

# REDDING SENTINEL



April 23, 2026

REDDING, CONNECTICUT

Volume 5 / Issue 1

\$3

## Budget referendum set for May 5

By Jessie Wright

After a nearly four-month process, the 2026-27 Town Budget will be voted upon at a referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 5.

Eligible voters can visit the polls from 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Redding Community Center at 37 Lonetown Road to weigh in on the approved 2026-27 operating budgets for the Town, Redding Board of Education, and Redding's share of the Region 9 Board of Education (which oversees Joel Barlow High School). Combined, these operating budgets are a 4.83% increase over the current fiscal year.

There also will be three capital expenditure approvals on the ballot, including \$2,208,000 for Town-related projects, \$482,376 for Redding Board of Education projects,

*Continued on page 2*



Photo by Mary Corcoran

A daffodil near Redding Elementary School is cheerfully framed by a row of yellow forsythia in bloom. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, e-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org).

## Georgetown Revitalization plan to be presented to the public

By Rocco Valluzzo

Following months of public engagement and refining of concept options, the Board of Selectmen reviewed the final stages of the Georgetown Revitalization plan at a special meeting on Wednesday, April 15. The plan will be presented to the public on Sunday, May 3 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Redding Community Center.

Pirie Associates, the New-Haven based architectural and landscape firm leading the Georgetown Revitalization project, highlighted the plan's concept areas, strategies for implementation, and a fiscal impact analysis of the plan.

According to Laura Pirie, there were three design options that came out of the first several stages of research and stakeholder engagement. Each looked at a different combination of uses on the site and strategies for incorporating community preferences.

Feedback from community members and the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee favored "Buildings in the Landscape" (option one) and "Drop by and Stay all Day" (option two), which were the options with the least dense residential development, containing between 280 and 370 dwelling units. Development strategy would focus on adoption of a refined plan merging these options, prioritizing lower residential density and commercial character.

There was also strong support for the removal of the dam at the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill site and the restoration of the Norwalk River, the creation of more walking trails, a potential walking connection to the Branchville train station, ice skating and kayaking opportunities, and support for the sustainable implications of restoration. The specific engineering and

environmental details of this move have yet to be determined.

Infrastructure changes would include the realignment of the Portland Avenue intersection near Redding Road and the extension of North Main Street to facilitate future parcel development. Pirie noted that implementation of on-street parking on Route 107 would naturally reduce vehicle speeds through Georgetown.

Proposed zoning changes would allow for incremental, private development (two-and-a-half to three stories) to maintain the existing scale of Main Street. Recommendations include a retail environment with a small town green and a public water feature.

"We're not changing the boundaries of everything, but allowing more readily appropriate development

*Continued on page 3*

## REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

### Following the fun

Rock Lot and Mary Evelyn Scott Nature Preserve

By Tony Gale



Photo by Tony Gale

As winter leaves in fits and starts, getting outside is more and more appealing. Last week, I picked a pleasant afternoon for another hike in our lovely town.

There are still so many trails I have not yet visited, and picking what to explore next can be a challenge. I will sometimes look at *The Book of Trails* online and select something that looks good. The Rock Lot and Mary Evelyn Scott Nature Preserve looked like a fun one, fairly long trails and the map looked interesting. The two areas are adjacent to one another, with the Rock Lot being owned by the Town of Redding and the Scott Preserve by Redding Land Trust. I had originally hoped to do it in the winter, but with the snow

covering the parking area, it just hadn't been practical. Now with that behind us, it felt like a good time.

Parking can be scarce, but there was a lone spot waiting for me at the Rock Lot entrance at 70 Acre Road across from Mine Hill Road.

As I started out, I met a very friendly dog and its owner, pausing for a little bit to say hello. The trail began through a grove of pine trees, with a lovely pine scent in the air. I followed the white blazes through

*Continued on page 15*

## Town-wide property revaluation begins this month

By Jessie Wright

A revaluation of all real property in Redding has begun this month, as the Town works to update property assessments with current market data and on-site inspections.

A revaluation is generally intended to be "revenue neutral" – rather than aiming to increase tax revenues, it is more of a re-balancing or re-cutting of the pie after properties are evaluated at the same point in time. The process is meant to ensure that each property owner is paying their fair share for community services using uniform standards. An increased property assessment value does not necessarily mean an increase in taxes; a person's tax obligation can only be calculated once the Grand List of property is finalized and a mil rate is set by the Board of Finance.

Redding conducts revaluations ever five years, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes; the assessments alternate between "full" revaluations, including on-site and interior property inspections, and "update" revaluations, which include updating the valuation model with recent real estate sales and market data. The revaluation that is now underway is a "full" revaluation.

Every property will be visited between now and fall 2027 by a representative of Vision Government Solutions, the firm selected to conduct the revaluation. These site visits will include a check of exterior measurements, building style, renovations, and condition of the home. If owners allow the representative to walk through the property, he or she will confirm the number of rooms, bathrooms, and interior conditions. All data collectors will wear Vision vests, carry proper credentials, and will knock on the front door of the property. A list of Vision representatives will also be on file with the Redding Police Department, if property owners wish to verify their identity when they arrive.

Property owners also should have received a mailer this month to review the details of their property and make corrections to send back to Vision Government Solutions. Town Assessor John Ford said that if anyone has not received the mailer, they should contact his office at [assessor@reddingct.gov](mailto:assessor@reddingct.gov) or (203) 938-2626 and he can provide one.

Ford noted that property owners should receive a new valuation notice by early December 2027. There also will be instructions on how to set up an informal review with Vision Government Solutions if you disagree with the assessment, after which a formal appeal with the Town's Board of Assessment Appeals may be filed. ■

For more information, visit [vgsi.com/redding-connecticut-2027-revaluation](http://vgsi.com/redding-connecticut-2027-revaluation)

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# EDITORIAL

## State of the Sentinel

In this Anniversary issue each year, we give our readers an update on the *Sentinel* from a financial as well as editorial point of view. Although not legally a non-profit, we pledge to distribute any profits to local community organizations and therefore consider it our duty to keep you informed.

This past year, our fourth, has brought us cost increases just about everywhere. Postage rose 16%, from an average of \$0.44 per copy mailed to \$0.51. Switching to our new printer, Springfield Republican, after Trumbull Printing closed, initially reduced print costs a bit – but overall production costs increased because of the significant expense of transporting copies to Redding from Springfield, MA. From May, a tariff pass-through on ink and printing plates was imposed and increased our total print costs by 2.5%. In December, the printer notified us of a 6% increase in manufacturing costs, which we negotiated down to 3%. There was then a 3.2% increase in newsprint costs imposed in January of this year.

As we head into our fifth year, production costs altogether are up about 25%. Postage up 16%. Software – Wix, MailChimp, FastMail, QuickBooks – all up. Like other small businesses, we have cut costs where we could and raised prices where we had to.

Lest it seem the year was all about cost pressures, total revenue was slightly up in all categories – subscriptions, newsstand, advertising – showing an increase. So, we're down but not out! And we are very grateful to our readers, advertisers, and newsstand outlets.

To increase revenue, we started selling branded merchandise. To expand our reach, we introduced a digital-only subscription and are now on sale at Greiser's in Easton. Atticus Upson, a recent graduate who grew up in Redding, has joined the team to find new advertisers. (You'll find him at [advertise@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:advertise@reddingsentinel.org) if you'd like to reach our readers through the *Sentinel*!)

Editorially, we are excited about several new features. If you haven't seen them yet, do keep an eye out for:

**Ask The Redding Gardener:** Sean McNamara, owner of Redding Nursery, offers local, seasonal advice about trees and plants.

**Redding's Own:** We profile people who grew up in Redding and are doing great things.

**SPARK:** Julie Durkin Marty of GTown Arts brings us a monthly round-up of local art exhibitions and events.

**Redding Kids:** This new section, published quarterly, provides fun and engaging content for the *Sentinel's* youngest readers. It also provides a platform for some of our town's family-oriented community groups to share programming and has become a place to showcase artistic and academic work of many local children.

Our mission at the *Sentinel* is not just to be a community newspaper for Redding, but also to serve as a model for other towns hoping to bring local newspapers back for their residents. So, we're very pleased to be helping groups in Easton and Ridgefield that are working to launch in their towns. We'll keep you posted on their progress, and ours. In the meantime, if you aren't a subscriber to the *Sentinel*, we'd be grateful if you would join us. ■

### Budget referendum set for May 5 / continued from page 1

and \$220,000 for Georgetown Sewer Plant facilities projects.

If voters approve the budget on May 5, the Board of Finance will convene that evening to vote to set a new mil rate.

There is no early voting nor is there same-day voter registration for referendums. The deadline to register to vote is May 4, 2026; the Registrar of Voters office will be holding a limited registration session the day before referendum on May 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall for permanently disabled people, people whose qualifications to vote as to age,

citizenship, or residence was attained after the last session to register prior to an election, or members of the armed forces discharged within the last year.

To register to vote or change your registration before referendum, visit [voterregistration.ct.gov/OLVR/welcome.do](http://voterregistration.ct.gov/OLVR/welcome.do) or visit Town Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Below is a copy of the budget referendum ballot. For more information, visit [reddingct.gov/government/town-administration/registrar-voters](http://reddingct.gov/government/town-administration/registrar-voters). ■

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome Letters to the Editor. Please be clear, civil, and concise. E-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org).

### To the Editor,

In response to the April 16, 2026 Editorial "Why legal notices belong in the community, not hidden on town websites" on the proposed bill H.B. 5289 removing the requirement for legal notices to be published in print.

I appreciate your editorial and perspective. I hope you may share mine: I live in a town that has no print newspaper and has been required to print legal public notices in the *CT Post*, or surrounding print newspapers, which a small fraction of the town subscribes to. The same is true for many other towns. Weston has an online news outlet, but no print.

The question before the legislature, is where the requirement of legal notice should be housed: online, at the one-stop landing page of the town website, (which all towns must maintain), or in print news media, which is considered by many municipal leaders as another "unfunded mandate" from the legislature. I subscribe to both print media and online media sources, and urge all public stakeholders like those who you listed – town, private, state entities, land transactors, permittees – to also continue to post legal notices in the online and print outlets, because the public is the targeted audience, and is (still) spread across both.

Now, as those media landscapes have shifted to where the public's attention is, (more online), the legislature must update its policies as well, to ensure the public is alerted as widely as possible when changes, meetings, or special hearings are noticed that affect the civic life of the community. I continue to advocate that our public notices be posted in both print/news sources and online town websites, but the requirement through H.B. 5289, is now to post legal notices on town websites, where the metrics show most people are regularly searching already to get updated about town notifications. This policy though, does urge stakeholders to continue to post widely across the media continuum, to where people are, and the *Redding Sentinel* continues to be that trusted news source, and I urge all public entities to continue to support trusted media like the *Redding Sentinel* with publishing public notices in good faith to notify the wider public, wherever they are looking, to be informed.

We are striving to balance the need to update the way the public is legally notified across the state, especially in many towns that have no local print news source, with the requirements that the legislature mandates. This is legislation that works to find that balance for the whole state. I hope that we can encourage our partners to support both local trusted news media and their town government as the responsible update to meet the public where they are. ■

State Representative Anne Hughes, Easton, 135th District

### To the Editor,

I had shoulder replacement surgery just a few days before falling one evening this week. My wife, Nita, fearing the worst, called 911, and the West Redding Volunteer Fire Department arrived promptly and in a much-appreciated manner. Because the crew was clearly focused on helping, our fears were eased.

As they arrived, I observed the crew splitting into groups to assess the situation and calmly question my wife about the events leading to the call. Throughout this ordeal, we were kept informed about their plans and given clear explanations at each step. My initial concern was their ability to get me from the bathroom floor to the stretcher and down the flight of steps. Before acting, they clearly described what they were about to do and didn't proceed until I acknowledged my understanding. As we descended the narrow staircase, I became comfortable with their abilities and felt safe in their actions. I could also see relief in my wife's eyes. We are both in our seventies, and events like this make us uncomfortable at best.

Their dedication to duty, concern for the patient's well-being, and overall professionalism are admirable qualities that reflect their long hours of training and their ability to achieve their goal, assuring the safety and well-being of all members of our Redding community. Next time you see an ambulance on our roads, know this: whatever the circumstance, those requiring West Redding Volunteer Fire Department assistance will be treated professionally and with sincerity of purpose. ■

Patrick Alarcon, Granite Ridge Road

With decades of local expertise and a commitment to exceptional service, I provide tailored guidance for every step in your real estate journey.

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Visit [reddingsentinel.org/team](http://reddingsentinel.org/team) to read profiles of our leaders, designers, and writers.

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

Visit our website

**Town of Redding, Connecticut**  
**Official Ballot**  
**Town of Redding and Regional School District No. 9**  
**Budget Referendum May 5, 2026**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS**  
To vote, fill in the oval  completely next to your choice, like this

1. Shall the Town of Redding appropriate the sum of **\$59,473,583** for the annual budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027? (This includes \$18,453,366 for the Town Operating Budget; \$27,570,525 for the Redding Board of Education Budget; and \$13,449,692 for Redding's share of the Region No. 9 Budget)

YES   
NO

2. Shall Regional School District No. 9, composed of the Towns of Easton and Redding, appropriate and authorize the expenditure of **\$27,226,097** as the operating budget of the district for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027? (Easton's share is \$13,776,405 and Redding's share is \$13,449,692)

YES   
NO

3. Shall the Town of Redding approve an expenditure not to exceed **\$2,208,000** for the following: Road improvements (\$1,400,000); Town facilities improvements (\$488,000); Public Works equipment (\$120,000); and Public Safety CAD/RMS systems upgrade (\$200,000) to be funded from the Unassigned Fund Balance or other sources as determined by the Board of Finance?

YES   
NO

4. Shall the Town of Redding approve the expenditure of **\$482,376** for Redding Board of Education school facilities improvements to be funded from the Unassigned Fund Balance or other sources as determined by the Board of Finance?

YES   
NO

5. Shall the Town of Redding approve the expenditure of **\$220,000** for Georgetown Sewer Plant facilities improvements to be funded from the Unassigned Fund Balance or other sources as determined by the Board of Finance?

YES   
NO

# Planners suggest driveway restrictions for accessory apartments

By Rocco Valluzzo

To help preserve town character in keeping with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), the Planning Commission agreed to formally suggest specific regulatory language to the Zoning Commission to prevent secondary driveways for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) at its Tuesday, April 14 meeting.

Commission Chair Laurie Heiss presented research from neighboring towns such as Weston and Stamford to support a “no additional driveway” rule for detached accessory dwelling units. The goal in these cases is to ensure ADUs remain “incidental and subordinate” to the primary residence to preserve two-acre zoning density.

“It could be a sentence that sounds like ‘no additional driveway/curb cut shall be created for the primary purpose of serving the, in this case, a detached apartment,’”

she said. “Weston’s was very similar. Stamford’s was almost identical. That’s something really simple that we can talk to them about.”

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton noted that Redding’s POCD very clearly supports the use of ADUs. She also suggested that the Commission be careful to avoid creating any non-conforming uses in its language and that any proposed changes to accessory apartment regulations should be forwarded to Town Counsel Steve Stafstrom first.

“We should run it by counsel to be sure that we are giving them legal language,” she said. “So anytime we propose a new regulation or new ordinance, before I bring it to the Board of Selectmen, I make sure that Steve or one of his associates has reviewed it.”

Pemberton added that the Town also will be updating sections of

the Zoning Regulations to comply with House Bill 8002, passed into law last November, which requires towns to create housing growth plans and offers incentives for towns to allow for more housing to be built. The bill is a revised version of legislation passed earlier last year by the legislature’s Democratic majority that was vetoed by Governor Lamont after outcry from leaders in Connecticut’s suburban communities who viewed the original legislation as an encroachment on local control.

The Commission will finalize its formal recommendations regarding ADU language and driveway restrictions in a letter to the Zoning Commission.

At the meeting, the Commission also clarified the deadline for updating the POCD is May 2028. A two-year extension is not available.

## Georgetown Revitalization plan to be presented to the public / continued from page 1

on Main Street,” said Pirie. “And then we’ve articulated the design solution into 16, not really parcels, but zones or areas, within the Wire Mill site with particular development strategies.”

The approval process would include public hearings by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Commission, which may revise or adopt the plan. It would then go to the State and the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (West-COG). The plan would be codified as an amendment to Chapter 10 of the Redding Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) rather than a standalone ordinance.

“Once the plan is adopted into the POCD, then Zoning can go ahead and do their work,” explained Pirie. “And it’s that point that the actual parcelization might happen, as pieces of the Wire Mill core are developed strategically as there is interest, as the Town would wish.”

Steve Jacobs of BJH Advisors, a New York-based real estate advisory firm, detailed three revenue sources: property taxes (based on a 70% assessment ratio), sewer fees, and triple-net lease rents from Town-owned buildings. Property tax projections for the Wire Mill site include a 15% discount because

the land remains under a long-term ground lease rather than fee-simple ownership.

The May 3 public session at the Community Center will offer free childcare for those who register for it by April 30. Registration is available at [ctreddingweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web](http://ctreddingweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web) under “Youth Programs.”

*Review the Georgetown Revitalization project materials at [reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project](http://reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project)*



# Harsh winter and contractor issues hamper walking path

By Jessie Wright

Construction of the new walking path around the Community Center fields will need to clear a handful of final hurdles before the project can be completed.

The wheelchair-accessible, half-mile path with benches and fitness stations has been years in the making, funded in part by a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant. Completion had been slated for last fall, but several days of rain and early ground freezes delayed paving until the spring.

Park and Recreation Commission Chair Angela Caes noted at a meeting on April 20 that the particularly harsh winter has caused the need for additional regrading and restoring of washouts in places along the site.

“We have sustained a huge winter, as everybody has seen in their own backyards,” Caes said. “And so, work is being done by Stantec, our engineer, to really assess what are the grades, how do they need to be improved, how does the path move forward.”

In addition, the contractor who was selected to do the construction

work has let his license and insurance expire, said Caes. “We are waiting for his updated paperwork as soon as possible,” she told the Commission. Minutes from the Commission’s October 2025 meeting reference “serious concerns” with the contractor’s responsiveness and paperwork delays and note that a threat of legal action was required to move forward at that time.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said that she will be scheduling the surveyor while the contractor’s compliance paperwork is on hold so that requirement of the project can move forward. She also told the *Sentinel* she does not anticipate any of the STEAP grant funding to be in jeopardy due to delays.

An agenda item at the April 20 meeting for an Executive Session to discuss a potential claim for the walking path project was tabled until Town Attorney Steven Stafstrom could attend.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**ALEXIS CHARTRAND & NIC GAREISS. Fri. April 24**

**APPALACHIAN FLATFOOTING WORKSHOP. Sat. April 25**

**THE WAY IT IS. Sun. April 26**

**MASS ENERGY HEALING. Weds. April 29, May 6, May 13**

**BLUEGRASS NIGHTS. Thus. April 30**

**KATE KEELER EXHIBIT: ARTIST TALK. Sat. May 2**

**HARMONY SINGING WORKSHOP. Mons. May 4, 11, 18**

**MOVING MEDITATION WITH LIVE MUSIC. Wed. May 6**

**ROCK HEARTS. Fri. May 8**

**KATE KEELER EXHIBIT: RECEPTION & CONCERT. Sat. May 9**

**SWING DANCE WITH TOO BLUE AND FRIENDS. Fri. May 15**

**LOVE’S ARC: DESIRE & HEARTBREAK. Sun. May 17**

[thegranitechurch.org](http://thegranitechurch.org)



# POLICE BLOTTER

## Police activity from April 6 – 19

By Donna Christopher

Police responded to seven emergency medical service calls, one fire department call, and eight citizen assistance calls. They issued four firearms permits and conducted two animal control investigations.

### Traffic

Police stopped 79 motor vehicles in the two-week period, issuing two summonses, 18 infractions, four written warnings, 54 verbal warnings, and took no action in one case. The infraction rate was 25%.

Three two-vehicle collisions occurred, with one resulting in minor injuries to a juvenile passenger on April 10 on Side Cut Road. A one-vehicle collision on Black Rock Turnpike on April 9 resulted in minor injuries to the operator.

A vehicle struck a light pole at Mark Twain Library on April 15, causing property damage. The suspect vehicle was located, and restitution was to be made by the vehicle's owner.

The Highway Department was notified after it was reported to police that a sign had been struck on a traffic island on Simpaug Turnpike.

### Arson

A small hay bale was set on fire on Town property adjacent to Collis P. Huntington State Park. Fire department members extinguished the fire, and police officers canvassed the neighborhood.

### Theft

Police are investigating the reported theft of tools from a vehicle in a driveway on Deacon Abbott

Road in the early hours of April 13. A 911 caller said they saw someone run up their driveway and open their car door. The suspect vehicle appeared to be a sedan on surveillance footage.

On April 13, a vehicle was reported having been left in the middle of Umpawaug Road. It was determined to be a vehicle stolen earlier from Fox Run Road after it was left unlocked with the keys inside it. The vehicle was returned to the owner, and the incident is under investigation.

On April 15, a caller reported a suspicious incident on Pheasant Ridge Road in which someone was trying to break into their home. No signs of forced entry were found. Officers located a cracked picture that fell off the wall.

### Other incidents

In response to a reported suspicious incident close to midnight on April 9 on Long Ridge Road, officers assisted a train passenger who was looking for a ride-share.

A complainant called to report a "disturbance" on Poverty Hollow Road on April 11, which was construction work late on a Saturday. The work stopped upon officers' arrival.

Police assisted a caller who was lost in a nature preserve off Dayton Road on April 17 around 9:00 p.m.

A caller reported finding a live shotgun shell while cleaning his garage on Picketts Ridge Road on April 19. It was turned over to an officer. ■



## Real estate tax revenue from residential and commercial about equal, analysis shows

By Susan Clark



Redding, like all towns in Connecticut, derives most of its revenue from real estate or, put another way, from the 20,544 acres Redding as a town occupies. Of total revenue of \$57.1 million in the fiscal year ending June 30 2025, property taxes accounted for \$53.4 million, or 93.5%.

At public meetings concerning redevelopment of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property, several people have asked about the Town's commercial versus residential tax base. As we get closer to decision-making time about the Wire Mill and the revitalization of Georgetown, the *Sentinel* has taken a look at revenue from various types of real estate across Redding with a focus on commercial versus residential – businesses and houses.

Both residential and commercial real estate taxes are assessed on land and improvements. The assessments are updated regularly. The mil rate for residential and commercial properties is the same – currently 29.54.

The Town gets little additional revenue from taxes or fees paid by the activities of either residents or businesses – a nominal portion of speeding tickets, no share of cable fees, no sales tax. (The Town does keep motor vehicle taxes and personal property taxes, which are included in the property tax figure above.)

So, does it matter to our total tax revenue whether the money comes from commercial or residential development, from businesses or households? Might one or the other be inherently more valuable and thus bring the Town greater revenue?

We have such a small commercial tax base that it is difficult to do a robust comparison, but a look at a few properties provides some high-level insight. Town Assessor John Ford provided data about commercial and residential properties in Georgetown to the *Sentinel* for analysis.

We looked at assessments, taxes, lot size, and livable area square

footage for each property. We averaged and then compared them. Expressed as tax revenue-per-square-foot, the residential properties bring in \$3.91 and the commercial ones \$3.89. Given the small number of properties reviewed, this is directional rather than definitive, but does indicate there's not a big difference. Tax on residential properties is, on average, slightly higher than on commercial ones.

If the tax revenue is roughly equal, what about the costs to the Town associated with commercial or residential development? Back when the first Zoning Regulations were being written for Redding, a study found that keeping land as open space was preferable to building housing, because families include children who need to be educated, adding to schooling costs.

An extension of this position is the argument that commercial development is preferable to residential because it brings tax revenue without adding costs to the schools. This argument assumes commercial development is cost-free. While commercial development doesn't directly increase costs in our schools, it does require investment from the Town. The build-out of infrastructure to support Meadow Ridge is a case in point.

In a future article, we'll examine the cost side of commercial versus residential development and continue the discussion of the pros and cons of these land use options in Redding. ■

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**Estate Planning - Probate - Elder Law  
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# Redding researcher discovers unexpected source of microplastics in remote areas

By Justin Reynolds



Photo by Joe Dadey

**Water sampling at Lake Tear in the Adirondacks**

Microplastics found at the remote source of the Hudson River are likely being carried in by hikers – not the wind – according to new research led by Redding’s Tim Keyes and Joe Dadey, both Ph.Ds and outdoor explorers and researchers.

After detecting microplastics in Lake Tear of the Clouds in upstate New York in July 2023, Keyes and his team initially suspected airborne pollution. Two years later, the researchers returned to Lake Tear and nearby Moss Pond, a similar body of water with no hiking access, to test that hypothesis by collecting new samples.

The results were striking.

Water samples from Lake Tear contained an average of 16.54 microplastic particles per milliliter, up from 9.45 in 2023. Moss Pond, just a short distance away but largely untouched by hikers, had an average of 0.73 particles per milliliter – more than 20 times lower.

“Our conclusion was that this is

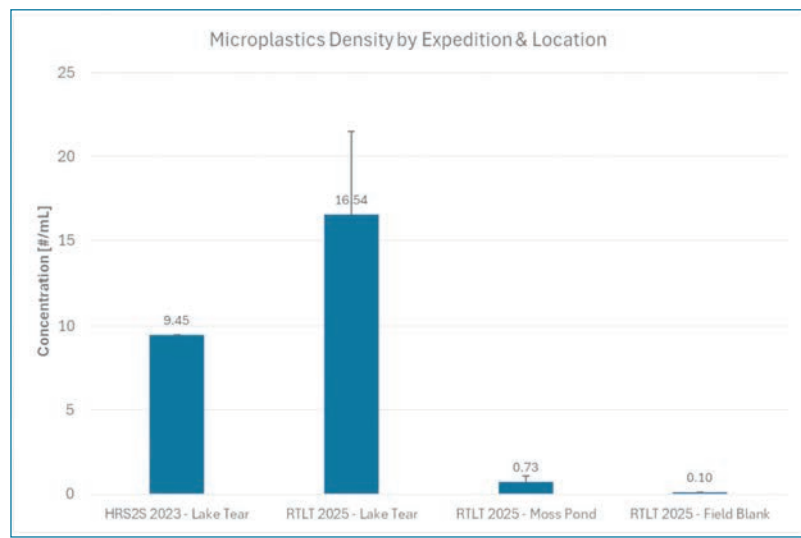


Figure courtesy of Joe Dadey and Tim Keyes

**The data show increased levels of microplastics at Lake Tear in just two years, with far lower levels at Moss Pond, a nearby area with no hiking access.**

not airborne,” Keyes said. “The area looks pristine – it’s not a matter of people leaving behind wrappers or plastic bottles. The only conclusion is that people are bringing it in with what they’re wearing.”

Lake Tear sits along a route to several Adirondack High Peaks, making it a regularly trafficked area by hikers.

Keyes said the findings align with previous research suggesting those who enjoy the outdoors are unwittingly introducing microplastics into the remote environments they explore.

The biggest culprits? Synthetic clothing and the soles of trail running shoes.

“Trail runners wear out much more quickly than boots,” Keyes said. “The soles are just like tires on your car.”

Despite the findings, Keyes said he does not want to discourage people from enjoying the outdoors.

“Our message is not to tell people to stop hiking – sometimes

these places are preserved precisely because people go out and enjoy them,” Keyes continued. “People just need to be mindful of this.”

In addition to living by the leave no trace mantra, Keyes said hikers can mitigate microplastic and microfiber shedding by wearing clothes made from natural fibers and hard-soled shoes. Synthetic materials can still be used as base layers worn next to the skin under natural or low-shed outer layers, he added.

“Over the long term, we hope outdoor gear manufacturers would improve the fabrics that they’re using and that shoe manufacturers would improve the durability of the rubber they’re using,” he said. “In the meantime, we can all vote with our dollars and make sure we choose clothing and footwear that will stand the test of time.”

Keyes said he plans to continue his research by collecting water samples from other watersheds. In

*Continued on page 14*

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## Alma Sarelli announces run for State Senate

By Jessie Wright



Alma Sarelli, a Republican and elected member of Westport’s Representative Town Meeting, announced last week her campaign for Connecticut State Senate representing the 26th District, which includes Darien, New Canaan, Redding, Ridgefield, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.

The seat opened when current State Senator Ceci Maher (D) announced in March that she would not seek reelection this November, citing her desire to make room for representatives of younger generations. Two Democrats have since announced their bids for the seat: State Representative Lucy Dathan and Weston First Selectwoman Sam Nestor.

As part of the Town’s Representative Town Meeting, Sarelli serves on Westport’s Public Protection, Education, Parks & Recreation, and Planning & Zoning Committees.

She also serves as a Justice of the Peace for the Town of Westport and is a member of the Westport Republican Town Committee Executive Committee.

Sarelli said her campaign will focus on affordability, local decision-making, public safety, support for small businesses, educational excellence, and fiscally responsible policies that protect essential services and preserve Connecticut’s quality of life.

Her announcement identified affordability, strong schools, public safety, and effective local representation as focuses of her campaign.

“For years, I’ve worked at the local level to strengthen our schools, support public safety, and serve the families who make Connecticut such a special place to live,” said Sarelli. “I’m running for the State Senate because our communities deserve practical, thoughtful representation in Hartford – leadership that listens, works across differences, and delivers results.”

Sarelli holds a degree in Business Management from Berkeley College and co-owns a national event entertainment production company with her husband. She has worked on multiple political campaigns, and served on several non-profit boards. She has been a Connecticut resident for 17 years. ■

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**May 23:** Garden Tour at The Lobster Pot with Hike at Stormfield

**May 30:** Birding Hike on the Aspetuck Trail

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**June 10:** Nature Book Club reads *The Overstory*



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## John Read Middle School principal search now underway | *By Anne Young Albanese*

Following the announcement that Principal Jen Desmarais will be retiring at the end of the school year, the search for a new principal at John Read Middle School has begun. Candidates have submitted resumes, with eight of them currently serving as assistant principals, one being a lead teacher, four working in a central school district office, seven working as teachers, and nine professionals in other roles.

The Easton-Redding-Region 9 (ER9) Central Office worked with 30 to 40 John Read Middle School staff members to develop a survey to be sent to stakeholders about the qualities they believe are most important for a middle school principal. These surveys allowed parents and staff to have input into the selection without being directly involved in the interview process.

The first category of questions explored personal qualities. Respondents chose “willingness to identify and tackle problems” as the most important. “Strong communication skills” was identified as the second most important quality. The next was “a willingness to make and stand behind decisions.” Then came a “strong vision for educational excellence.” Finally, was an “open and accessible leadership style.”

Respondents were then asked about professional qualifications and to rank their level of importance. The top qualification identified by survey respondents was experience working in a middle school

setting. Prior experience as a school building principal was second, followed by prior experience as an assistant principal. The next most important qualification was prior experience in a district of a similar size and/or district reference group (DRG). DRG is a designation given to each school district by the Connecticut Department of Education, based on socioeconomic status and student need. The least important quality was having a doctorate degree.

When asked about the top five focus areas for the principal’s first year, the most important area identified was building relationships with teachers and staff. The second area of concentration was developing and implementing systems and structures. The third area was parent support and engagement. The fourth most important focus area was improving special education services in collaboration with Dr. Meghan Pogonelski, ER9’s Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services. The least important focus area of the five was instructional leadership.

Desired strengths came in the following order: communication, transparency, and approachability; strong and consistent leadership and accountability; support for staff and community building; and middle school expertise and vision. The rest of the answers fell into other categories without enough responses to be significant.

The next step in the search

process is a preliminary screening of candidates, which will be conducted by ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon and ER9 Director of Human Resources Dr. Robert Miller. Some of this process may include brief Zoom interviews.

Once the pool has been narrowed to the top eight to 10 candidates, the formal selection process will begin. McKinnon and Miller will develop a committee that will consist of themselves, Chair of the Redding Board of Education Laura Worsz, and other Board of Education members. Nora Gaydos will represent the teachers and their union. Staff will be represented by assistant principal Kyla Dunn and Dr. Allison Panaro, a John Read Middle School counselor. Non-certified staff will be represented by technology assistant and Connecticut PTA Paraprofessional of the Year, James Bairaktaris. Finally, parent participants will be selected by the John Read Middle School PTA.

Candidate interviews will take place following the April school break and the pool will be narrowed down to the top four. Those candidates will be invited to participate in a second round of interviews.

The second round will include a performance task and a second interview. The goal for this round is to narrow the candidates to the last one or two. The third interview will take place at the May 5 Board of Education meeting. McKinnon hopes to announce the new principal at that meeting. ■



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## Beatrix Eriksen named Outstanding Volunteer by CT PTA | *By Anne Young Albanese*



Beatrix Eriksen

Beatrix Eriksen, President of the John Read Middle School PTA, was recently honored as one of the Connecticut PTA’s Outstanding Volunteers. She was nominated by Meredith Schuchard, Co-Vice President of Membership and the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Redding-Easton. The rest of the PTA Executive Board also supported Eriksen’s nomination.

“Bea has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and genuine care for our school community. She consistently goes above and beyond to support students, families, teachers, and staff,” said Schuchard.

Eriksen is recognized for her ability to bring people together, encourage collaboration, and keep a positive, inclusive environment. The John Read Middle School PTA Executive Board said that she has made a meaningful difference in the school. Under her leadership, the PTA has remained organized,

engaged, and focused on what truly matters, supporting students’ education and well-being.

Schuchard added, “Bea leads with integrity, compassion, and a strong sense of purpose. Whether coordinating events, supporting volunteers, or advocating for the needs of our students, she approaches every task with enthusiasm and professionalism.

Connecticut PTA staff members Mary Battaglino and Annie Baldarelli agreed that “Beatrix is amazing. We love her.” They were very pleased to see her nominated.

Eriksen had no idea that she had been nominated.

“I’m incredibly honored and humbled to be named one of the Volunteers of the Year by the Connecticut PTA,” she said. “This recognition really belongs to the many dedicated families, educators, and fellow volunteers I’ve had the privilege to work alongside. Supporting our schools and children is a true joy, and I’m grateful for the community that makes this work so meaningful.”

Eriksen is eligible to serve as President for one additional term (2026-2027) but is open to another stepping into her shoes. Anyone interested in learning more about the position or other positions within the PTA may e-mail [jrmsptainfo@gmail.com](mailto:jrmsptainfo@gmail.com). ■



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## Six Redding students land on Immaculate High School’s Fall 2025 Honor Roll

*By Jessie Wright*



Immaculate High School recently announced the students making its Honor Roll in the previous semester, including six students from Redding.

“Earning Honor Roll recognition while balancing rigorous academics

with athletics, activities and service speaks volumes about these students’ dedication and character,” said Head of School Wendy Neil. “These Mustangs truly embody Immaculate’s mission to educate the whole person.”

Students from Redding who met the criteria for Distinguished Honors (4.5 minimum GPA), High Honors (4.0 minimum GPA), and Honors (3.5 minimum GPA) are named below:

**Distinguished Honors:**  
Eric Fleming '29  
Emma Scheckner '26  
Maya Tedawes '26

**High Honors:**  
Ryan Hoeing '28  
Elise Van Brakel '29  
John Ceccarelli '28 ■

*This data is submitted by Sentinel readers and education institutions. To submit a name for recognition, e-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org)*



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# SPORTS

## Team faces stiff competition early

*Boys lacrosse* | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Frank Branca scored one goal and had three assists for the Joel Barlow High boys lacrosse team in its game against Pleasantville, NY on Saturday, April 18.

A tough, non-league schedule in the early part of the season has been a challenge for the Joel Barlow High boys varsity lacrosse team. The Falcons have faced some formidable opponents, likely serving as useful preparation when it comes time to take on those in the South-West Conference.

Among them was Pleasantville, which Barlow hosted on Saturday, April 18. The Panthers put their quickness and athletic ability to use early, building a first quarter lead en route to an 18-8 win.

Less than a minute into the action, the Panthers were up 2-0 courtesy of back-to-back goals by

Brian Doherty, whose first was just 14 seconds after the opening face-off. Keeping the momentum, they tacked on another three for a 5-0 lead with 6:38 left in the first quarter.

While the Falcons took some shots that were turned away by Panther goalie Jack Crombie, they did break through with 5:16 left on a goal by Matt Branca with his brother Frank assisting. However, Pleasantville responded with two more in the time remaining for a 7-1 lead.

A slashing penalty called against the Falcons put them down a player in the second quarter, and

the Panthers took advantage of the situation with another goal by Doherty, who also scored another less than a minute later. After Ethan McGuire's goal put his team up 10-1, the Falcons answered courtesy of Matt Branca with 4:13 left. Following a quick face-off, he completed his hat-trick 10 seconds later and the Falcons' Keeler Pheeney also found the net with Chase Bonanno assisting in the final minute. But, with the Panthers adding two more goals, Barlow was down 12-4 at halftime.

When play resumed, the Falcons took advantage of a Panther cross check call, later scoring on a low shot by Matt Branca at 10:22. But when the Falcons committed a similar offense less than a minute later, the Panthers returned the favor. Matt Branca netted his fifth goal in the time remaining, and Frank Branca scored his first, but another Pleasantville goal had the Falcons trailing 14-7 going into the final frame.

For the fourth quarter, the Falcons were held to just one goal, coming from Bonanno with about 10 minutes left to play. Pleasantville, however, racked up another four.

Matt Branca led Barlow with five goals. Frank Branca had one with three assists while Bonanno (one assist) and Pheeney each scored one apiece. Tyler Young, Ryan Klem, and Jacob Cummings each had an assist.

Barlow, now 1-3, hosts Weston on Thursday, April 23 at 5:00 p.m., hosts Greenwich on Saturday, April 25 at 12:30 p.m., and is at New Fairfield on Tuesday, April 28 at 5:00 p.m. ■

## Falcons strike quickly in victory Baseball

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Barlow's Desmond Kady pitched four and two-thirds innings of relief on Saturday, April 18.

Helped in part by errorless defense, as well as some key hits early on, the Joel Barlow High varsity baseball team dominated host Ridgefield for a 9-3 victory on Saturday, April 18, for its second win of the season.

With Kenny Esposito and Gavin Maryott both hit by pitches, the Falcons had runners aboard early in the first inning. Brennan Maryott's single drove in one run and a walk by Drew Gutowski loaded the bases for Jimmy Kennedy, who delivered a two-run single. The former later scored on a fielder's choice for a 4-0 advantage.

Shortstop Desmond Kady turned a double play to help keep Ridgefield scoreless in the bottom of the inning before the Falcons tacked on a run in their next turn without the benefit of a hit. After drawing a walk, Gavin Maryott stole second and third before scoring on an error to make it 5-0.

Ridgefield got two runs back in the bottom of the frame. Two walks and a hit batter loaded the bases for Blake Clausen's two-out, two-run double to cut the deficit to three.

Barlow, however, widened the lead in the third frame when Kennedy led off with a double and scored on Desmond Kady's single to right field. Cassius Kady hit into a fielder's choice to score Grayson Lapine, who had gotten on base on an error earlier in the inning.

Alex Salley's sacrifice fly in the bottom of the third turned out to be Ridgefield's last run. Barlow relief pitcher Desmond Kady then held off the Tigers for the rest of the game. In the meantime, the Falcons tacked on two more runs in their last turn. Ethan Goldstein singled to drive in one and Desmond Kady singled to drive in another as the Falcons all but cemented the win.

Kennedy led Barlow at the plate with three hits. He also drove in two runs and scored a pair as well. Desmond Kady and Brennan Maryott each had two hits with the former driving in two runs and the latter getting one RBI and also scoring once. Gutowski scored two runs, as did Gavin Maryott, while LaPine and Esposito had one run apiece.

Starting pitcher Cole Johnson got the win, going two and one-third innings with three runs on two hits and two strikeouts. Desmond Kady went four and two-thirds innings for the save with no runs on one hit and two strikeouts.

The Falcons, now 2-4 overall, host New Milford on Monday, April 27 and visit Stratford on Wednesday, April 29. Both games are at 4:15 p.m. ■

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SPORTS

# Crusaders' hitting proves hard to handle

*Softball* | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High right fielder Olivia Masone prepares to catch a pop fly as center fielder Alisen McTague looks on during a varsity softball game against Lauralton Hall on Thursday, April 16. Barlow lost 4-17.

Cooling off its opponents' hot bats was a tough task for the Joel Barlow High varsity softball team when it hosted Lauralton Hall last week.

While the Falcons played fairly tight defense (committing just two errors), the Crusaders still hit with precision on Thursday, April 16. Racking up more than a dozen hits, they piled on the runs for a 17-4 win in a game that was halted after five innings due to the 12-run rule.

After both teams went quietly in the first inning, the Crusaders put their bats to work in the top of the second. Two singles, followed by two batters hit by pitches, allowed the visitors to push across their first run. An error, plus a two-out single by Grace Dubin put them up 5-0.

The Falcons cut the gap a bit in their next turn. Consecutive singles by Morgan Ross and Sofia Huydic put runners on base, and Emily Esposito reached base on an error to bring in a run before a pair of fielder's choices accounted for two more, putting Barlow back in the game as it trailed 5-3.

Far from finished, the Crusaders rallied again in their next turn with multiple hits, including a double by Maja Brown and a triple by Skylar Crozier to make it 11-3. They also came through in a big way in the top of the fifth, plating six runs on five hits.

Now down 17-3 going into the bottom of the inning, the Falcons needed to score at least three runs to keep the game going. Sophia Kelly reached base on an error, and Ross doubled to right field before Huydic followed with an RBI single. Their threat soon ended, however, as Barlow failed to score again.

Esposito, Keira Riley, Olivia Masone, and Huydic each drove in a run for Barlow, now 1-5. It visits Immaculate on Friday, April 24, hosts New Milford on Monday, April 27, and is at Stratford-Notre Dame Prep on Wednesday, April 29. All games start at 4:15 p.m. ■

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## Joel Barlow sports results and schedules



**Baseball**

**Results:**  
April 13: Joel Barlow 13 / Kolbe Cathedral 2  
April 15: Masuk 11 / Joel Barlow 7  
April 18: Joel Barlow 9 / Ridgefield 3

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 2-4

**Next games:**  
April 27: home versus New Milford at 4:15 p.m.  
April 29: away at Stratford at 4:15 p.m.

**Softball**

**Results:**  
April 13: Kolbe Cathedral 14 / Joel Barlow 2  
April 15: Masuk 26 / Joel Barlow 4  
April 16: Lauralton Hall 17 / Joel Barlow 4

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 1-5

**Next games:**  
April 24: away at Immaculate at 4:15 p.m.  
April 27: home versus New Milford at 4:15 p.m.  
April 29: away at Stratford-Notre Dame Prep at 4:15 p.m.

**Boys lacrosse**

**Results:**  
April 18: Pleasantville 18 / Joel Barlow 8

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow: 1-4

**Next games:**  
April 23: home versus Weston at 5:00 p.m.  
April 25: home versus Greenwich at 12:30 p.m.  
April 28: away at New Fairfield at 5:00 p.m.

**Girls lacrosse**

**Results:**  
April 11: Joel Barlow 18 / Notre Dame Prep 0  
April 14: Joel Barlow 20 / Stratford-Bunnell 8  
April 16: Masuk 17 / Joel Barlow 7

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 4-2

**Next games:**

April 24: away at Weston at 5:30 p.m.  
April 25: home versus Brien McMahon at 10:00 a.m.  
April 28: home versus New Fairfield at 5:00 p.m.

**Boys tennis**

**Results:**  
April 13: Joel Barlow 5 / Immaculate 2

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 2-1

**Next matches:**  
April 24: away at Bethel at 3:45 p.m.  
April 27: away at New Milford at 3:45 p.m.  
April 29: away Brookfield at 3:45 p.m.

**Girls tennis**

**Results:**  
April 13: Joel Barlow 5 / Immaculate 2

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 2-1

**Next matches:**  
April 23: home versus Bethel at 4:15 p.m.  
April 27: home versus New Milford at 3:45 p.m.  
April 29: home versus Brookfield at 3:45 p.m.

**Boys volleyball**

**Results:**  
April 14: Joel Barlow 3 / Glastonbury 1  
April 15: Joel Barlow 3 / Newtown 0

**Record:**  
Joel Barlow 5-2

**Next matches:**  
April 23: away at Harding at 4:15 p.m.  
April 25: home versus Pomperaug at 11:00 a.m.  
April 27: home versus Bunnell at 6:00 p.m.

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## SPARK *Arts and culture around Redding and beyond*

By Julie Durkin Marty



Photo by Peter Brown

**State of Alarm: Margaret Roleke at Ball & Socket Arts**

*Three shows not to miss this month.*

**State of Alarm: Margaret Roleke Ball & Socket Arts, 493 West Main Street, Cheshire Through May 10 ballandsocket.org**

Walk into Margaret Roleke's show and the first thing you feel is drawn in. The wall pieces shimmer from across the room — colorful, almost festive. Then you get close enough to see what they are made of: spent shotgun shells and brass casings. Roleke lives in Redding. Sandy Hook happened near her home, and gun violence has been at the center of her work ever since. Shotgun shells are manufactured in candy colors — from a distance they look like beads — and Roleke uses that deliberately. The show also includes large fabric works stitched by hand from Kevlar and found materials, and cyanotype photographs where the American flag appears and fades on cloth. It is one of the most urgent shows on view in Connecticut right now.

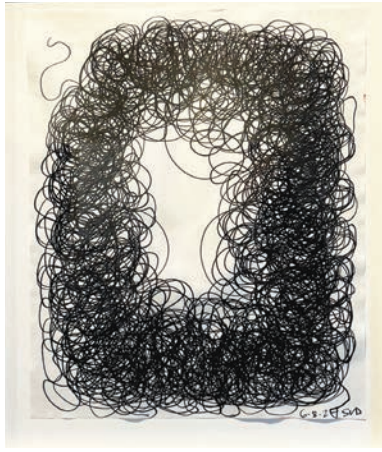


Photo by Julie Durkin Marty

**Sally Van Doren at daphne:art**

**WRIT & WEFTED: Sally Van Doren & Nancy Koenigsberg**  
*daphne:art Gallery and Advisory, Litchfield*

*By Appointment daphneartgallery.com*

daphne:art is a hidden gem — a by-appointment private gallery run by veteran curator Daphne Anderson Deeds out of her Litchfield home, and worth every effort to get there. The current show pairs two artists who both work at the boundary between language and material. Sally Van Doren is a poet and visual artist whose paintings and drawings grow from thousands of pages of illegible handwriting — marks that stopped being words and became something else entirely, dense looping lines that feel simultaneously like thought and pure sensation. Nancy Koenigsberg, whose work is in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, weaves and knots copper and steel wire by hand into sculptures that are at once industrial and delicate — forms that cast shadows as compelling as the objects themselves. Together these two artists make

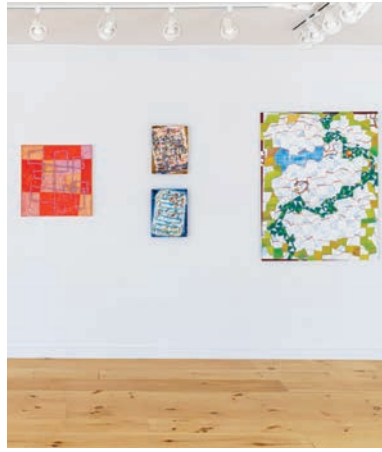


Photo by Cary Whittier

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If you have ever stood in front of a painting and felt something before you understood why, Charged Field is for you. Twenty painters — including Trudy Benson, Lisa Corinne Davis, Sarah Walker, and Alyse Rosner — make work that operates through color, surface, and material rather than recognizable imagery. That does not mean it is hard to experience. It means the paintings talk directly to something in the body before the brain gets involved. Come with an open eye and stay as long as you want. Upcoming events make it even easier to get inside the work:

May 8, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.: First Friday Cocktail Hour and Curator Walk-Through; May 9, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: Artist Talk and Closing Reception. ■

## Notes from a neighbor *Heavy reading*

By Carter Wiseman

Despite widespread predictions, the internet has not put books out of business. Indeed, ink-on-paper publishing seems to be holding its own, at least for thrillers, diet guides, and romance.

But the digital revolution has nearly eliminated BIG books, what have traditionally been called tomes. I have several, and although I almost never crack one anymore, I can't bring myself to part with them.

I was an art history major in college, so H. W. Janson's massive text was the go-to source. My copy measures 9 by 12 inches and weighs seven pounds. Everything in Janson, including the images, is now available online, so when I can't remember the title of that Van Gogh, I shield my eyes from the shelf where Janson waits and Google Vincent instead.

When searching for a definition of a word while writing a college paper, the most respected source was *Webster's Second Edition*. I have a vintage copy inherited from my aunt. It weighs in at 15 pounds, and I used to turn to it to settle dinner-party disputes over etymology. Now I spare my back and use my phone.

Many years ago, I signed up for the two-volume photo-reduced edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a premium from the Book-of-the-Month Club (18 pounds), which came with a magnifying glass. When I became a teacher, I added a few more reference giants: the *Riverside Shakespeare* (four pounds), the *New Columbia Encyclopedia* (nine pounds), and McGraw-Hill's *Concise Encyclopedia of Science and Technology* (10 pounds). All 63 of those pounds

weigh on my conscience now, as if reproaching me for running off with something younger and slimmer.

These heavies may be out of circulation, but they are apparently still good for projecting a message of intelligence and authority. If one looks closely at the settings TV pundits like Jon Meacham, Jelani Cobb, and Doris Kearns Goodwin choose as backdrops for their on-air appearances, some familiar tomes appear sprinkled among the latest works of their own.

I recently attended an event at a New York private club that has an impressive library, with shelves sagging under the tomes, along with matched sets of Trollope and Dickens. Even though few of these volumes are ever checked out, the librarian told me that she has to fight with the events staff to protect them. It seems that wedding planners and corporate executives like to have receptions in the library, and she feels that readers should still have some peace, even if they are no longer asking for Melville, or even Mailer. Members of such institutions may not look things up in paper volumes much anymore; they may not even know how to. But they evidently like to associate themselves with literacy while they drink.

I, too, enjoy a glass or two among my tomes. But I'm proud to say that, while I am pretty good at scrolling, I still know how to turn a mean page. ■



# From 1729 to Today - Rooted in Redding, Growing Together.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### The Imperfectionists

By Tom Rachman / 304 pages / Dial Press Trade / \$9.45

*The Imperfectionists* by Tom Rachman examines the private and career choices of talented individuals living on quicksand — in this case, a failing daily English-speaking international newspaper, based in Rome, Italy. The title asks a question that the author answers with humor and pathos: Implicitly, why are they imperfectionists? These are talented professionals, working day after day, as their career leaves them. Before the finish of this award-winning novel, the reader will see human frustration become cruelty as psychological delusions manifest in ways of coping that result in searing loneliness in one example, withdrawal in another, and emotional betrayal in yet another (which amount to variations on the same theme of abandonment).

In this novel of institutional decline, stalwarts suffer. A newspaper traditionalist will become irrelevant, and age into undignified poverty. Eccentric or flamboyant qualities once right for top news reporters at the peak of the newspaper industry, prove less than desirable in a moribund context. Similarly, a symbol of earlier day success (and stress) — the newsroom bar — proves not a good fit in a duller water-cooler context. Life is not what they were led to expect, personally or professionally. Life is, dare we admit it, imperfect. These vignettes are stories of soon-to-be existential orphans.

The past is a time that can be remembered but not touched. With no collective past, present and future are invisible. These imperfectionists are realizing slowly that their corporate lives have no real past. A vanishing future is therefore also unreachable. Unreachable in Rachman's writing means irrelevant. These are intelligent minds trapped in machinery of downward changes, privately expressed in dreadful ways. They are souls struggling against one assault after another. "The internet is to news," [Corrections Editor Herman Cohen] said, "what car horns are to music."

*The Imperfectionists* is a writer's voice making a novel about "fictional" characters who work at a failing international newspaper. But

a newsroom is not an office, and the more inclusive story of decline is the story Rachman tells. It is office gossip in high gear, on steroids. It is a novel about how private catastrophes directly connect to uneven professional circumstances.

Do these sentiments seem real? Yes. Does the novel entertain? Partly. Does the reader feel immersed in the newspaper zeitgeist? For better and worse, yes. There is an attempt to portray the human condition generally as analogous to the fragile condition of the world the newspaper reports on. And with respect to private tentative situations, the lens narrows: Some newspapers have been dying for decades. These are the consequences, public and private.

Rachman's experience as a journalist is sustained, muted, or contradicted by the lived experiences detailed in each profiled character's fundamental nature and working gripes. For example, "Kooks with Nukes" is the title for Ruby Zaga, copy editor. She tells herself that she despises her job and the other people she works with, always feels ignored and invisible, and, though good at her job, feels that she always is about to be dismissed. Her shortcomings as a person living in Rome are another matter. She is lonely, and not aware enough to appreciate that her loneliness is a survival ploy and self-fulfilling prophecy simultaneously, and that the mechanisms of loneliness have affected her outlook in toxic ways, slowly devouring her identity. This, of course, is analogous to how cultural change is gradually devouring her livelihood. Her paranoia is toxic and misdirected but founded on real-world issues. Her personal failures mirror the newspaper's decline.

Finally, *The Imperfectionists* claims that, over time, a species of journalist might become extinct if these facts are true: Leadership is inert, founding principles are forgotten, and the individual creatures in the species are driven off or die.

Review by Tom Casey, author of *Human Error*, *Strangers' Gate*, and *Unsettled States*

## LIBRARY CORNER

### You'll find me at the Frolic

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

One of my favorite events of the year is coming up on May 2: The 29th Annual Frog Frolic Family Festival! This family-friendly carnival is one of Mark Twain Library's biggest fundraisers. It takes place at the Redding Community Center where attendees will find bounce houses, carnival games, food trucks, a bubble garden, and live acoustic performances. I am lucky enough to have attended the Frolic for a few years, and it is now

solidified into some of my cherished family memories. Now, my kids have trouble going to sleep the night before because they are so excited for the Frolic.

Even though this fundraiser has been taking place for almost three decades, there's something new each year as committee members change and decide to experiment with new offerings. This year there will be a yoga class for kids and a family corn hole tournament. If you

bring a blanket and some chairs, you truly can end up spending the whole day there. I love to see the babies in the bubble garden, the toddlers in the bounce house, the elementary school kids running around from game to game, the middle schoolers volunteering, and seniors selling popcorn. It's a true multigenerational event and I can't wait to see you there. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

### Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

Nathaniel Ian Miller grew up in Redding. He is a former journalist and the author of the critically acclaimed novel *The Memoirs of Stockholm Sven*, which was longlisted for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize and has been translated into multiple languages. The story takes place in the isolated landscape of Svalbard, Norway in the early 20th century when Sven Ormson leaves behind his mundane existence for this harsh Arctic archipelago. He moves from hard labor in a mining camp to a

self-imposed exile after a disfiguring accident and survives with the help of a Finnish fur trapper named Tapio. It is an intimate portrait exploring themes of loneliness, the healing power of connection and, extraordinarily, finding beauty in a hostile environment. While it is inspired by a real person referred to as Stockholm Sven, this story is a work of fiction.

*Red Dog Farm*, published in 2025, is Miller's second novel. It is a coming-of-age story following Orri who returns from university

to help run his family's struggling cattle farm in the Borgarbyggð, a region of Western Iceland. Once again, he explores themes of family, love, and finding purpose amidst a harsh landscape. We follow this young man's transformative year as he falls in love and seeks to connect with his stoic, distant father. This talented author delivers another moving study of character and place.

Nathaniel Ian Miller currently lives with his family on a farm in Vermont. ■



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## Poem

By Isabel Van Steinburgh, age 9

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APRIL 30 | 7:00 PM | Mark Twain Library

Discover the story of Redding's own pioneering composer at the Mark Twain Library. Presented by our Town Historians.

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## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# Redding baker brings fresh, local approach to daily bread

By Justin Reynolds



Photo by Michael Renzulli

Shannon Renzulli's new bakery and delivery service will open for orders on May 1.

As a therapist in Fairfield, Shannon Renzulli spends her days helping clients navigate anxiety disorders. Now, she's scaling back her practice to make room for a different kind of work — baking — with Weekend Bakeshop, which launches May 1.

"It's a small bakery I started here in Redding," Renzulli said. "We specialize in sandwich breads, things you use every day — tortillas, focaccia, rolls."

Renzulli's baked goods aren't sold from a storefront; they are delivered weekly right to your door. Customers who place orders before 10:00 p.m. on Wednesday can choose to have their bread delivered to their homes that Friday or Saturday; if they miss the Wednesday cutoff, the order will arrive the following weekend.

Currently, the bakery plans to deliver to addresses in Redding, Easton, Ridgefield, Wilton, Westport, and Weston.

Renzulli's approach to baking comes from a desire to simplify what she eats. While she still eats some processed foods — "I'm not an extremist," she joked — she tries to limit them for her family and carries that ethos into her bakery.

"I use local products as much as I can, getting eggs, milk, butter, and honey from local farms around town," she said. The farms include Shaggy Coos in Easton and New Pond Farm in Redding. "I know those animals are well-fed and well taken care of. They're happy. I feel great about being able to know where my ingredients come from and support our local farming community."

That focus on quality ingredients is part of what she hopes will set her bakery apart.

"Not every family or person has the time to make their own bread or baked goods, and they value the quality of ingredients," she said. "That's part of the reason I'm doing this."

Renzulli doesn't come from a



Photo by Shannon Renzulli

Chocolate brioche is one of the sweet treats offered alongside weekly bread staples.

family of bakers — which is exactly what got her into baking in the first place.

"I'm probably a baker because my family didn't bake," she said. "It started with teenage insomnia, watching the Food Network at 2 a.m., Rachael Ray and Emeril. Some people like to draw, some people like to paint — I just enjoy cooking and baking. And I also like to eat, so I guess it works out," she laughed.

Originally from California, Renzulli went to graduate school in New York City, where she met her husband, a Bethel native.

"It's really cool to me that I can buy dairy, eggs, and produce that I can pick out of the ground here," she said.

The Renzullis moved to Redding in 2020 and have a six-year-old son.

"He's my official taster, and he's very thrilled by having that job," Renzulli said. "When I'm baking at home, he'll give me immediate feedback."

While Renzulli experiments and hones her recipes at home, she is using a professional commercial-grade kitchen in Norwalk for Weekend Bakeshop.

Renzulli plans to donate a portion of the bakery's weekly profits to rotating charities across Connecticut.

"It's just a way I can help our Connecticut family," she said.

While Renzulli will continue seeing clients at her therapy practice Monday through Wednesday each week, she's happy to bring more balance to her life through baking.

"It's been a fantastic shift for me," she said. "Baking gives me personal levity, something different to do with my brain. It's just something that I'm very passionate about. Being able to share this with my Redding neighbors is wonderful." ■

Learn more at [weekendbakeshop.com](http://weekendbakeshop.com)

# The "come as you are" community band

## Georgetown Marching assembles for connection not perfection

By Justin Reynolds



Photo courtesy of Andy Tyson

Andy Tyson envisions Georgetown Marching as an enhancement to beloved community events, bringing neighbors together with music and fun.

When Andy Tyson was teaching music in Madrid two decades ago, he was impressed by how community bands brought neighbors together. Now, he's launching one in Redding called Georgetown Marching, aiming to create that same sense of connection.

"It doesn't matter if you can just play tambourine on beats two and four or if you can play a really high trumpet line," Tyson said. "The point isn't your musical virtuosity — it's coming together and having fun."

Tyson envisions Georgetown Marching drawing inspiration from New Orleans second line music; he sees the band playing music in the style of Rebirth Brass Band.

"The line parades — there's freedom there, there's improvisation involved, and it really connected to me as the 'come as you are' sort of thing," he said. "College football halftime shows are thrilling to watch and a lot of fun, but the focus there is on repeatable precision. It needs to be the same each time. I like knowing that a piece will be a little different each time we play it. There's a freedom to play in the way that best suits you."

Tyson has loved music his whole life. When his family moved into a house in New Hampshire when he was six or seven, it came with a piano, and he hasn't imagined pursuing anything else as a career since.

Today, he's Director of the Arts at New Canaan Country School and a jazz pianist. He is also involved in several ensembles, including serving as President of the University Glee Club of New York City, a choral group founded in 1894 that performs at venues like Lincoln Center.

"I originally joined the chorus because I was looking for community," Tyson continued. "But that's in New York City. I wanted to do something closer to home with people I bump into at Caraluzzi's — to bring different people together through a shared love of music."

Tyson, who moved to Redding with his wife in 2018 and has two young children, ultimately hopes Georgetown Marching gives participants a true sense of belonging.

"You might have the virtuosic trumpet player and someone new to the genre playing whole notes," Tyson said. "There's a place for everyone. You are not being judged. You are here to play what you can and contribute what you're able. Everyone has a blast."

Georgetown Marching is free to join. Tyson encourages folks who are interested to visit [georgetownmarching.com](http://georgetownmarching.com) and fill out a form. As of the first week of April, 15 people had signed up. Their weapons of choice? Trumpet, trombone, flute, oboe, drums, saxophone, and sousaphone, among others.

"Maybe we'll be the roaming band at Georgetown Day or one of the groups that shows up at Nod Hill Brewery during the Oktoberfest season," he said. "Being at community events that already happen, as a community band with community members, seemed like a fun thing to do."

Tyson pointed out that when people give up their dreams of becoming professional athletes, they can still join pick-up games or beer leagues. That's not always the case with music — and he hopes Georgetown Marching helps change that.

"I can't remember life without music, and I can't imagine life without music," he said. "I'm thrilled to have found a way to share that love of music with my neighbors." ■

Learn more at [georgetownmarching.com](http://georgetownmarching.com)

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# New cyber safety series aims to guide community members

By Lisa Goldstein



Online scams often start off innocently, according to Mark Twain Library Director of Technology George Avidon. Perhaps an e-mail that says “your computer has a virus, call this number and we can help.” But, Avidon warns, once you click or call that number, it’s easy to go down a rabbit hole which typically ends in a loss of money.

To keep community members informed and give them the tools to avoid online scams, Mark Twain

Library is introducing a monthly in-person Cyber Safety Open Forum, led by Avidon. “I want to give people the confidence to become more aware of what they do online on a daily basis and how they can reduce the risk,” said Avidon, who has fielded numerous questions from patrons and friends who have fallen prey to online schemes.

It’s not just in your imagination that these kinds of online scams and attacks have become more pervasive. According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in April 2025, nearly three quarters of Americans have experienced an online scam or attack – such as stolen credit or debit card information,

fraudulent charges, or an online account getting hacked. A record \$16.6 billion was reported in losses to the FBI from these cybercrimes in 2024. And, cybercrimes impact people of all ages, according to the survey, not just the older generations. According to a 2025 Microsoft Digital Defense Report, these attacks also are becoming more sophisticated, in large part due to artificial intelligence.

The program at the Library is designed to provide tips for patrons to establish simple habits that will help them steer clear of such crimes. For example, Avidon suggests logging into your bank account every single morning to

make sure nothing is askew and setting up a separate e-mail address just for shopping. “Do you want your financial e-mails with Macy’s advertising e-mails? And, do you think Macy’s sells your info to third parties?” asked Avidon. “You create a cleaner environment, and you begin to understand that even if things look good, it doesn’t mean they are.”

Providing tips like these as well as how to spot false advertising and phishing all will be part of the dialogue in the new program. And it’s not just for those who have lost money.

“You don’t have to come because you’ve had a problem,” said Mark

Twain Library Adult Program Coordinator Elaine Sanders. “Come to learn how to avoid a problem.”

Technology is a part of daily life, but it can sometimes feel confusing, overwhelming, or even risky. Avidon plans to offer a relaxed format where patrons can ask questions, share recent experiences, and better understand how to recognize when something seems suspicious, when something is clearly wrong, and what steps to take next to live a “cleaner digital life.”

Cyber Safety is a drop-in program, so registration is not necessary, and will be held at Mark Twain Library at 439 Redding Road on the fourth Wednesday of each month. ■

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Redding researcher discovers unexpected source of microplastics in remote areas  
*continued from page 5*

July, he’ll collect samples from the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport, which flows into Long Island Sound; he’s enlisting some high school students to assist with that project. He also plans to head back to the Adirondacks this summer with Dadey to continue research in the Gore Mountain region.

“We’ll be going from a high-intensity area to a less intense area where we expect to find the lowest

amount of microplastics,” he said.

For the first time, the researchers will also analyze the chemical composition of individual microplastics to help determine their sources using a process called fingerprinting.

“We’ll be able to tell whether it’s a polymer from a water bottle, foot tread, or synthetic clothing,” he said. “We’ll be able to have a pretty decent idea of where this stuff came from.” ■



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# Gardeners fight to keep “gem of a community resource”

By Donna Christopher



Photo by Alice Fuchs Garrard

Coolers full of food donations supplied by community gardeners.



Photo courtesy of Alice Fuchs Garrard

Garrard has tended a plot in the Community Garden for 16 years and shares her knowledge with several fellow gardeners.



Photo by Michele Van Steinburgh

Gardening has been a beloved activity for Michele Van Steinburgh's family.

Redding's Community Garden, a meaningful part of daily life for many local families, now faces an uncertain future after a planned fence replacement project was halted and the garden indefinitely closed when a septic system for the elementary school was discovered beneath the site.

Gardeners have grown a wide variety of plants – from dahlias and raspberries to lettuce and pumpkins – for several decades at the fenced-in plots behind Lonetown Farm, creating a space that attracts pollinators, fosters appreciation for nature, and builds friendships and shared purpose.

Many residents say the garden is a cherished place and hope it will be preserved or relocated rather than lost.

For Michele Van Steinburgh, tending a plot at the Community Garden has been a family activity. Her in-laws maintain a nearby plot where her children regularly help weed and harvest vegetables, creating a shared, hands-on experience across generations.

“This will be our ninth summer at the garden. My daughter began

toddling around in the dirt at age one,” said Van Steinburgh. She said she leaves an unplanted portion for her son to drive toy trucks through all summer.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the space served as a “lifeline,” for her family, offering a place to gather safely and connect with others at a distance. “The garden is a gem of a community resource. To not replace it with a new home would be heartbreaking for my family,” she said.

Lesley Barewin is “deeply disappointed” by the sudden closure. “One of the first things I did when I moved to Redding was get on the garden wait list. In 2022, I got a plot and I’ve been gardening there for four seasons. Growing a garden has been eye-opening and incredibly humbling,” she said. Barewin said she has gained knowledge from other gardeners with whom she has formed strong bonds and friendships. “Spending time there in the summer, watching the flowers and listening to the bees, is such a peaceful blessing. I can hardly imagine a summer without a garden, and I really hope the Town

will decide soon on how to use the remaining plots.”

A review of the situation took place at the April 20 meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission. The Town is in the process of scoping the system to determine its exact location and impact to the garden and limitations on use. Active leaching fields and effluent approximately one foot below the surface in some areas were discovered during the initial review.

“I recognize that our community gardeners are dedicated environmental stewards who have invested years of labor into their plots. Any disruption to a growing cycle is significant and devastating,” Park and Recreation Chair Angela Caes said, speaking personally.

The surprise that the garden may close has been hard felt, several said.

Alice Fuchs Garrard, who has tended a plot there for 16 years, does not want to lose the Community Garden – both because of her personal connection to the place, but also because of her efforts to collect produce grown there to give to people experiencing food insecurity. For the past three growing sea-

sons, community gardeners have contributed to Redding Grange's fresh food drive, donating produce in partnership with Food Rescue US – Fairfield County to distribute to Redding Social Services and ARC Comida Food Pantry in Danbury.

A letter sent to the Park and Recreation Commission by Rabbi Ari Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Association of Religious Communities that runs Comida Food Pantry, urged the Town to find a way to continue this meaningful partnership amidst Federal cuts to food insecurity programs.

“The food donations we have received from the Community Garden have been a Godsend to support our endeavors to feed some of the most vulnerable families in the region. We wish you could see the looks on the faces of our clients when they see the fresh greens, squash, potatoes, etc. If there is any way you could continue this program this summer, we would be most appreciative of your support,” he wrote.

Garrard, a Master Gardener and member of the Redding Grange,

noted the garden has been above the septic leaching fields for years with no known issues. “It’s just much ado about nothing,” she said at the April 20 meeting.

“All of us are devastated by this,” fellow gardener Elizabeth Sager said. “The garden has been in use for decades with no problem. We went from expanding the garden last summer to now being told we’re shutting down indefinitely.”

Sager, like others, worked hard to establish her plot, spending three years on the waitlist then working for two years to get the soil ready for planting. Once workable, she routinely had her soil tested at UConn. “There has never been an indication that the soil is in any way problematic,” Sager said.

Sager suggested that if edible plants are restricted, gardeners should still be allowed to grow flowers this season, which pose no consumption risk and allow them to continue cultivating and enjoying the space.

Her spring garden this year, among other plants, was going to include 150 garlic plants and 45 shallot plants that are “ready to go in that should have gone in last weekend and are now dying in my basement,” she said. She also has 200 onion sets that are now two weeks overdue for planting.

Sager emphasized that time is of the essence. She estimates that by June, the garden is probably effectively gone for the season because it is so difficult to keep a plot maintained. “You have to weed all the time. Everything happens quickly, because the planting season should have already been going. We’re late now, and the weeds are growing.” ■

## Join the *Sentinel* Team

If you live in Redding and have reporting or editorial experience, we'd like to hear from you. We're looking to add bench strength to our team of local talent. We work remotely, part-time, on a freelance basis.

Please write to [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org) and tell us about yourself.



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### Redding's Big Outdoors: Following the fun / continued from page 1

mature pine trees and small saplings alike. Soon, I was faced with a choice: left on the Duncan Munro Trail or right on Joan's Trail. For no particular reason, I went left. The trail went alongside and through the gaps in stone walls, many in some of the best condition I have seen in Redding. The path was dotted with rocks peeking up from the dirt here and there along with the occasional root. As the trail continued, the occasional house was visible through the still-bare trees. I passed a junction with Cross Trail, marked with blue blazes and continued, staying on the Duncan Munro Trail. The sounds of power equipment in the distance contrasted with bird songs and the crunch of leaves underfoot.

As I neared the boundary between Rock Lot and the Scott Preserve, I started noticing more exposed rock all around with a mint green lichen growing across it. A dog from a nearby house barked a greeting or perhaps a warning as I walked along. As the trail passed between two low ridges, a sign about bow hunting season helped me know when the transition into the Scott Preserve happened.

The trail became rougher and more fun. There was a bit of a scramble down a small hill. With the wonderful benefit of being able to go off-trail here on Land Trust property, I clambered up a large rock jumble, just to see what was there. Being in the woods and exploring reminds me of childhood in the best way, and I try to embrace that. After cautiously climbing back down (so much trickier than going up), I kept along the path.

Soon, I passed a lovely grove of mountain laurel, which would turn out to be one of many. The trail passed under power transmission

lines, and back into the forest. A squirrel scampered by, in a rush to somewhere as I approached War-rups Rock, a notably huge rock with a sheer face. The trail then passed near the occasional swampy area, with skunk cabbage sprouting up. I would sometimes lose track of the trail and the blazes but, like so many of the great trails in Redding, when I was unsure of the right direction it ended up being where it looked the most fun to go.

The trail wound around and went under the power lines again and soon met up with another Cross Trail. This time, I took that trail and shortly joined up with Joan's Trail, taking a right and heading back north. Following the white blazes, I was soon back in the Rock Lot. I walked along the perfectly named Whale Back Rock. I passed the Lincoln Selleck trail on my left and then the first Cross Trail on my right.

As I was nearing the end of my outing, I saw a sign for Great Oak. I couldn't just pass that by, so I took that spur trail a short distance to what was indeed a great oak. Probably the largest circumference tree I have seen on the East Coast. Well worth the short detour.

Back to Joan's Trail, then I passed where I started along the Duncan Munro Trail through the pines and back to my car. I always feel reinvigorated after time in the woods, and this was no exception, especially on such a lovely spring day. ■

*Do you like to hit the trails? The Sentinel is looking for additional volunteer contributors for Redding's Big Outdoors. E-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org) for more information.*

# THE NATURAL WORLD

## The Book of Trails V: Progress report

By Cole Tucker-Walton

Last week at Mark Twain Library, I gave an update on *The Book of Trails*, which a small team has been revising over the past year and a half. First published in 1982, *The Book of Trails* is a beloved, volunteer-produced guide to the hiking trails in Redding. Why revise it now, 20 years after the last (fourth) edition? The timing was partly in honor of Redding Land Trust's 60th anniversary; but also, the usual changes had piled up. Under the care of Trails Boss Stuart Green, trails have been added and rerouted, and Redding Land Trust (under Silvia Erskine and Gordon Loery) and the Redding Conservation Commission (under Dave Patee) have added hundreds of acres of open space.

A major cultural change also influenced the forthcoming edition: the invention of smartphones. What can a printed guide offer in the 2020s, when an app can show us exactly where we are and which direction we're facing? Our answer: *The Book of Trails* is not just concerned with the trail, but with your relationship to this place, telling a story of the town and of every forest and field.

Our team wanted to make sure that new and updated maps were legible and consistent while retaining the charm of the hand-drawn style used by prior mapmakers Christopher Kilgore, David Ellison, Reeve K. Biggers, and Barrett Cram. In the summer of 2025, I studied everything from *The Hobbit* and early editions of *The Connecticut Walk Book* to antique maps from 17th-century England and 11th-century Egypt. I asked another Redding native, San Francisco-based artist Elisabeth Wren Eckman, if she would contribute illustrations of plants and animals.

In September, I spent a delightful morning collecting references from Conservation Commission records at the Old Town House. Would you believe that in the 1950s, our *Town meeting minutes* were illustrated? A testament to the impact made by one or two artists who live nearby and volunteer.

This idea, the impact of a few caring locals, became the heart of the project. Bill Hill, of Warrups Farm, loaned me a copy of *Walks in Redding*, a set of *Redding Pilot* articles collected in 1973 by his mother, Betty Hill. In 1975, she'd added a map of Saugatuck Falls Natural Area, which caught my eye. Who was this mapmaker, John Hoogenboom? He wasn't mentioned in *The Book of Trails*, yet he designed the network at Saugatuck Falls that visitors still fall in love with today.

His 1975 map is wonderfully annotated with over 40 points of interest. You can still find American chestnut sprouts where he saw them on Knapp Way, and his map allowed us to confirm the identity of a record hickory tree fallen since the last edition of *The Book of Trails*.

Bill also showed me another of Betty Hill's treasures, a portfolio of

newspaper clippings about whether the Town should purchase land for Topstone Park. These articles and letters to the editor brought life and detail to an important controversy in which residents came to articulate their strongest reasons for preserving open space.

Why care about these assorted stories? For me, they touched on the profound role that "nature" takes in our lives. As a kid, I loved to explore the Samuel E. Hill Little River Preserve with my father. When I was in middle school, he developed ocular melanoma, and when I was in high school, it progressed to his liver; he died when I was a senior. For the next few years, I spent a lot of time alone in "our" woods.

As I learned from a survey the Land Trust put out in August, trees comfort many of us in our grief. Something magic happens when we draw a protective line around these outdoor spaces. When we restrain our impulse to use up the earth, we make room for more-than-human-systems that overflow with life. These systems last when the people we love don't last. Parents die, kids grow up and move away – but we still have these places where we've put our memories and relationships. We return to them and find them still alive, still growing.

By this past winter in the draft of the new edition, we had a new history section, a sequence for the new properties, drafts of an updated map style, and notes and sketches for expanded reference sections. In March, the updated trail descriptions were finally complete.

Every time I go outside, I see something else we can put in the book. But another lesson I've learned is that a major pleasure of looking at maps is correcting them! What we're not able to include in this version will be fodder for the next. So, we're winding it down, wrapping it up...soon. Perhaps this summer.

In the meantime, take yourself on some adventures inspired by our research. If you haven't seen the 600-foot-tall smokestacks of Long Island's Northport Power Station from Joan's Trail, then visit the Mary Evelyn Scott Preserve. In mid- to late-May, visit Saugatuck Falls Natural Area and e-mail us if you find any ground pine on Hemlock Trail, or pink lady's slipper on the Oak Trail or under the transmission lines. (A little further north, onto the Hardwood Trail, you're sure to see azaleas blooming along the river.) If you're extra adventurous, visit Huckleberry Swamp in boots or waders to see if Redding still has the rare swamp birch.

Then, sometime in late July or August, pick a preserve or trail – almost any will do – and walk near a swampy area until you smell the intoxicating fragrance of sweet pepperbush, our most underrated shrub. But that's another season, and the dogwood hasn't even bloomed. ■

Cole Tucker-Walton is a Trustee of Redding Land Trust



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## Roll up your citizen-scientist sleeves New Pond Farm to host annual BioBlitz

By Pamela Brown

If you're interested in learning about the natural environment and farm life while having fun along the way, stop by New Pond Farm Education Center's upcoming BioBlitz and Open Day on Saturday, April 25. "Both events are perfect for families looking for a fun and inspiring day outdoors. We love introducing first time visitors to New Pond Farm and showing those already familiar with us something new," said Emily Ciffone, Director of Education.

BioBlitz will take place from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. on the New Pond Farm property at 101 Marchant Road. This annual event celebrates local biodiversity and offers community members an opportunity to be citizen scientists and help inventory the wild animals and plants living on New Pond Farm's 102 acres. To participate, guests take photographs of species they spot and upload them to the iNaturalist app, an online social network, where their findings will be identified and verified. Last year's BioBlitz recorded more than 230 species and nearly 700 observations.

The day will be filled with a series of activities led by experts and educators as well. There will be a Bird Walk led by expert birder Joe Bear searching for spring migrants at 8:00 a.m.; a Plant Walk led by naturalist Cathy Smith searching for spring ephemerals and other early spring plants at 10:00 a.m.;

Water Sampling to perform basic water quality testing throughout the farm led by assistant educator and explorer Tim Keyes at 12:00 p.m.; Insect Investigations led by local lepidopterist Vic Demasi who will share his diverse collection of insects while helping participants identify their finds at 1:00 p.m.; and Nature Trivia to test your knowledge on identifying local species at 3:00 p.m.; and Wetland Wanderings at 5:00 p.m.

BioBlitz supports New Pond Farm's mission of inspiring and educating people to protect and preserve the natural world. "By cataloging the living organisms on the property, we gain a better understanding of any potential conservation needs. With current data, New Pond Farm is able to make land use decisions to benefit the plants and wildlife," said Ciffone, noting the community is essential to these citizen-science projects. "When community members participate, they not only contribute to the collection of important scientific data, but they also have the opportunity to be inspired by the natural world and gain a better understanding of the value of biodiversity."

Alongside this day-long cataloging, the Farm is hosting Open Day programming from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Guests and others interested in membership at New Pond Farm can visit the barnyard, sample fresh milk, go on a trail walk, and explore the Native American

encampment. They also can meet the farm's native ambassadors – the Eastern Painted Turtle and Eastern Box Turtle.

"Bringing together the BioBlitz and Open Day captures what New Pond Farm is all about – inviting people in, sparking curiosity, and deepening their connection to the natural world," said Priya Desai, Executive Director. "Whether someone is documenting a species for the first time or exploring with their family, they become part of a shared effort to better understand and care for this land. What makes the day especially meaningful is seeing community members, local experts, staff, and volunteers all learning and working side by side. It's welcoming, hands-on, and it's conservation in action – an experience that inspires long lasting stewardship of the land that sustains us all."

This jam-packed day is a way for New Pond Farm to share its bounty, Desai said. "We want guests to feel welcome and to understand that we have many incredible resources to share – beautiful and diverse habitats, domesticated and wild animals, and enthusiastic staff and volunteers who love sharing the wonders of the natural world." ■

For more information and schedule updates, visit [newpondfarm.org/events/bioblitz\\_2026](http://newpondfarm.org/events/bioblitz_2026)



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# THE NATURAL WORLD

## Ask The Redding Gardener

By Sean McNamara



Dear Sean,

Happy spring! I am sending photos of a very large and very old weeping cherry on my property. I noticed the damage to one of its limbs earlier this spring, and was wondering if there is anything we can do to help it? It's one of my favorite trees and I want to do whatever we can to preserve it for as long as possible. Thanks so much for all your help!

— Maria from Bethel

Well, Maria, happy spring to you too! Thanks for sending the photos of your big old weeping cherry — I can see why it's one of your favorites. That graceful, fountain-like shape with the long cascading branches is really something special, especially when it's covered in those pretty pink blossoms.

What you've got there is a classic multi-stem (or "clump") weeping cherry — most likely a Weeping Higan Cherry. Years ago, nurseries would sometimes plant three young trees very close together in the same hole to create

that dramatic, full look right from the start. As the trunks grew and thickened over time, they started pressing against each other. That's exactly what's happening with the wound you noticed — one of the three leaders is getting squeezed out by the other two. The bark is separating and there's some internal rot starting where they rub together.

The good news is the damage doesn't look too extensive yet. These old trees are tougher than they appear, and this one will probably keep going for many more years if we give it a little help. In the old days, folks used to slap tar on wounds like that, but we've learned that actually slows down the tree's natural healing, so it's best to leave it alone and let nature do its thing.

Here's what I'd recommend: Have a professional arborist take a closer look. They have the right tools to check how much decay is inside the trunk and can tell us how serious it really is. If one leader is clearly the weak link, they might

suggest removing it during the dormant season. That would reduce the competition and let the stronger two trunks thrive with better structure. They could also cable the remaining leaders together, so the sturdy ones help support each other.

Bottom line, Maria: Your prized weeping cherry isn't in immediate trouble, but it's worth getting a professional set of eyes on it soon. These beautiful old trees have been charming American gardens since the late 1800s (they arrived here from Japan well before the big 1912 gift of cherries to Washington, D.C.), and with a little thoughtful care, this one should keep putting on its spectacular spring show for a long time to come. ■

Happy gardening,  
Sean, The Redding Gardener

P.S. Got more tree questions, spring surprises, or any other gardening puzzles? Feel free to drop me an e-mail anytime or stop by Redding Nursery at 73 Hill Road.

## If trees could talk

April is for lovers — of trees

By Laurie Heiss



Photo by Laurie Heiss

The author's roadside tree in bloom.

It's a loud music night at a local restaurant when a neighborhood buddy makes a point of saying how gorgeous my prominent roadside tree is in blossom. I agree. Every year, I'm excited to take photos like it's the first time I've seen it. We aren't alone in savoring the scenery in this spring season. We all notice the trees we've missed as they wake up and show off.

It is bittersweet as the pink-turned-white petals snow onto my lawn, transformed overnight with thousands of just-opened violets. The willow bank has changed from a pinkish-yellow fringe to that light, yellowish-green that makes me grin. Reddingites are fortunate to enjoy so many roadside trees in blossom, trails with blooming understories and yards full of beauty. Let's hold that thought through the dog days of summer when we take trees' full-leafed shade for granted...

before we seek the golds, oranges, and reds of fall.

Our lives are entwined with our tree canopy; so, participate in Earth Day, Arbor Day, May Day! Read a tree-celebratory or tree-centered book! Richard Powers's *The Overstory*, Doug Tallamy's *The Nature of Oaks*, Leah Glasser's *Branching Out: The Public History of Trees*, Matthew Flemings's *The Tree Book: The Stories, Science & History of Trees*, or *The Wisdom of Trees* by Lita Judge are great places to start. And yes, go hug a tree (I guarantee it feels good). Fight for them. Care for them. Love them. And as we sometimes trade full power to our homes 100% of the time for fewer trees, ask yourself if it's worth it.

Spring Greetings from your friends at The Redding Tree Conservancy. ■

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**SCHEDULE**

11:00 Lunch  
12:30 Shotgun Start  
5:30 Cocktail Hour  
6:30 Dinner, Awards and Raffle



DAWS.ORG | DAWSGOLF2026.GIVEMART.COM



Our Annual Golf Tournament for DAWS returns on June 8th to the Redding Country Club, home to the beautiful 18-hole Rees Jones designed course. Thank you for participating in support of our life-saving mission, dedicated to saving thousands of animals each year.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies  
R = registration required

## This Week's Featured Events

### Let Your Groove Bloom: Dance Party

**Thursday, April 23**  
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
First annual spring dance party, live music, light bites, BYOB  
Ages 35+  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
E-mail studio06896@gmail.com  
**R**

### Cocktail Party and Screening of *Glory*

**Thursday, April 23**  
7:00 p.m.  
Fundraiser event for *Redding's America 250* concert  
Greenwood Features  
269 Greenwood Avenue  
Bethel  
redding250.com  
**\$, R**

### New Pond Farm's Open Day and BioBlitz

**Saturday, April 25**  
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. BioBlitz  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Open Day  
Visit the farm and become a citizen scientist by recording species and observations  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org



## MEETINGS

**Thursday, April 23**

**Annual Town Budget Meeting**  
3:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road

**Friday, April 24**

**Region 9 BoE Select Committee on Academic Rigor, Standards, and Grading**  
8:30 a.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Room A108  
100 Black Rock Turnpike

**Friday, April 27**

**OPEB Trust Board**  
6:00 p.m.  
Virtual

**Monday, April 27**

**Board of Finance**  
7:30 p.m.  
Town Hall / Conference Room and Virtual  
100 Hill Road and Zoom

**Tuesday, April 28**

**Region 9 Finance & Operations**  
5:30 p.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons  
100 Black Rock Turnpike

**Tuesday, April 28**

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

**Tuesday, April 28**

**Planning Commission**  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual  
100 Hill Road and Zoom

**Monday, May 4**

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

**Monday, May 4**

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

**Monday, May 4**

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

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Town & Region 9 Board of Education Budget Referendum**  
6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
reddingct.gov/government/town-administration/registrars-voters/2022-upcoming-elections

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Georgetown Fire District**  
5:00 p.m.  
Georgetown Fire Department  
61 Redding Road

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Redding Board of Education**  
7:00 p.m.  
John Read Middle School / Community Room  
486 Redding Road

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Conservation Commission**  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road

**Tuesday, May 5**

**Board of Finance**  
8:15 p.m.  
Virtual

\*See meeting agendas and minutes at [reddingct.gov/agendas-minutes](http://reddingct.gov/agendas-minutes)

## AMERICA 250

**Thursday, April 23**

**Cocktail Party and Screening of *Glory***  
7:00 p.m.  
Fundraiser event for *Redding's America 250* concert  
Greenwood Features  
269 Greenwood Avenue, Bethel  
redding250.com  
**\$, R**

**Saturday, April 25**

**The Remembrance Parade**  
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Parade route from Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church to Ballard Park  
207 Main Street  
Ridgefield  
ridgefieldct250.org/events/the-remembrance-parade

**Thursday, April 30**

**Charles Ives, His Life and Music**  
7:00 p.m.  
Learn about Charles Ives and his musical legacy and the ties to the upcoming May 30 concert celebration put on by Redding's America 250  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
redding250.com  
**R**

**Thursday, April 30**

**Creative Survival: African Heritage Enslavement & Freedom in Early New England**  
7:00 p.m.  
Presentation by Rhode Island's Historian Laureate  
Helen Keller Middle School  
360 Sport Hill Road  
Easton

**Thursday, April 30**

**The Importance of Connecticut to the Revolution with Mike Allen**  
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Wilton Historical Society  
224 Danbury Road  
Wilton  
wiltonhistorical.org/america-250-wilton-300  
**\$, R**

## ARTS

**Saturday, April 25**

**Artist-in-Residence Open Studio Program**  
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Meet April artist Lori Larusso, enjoy refreshments and activities  
Weir Farm National Historical Park  
735 Nod Hill Road  
Wilton  
nps.gov/wefa

**Sunday, April 26**

**The Way It Is**  
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
A weaving together of music and storytelling  
The Granite  
5 North Main Street  
thegranitechurch.org/events  
**\$, R**

**Tuesday, April 28**

**Altered Book Workshop with Sarah Upson**  
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
Hands-on workshop transforming a book into art  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwinlibrary.org  
**R**

## CHILDREN | TEENS

**Saturday, May 2**

**Mark Twain Library's Frog Frolic**  
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Annual free outdoor family festival with food, games, live music, and activities  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
mtlfrogfrolic.org

## FOOD | WINE

**Thursday, April 23**

**A Wine & Spirits Showcase**  
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Presented by Redding Wine & Spirits and Redding Country Club, enjoy 80+ wines and spirits and light bites  
Redding Country Club  
109 Lonetown Road  
E-mail frank@reddingwineandspirits.com  
**\$, R**

**Saturday, May 2**

**Tickets on sale now: Troop 15 Spaghetti Dinner**  
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
West Redding Firehouse  
306 Umpawaug Road  
reddingtroop15.org  
**\$, R**

## NATURE

**Saturday, April 25**

**New Pond Farm's Open Day and BioBlitz**  
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. BioBlitz  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Open Day  
Visit the farm and become a citizen scientist by recording species and observations  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org

**Wednesday, April 29**

**Spring Wildflowers: Wildflower Ramble & Brown Bag Lunch**  
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
**R**

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**Thursday, April 23**

**Let Your Groove Bloom: Dance Party**  
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
First annual spring dance party, live music, light bites, BYOB  
Ages 35+  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
E-mail studio06896@gmail.com  
**R**

**Saturday, May 2 - Monday, May 4**

**Minks to Sinks Tag Sale**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday  
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Sunday  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Monday  
Wilton High School grounds  
395 Danbury Road, Wilton  
familyandchildrensagency.org/minks-to-sinks

**Temple B'nai Chaim**

Friday, April 24  
5:30 p.m.  
Family/Israel Shabbat and potluck dinner  
82 Portland Avenue  
templebnachaim.org

**Want to feature an upcoming event?**  
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 @AlexisBennettSellingCT



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 Listed By John Frey | 203.240.0624  
 John.Frey@cbmoves.com



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Mary Dent  
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 203.470.5605



Margi Esten  
 203.241.8453



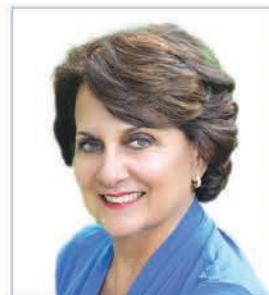
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1. & 2 Based on information from Greenwich Association of REALTORS, SmartMLS Inc. 4/1/2025-3/31/2026. The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2025 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logo are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Anywhere Advisors LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

