Annual Holiday Pop Up**  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Holiday shopping, décor, and music  
Reverie Brewing Co.  
57B Church Hill Road  
Newtown  
newtownmoms.com  
\$

HOLIDAY

Thursday, Nov. 17 —  
Friday, Dec. 18

**Keeler Tavern Holiday Boutique in the Barn**  
Thursdays – Sundays  
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center  
152 Main Street  
Ridgefield  
keelertavernmuseum.org

Friday, Nov. 25 —  
Saturday, Dec. 31

**A Holiday Wonderland at the Mansion**  
Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum  
(Wed. – Fri.) 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m.  
(Sat. – Sun.) 12:00 p.m., 12:30 p.m., 1:00 p.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m.  
295 West Avenue  
Norwalk  
See website for times  
lockwoodmathewsmansion.com  
\$, R

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Breakfast with Santa**  
9:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Enjoy a pancake breakfast while visiting with Santa – proceeds benefit the Melissa McFadden Scholarship Fund.  
Riverbrook Regional YMCA  
404 Danbury Road  
Wilton  
wiltonymca.org  
\$, R

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Stage Play: A Christmas Stocking**  
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Norwalk Public Library - South Norwalk Branch  
10 Washington Street  
Norwalk  
norwalklib.org/104/SoNo

Saturday, Dec. 10

**Redding Town Tree Lighting**  
3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.  
Redding Town Green  
Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

Sunday, Dec. 11

**Jingle Bell Parade and Food Drive**  
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Join Friends of the Second Company Governor’s Horse Guard for a horse parade, holiday music, and food drive  
Fairfield Hills  
Keating Farms Avenue  
Newtown  
www.facebook.com/f2ghg

Sunday, Dec. 11

**Alan Sklar Reads Christmas Stories**  
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Voice actor Alan Sklar will read The Gift of the Magi and A Child’s Christmas in Wales, followed by holiday refreshments  
Ridgefield Library  
472 Main Street  
Ridgefield  
ridgefieldlibrary.org  
R

Sunday, Dec. 18

**Georgetown Holiday Fair**  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Holiday parade, treats, and visits with Santa  
Main Street  
Georgetown

Sunday, Dec. 18

**Stew Leonard’s Menorah Lighting**  
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
With Rabbi Yehoshua Hecht of Beth Israel Chabad of Westport/  
Norwalk  
Followed by live music, kosher refreshments  
100 Westport Avenue  
Norwalk  
stewleonards.com  
R

Wednesday, Dec. 21

**Winter Solstice Welcome Celebration**  
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Pop-in celebration to mark the arrival of winter - bring a friend and/or a treat to share.  
Redding Grange  
399 Newtown Turnpike  
facebook.com/GrangeReddingCT

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, Dec. 15

**Author Talk: Revolutionary Philanthropy – with Author Scott MacMillan**  
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Saturday, Dec. 17

**Wreaths Across America Event at the Ridge Cemetery**  
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  
Fife & drums, regiments, musket shooting  
Sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution and Redding Historical Society  
Redding Ridge Cemetery  
78 Black Rock Turnpike  
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Dec. 19

**World Affairs Forum: Increasing Income Inequality Around the Globe**  
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
In-person and Zoom  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
Marktwinlibrary.org  
R

MEETINGS

Thursday, Dec. 8

**Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee**  
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Zoom  
100 Hill Road  
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Dec. 8

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

Friday, Dec. 9

**ER9 Board of Education Policy Committee**  
9:00 a.m.  
Live or Zoom  
654 Morehouse Road  
Easton  
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Dec. 12

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

Tuesday, Dec. 13

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

Tuesday, Dec. 13

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

Wednesday, Dec. 14

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

Wednesday, Dec. 14

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

Thursday, Dec. 15

**Historic Review Committee**  
7:00 p.m.  
Old Town House  
23 Cross Highway  
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Dec. 15

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

Friday, Dec. 16

**ER9 Boards of Education Policy Committee**  
9:00 a.m.  
Live or Zoom  
654 Morehouse Road  
Easton  
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Dec. 19

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

This Week’s Featured Events

Pancake Breakfast with Santa / Wilton Family Y

**Saturday, December 10**  
3 seatings: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.  
\$12 per person, children under 2 eat free  
Register online at wiltonymca.org

Redding Artisan Holiday Fair

**Saturday, December 10**  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Crafts, shopping, and refreshments  
John Read Middle School  
486 Redding Road

Redding Town Tree Lighting

**Saturday, December 10**  
3:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.  
Holiday music, food, and scout activities  
Town Green / Hill Road

Want to feature an upcoming event?

E-mail us at [advertise@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:advertise@reddingsentinel.org) for more information.



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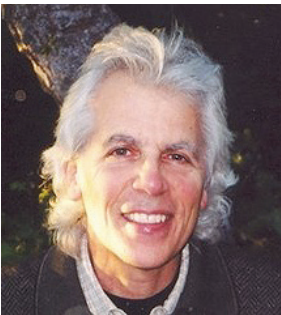
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Peri Barto  
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Applicant subject to credit and underwriting approval (20221102-1745808)

Mary Dent NMLS ID: 260216 | CT - LO-260216 | GRA NMLS ID #1598647 (Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) • CT - Lic # MCL-1598647

Call Mary to discuss  
your mortgage options.



Mary Dent

VP of Mortgage Lending

C: (203) 715-8584  
O: (203) 974-1733

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Mary.Dent@grarate.com

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