

Board of Ed finalizes proposed 2025-26 budget

By Anne Young Albanese

On Tuesday, February 4, the Redding Board of Education approved its proposed 2025-26 fiscal year budget, for a total of \$26,521,323. This represents a 4.19% increase (or \$1,067,701) over the 2024-25 fiscal year. Some items from the original budget presentation were removed to bring the increase below 5%. The Redding School District comprises John Read Middle School (JRMS) and Redding Elementary School (RES).

The Board of Education and the Central Office administration have introduced a Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program (VERIP), which is anticipated to bring some cost savings.

“This is to encourage six veteran educators to retire early at the end of this year. This budget

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Photo by Jessie Wright

The slope by the Redding Elementary School kindergarten wing was the perfect bunny hill for sledding after a winter storm on Sunday, February 9. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Finding light in the darkness of winter

By Rob Sample

Do the winter months leave you feeling a bit melancholy? You’re certainly not alone – and there may even be a biological reason for it.

This condition is known as seasonal affective disorder, appropriately dubbed “SAD” for short. It is common from late fall through the winter when days are shorter in northern climes and people experience fewer hours of daylight. According to Johns Hopkins University, scientists theorize that those shorter days and limited sunlight set off a chemical change in the brain that can result in symptoms of depression.

“Some studies show that SAD affects up to 25% of the population, and it’s especially prevalent among people of Northern and Eastern-European ancestry,” said Liz Jorgensen, Director of Ridgefield-based Insight Counseling, LLC, and a nationally recognized expert in both adolescent and adult counseling. “We think it comes from our ancestors, very few of whom were noble people. They toiled the land and needed to hibernate during those dark winters to

preserve their energy. It’s biologically driven – you don’t see it in the Amazon or in other regions of the tropics.”

Jorgensen pointed out that people who feel sluggish or a bit blue during winter months can take certain measures to lessen it. If you feel the need to sleep more, it won’t hurt to allow yourself an extra hour or two of slumber. Sunlight is also a natural mood booster: When it’s warm enough, try to spend an hour outdoors in an activity such as walking, hiking, biking, or running.

When it’s just too cold to venture outside, technology has provided a way to mimic the sun’s rays via the daylight lamp (also known as a sun therapy lamp). Jorgensen and her eight colleagues at Insight Counseling employ them in winter for counseling sessions, and by mimicking natural sunlight, they can help boost your mood and energy levels. They won’t, however, provide you with the Vitamin D you’d otherwise get from actual exposure to the sun; you’ll need to supplement that at the drugstore.

SAD has dovetailed with an

uptick in mental-health disorders overall in the U.S., which some practitioners trace to a decrease in social connections and an increase in self-isolation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of people living alone in the U.S. increased by 4.7 million, to 37.9 million, between 2012 and 2022.

“In addition, people no longer belong to community organizations or participate in community activities the way they once did,” Jorgensen noted. “That was a trend prior to Covid-19, but Covid definitely accelerated it – particularly among young people and sparking a greater trend toward loneliness and isolation.”

Jorgensen has seen a lack of social connection among all age groups. “Humans are social creatures,” Jorgensen said. “We really do rely on each other to thrive. When a good friend was diagnosed with cancer, I ran right over with all her favorite recipes.”

In the past, Jorgensen’s kindness wouldn’t have been unusual – but

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REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Technology on the trails

By Jessie Wright

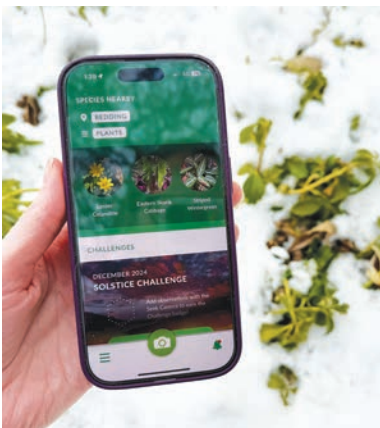


Photo by Jessie Wright

Most of the time, I try to keep my phone in my pocket while I am out on my weekly hikes, reminding myself to look up and out at the natural splendor around me. It’s a welcome respite from the hours spent behind a screen, a treasured opportunity to soak up texture and sunlight.

That said, there are a few apps with features so useful they will prompt me to occasionally break this personal rule. Some I use before heading out as I plan my weekly excursion; others enhance my experience following the trails – both the ones under my boots and those of my own curiosity.

Seek by iNaturalist

This is the app I probably use most outdoors, whether in my own backyard or out in Redding’s open spaces. Simply take a photo with the Seek app of any plant you’d like to identify, and it will spit out details on its taxonomy, physical characteristics, seasonality in your region, and observations from other Seek users. You can also save your photos and past searches into collections to organize and reference later.

The app also includes settings for all types of animals, though I find animals are more difficult to snap photos of for reliable identification. Even if you aren’t a big hiker, this is the app I recommend to anyone who isn’t sure about what is growing in their own gardens.

Merlin Bird ID

I lovingly call this app “bird Shazam”, like the app that allows you to identify any song that is playing in the background. Developed by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Merlin app offers you many ways to identify the feathered creatures out on your walks. I use the Sound ID feature the most, where you record a few seconds of audio, and the app can tell you what species are nearby.

There are also options for step-

Continued on page 4

After a devastating flood, a gallery reopens with love

By Donna Christopher

A peace sign painted on the side of the Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center is a fitting symbol for Bob and Julie Durkin Marty as they prepare for a reopening of their gallery on February 15, six months after a flash flood destroyed much of the building’s interior.

The show, Just Love Everybody: The Art of Dave Daignault, will open on Saturday, February 15 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Daignault was part of a group show at the gallery last year before the flood and painted the sign on the building, which mirrors one on a barn he formerly owned on Umpawaug Road some locals might know as the “Peace Barn”.

“We knew his work and are fans of his work, fans of his mission to spread love. So, from our perspective, he seemed like the kind of artist who would be appropriate at this juncture – who would be able to kind of reflect both our sense of commitment, our resilience as a gallery, and that we believe in the community of artists,” said Bob Marty. “Our question was, how do we tell the world about that?”

An August 18 rainstorm dumped over eight inches of rain on Redding, took two lives in Connecticut, and caused millions of dollars in damage, leading to a federal major disaster declaration. The storm flooded the Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center on Main Street, destroying much of the interior of the public space and Julie’s lower-level studio, along with equipment and half of her life’s work. After six months of clean-up and reconstruction, the 5 Main Street gallery has completed repairs to the interior.

The solo art show opening on Valentine’s Day weekend is a chance to celebrate the expression of love the Martys felt from the local community of artists, some they knew and many strangers, who came in to help clear out the building the day after it flooded. Dozens of people came to help them shovel out the wreckage and grapple with the damage. Following a three-month water clean-up, construction began in December. Floors and walls have been replaced, a new HVAC system was installed, and some artwork was restored.

During a recent conversation at the studio, the Martys expressed their gratitude for the dozens of people and the local arts and business community who helped them rebuild.

“(Ring’s End) gave us a very deep discount to try to help us on the paint, on the sheetrock, and the flooring materials,” Bob said. “So much had to be ripped out and replaced brand new. We had to cut out all the sheetrock three feet up all through here,” he said of the main gallery, adding that the base-

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EDITORIAL

Testimony in support of SB 1230

Last week, the *Sentinel* submitted testimony to the Government Administration and Elections Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly in support of SB 1230. That bill, if passed out of Committee and ultimately enacted, would require Connecticut State agencies to allocate 50% of their advertising spend to media outlets headquartered in Connecticut.

We wrote to the Committee that having a local newspaper again informs residents about town government, schools, sports, businesses, arts and cultural activities, and more. People learn about their neighbors, where to hike or find a local farmstand, and which new businesses are starting up.

We pointed out that we print legal notices for the Town of Redding, so residents are fully informed about zoning, budgets, special town meetings, and other activities critical to our community.

Our success is based on our decision to focus on Redding and the needs of Redding residents. We are entirely local. That local focus brings our community together and has made the *Sentinel* part of the fabric of Redding life.

It's not easy being a newspaper publisher, though, and any additional revenue we can get will further support our mission. With funds from State advertising, for example, we could hire reporters as staff rather than pay them per story – and they in turn would pay more in tax to the State. A virtuous circle, if you will.

Being local means we support other local initiatives, such as SB 1230. Connecticut's government agencies should spend their funds to the extent possible with local businesses, and that includes advertising.

We'll keep you informed of the progress of this bill. ■

State aid would increase to Redding under Lamont's proposed budget

By Keith M. Phaneuf and Renata Daou

Some towns would gain and some would lose State funding under Governor Ned Lamont's proposal for town aid grants, including the Education Cost Sharing grant, the largest operating grant to K-12 school districts.

The State's \$2.3 billion Education Cost Sharing program would continue to follow a previously authorized schedule of increases, growing by more than \$157 million in the first year of the new biennium and by another \$11 million in the second.

Similarly, the grant that reimburses communities for a portion of the revenue they lose because certain properties are exempt from local taxation also will grow as planned, by about \$40 million over the next two years combined.

Total aid to Redding would increase by 2.91% under the proposal. The total number includes payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), motor vehicle tax reimbursement, supplemental revenue sharing grant, Mashantucket Pequot & Mohegan fund grant, town aid road, local capital improvement (LoCIP), municipal grants-in-aid, education cost sharing, and adult education.

Under the Education Cost Sharing program, Redding would receive 7.34% more for its public schools next fiscal year according to Governor Lamont's proposed budget adjustments. ■

This article originally appeared in CT Mirror

It has been edited to highlight proposed aid numbers for Redding

State Aid Type to Redding	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	\$ Change, FY2025-2026	% Change, FY2025-2026
Total Aid	\$798.72K	\$821.97K	\$821.97K	+\$23.25K	2.91%
Education Cost Sharing Grant	\$262.37K	\$281.63K	\$281.63K	+\$19.26K	7.34%

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

Thank you, Dave Smith, for bringing attention to the out-of-line, unexplained, 7,100% increased brush drop-off fees at the Transfer Station.

I have been a taxpayer in town for 40 years and have seen our town budget, real estate taxes, fire district taxes increase by 300-500%, while the town population has stayed relatively the same.

We may not be able to directly influence the political turmoil and drastic changes going on in our country now, but certainly as “proud” Reddingites, we should all make the efforts to be responsible town citizens and work to keep our taxes and town fees under control.

I want to be able to afford to live in the town I love. ■

Susan Boone Durkee
Mark Twain Lane
Mark Twain's “The Lobster Pot”

To the Editor,

What a pleasure to read Jane Hamilton-Merritt's piece, Redding Land Warriors. The wide-open spaces and abundant preserved land are what attracted me to Redding. Land preservation on this scale does not happen by accident. To learn more of the visionary early champions and crusaders like Sam Hill, Mary Anne Guitar, and Stuart Chase deepens the appreciation, awe, and great good fortune I feel to be newly arrived in this stunning place. Thank you. ■

Josh Lehrer
Redding Road

To the Editor,

I would like to thank Jane Hamilton-Merritt for her article entitled “Redding Land Warriors, How Redding became ‘Small Town: Big Outdoors’” published in the February 6, 2025 edition of the Redding Sentinel. This informative article clearly articulates the history of Redding's land conservation efforts, its results, and inspires continued efforts to preserve Redding into the future. ■

Jeanne Lazo-Wasem
Poverty Hollow Road

LEGAL NOTICE

The Redding Board of Assessment Appeals will be meeting Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Town Hall to set hearing dates and review appeals applications from the tax assessments on the grand list as of October 1, 2024. Anyone wishing to make an appeal must obtain an application from the Tax Assessor's office or Town website, fill out the required information and return it to the Tax Assessor's office by Thursday, February 20, 2025. Once the application is received, a hearing date will be scheduled for all eligible applicants. Only applications completed and returned by February 20, 2025 may be considered for a hearing. ■

Greg Stackpole, Chairman
Redding Board of Assessment Appeals



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



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OPINION

Roads without rage

By Carter Wiseman

Every time I drive back toward Redding from a trip to Trader Joe’s or Barnes & Noble in Westport, I am confronted with a moral dilemma. It happens where Route 107 comes in from the left before merging with Route 53 and then going right on Hill Road to Redding Center.

There are no traffic lights at the intersection, just three stop signs. As long as there is no traffic, one can normally (if illegally) “roll” through, but if there is a Maserati or a dump truck approaching, one has to make a choice. This is especially true if vehicles arrive at the same time. If you remember your driver’s ed class, the vehicle on the right may advance first. In the case of dump trucks, I give their drivers priority, since braking and accelerating a huge rig must be annoying. But I have found that drivers of high-end cars often like to move quickly off the line, often too quickly.

I don’t know if this reflects a sense on their owners’ part that their wealth entitles them to cut the queue, or whether their cars’ better acceleration guarantees a jump on my Honda. But I think the way one handles this common roadway encounter says something about how one feels about one’s fellow human.

Deliberately running a stop sign may produce a moment’s competitive thrill in the most aggressive among us, but it is unlikely to cut more than a few seconds off the driver’s trip.

And even those seconds tend to evaporate at the next red light, when there is no option but to stop. Then there is the risk that two A-type personalities are involved, and a crash results.

Excuse the hyperbole, but in a time of stress over doing the right thing, this seems to me to be a microcosmic illustration of what it means to be civilized. Without some rules on which we all agree, we revert to barbarism. Just ask the Romans and the Visigoths! When good rules are observed, peace tends to prosper. It can even make one feel better about oneself. You are in for an unexpected pleasure when waving another driver through a four-way, perhaps flashing one’s headlights as an “after-you” signal. It happens so rarely that you are likely to get an astonished high-five in return.

Heading south from Redding on Route 53, there are a couple of stretches of straight road in upper Weston. The speed limit is 40 miles-per-hour, which I admit to sometimes exceeding. Nevertheless, I regularly get passed despite the double yellow lines. For the longest time, my first impulse was to give the speeder a rude hand gesture and pound my steering wheel. But since I am now usually leaving a soothing meditation class at the Redding Community Center, I just smile, wave — and quietly hope a cop pulls the offender over when they blow through the stop sign at the Route 57 merge. ■

The Grange to host inaugural Environmental Summit

Saturday, February 22 | By Pamela Brown



On Saturday, February 22, Redding Grange #15 will host its first-ever Mini Environmental Summit to address and discuss pressing ecological issues and crowdsource solutions together. The event runs from 12:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. with a closing reception with light refreshments at 4:00 p.m. for attendees to socialize and network with individuals concerned about the environment.

“Our event was inspired by a very special Redding resident and Grange member, Victor DeMasi. Among other credentials, Victor is an entomologist and research associate at the Peabody Museum, and he kindly offered to speak about pollinators at the Grange. The topic met with such enthusiasm that we decided to expand the offering,” said Grange President Elizabeth Jensen. “Come prepared to be inspired and empowered to take action toward a greener future.”

The Summit will comprise informative and insightful presentations on a variety of topics selected by the Grange’s Event Committee, along with a question-and-answer

segment. “We think people will find the topics locally relevant, but they also have a much larger reach,” said Jensen.

DeMasi will offer the opening presentation on pollinators, specifically focusing his presentation on how neonicotinoid pesticides harm pollinators and ecosystems around us. “Seventy-five percent of our plant species are pollinated by insects and other species that are disappearing at an alarming rate,” said DeMasi. “Neonicotinoids are now the most widely used pesticide in Connecticut. Problem is, they are water soluble – spray your lawn and the next rain they are in your neighbors well water and your own. Well water potability is a critical issue in local towns.” DeMasi will be joined by some young citizen scientists, whose “dedication is a breath of fresh air” to outline projects they’re working on to improve the local environment.

Additional presentations will include Permaculture Basics by Jacqueline Kowalski, Associate Extension Educator/Urban Agriculture at UConn and Need to Know Facts about Glyphosate by Bill Hill, owner of Warrup’s Farm.

“I will present some background on the origins of herbicides and Roundup (Glyphosate) in particular – why it is toxic and what some of the alternatives are, while recognizing the need to control some plants some of the time,” said Hill.

Laura Del Savio from the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters will offer an envi-

ronmentally focused Legislative Summary, and Jon Vander Werff, Connecticut Project Manager of the Coldwater Habitat Program, will offer a segment on Water Quality.

“As most of Redding is considered a watershed, it is an especially important topic for us,” noted Jensen.

Jensen encourages everyone to attend, even if you have the slightest interest in the environment.

“As cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has’,” Jensen said, adding that attendees will come away with practical tips to help protect the environment.

“Information from the participants inform constructive behavior to limit negative behavior that impacts our environment and our health. We owe it to those who follow us in this world to be responsible for what we leave behind,” DeMasi affirmed.

If the Mini Environmental Summit is successful, Jensen said it might lead to similar regular events at the Grange.

“We hope people will leave the event more informed about environmental issues, inspired to take action (however small), and have the chance to connect with others who share their interests.” ■

Learn more and register at reddinggrange.org/events-and-activities



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SPORTS

Falcons stay in hunt for playoff spot

Girls basketball | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Sarah Asghar scored 10 points for the Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team in a game at Bethel on Tuesday, February 4. Barlow lost 37-46.

As the regular season winds down, the Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team is in good shape to claim a spot in the South-West Conference playoffs. The Falcons are currently in third place in the Colonial Division and sixth in the tournament rankings. A victory in one of their three remaining games will guarantee them a playoff spot for the first time in several years. Barlow hit a bump in the road when it traveled to Bethel on Tuesday, February 4. Despite keeping pace with its opponent for much of the first half, it wound up playing catch-up the rest of the way in a 37-46 loss.

“I think we played well in spurts,” said Barlow Head Coach Joe Carollo. “But I think that we showed that we can play with anybody like we have all year.” Aiden Gill’s three-pointer put the hosts up at the beginning, but the Falcons countered with one courtesy of Agnes Davis to start an eight-point run, capped off by a steal and layup by Sarah Asghar for an 8-3 advantage. The momentum then went the other way, with the Wildcats sinking seven straight of their own, including a field goal and free throw by Summer Wish to put her team on top 10-8 with 1:04 left in the first period. Barlow never had the lead again.

Some accurate three-point shooting helped the Wildcats outscore the visitors by a two-to-one margin for the second frame. Emma Huedepohl hit back-to-back treys early in the period, and another later on from Mia Marschner increased Bethel’s lead to ten (24-14). “They were hot,” said Carollo. “Shooters make shots.” The lead grew as high as 12 points before the Falcons’ Grace Walsh added a three-pointer of her own right before the buzzer as the visitors went into halftime trailing 28-17. Stepping it up on defense, the Falcons held the competition to single-digit scoring for the third period. They got to within 10 points of the hosts (32-22) with 4:33 left, and with the help of four straight points by Mia Tartaglia, made it 32-28 with a minute-and-a-half left. Barlow stayed within striking distance as the fourth period got underway but suffered a setback when Tartaglia fouled out with 6:33 left in the game. Another three-pointer by Davis helped keep her team’s chances alive, but the Falcons drew no closer. Tartaglia and Asghar led Barlow in scoring with ten points apiece. Walsh had seven (one three-pointer) and Davis scored six on two three-pointers. Paige Jarvis and Ava Gillon each had two points. Barlow finishes the regular season this week before the SWC playoffs begin on Wednesday. “We control our own destiny,” said Carollo. “If we win one or two of our last three, we’re in and that’s what we want.” ■

Trojans respond to Barlow threat

Wrestling | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High’s Alex Krois, top, defeated Weston’s Duco Van Riemsdijk at 144 pounds in a wrestling match at Weston on Wednesday, February 5. Barlow lost 32-48.

As the weight classes increased, things got more difficult for the Joel Barlow High wrestling team when it visited Weston last week. While the Falcons did well earlier in the match, Weston had the upper hand later in the night on Wednesday, February 5. Taking the last six bouts, they came from behind for a 48-32 win. The Trojans kicked off things with a win in the 106-pound class when James Lemmis pinned Will Areklett in 3:16. They then gave the Falcons some easy points by not having wrestlers for the next three weight classes. As a result, Grady Mumbach (133 pounds), Zack Jhilal (120 pounds), and Mike Areklett (126 pounds) all got victories by forfeit, putting the Falcons up 18-6. Weston countered with Edward Ye pinning Jake Hamlin in 1:55 at 132 pounds, but the Falcons added to their lead with three more wins. At 138 pounds, Ryan Knob racked up the points against Eli Wald, eventually winning an 18-2 technical fall. Things were much closer in the 144-pound match. Alex Krois trailed Weston’s Duco Van Riemsdijk much of the way before coming from behind for a close 10-9 decision.

Scott Romano also got Barlow a win, coming at 150 pounds when he needed less than a minute to pin Brady Martin. That would be the Falcons’ last victory of the night, as the Trojans took the next six contests, starting with Noam Ben-Zvi pinning Claudio Barbosa in 59 seconds at 157 pounds. Olaf Koskinski then pinned Anthony Azzara in the first period of the 165-pound class. With Barlow not having a wrestler at 175 pounds, Weston took the contest to cut the lead to a point (32-31). By now the Trojans had the momentum, taking the lead when Max Lipton pinned R.J. Gaspar in 1:28 at 190 pounds. Weston stopped any chance of a Barlow comeback by taking the last two matches, both by pins. Nick Jandrucko defeated Pierce Counter at 215 pounds, and in the 275-pound division, Julian Smith topped Connor Lee to secure the win. Barlow, now 2-5 in the South-West Conference, finishes its regular season schedule this week before taking part in the league championships on Saturday, February 15 at New Fairfield High beginning at 8:30 a.m. ■

Sports stats and schedules

Boys basketball <i>Results:</i> February 4: Bethel 63 / Joel Barlow 36 <i>Record:</i> Joel Barlow 3-13 <i>Next games:</i> February 15: home versus New Milford at 1:30 p.m. February 18: away versus New Milford at 7:00 p.m.	Girls basketball (continued) <i>Next games:</i> February 19: South-West Conference quarterfinals TBA Hockey <i>Results:</i> February 5: Joel Barlow-Weston-Abbott Tech 4 / Milford Mariners 3 <i>Record:</i> JBWA 12-2-2 <i>Next games:</i> February 15: home versus Bethel-Brookfield-Danbury-Immaculate at 3:15 p.m. February 19: home versus East Haven Co-op at 5:45 p.m.	Boys swimming (continued) February 4: Bunnell-Stratford 83 / Joel Barlow-Bethel 79 <i>Record:</i> Joel Barlow-Bethel 0-4 <i>Next meet:</i> February 18: away versus New Fairfield at 4:00 p.m.
Girls basketball <i>Results:</i> February 4: Bethel 46 / Joel Barlow 37 February 7: Joel Barlow 50 / New Milford 44 <i>Record:</i> Joel Barlow 12-6	Boys swimming <i>Results:</i>	Wrestling <i>Results:</i> February 5: Weston 48 / Joel Barlow 32 <i>Record:</i> Joel Barlow 2-5 (SWC) <i>Next matches:</i> February 15: away at New Fairfield at SWC championships at 8:30 a.m.

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Redding's Big Outdoors: Technology on the trails / continued from page 1

by-step bird identification based on physical characteristics and size as well as a photo analysis tool. The photo tool works offline, which can be very handy on many of Redding’s trails that fall outside of reliable cellular data network coverage.

AllTrails
Usually, I have a sense of what trail or open space I’d like to tackle next, but if I need some inspiration, I’ll turn to AllTrails. My favorite feature of this app is the category search, where you can select “dog friendly” or “running” or “stroller friendly” etc. along with a geographic location to populate a list of options in the area that suit your needs. I don’t often pull up AllTrails while I’m on the hike itself – I prefer instead to use it to chart my course while I’m still at home, using its details on hike intensity, distance and elevation, reviews from other hikers, and trail loop maps to narrow down what sounds good to me.

CARROT Weather
This app isn’t exactly hiking specific, but with so many weather apps out there, it deserves a mention. Looking at the weather forecast (and my limited windows of free time) for the week is an important part of any trail planning session, and I’ve found CARROT to be one of the better apps in terms of accuracy and hour-to-hour forecasting. As a bonus, it delivers its forecasts with fun, snarky commentary, which usually makes me smile, even if I see my preferred excursion date will be a washout. This bonus does come with a price, however – of all the apps I recommend, this one requires a paid subscription.

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 for more information.

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School Safety Officers honored at elementary and middle schools

By Anne Young Albanese



School Safety Officer John Parisi with an RES student.

With February 15 marking National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day, John Read Middle School (JRMS) and Redding Elementary School (RES) are celebrating the important contributions their School Safety Officers make to their school communities.

According to RES School Safety Officer John Parisi, School Safety Officers (SSOs) and School Resource Officers (SROs) have similar backgrounds and positions. They help to protect the schools, and they familiarize students with police officers with whom they can communicate and grow to trust. The difference between the two is that SSOs are retired police and law enforcement officers, while SROs are current, active police department members.

Parisi was a police officer in the Westport Police Department for 35 years before retiring. He was retired for about two weeks before realizing that he still wanted to work. He joined Redding in 2015 as an SSO.



Officer Mike Casey, the school safety officer for JRMS.

When asked about his favorite part of the job, Parisi said, “I truly ENJOY (his emphasis) working with the kids. They are the best part of my job.”

“We are so fortunate to have Officer John at Redding Elementary School. His commitment to ensuring a safe and positive environment for everyone does not go unnoticed,” raved Melissa Labrosciano, Principal at RES. “Officer John’s influence extends beyond his protective role; he is a true role model, demonstrating leadership and kindness that inspires everyone around him. His positive impact is felt throughout our entire school community.”

Officer Mike Casey is the School Safety Officer at JRMS. Casey worked with the Ridgefield Police Department for close to 30 years before retiring as a captain. After leaving Ridgefield, he joined the Western Connecticut State University’s Police Department for 13 years, earning the rank of sergeant.

This is his first year at JRMS, where he is already appreciated by parents, students, and staff.

When interviewed for an issue of the JRMS PTA newsletter last fall, Casey said, “Redding is like Ridgefield in a lot of ways. The town supports law enforcement, and parents are so appreciative of our efforts for a safe environment for the kids”. He added, “It’s important to have those friendly interactions between officers and the community and put faces to names, especially in a small town. It earns respect both ways.”

“In his short tenure at John Read, Mike has earned the respect of the entire community,” said Jennifer Desmarais, Principal at JRMS. “The students eagerly greet Officer Mike each day, often accompanying a hello with a fist bump. Mike knows most students by name. He takes the time to ask students and staff about their interests. I often overhear students sharing their weekend exploits from the court or ice with Mike on Monday mornings. Many students have shared with me that they consider Officer Mike as one of their trusted adults.”

Desmarais expressed appreciation for both his years of experience in law enforcement and the critical eye he brings to school safety measures as well as his commitment to getting to know the JRMS community.

“He goes above and beyond,” she said. “He attends school events. He talks to students and staff during lunch and recess times. He visits with faculty. He is getting to know parents and other members of the Redding community. He cares, and kids take note.” ■

Calling for new ideas from young minds

Submissions open for student contest on sustainable energy

By Jessie Wright



The 20th annual eesmarks Student Contest is now open for registration, inviting Connecticut students in kindergarten through 12th grade to showcase their innovative ideas on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable solutions for energy production and consumption.

For two decades, the eesmarks program has inspired students to think creatively about energy and the environment and foster a generation of innovators who will drive positive change. It is put on by Energize Connecticut sponsors, Eversource and Avangrid, Inc. subsidiaries United Illuminating (UI), Southern Connecticut Gas (SCG), and Connecticut Natural Gas (CNG). This year, teachers are also invited to participate by creating a video or song with their students, illustrating the importance of conserving energy.

The contest features various prompts tailored to different grade levels. Students in grades K-8 can participate by creating posters, limericks, billboard designs, fictional stories, persuasive letters, comic strips, or social media posts. High school students in grades 9-12 are tasked with producing persuasive images or words, such as short poems or cartoon strips, that advocate for an energy-saving topic. Entries will be evaluated

based on scientific validity and the effectiveness of their imagery.

“From community projects and playwriting to posters and public service announcements, the eesmarks Student Contest has received thousands of entries since its inception in 2005, but despite the varying prompts, one theme has remained constant throughout all of the student submissions – small habits or changes can make a big impact,” said Erik Robie, Director of Customer Programs and Products, including Conservation & Load Management, at UI, CNG, and SCG. “That theme is one our teachers incorporate daily in their classrooms, which is why I look forward to seeing their proposals on how we can save energy and be more energy conscious.”

The registration deadline for this year’s contest is March 21, 2025, and the project submission deadline is shortly after on March 28, 2025. All work must be completed individually, with no group projects accepted.

Finalists will be honored at an awards ceremony in May 2025 at the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, where winners will receive a certificate and an Amazon gift card. ■

Learn more and register at EnergizeCT.com/student-contest

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REMEMBERING REDDING

History of the Spinning Wheel Inn *The Tottle Years* | By Bruce Nelson



The original Spinning Wheel Inn on the Black Rock Turnpike in Redding in 1935.

Exactly when the original building that houses the Spinning Wheel Inn on the Black Rock Turnpike in Redding was constructed is a mystery that will never be solved with any degree of certainty. The 1748 date quoted by founder Elaine D. Tottle is likely a bit early but given that the structure we see there today is a reconstruction with multiple alterations, 1748 is probably close enough.

Legend has it that the building’s owner in the middle of the 19th century was a congenial chap named Bradley Burr. During Burr’s tenure, the building served as a stop for the thrice weekly stagecoach run between Norwalk and Danbury. Runs of that length generally required that teams be changed to keep the horses healthy and fresh.

Described in a 1941 account from the Redding Historical Society’s Landmarks File as a colorfully dressed man known for wearing a white stovepipe hat, Burr could have hosted passengers while the teamsters switched out the four-horse team for fresher steeds to continue the journey. Whether he served food and drink or also worked as a driver of the stagecoach has long been a subject of conjecture. The legends are many, the facts are few. While we know it always served as a residence, its original small size would make it doubtful that it doubled as a tavern.

Upon his death in 1868, the property went to Bradley’s son, William Henry Burr. William lived there until he sold the property to children’s author Amy Ella Blanchard and her life-partner, artist and illustrator Ida Waugh, in the early 1900s. Blanchard didn’t commit herself to full-time writing until she was 34. She had written verses for Waugh’s picture books earlier, and in the early 1890s decided to try her hand at authoring her own works. Once she began, she worked non-stop, writing over 70 books for girls from age six to 18, many illustrated by Waugh.

The pair split their time between their residences in New York City, Redding, and two side-by-side summer cottages on Bailey’s Island, Maine. The Ridge was somewhat of an enclave for women authors during the first 20 years of the 20th century, so Blanchard and Waugh fit right in. They owned the Redding house for over a dozen years. Blanchard sold the property to Doctor Alfred Cohn sometime in the mid to late 19-teens. Doctor Cohn liked the house, but not the noise from the Black Rock Turnpike as vehicular traffic increased during the early 1920s.

Elaine Gore married Morton P. Tottle in 1905 in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1909, their only son, William Alexander Tottle, was born. Morton worked as the vice president of his family’s business, William A. Tottle & Company, Inc, a manufacturer of brushes in Baltimore. Upon the death of his father in 1916, he assumed the office of president. In 1924, Elaine and Morton divorced.

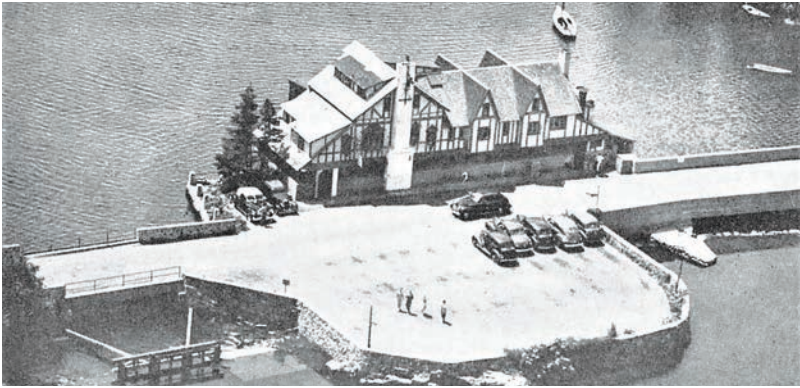
The following year, Elaine visited her sister, Jessie S. Frost, who maintained a summer home on the Ridge with her husband Aaron V. Frost, a successful 5th Avenue jeweler in New York City. Elaine quickly decided that Redding would be an ideal place to live. She came upon the old Burr property while searching for an old home on a busy thoroughfare that could be converted into a country teahouse and inn.

After purchasing it from Doctor Cohn, she added a kitchen at the southwest corner of the house. The first floor consisted of four rooms surrounding a large center chimney. Tottle would make the two larger rooms at the front of the house into the dining rooms for her new venture. Her plan was to operate the inn only during the months of summer.

In 1925, there were two other seasonal operations on the Ridge that also served food to travelers making the journey between Fairfield and Danbury. One was a tea-room just beyond the full service Ridgewold Inn, and the other about a half-mile further north just beyond the five-corners, aptly named “A Bend in the Road”.

On opening day in the spring of 1925, Tottle served a total of 28 guests. Although a complete novice in the restaurant business, her reputation for having only “the finest American cooking,” was soon established. The business grew and thrived throughout the latter half of the decade when Prohibition made serving alcohol a crime. While many dining establishments served bootlegged liquor in defiance of the law, Elaine Tottle did not. As a Christian Scientist, she would refrain from selling alcohol as long as she maintained control of her inn, even advertising “No Liquor Served” in all its promotional material. Mrs. Tottle felt the restaurant maintained a better atmosphere by maintaining its “dry” status. Those who preferred to drink could have a cocktail at home and save a little money before having dinner at the Spinning Wheel.

In 1927, Mrs. Tottle authorized the construction of the first of two



The Tottles also operated a Southport location of the Spinning Wheel, shown here in 1948.

residences that sit to the south of the house. The first one was for her and her son who was set to graduate in June of 1928 from the Manlius School, a military prep school in upstate New York. William had made the decision to forgo attending college to take a position in finance but soon decided to join his mother in managing the restaurant. The second residence, built about a year later, was initially occupied by some of the live-in help.

That same year, a small gift shop was added, using a portion of one of the rooms on the main level. It was so successful that Mrs. Tottle built an addition to the main structure that would be a dedicated space for the shop. Entrance to the main dining area was then through the gift shop, a move that no doubt increased that part of the operation’s revenue. At the same time, a larger addition was added to the north end of the main building that was designed to accommodate enough guests so that weddings, award dinners, and other large events could be held at the Spinning Wheel without interrupting the inn’s routine lunch and dinner service.

The outbreak of WWII saw a dramatic decline in business at the Spinning Wheel. With gasoline being rationed, getting to the restaurant became a burden that most of the inn’s customers couldn’t overcome. A good portion of those customers came from points south – Bridgeport, Fairfield, and Westport. The 30-mile round trip would require more than a gallon of gasoline in even the most efficient machines of the day. With most people limited to about four gallons per week, dining out in the country was no longer an option. Additionally, most of the inn’s seasonal employees lived outside of Redding, and it had been Mrs. Tottle’s practice to have someone drive to Bethel to pick up many of the teenaged girls who worked as waitresses and transport them to and from work.

It was time to alter the business plan for the duration of the war. It began with Elaine leasing the old Tide Mill at 95 Harbor Road in Southport. There, a new Spinning Wheel Inn would emerge. It was close enough for most of their established customers to make the trip either by automobile or by public transportation. Like the inn in Redding, the Southport venue did not serve alcohol and was in operation six days a week, closed only on Mondays. Elaine would run the new venture while her son William was off serving his country.

The Redding restaurant was shuttered, not to be reopened until after the war.

The Southport location thrived, and after the war when William was discharged from the Army, the Tottle’s reopened the Redding location, making the decision to operate both. Somehow it worked, and keeping the Southport operation proved to be a wise decision.

On Monday, September 27, 1948, the Redding inn burned to the ground. All that was left standing were the two chimneys, the south wall, and part of the new gift shop. The main structure – the original part of the building – and the newer wing on the northern end of the inn were leveled by the flames.

The fire had been reported around 11:00 p.m. by Mrs. Marcus Burr who resided across the road. A total of five fire companies from Redding, Easton, Georgetown, Bethel, and Danbury responded, but with a lack of water, once their trucks were empty, they were in no position to save the restaurant. Damage was estimated at between \$75,000 and \$100,000, amounts that were only partially covered by insurance. The Tottles vowed to rebuild.

The building was painstakingly rebuilt the following year using timbers and lumber reclaimed from several old barns that contractor George Banks had located in Vermont. The chimneys were repointed, and the original six-foot stone lintel was salvaged. The rebuilt structure looked like the one it had replaced, but gone were the front dormers, and the new facade featured the look of a story-and-a-half colonial house with shorter windows on the second floor. Inside, a stranger to the building would have thought it to be 200 years old. Elaine Tottle, with the help of her lifelong friend and gift shop manager Edith Hiss, had restored the magic that her clientele was accustomed to.

Outside, new gardens were planted. The few sweeping old maples that had managed to survive the fire were trimmed, while the ones that had been too badly burned to thrive were removed. A new cutting garden was available to provide the fresh floral arrangements that guests had come to expect.

After wrapping up the 1951 season at Thanksgiving with the signature display of Della Robbia garlands of laurel and fruits, the Tottles shuttered the Spinning Wheel and headed for Florida. That year, they would begin a new venture, also naming it the Spinning Wheel. In an uncharacteristically mid-century building on the Tamiami Trail in southern Sarasota, the



A 1948 fire destroyed much of the original Redding inn.

mother and son duo opened another restaurant, growing their little empire to three. Also devoid of potent potables, they managed to attract an older crowd who appreciated good old fashioned American cooking. Just as she had been doing since the 1930s, Elaine’s close friend Edith Hiss would manage the gift shop operation.

As the 1950s wore on, Bill and his wife Arlene would take on more of the management duties as Elaine, who had been born in 1883, grew older. The Southport location closed in the mid-1950s as the family directed more of their efforts to the split operations in Redding and Sarasota. The inn in Redding would also remain open longer each season; service would begin the second week in March and run through New Year’s Eve.

In August of 1959, Bill’s insistence that they needed a liquor license to survive won out, and the inn began serving cocktails after 34 years of getting by without them.

As Edith Hiss approached the age of 80, she gave up her duties at the gift shop. She passed away in 1963.

In September of 1967, just two months before Elaine would pass at the age of 84, Bill and Arlene closed the restaurant one evening and headed back to their residence at the southern end of the inn’s parking lot. Bill stopped to check on his aging mother while Arlene continued to their home. Upon opening the door and switching on the lights, Arlene encountered an armed intruder. A scuffle ensued, and when Bill arrived a few minutes later, he saw the masked man with a gun. Bill grabbed his rifle and pursued the would-be thief. The man fired a single shot towards Bill, and Bill returned fire, hitting his wife’s assailant twice, once in the wrist and once in the leg.

While the wounded man escaped that evening, police in Westchester, NY apprehended him the following day. The suspect was eventually sentenced to 10 years in prison.

By 1972, Bill and Arlene were ready to retire. They sold the Spinning Wheel to Beatrice and Bayard Waring. Mrs. Waring was the former Miss America, BeBe Shopp, from 1948. They would run the venture for the next seven years, but the old guard was gone after a very successful 47-year run. ■

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

Finding light in the darkness of winter / continued from page 1

her friend informed her that nobody else had come to visit. “We’re all getting away from all those things we once learned in school, and our parents made us do,” said Jorgensen. “For many young people, online is their whole life experience and social situations give them a lot of anxiety.”

Such situations require a gentle “push” toward greater connection, she added. For instance, a young person having difficulty landing a job might send dozens of inquiries on the web and via e-mail. As an alternative, Jorgensen encourages

them to try applying in person for work. Doing so can build social skills – and, by standing out in the crowd, might land a job.

Fortunately, many community resources are available to help. “I think a lot of people don’t realize what’s available in our area and throughout Connecticut to help people to achieve mental health,” noted Conor Burke, a prevention specialist at the Western Connecticut Coalition who spoke at a recent event organized by the Redding Prevention Council, which works to boost mental health and prevent

substance abuse.

“Most of us are our own worst critics – but with effort we also can be our own best fans.”

Practicing gratitude is one technique to boost one’s own mental health, Burke said. “This can mean thinking of three positive things that happened to you over the past few days. Doing this helps an individual to maintain a positive outlook.”

Because SAD tends to occur right around the New Year, Burke cautions people not to make New Years resolutions. The drawback of

doing so, he said, is that you’ll set unrealistic goals, fail, and feel even worse. Instead, make your goals achievable and be patient with yourself.

When an acquaintance or friend is dealing with a mental-health crisis, it’s important not to try to quickly “fix” the situation. “Instead, be an active listener – give people your full attention,” said Burke. “Ask questions such as, how have you been feeling lately? Have you noticed any changes in your mood? Would you like to talk about what’s been on your mind?”

Where to Turn for Help

- Call Danbury Hospital’s Crisis Line: (203) 739-7799
- Contact Redding Social Services: (203) 938-3580
- Visit WeAreCT.org
- Send a text to the Crisis Textline. Text CT to 741-741
- Dial 988 to contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
- Contact the Trevor Project, crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ people ages 13-24: (866) 488-7386 ■

Artificial Intelligence

Not ready for primetime

By Bruce Nelson

Lately, we have all been hearing a great deal about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it is going to revolutionize the way we work. Some are hailing its arrival as the greatest technological advance of our generation, while others are predicting a world where our machines will take over and make humans subject to their commands.

Recently, an AI component on my screen suddenly appeared after the last automatic update of my computer. I could either ignore the newest addition or allow it to prove its worth.

Curious to see its abilities, I opted to give it a chance. Would it save me time with my research? Would it make me a better writer? Punctuation has always been my Achilles' heel, so any help on that front would be a plus.

I decided to request a report on what is one of Redding's oldest and best-known venues: the Spinning Wheel Inn. There have been multiple newspaper articles written about it over the years and several published articles that can easily be found online. What the AI app on my PC generated is printed below in its entirety. For the real history of the Inn, read my article in my Remembering Redding column today on the adjacent page six.

Most of what you see below is pure fiction. Who Abigail Huntington and Jonathon Hulls were is a complete mystery to me – Redding's official Town Co-Historian. Samuel Clemens died in 1910, 15 years before the Inn was even founded, so he certainly would have been of no help in securing funding for the operation! There is virtually nothing of merit in this entire AI-generated report.

My entire query to AI – “Give a detailed history of the Spinning Wheel Inn in Redding Connecticut including its founders.”

The report AI generated in less than 30 seconds:

The Detailed History of the Spinning Wheel Inn

Redding, Connecticut's Historic Gem

Introduction

Nestled in the picturesque town of Redding, Connecticut, the Spinning Wheel Inn stands as a testament to the rich history and heritage of the region. This charming establishment has been a cornerstone of the community since its inception, offering a glimpse into the past while providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for guests.

The Founding of the Spinning Wheel Inn

The Spinning Wheel Inn was founded in the early 18th century by a group of visionary settlers who sought to create a haven for travelers and locals alike. Among the founders were prominent figures such as Samuel Clemens, Jonathan Hulls, and Abigail Huntington. These individuals were instrumental in establishing the inn as a central hub for commerce, hospitality, and social gatherings.

Samuel Clemens

Samuel Clemens, a respected farmer and merchant, played a crucial role in the founding of the Spinning Wheel Inn. His entrepreneurial spirit and keen business acumen helped secure the necessary resources and funding to bring the inn to life. Clemens was known for his unwavering commitment to the community, and his legacy continues to be felt in Redding to this day.

Jonathan Hulls

Jonathan Hulls, a skilled craftsman and builder, was responsible for the construction of the Spinning Wheel Inn. His expertise in

carpentry and attention to detail ensured that the inn was built to the highest standards of the time. Hulls' dedication to his craft is evident in the inn's enduring architecture, which has withstood the test of time.

Abigail Huntington

Abigail Huntington, a beloved local figure, contributed her talents as a chef and hostess to the success of the Spinning Wheel Inn. Her culinary skills and warm hospitality made the inn a popular destination for travelers seeking a comfortable and memorable stay. Huntington's recipes and traditions continue to be celebrated at the inn, preserving her legacy for future generations.

Early Years and Growth

In its early years, the Spinning Wheel Inn quickly became a bustling center of activity in Redding. The inn's strategic location along major trade routes attracted merchants, travelers, and dignitaries from near and far. The founders' commitment to excellence in service and hospitality earned the inn a reputation for quality and reliability.

A Hub of Commerce and Hospitality

The Spinning Wheel Inn served as a vital hub for commerce, facilitating trade and communication between Redding and neighboring towns. Merchants would gather at the inn to exchange goods, discuss business, and forge new partnerships. The inn also hosted community events, including fairs, markets, and social gatherings, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among residents.

Architectural Features and Design

The Spinning Wheel Inn's architecture is a stunning example of Colonial-era design, featuring hand-hewn beams, wide plank floors, and intricate woodwork. The building's layout was carefully planned to accommodate guests, with spacious common areas, cozy guest rooms, and functional spaces for dining and entertainment. The inn's timeless design has been preserved and restored over the years, maintaining its historical integrity.

The Revolutionary War Era

During the Revolutionary War, the Spinning Wheel Inn played a significant role in supporting the Patriot cause. The inn served as a meeting place for local militia members and provided lodging for soldiers passing through the area. It is said that notable figures such as General Israel Putnam and Benedict Arnold frequented the inn during this tumultuous period.

Supporting the Patriot Cause

The founders and staff of the Spinning Wheel Inn were staunch supporters of the Patriot cause, offering shelter, provisions, and intelligence to aid the war effort. The inn's strategic location made it an ideal spot for meetings and planning sessions, and its staff worked tirelessly to support the soldiers and officers who stayed there.

A Witness to History

The Spinning Wheel Inn bore witness to many significant events during the Revolutionary War, including battles, troop movements, and diplomatic negotiations. The inn's guests included soldiers, spies, and dignitaries, all of whom contributed to the war effort in various ways. The stories and anecdotes from this era have become an integral part of the inn's rich history.

The 19th and 20th Centuries

As the 19th century dawned, the Spinning Wheel Inn continued to

thrive, adapting to the changing times while preserving its historical charm. The advent of the railroad brought new opportunities for growth, as more travelers and tourists flocked to Redding to experience the inn's unique blend of history and hospitality.

The Arrival of the Railroad

The construction of the railroad in the mid-19th century transformed Redding into a bustling destination for tourists and travelers. The Spinning Wheel Inn capitalized on this newfound accessibility, attracting visitors from across the region who sought to explore the town's natural beauty and historical landmarks. The inn expanded its offerings to include guided tours, recreational activities, and special events, further cementing its status as a premier destination.

Preserving Tradition Amidst Change

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Spinning Wheel Inn remained dedicated to preserving its historical roots while embracing modern conveniences. The inn underwent several renovations and restorations to ensure that its architectural integrity and historical significance were maintained. These efforts were supported by the local community, which recognized the importance of preserving the inn as a symbol of Redding's heritage.

The Spinning Wheel Inn Today

Today, the Spinning Wheel Inn stands as a cherished landmark in Redding, Connecticut, welcoming guests from around the world. The inn's commitment to excellence in hospitality, coupled with its rich history and cultural significance, continues to draw visitors who seek an authentic and memorable experience.

A Modern-Day Retreat

The inn has embraced modern amenities and services to cater to the needs of today's travelers while preserving its historical charm. Guests can enjoy comfortable accommodations, exquisite dining, and a range of recreational activities, all set against the backdrop of Redding's scenic beauty.

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

The Spinning Wheel Inn's legacy is a testament to the vision and dedication of its founders, as well as the countless individuals who have contributed to its success over the centuries. The inn remains a vital part of the Redding community, celebrating its past while looking forward to a bright and prosperous future.

Conclusion

The Spinning Wheel Inn's storied history is a reflection of Redding's rich cultural heritage and enduring spirit. From its humble beginnings as a 18th-century inn to its present-day status as a beloved landmark, the Spinning Wheel Inn continues to inspire and captivate all who visit. The legacy of its founders lives on, as the inn remains a symbol of hospitality, tradition, and community in the heart of Connecticut.

I have little doubt that Artificial Intelligence will greatly improve during the next few years, but if what you have seen here is an accurate example of its current abilities, the only thing we have to worry about at this point is that users will rely on the information it generates as being accurate – and that my friends, is scary indeed! ■

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

OBITUARY

Robert Stirling Wylie, Jr.

April 13, 1925 – January 6, 2025

Robert Stirling Wylie, Jr. passed away peacefully on January 6, 2025, at the age of 99. Bob, as he was known, and Karen, his wife, were 10-year residents of Meadow Ridge in Redding.

Bob was born in New York City on April 13, 1925, to Robert Stirling Wylie, Sr. and Marjorie Flack Wylie. He was raised in New York City, Westchester County, and Stony Brook, NY. Bob attended The Stony Brook School, which his grandfather, Dr. David G. Wylie, was instrumental in founding. At Stony Brook, he played football and made many lifelong friends. He graduated from Stony Brook in June 1943.

Before graduation, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces. During World War II he rose to the level of Staff Sergeant, serving as a B-17 togglier in the Eighth Army Air Force. Based in England, he completed 25 combat missions over Germany.

After an honorable discharge from the Army, Bob entered Wesleyan University, graduating in 1949 as an Olin Scholar. He was a varsity runner on the track team and participated in the U.S. Olympic Trials at Randall's Island in 1948. Bob was a president of the Chi Psi Fraternity and a member of the Mystical Seven, a senior honor society.

On January 9, 1953, Bob married Karen Berthelsen at St. James' Church in New York City, moving to Chicago for several years prior to returning to Stamford to start a family. Beginning in 1958 they had four children, Robert, Liza, James, and Ian. The Wylies moved to Greenwich in 1966 where Bob and Karen focused on family, home, career, and community.

The majority of Bob's career was in the textile industry, serving as Marketing Vice President for Celanese Fibers Co. and then Hoechst Fibers Industries. He was a member of the Textile Distributors Association and The Board of Trade. After textiles, Bob joined World Courier as a Senior Vice President of Marketing.

Community service was important to Bob. He was a deacon of his church in Chicago, a member of the Session at the First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, and a member of the executive board of the Second Congregational Church

in Greenwich. Bob was a director of the Round Hill Association and the Historical District Commission of Greenwich as well as an active member of the Retired Men's Association. Bob served on the Representative Town Meeting, as a Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, and as a Democratic candidate for Selectman. Bob was renowned for his skills in organizing volunteer groups and orchestrating political campaigns in Connecticut for national, state, and local Democrats. At Meadow Ridge, Bob was active on the resident marketing committee, led the employee scholarship fundraising for many years, and was involved in the recently completed solar energy project.

A lifelong learner, Bob was a member of the Harvard AMP class of 1973 and after retiring, earned a master's degree in history and education from Western Connecticut State University. Bob was an avid reader with a particular interest in history and biography. He enjoyed a good game of tennis and many spectator sports, especially football. Bob had many close friends from every aspect of his life, and he greatly enjoyed his interactions with all of them. Bob placed his family first, and his children remember many wonderful adventures and experiences. Most importantly, Bob had wonderful values that he lived his life with and transmitted to his children and their families.

Bob is survived by Karen, his wife of 71 wonderful years, and their four children, Robert, and his daughters, Sarah and Meaghan; Liza and her husband, Peter, and their son Jack; James and his wife, Donna, and their daughter, Emma; and Ian and his wife, Pilar, and his two sons, Ian, Jr., and David. Bob is also survived by a large extended family. His sister, Jane Wylie Marshall, of Branford, passed in February 2025 and Bob was pre-deceased by his daughter-in-law, Jane.

A memorial service celebrating Bob will be held at Norfield Congregational Church, 64 Norfield Road, Weston, CT on February 22, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals can be made in Bob's honor. ■

Board of Ed finalizes proposed 2025-26 budget / continued from page 1

strategy not only saves approximately \$250,000 (new teachers are hired at lower salaries), it also enables the district to bring in teachers new to the profession,” explained Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon.

The Districtwide category makes up the largest share of the Redding School District budget, comprising 25.87% of the total costs. It has an increase of 5.29%, or \$345,022. This category covers costs that are required for the entire district. It includes benefits for certified and non-certified staff at both schools as well as other districtwide expenses such as food services, substitutes, transportation, and tuition.

The next category is Pupil Personnel Services, which comprises 24.67% of the budget. This includes special education services, psychologists, and a social worker. The proposed cost is \$6,528,131, which is a change of \$321,719 or 5.18%.

The next largest category of the overall budget is JRMS. It comprises 19.17% of the budget for all costs limited to JRMS. This includes all staff salaries, and all needs for instruction and operations. The total for this category is

\$5,083,837, which is an increase of \$84,756 or 1.7%.

RES expenses comprise 21.37% of the budget at \$5,668,046, with the same budget line items as JRMS. The proposed increase is \$77,155, or 1.38%.

Central Office expenses are shared between Redding, Easton, and Region 9 school districts. The details of these expenses appeared in the February 6 issue of the Sentinel. Redding School District's share is \$790,468, an increase of \$33,817 or 4.47%.

Community members who wish to learn more can view a live spreadsheet with budget details online, available at sites.google.com/er9.org/redding-budget/home. Sara Scrofani, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, can be reached directly for questions or feedback through the Proposed Budget Q & A. There is a link to a form that will go directly to Scrofani when submitted.

The next step in the budgeting process is a presentation to the Redding Board of Finance, which is scheduled for Monday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall. Meeting updates will be posted at townofreddingct.org in the case of a date or location change. ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Gear up for athletic excellence with TTEndurance

By Justin Reynolds



Photo courtesy of TTEndurance

Eneas Freyre has been a competitive athlete his entire life, participating in a slew of professional cycling races in the 2000s. More than a decade ago, Freyre decided to leverage these skills and open TTEndurance, a gym and full-service bike shop located at 772 Post Road East in Westport.

“We have strength and cycling classes, personal training, endurance coaching for cycling, running, and triathlon,” Freyre said. “Our bike shop focuses on high-quality service at reasonable prices. We also sell new and used bikes, have extensive experience with custom builds, and perform bike fits. We work on all kinds of bikes, including kids’ bikes, but have an excellent reputation for top-level service on racing bikes of all kinds.”

Prior to opening TTEndurance (short for Total Training & Endurance) Freyre helped run a similar business in the same area. When that business closed, Freyre and his wife struck out on their own, gathering a team of dedicated staff members who also help train clients.

“As a lifelong competitive athlete and former professional cyclist, I wanted to bring the knowledge that I had acquired during my full-time racing years to the local

cycling community,” Freyre said.

Freyre was born in Spain, moving to Greenwich when he was in the second grade. After graduating from Brunswick School, he went to the University of Richmond where his cycling racing career began.

“I had the good fortune to have raced in Europe, Asia, Canada, the U.S., the Caribbean, South America, and Central America,” Freyre continued. “Eventually, I settled in Norwalk where my wife and I had two boys, and I started working as a coach and trainer locally until we started TTEndurance.”

Growing up, Freyre always loved cycling.

“I used my bike to go to school, work, camp, visit friends, and just explore,” he said. “I’d always wanted to try bike racing, but when I asked the local bike shops for advice on how to get started, I was greeted with little interest and found no support.”

That experience has always bothered Freyre – which is why he runs a junior racing team at TTEndurance and is always eager to help kids interested in cycling.

When Freyre lived in Norwalk, Redding and the surrounding towns were on his training routes.

“I knew the area well and always dreamed about living here,”

he said. “When an opportunity came up for my wife to teach in Ridgefield, we decided to make the move to Redding.”

Both of Freyre’s kids are products of Redding schools; his oldest, Caden, is a senior at Joel Barlow.

“Caden has followed in my footsteps as a bike racer and has been rolling around on two wheels since he could walk,” Freyre said, adding that he’s coached his son over the years, which has been a “privilege and massive learning experience. He’s now competing at the highest level in the U.S. and has his eyes set on more international racing in 2025.”

TTEndurance currently offers weekly select strength classes and indoor cycling sessions for a variety of skill levels; the company also offers personal training and coaching for cycling and multisport athletes.

“I believe that a strong endurance system is the base for any kind of athletic endeavor,” Freyre said. “In an age of chronic diseases and metabolic dysfunction, endurance training is the first line of defense.”

Over the past decade, the training and retail environment has changed significantly, with more and more digital options emerging every day. Freyre hopes to buck this trend, keeping his brick-and-mortar doors open to provide a human connection for its clients and the community.

“Our ability to listen to our clients’ needs and provide a supportive environment for them is something that truly sets us apart,” Freyre said. “We develop close and trusting relationships with our clients which – in a time of AI-driven online services – is something unique and truly human.”

To learn more, visit tten endurance.com

Redding resident to head business school at Iona University

By Anne Young Albanese



John DeMelis was recently named Dean of Iona University’s business school.

Redding resident John L. DeMelis, MBA, CPA, has been appointed Dean of the LaPenta School of Business at Iona University in New Rochelle, NY. He has been serving as Interim Dean since July 1, 2023.

“I am hoping to build upon the reputation of the LaPenta School of Business and Iona University as an institution that produces high-quality, career-ready students who are recognized for their ethics, creativity,

and problem-solving abilities,” said DeMelis.

“John’s deep industry experience and managerial acumen have been a tremendous benefit to Iona and our students. At Iona, our mission is to provide an educational experience that transforms lives – and that is what John is doing,” said Iona President Seamus Carey, Ph.D. “From top internship placements and job offers after graduation to corporate visits and mentorship, John’s network and expertise have helped to strengthen our business partnerships. We are excited for all that’s still ahead with John as Dean.”

DeMelis earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Economics from the State University of New York at Oneonta and his MBA from New York University’s Stern School of Business. He is a certified public accountant in New York. DeMelis launched his career with Ernst & Young, where he worked for 32 years. During his tenure with Ernst & Young, he worked as an adjunct professor teaching auditing at

Fairfield University on and off for 20 years. He joined Iona in 2020 as a senior clinical lecturer in accounting.

DeMelis moved to Redding in 2002 from Goldens Bridge, NY. He was looking for land to build his dream home where he and his partner could raise their children in a rural environment. They also wanted a high-quality school system so their children could attend public school. His son Nathaniel graduated from Joel Barlow High School in 2018, and his daughter Lia did the same in 2020.

DeMelis and his wife Claudia are also involved in the Redding community, including being active members of Sacred Heart and St. Patrick Parish and the Redding Country Club. DeMelis is also on the Finance Committee at Mark Twain Library. Claudia worked in religious education at both Sacred Heart and St. Patrick’s and volunteers at the Mark Twain Library Book Fair and Frog Frolic. ■

Greenwood Features adapts Cinema unveils stage for live shows

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Frank Lockwood

Changes are coming to Greenwood Features. Many know the downtown Bethel movie theater for its interesting movies, but now it’s also becoming a regional destination for live performances and entertaining shows. “We are becoming a location that features events where we can really explore all areas of interest including film, music, live performances, art, speaking engagement, and more,” said Frank Lockwood, who owns the cinema with his wife, Jaimie. “We’re thrilled to be embarking on this venture. It has been exhausting, albeit rewarding, figuring out the ins and outs of cinema over the past three years; but music offers a completely new life force that gives us a second (or maybe fifth) wind to keep doing what we’re doing while we still have day jobs and a family to raise.”

For the past year, Lockwood has been hard at work behind the scenes getting the theater ready for its next chapter. One of Greenwood’s four theaters has been converted into a main stage space dedicated to live musical events, community theater, and unique audience experiences.

“Our goal is to bring in underplayed artists with original content in the genres of indie, folk, alt-rock, jazz, blues, and more. We are in conversation with over eight booking agents and several bands with each agent at the moment and hope to have a large lineup for this year soon,” he said.

Lockwood worked diligently with the Town of Bethel and other partners on the conversion of the space, ultimately building a fully mobile 26-foot by 10-foot stage with its own sound and lighting system. To make it all happen, Lockwood secured a local grant and established a partnership with LesserEvil, a Danbury-based snack company that manufactures clean, organic snacks. In addition to supporting the development of the stage, LesserEvil provides the theater with premium popcorn kernels. “We’re proud to support the local creative community with this new stage, a space where artists can connect with our community,” said LesserEvil Snacks.

Lockwood is committed to making the theater a popular entertainment center for the town. “Our goal with reopening the cinema has always been to bring back new energy to the downtown area since the lights went out at the Bethel Cinema. We’ve always wanted to create a community space that the people of Bethel can enjoy along with other

local communities that lack businesses that offer new and upcoming art and productions in a world that produces an exhausting amount of content,” said Lockwood. “We’re creating a space where the community can connect with artists in an up-close and personal way.”

The first event kicking off the opening of the new theater is a Game Show Trivia Competition on Saturday, February 22. “It’s a unique experience and we thought it would be fun. With our sponsor we decided a great event would be to host a Jeopardy-style format game show that pits three local contestants’ knowledge against each other,” said Lockwood. The winning prize is a year’s supply of LesserEvil Snacks and a year of free movie passes. After the show, Greenwood Features will be playing the classic comedy *Wayne’s World*.

In addition, Lockwood is going to offer another space for the community to utilize in a new way. When the projection equipment broke down in one of the smaller theaters, he decided against investing in a costly repair and opted to optimize the space as a second venue for parties and live performances. “This will be open by summer. You can expect a new space for more intimate performances and gatherings. We’re also thinking about doing regular karaoke in the space,” he said.

An impetus for these changes was keeping people coming back to the theater and offering something for everyone.

“We had hoped to keep a lot of the original vision of the cinema alive by focusing on art and independent features. But as we hit our third year, we realized that the family and younger audiences lack places to go, as well,” Lockwood said. “We’ve also noticed the difference in times these audiences enjoy going out during the day of the week as well as the time of day. We feel that optimizing the daily utilization of our space with different engagements will not only allow us to keep doing what we set out to do but will create a new gathering place for people who are lacking a place to share common interests.”

The theater will also continue to show movies in all three of its theaters. “We may play around with showtimes during live performances so as not to disturb other customers, but that’s something we’re going to test as we go,” he said. ■

Learn more at greenwoodfeatures.com

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Valentine's Day February 14th Please join us!

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213 Greenwood Ave. (Dolan Plaza) Bethel
Closed Mondays
203-797-8131
portofinorestaurantandwinebar.com

THE NATURAL WORLD

The Outside Story: Bees at home in holes and hollows | By Jason Mazurowski

On a subzero morning, I clip into skis and head out across my meadow, gliding between desiccated husks of sundial lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) poking up above the snow. I imagine this spot eight months ago, as I watched bumblebees, mason bees, and sweat bees forage among them. Back then, in June, the world was exploding with sounds and colors, insects on the wing, and birdsong in the humid air. Today, there is silence.

As a pollination ecologist, I spend much of my time chasing solar-powered creatures, crouched among wildflowers observing an intimate interaction between two of life’s kingdoms. The common denominator of it all is sunlight, which provides plants with energy to grow and produce the nectar and pollen necessary for powering the flight of tiny creatures redistributing energy throughout the ecosystem. But now, in the depths of winter, sunlight is scarce, and the hum of insects will be absent from

the landscape until the first willows bloom. The creatures I spend so much time thinking about are gone for half the year. Yet, they haven’t truly disappeared – the progeny of those bees I observed among the lupine are likely nearby, awaiting the return of the sun.

Signs of overwintering bees can be found almost anywhere, with the exception of the European honeybee (*Apis mellifera*). Having evolved in the tropics, honeybees never experienced selection pressures resembling a New England winter. Instead of hibernating, they huddle together in the hive, sipping honey and generating warmth by movement. They emerge during thaws, searching in vain for floral rewards.

Our native bees, on the other hand, are well-adapted to winter and rely on environmental cues to time their emergence. Most solitary bees complete their larval stage and pupate during the growing season before entering diapause, a state of

arrested development. They overwinter as pupae, resuming development when their preferred food blooms. Less commonly, some species overwinter as larvae or, in rare cases, as fully developed adults.

Whatever stage of life they overwinter, bees must remain protected from predators, extreme temperatures, and desiccation. About 70% of solitary bees overwinter in nests below ground. The rest are scattered throughout the landscape, tucked into stems, logs, rocks, and snags.

Perhaps the easiest above-ground nests to observe are those of the genus *Ceratina*. These small, turquoise carpenter bees hollow out the pithy interior of dead branches on sumac, elderberry, or raspberry. Find a broken stem on any of these shrubs, and you’ll likely see a small entrance hole where pupae are hidden.

Artificial “bee houses” and natural snags riddled with beetle holes are also great places to look. Occupied nests are capped with materials

determined by the genus inside: mud for mason bees (*Osmia* spp.), mashed-up leaf material for leaf-cutter bees (*Megachile* spp.), and sap for resin bees (*Heriades* spp.). Unoccupied nests from previous winters are often easier to spot at first, with small exit holes chewed through the entrance.

Then there are the elusive bumblebee queens: all of New England’s bumblebee species overwinter as adults. Unlike honeybees, bumblebees evolved in tundra-like conditions and are adapted to cool, short growing seasons. Their annual colonies die in the fall, leaving only reproductive females to become next year’s queens, much like seeds of an annual plant.

After mating in the fall, future queens find safe places to overwinter before emerging to establish new colonies in early spring. Despite being relatively abundant, little is known about where these queens go. Incidental observations suggest that they hunker down

beneath leaf litter, under bark, inside rotten logs, or in shallow underground burrows, yet few have ever been found. Community science projects like “Queen Quest” aim to collect more systematic observations and shed light on how they survive the winter.

Each of my morning excursions through the woods is a reminder that mysteries linger beneath the snowpack, even among our most familiar creatures. Like them, I patiently wait for those first warm April days when the sun brings those welcome sounds, smells and colors back to the landscape, and I can dust off my insect net and hand lens and head out to meet them. ■

Jason Mazurowski is an ecologist, naturalist, and adjunct instructor at the University of Vermont. *The Outside Story* is edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

If trees could talk Seeding history | By Janice Rotchstein



Backyard ancestral bonanza. (Left to right) Connecticut’s Charter Oak, Harry Truman’s Ginkgo, Mark Twain’s Bur Oak.

Why plant a regular Bur Oak when you can grow an offspring of Mark Twain’s from Hannibal, Missouri? Or raise a scion of Henry David Thoreau’s beloved Black Birch on Walden Pond? Or opt for a Sugar Maple with ties to Amelia Earhart?

Actually, a neighbor of ours did just that 25 years ago. Now those legacy offshoots are thriving in his backyard on Great Oak Lane.

It began when Sean McNamara, who runs Redding Nursery, decided to combine two avid pursuits: gardening and history. Within weeks of ordering from American Forests’ catalogue, a series of four-foot saplings arrived.

First in the ground was a scion of Connecticut’s legendary Charter Oak. Today, it stands 38 feet tall. Kin of the tree is found in Putnam Memorial State Park.

Inspired by David McCullough’s biography of Harry Truman, McNamara planted a Ginkgo sired at the 33rd U.S. President’s homestead. Each fall, this now 33-footer’s robust canopy glows a deep

saffron yellow.

Last, but not least, was Mark Twain’s Bur Oak. Having read *Tom Sawyer* as a boy, McNamara wanted to bring the Mississippi to Redding. Today, the tree soars 44 feet near a grove of evergreens.

One of McNamara’s most important tips to ensure a sapling’s success: plant the root flare one to one-and-a-half inches above the ground so it can receive oxygen.

If you also are interested in adding a piece of history to your land, Phyllis and Tom Hunter in Tennessee can assist. In 2011, after learning that American Forests’ greenhouses had been destroyed in a hurricane, they converted part of Tom’s family farm into the non-profit American Heritage Trees (AHT). “We are both vegetarians, so raising trees rather than cattle made sense,” laughed Phyllis. “And we wanted to carry on the mission of preserving part of our country’s history.”

Today, the Hunters offer a diverse historic lineage selection from such notables as Robert Frost,

Alex Haley, Helen Keller, Edgar Allan Poe, Franklin Roosevelt, George Washington, and William Faulkner. There is even the “Space Gummy”, which Charles Walker germinated on his NASA Discovery flight in 1984 from Indiana Sweet Gum seeds.

An ancestry tree could also be a unique gift for your special Valentine – and there are many options to complement his or her interests: writer, naturalist, poet, teacher, adventurer, etc. Whatever species you select, not only will the present be a conversation piece, but, like McNamara, your recipient will continue a unique tradition rooted in U.S. history. ■

Learn more about AHT at americanheritagetrees.org/our-history

McNamara will show his historic trees by appointment: (203) 938-3297.

If you have a favorite tree you’d like featured in this column, contact reddingtreeconservancy@gmail.com

Need plans tonight? Gather your friends for Galentine’s Day

By Pamela Brown

Forget the roses – grab your gal pals! This Galentine’s Day, celebrated on February 13, ditch the usual dinner date and dive into a world of fun local activities, from yoga and cocktails to jewelry making and craft workshops. An evening of laughter, conversation, pampering, music, or hands-on activities can honor your special friendships and strengthen the bonds of sisterhood.

All the events below take place on Thursday, February 13.

Galentine’s Day Yoga and Cocktail Hour
Yoga Station & Wellness
9 Brookside Road,
from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Register at yogastationct.com or e-mail info@yogastationct.com

Pamper yourself with a 20-minute gentle yoga session then socialize with your gal pals at the Cocktail Hour featuring passed hors d’oeuvres created by Collyer Catering and wine and/or mocktail tastings provided by Sommelier Jillian Fontana.

Galentine’s – Ladies Night Out Milestone
2 Main Street,
from 3:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Reserve at opentable.com/r/milestone-redding

Enjoy an evening of classic comfort foods along with special cocktails, shareable desserts, and half-price bottles of wine.

Galentine’s Day Shops at Auburn Landing
28 Main Street,
from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Text to reserve your spot, more details on Instagram @shops.at.auburn.landing

A night for fun, friends, and festivities will feature mocktails, cocktails, bites, and more. There will be a Make your Own Bouquet Bar with Lily Estreae, Forever Jewelry Sessions with Five and Nine Designs, and Bandana Making with The Shop Vintage.

Galentine’s Permanent Jewelry & Fairy Hair
Aquila’s Nest Vineyards
56 Pole Bridge Road, Sandy Hook, at 6:00 p.m.
Tickets at aquilasnestvineyards.com

Add some sparkle to your evening with permanent jewelry and fairy hair custom-made by Inter-Linked Jewelry. Enjoy the vineyard’s delicious wine or an assortment of nonalcoholic beverages.

Galentine’s Day Celebration Board and Brush
7 Eagle Road, Danbury
from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Register at boardandbrush.com/danbury

Participants can select a wood project from an expansive gallery to create their own unique wood sign. The studio provides all the materials, including a variety of pain and wood stain colors, and offers step-by-step instructions to create a beautiful wood piece. Board & Brush Danbury is a BYOB establishment.

Live in the Taproom – Cold Chocolate
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield
from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Tickets at nodhillbrewery.com/live-music-and-more

Enjoy an evening of music with Cold Chocolate, a genre-bending Americana band that fuses folk, funk, and bluegrass. Food will be provided by Walrus Outpost; bring your own food is also welcome. The brewery features nine draft lines and two cask beer engines along with wine, hard cider and seltzer, and various soft drinks.

Bingo Night
Charter Oak Brewing and Taproom
9B Shelter Rock Road, Danbury
at 7:00 p.m.
charteroakbrewing.com

Gather your girlfriends for the brewery’s monthly game of Bingo, with beers and plenty of laughter. Play for free to win great brewery prizes while enjoying beer from 10 taps.

Galentine’s Day The Barre - Plank Ridgefield
389 Main Street, Ridgefield
at 6:45 p.m.
Register at plankridgefield.com

Enjoy an empowering 45-minute, feel-good barre class that will leave you feeling strong and fabulous. After class, enjoy cocktails and mocktails in the lounge along with more fun, surprises, and a special Galentine’s gift bag.

Galentine’s Bikini Bod Paint Night
Good Old Days Pizza & Cocktail Den
19 Main Street, Newtown from 5:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
goodolddayspizza.com

Enjoy an evening of pizza and painting with Highly Potted Goods. It includes an entire Bikini Bod Pie, one drink of your choice, and all materials/paint supplies. This is a 21+ up event. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

I am Nobody’s Slave: Author Talk with Pulitzer Prize Finalist Lee Hawkins Tuesday, February 18 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Virtual Mark Twain Library marktwainlibrary.org R	Redding Express – Bus Trip to <i>Hadestown</i> on Broadway Wednesday, February 19 9:00 a.m. Bus leaves 2:00 p.m. Show Orchestra and 1st Mezzanine Seats Meet at Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org/ parks-and-recreation \$, R	JD's Jam Thursday, February 20 7:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. House band and full backline available for unique jam session The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org/events R	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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ARTS

Thursday, February 6 – Sunday, March 16 “The Weight of Silence” Art Exhibition 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Saturdays Anonymous Society 268 Simpaug Turnpike anonymoussocietygallery.com	Saturday, February 15 Artist Opening: Just Love Everybody 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Exhibition of the art of Dave Daignault Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center 5 Main Street gtownarts.com	Wednesday, February 19 Redding Express – Bus Trip to <i>Hadestown</i> on Broadway 9:00 a.m. Bus leaves 2:00 p.m. Show Orchestra and 1st Mezzanine Seats Meet at Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org/ parks-and-recreation \$, R	Thursday, February 20 JD’s Jam 7:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. House band and full backline available for unique jam session The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org/events R	Friday, February 21 Lyrics Coffeehouse – Chris Brown 7:30 p.m. Acoustic music in a laid-back atmosphere Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org/ parks-and-recreation \$	Monday, February 24 Italian Opera Immersion – Madama Butterfly 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road E-mail mstillman@townofreddingct.org or call (203) 938-9725 \$, R	Friday, February 28 Community Contra Dance 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Co-hosted by Redding Grange #15 The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org/events \$, R	Saturday, March 1 <i>The Philadelphia Story</i>, a Live Radio Play 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Performance, desserts, and drinks with proceeds benefitting New Pond Farm Education Center Georgetown Oratory 30 Church Street newpondfarm.org \$, R
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CHILDREN | TEENS

Friday, February 14 Be Mine, Valentine Story Time 1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Drop-off program for 3 and 4 years olds Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Friday, February 14 Friday Games – Scattergories 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Grades 5+ Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Monday, February 17 Rock Painting 4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Grades 5+ Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Tuesday, February 18 Grit Ninja Camp 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Ninja warrior obstacles courses and fun Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org/ parks-and-recreation \$, R	Wednesday, February 19 Cooking with Citrus: Celebrate the Seasons with the Thirsty Radish Part I 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Virtual Mark Twain Library marktwainlibrary.org R	Friday, February 21 Refreshments with Friends 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Coffee, tea, cheeses, baked goods Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road	Saturday, February 22 Backyard Syruping Workshop 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Learn to make your own maple syrup New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R	Thursday, February 27 Cocktails and Creativity 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Live music, cocktails, and creative expression The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org/evens \$, R	Tuesday, February 18 Fireside Yoga 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R
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Wednesday, February 19

Meditation 12:00 p.m. Virtual 40-minute session Heritage Center E-mail mpilato@townofreddingct.org for reminders R	Thursday, February 20 Cozy Flow: A Winter Yoga Journey 12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Virtual Mark Twain Library marktwainlibrary.org R	Saturday, February 22 Mini Environmental Summit 12:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Discuss ecological issues and brainstorm solutions Redding Grange #15 499 Newtown Turnpike reddinggrange.org R	Tuesday, February 25 Astronomy Talk: The Birth & Death of a Star 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Indoor presentation, suitable for ages 12+ New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R	Friday, February 21 It Takes a Village 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Support group for new parents – all ages welcome Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org	Thursday, February 27 Senior Open House 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Learn about all the Y has to offer to seniors Riverbrook Regional YMCA 404 Danbury Road wiltonymca.org
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RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom) 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemlutheranct.org	Calvary Independent Baptist Church Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. / Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m. Nursery provided for all services. 711 Redding Road cibcredding.org	Christ Church, Episcopal Sundays at 9:00 a.m. 184 Cross Highway christchurchredding.org	First Church of Christ, Congregational Sundays at 10:00 a.m. 25 Cross Highway firstchurchredding.org	Long Ridge United Methodist Sundays at 11:30 a.m. 201 Long Ridge Road Danbury longridgeumc.com	Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish <i>Sacred Heart Church:</i> Saturday Confessions: 10:00 a.m. at Pryor Hubbard Hall Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m. Saturday Eucharistic Adoration: 6:00 p.m. Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. 12:00 noon LATIN Weekday Mass: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday 6:00 p.m. LATIN 30 Church Street <i>St. Patrick Church:</i> Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 p.m. Saturday Confessions: 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m. Weekday Mass: Monday – Friday at 8:30 a.m. Weekday Confessions: Mondays and Thursdays: 7:30 p.m., before or after mass, or by appointment Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. 169 Black Rock Turnpike sacredheart-stpat.org	Temple B’nai Chaim Friday, February 14 Tu B’Shevat Shabbat 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. 82 Portland Avenue templebnaichaim.org	Please check church and synagogue websites for religious holidays and seasonal worship opportunites
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MEETINGS

Thursday, February 13 Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road	Thursday, February 13 Redding Fire District #2 Commissioners Meeting 7:00 p.m. 306 Umpawaug Road	Thursday, February 13 Region 9 Board of Education 7:00 p.m. Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons 100 Black Rock Turnpike	Tuesday, February 18 Board of Selectmen 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, February 20 Democratic Town Committee 7:30 p.m. Location to be posted	Monday, February 24 OPEB Trust Board 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Monday, February 24 Board of Finance 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, February 25 Board of Assessment Appeals 4:30 p.m. Town Hall / Conference Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, February 25 Region 9 Board of Education 7:00 p.m. Joel Barlow High School Library Learning Commons 100 Black Rock Turnpike	Tuesday, February 25 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Wednesday, February 26 Zoning Commission 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, February 27 WestCOG Flood Mitigation Grant Support Information Session 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Virtual	Monday, March 3 Park and Recreation Commission 7:00 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road	Monday, March 3 Republican Town Committee 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, March 4 Conservation Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	For meeting details and agendas, visit townofreddingct.org/events	*Town Offices will be closed on Monday, February 17 for Presidents Day.
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COLDWELL BANKER | REALTY



Mike Anderson
203.770.3349



Alexis Bennett
203.313.3110



Kim Cuniberti
203.733.6976



Tim Dent
203.470.5605



Donna DiBartolo
203.858.0597



Margi Esten
203.241.8453



John Frey
203.240.0624



Liz Furrer
203.733.0678



Debbie Gore
203.417.5692



Joanne Grasso
203.733.9344



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Home is where the heart is! Here's to a day filled with love, laughter, and the comfort of home. May you create beautiful memories that last a lifetime! And if you're ready to find a new home to love –

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