

Strategic plan to evaluate emergency services

By Rocco Valluzzo

As part of Redding’s public safety study, the Board of Selectmen authorized First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to sign a statement of work and agreement with MissionCIT for an emergency services strategic plan.

Based in Shelton, MissionCIT provides EMS education, Fire Service training, assessment, and professional services for first responders.

“The purpose of this study is to take a good hard look at our town’s emergency services, the fire departments, EMS, as well as our communications center, and see what direction we need to go in the future,” said Redding Emergency Management Director Sean McKenney at the Selectmen’s June 23 meeting. “There have been some potential shortcomings over the years, and this is our way of

Continued on page 4



Photo by Ann Curry

A flag adorns an historic barn on Redding Road. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Rock ‘n Roots returns July 12 | By Pamela Brown



Photo by Peter Weingard

Rock ‘n Roots is back. Redding Historical Society is hosting its annual crowd-pleasing, entertaining fundraiser of the season on Saturday, July 12. “It’s a unique event for the town – there’s live music, food trucks, and fireworks in an historic setting, reminding us of our history,” said Redding Historical

Society President Janice Dimon.

The 9th annual Rock ‘n Roots 2025 Music Festival and Fireworks Show will take from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m on the grounds of Lonetown Farm at 43 Lonetown Road (the rain date is set for Sunday, July 13). Fireworks by Blue Sky Fireworks will begin at 9:30 p.m. There are adult, student, and fireworks-only tickets available, and children 12 and under are free. Tickets can be purchased online through July 10 at reddinghistory.org/rock-n-roots-revival or at the entrance to the event.

“It’s an opportunity for the community to relax, enjoy outstanding performers from the area, good food from our vendors or from a personal picnic basket, and a fireworks display in a spectacular setting,” said Dimon. Depending on the weather, the event can draw an estimated 600 people.

The origin of the event dates

to 2015 and an idea from the late Charley Couch, Redding Historical Society Board Member and Town Historian. According to Pam Reese, a 35-year Board Member, and Lara Schuler, this year’s Stage/Music Manager, Couch wanted an event to celebrate Independence Day that provided a variety of rock and Americana music. The historic Lonetown Farm, with its Farmhouse/Museum and the Zalmon Read Barn, was the perfect setting for the colorful celebration. Ever since, it’s been the nonprofit’s primary fundraiser.

“It allows us to meet our annual groundskeeping and utility costs at the Lonetown Farmhouse/Museum and site,” said Dimon, who noted these are important parts of the Historical Society’s mission to educate, preserve, and to promote Redding’s rich historic heritage.

The blend of live Americana

Continued on page 7

REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Land Trust calls out its preserves | By Susan Clark

For most of its 60 years, Redding Land Trust has been working quietly in the background doing its best to conserve Redding’s land, rarely drawing attention to itself. Long-time residents and newcomers alike have taken Redding’s rural natural beauty as a fact of life, something that just happened – and weren’t we lucky! Many didn’t know the Land Trust existed and, if they were aware, weren’t sure what the Trust actually did.

That’s all changing now. Redding Land Trust has more than 2,000 acres of Redding’s 8,000 acres of open space under its protection. To make it easier for lovers of nature of all sorts to enjoy these spaces, significant Redding Land Trust conserved areas are now signposted.

“There are so many Redding Land Trust properties, both with and without trails, that folks are not aware of; we thought the addition of signs would not only celebrate their existence, but also underscore how much of our town is protected open space, open and free for all to enjoy,” said Land Trust Co-Presidents Silvia Erskine and Gordon



Photo by Susan Clark

Loery when asked about the impetus behind the sign project.

The sign project began in 2023, jumpstarted by a grant from the Bauer Family Foundation which has, so far, covered about 75% of project costs. The grant also helped

fund the addition of kiosks on several Land Trust properties.

Nineteen signs have been installed, and Land Trust committees are preparing a list of the next group of properties to receive the handsome streetside signs. The vertical signs are simple, visually appealing, and stand out in the leafy settings where most are placed. The primary designer of the signs was Trustee Cole Tucker-Walton, with input from the Land Trust’s Sign Committee (Susan Lockwood and Silvia Erskine) as well as the rest of the Land Trust Board of Trustees. The signs were made by Belmeade Signs in Southwick, MA and the posts were designed by the Land Trust and built and installed by Riverside Fence of Ridgefield.

Erskine and Loery say the response to the new signs has been enthusiastically positive. We would agree. Look for them as you drive around town, and you may discover a Land Trust open space you didn’t know existed and inspiration for your next outdoor outing. ■

Housing bill vetoed after suburbs, including Redding, push back

By Jessie Wright

The omnibus housing bill H.B. 5002, which had passed the State House and Senate by narrow margins in the most recent legislative session, was vetoed by Governor Ned Lamont on Monday, June 23, after he received strong pushback from Republican legislators and suburban opponents to aspects of the bill.

The bill had been designed to address the housing shortage in Connecticut, which has one of the most constrained housing markets in the country.

Most of the proposed programs in the bill were “opt-in,” meaning towns wouldn’t have been forced to take certain actions. However, participation in some programs was tied to state funding and funding prioritization, which lawmakers had hoped would help incentivize zoning changes that would encourage more housing units be built.

H.B. 5002 would have allowed municipalities to establish priority housing development zones with a minimum density of four units per acre for single-family housing, six for duplexes or townhouses, and 10 for multi-family housing. The zones would allow development in them “as of right,” removing the public hearing process before zoning and planning commissions. One provision also would have allowed developers to convert commercial buildings to residential with nine or fewer units without a special hearing, with state law superseding any local regulations.

One of the most contentious parts of the bill was based on “Towns Take the Lead,” similar to past “Fair Share” proposals, in which each town was assigned a number of housing units to plan for through a formula calculating the overall units needed in the state. Though Lamont was emphatic when asked by *CT Mirror* that the numbers were to help plan and were not a mandate, opposition to it contributed to his decision to veto.

“I think we can make it better. I think the only way to really make it work is if you have buy-in from the local communities. And I think the vast majority of those communities want to do the right thing,” Lamont told reporters in a press conference in Hartford following the veto.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, who wrote a letter to Lamont urging he veto the bill, echoed those sentiments in an interview with the *Sentinel* following the veto decision.

“I fully support the premise, which is that we have a housing crisis. Housing is unaffordable for a significant portion of our residents, including about 30% of Redding, who struggle to afford to live here,” she said. “I just don’t think the bill with the ‘hammer’ is necessarily the right way to go.” She noted that the fair share allocations did not take into consideration the conservation of public drinking water; virtually all of Redding is watershed land, which the State’s Plan of Conservation and Development largely

Continued on page 4

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DANBURY CT
PERMIT NO. 254

Index	
Big Outdoors	1
Legal Notices	2
Letters to the Editor	2
Police Blotter	3
Music Note	5
Obituary	7
Book Review	8
Library Corner	8
Business Spotlight	9
The Natural World	10
Calendar of Events	11



LEGAL NOTICES

At a Special Town Meeting held at Redding Town Hall on June 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., it was voted as follows: to approve FY25 line-item transfers within the budget for police overtime (unanimous); to reallocate available FY25 town capital for local match of Redding Community Center walking path construction and road repair (18 in favor, 2 opposed); and to approve 2025 CT Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Program Proposals. ■

Michele R. Grande, Town Clerk
June 24, 2025

The Town of Redding will host a meeting at the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road, Redding on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at 7:30 p.m., seeking public comment on the Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) report which will be made available for review at the First Selectwoman’s Office and on the Town Website at <https://reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project/>.

This report compares options for cleaning up the brownfield site at the historic Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill located at 20 North Main Street. Public comments can also be received via e-mail at gfiore@reddingct.gov no later than July 9, 2025. ■

NOTICE OF DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of Redding, Connecticut.

Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., at Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road, Redding, CT to endorse candidates for 2025 Municipal Election and to transact other business as may be proper to come before said Caucus. In case of emergency, the Caucus will be held on Monday, July 21, 2025, at the same time and location. ■

Dated at: Redding, Connecticut, Date: June 30, 2025,
Democratic Town Committee of Redding, Connecticut Chair Aaron Bricker

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS, GEORGETOWN AND REDDING

THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF REAL ESTATE, PERSONAL PROPERTY, MOTOR VEHICLE and GEORGETOWN SEWER DISTRICT TAXES, ON THE GRAND LIST OF OCTOBER 1, 2024, IS DUE AND PAYABLE JULY 1, 2025. PAYMENTS MUST BE POSTMARKED, PAID IN PERSON OR PAID BY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD ONLINE, NO LATER THAN AUGUST 1, 2025. TAXES ARE DELINQUENT AUGUST 2, 2025. FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF TAX OR PENALTY. The October 1, 2024, Mill Rate for real estate, personal property and motor vehicle taxes is 29.54

Payments postmarked, Paid in Person or Online, on or after August 2, 2025, ARE DELINQUENT. Interest will be charged at the rate of eighteen (18%) percent annually or one and one-half percent per month, from the July 1, 2025, due date, as per State Statute.

Motor Vehicle Taxes are due in full between July 1, 2025, and August 1, 2025. Failure to make payment in accordance with the above will result in suspension of registration privileges in addition to interest charges. Delinquent Motor Vehicle Taxes must be paid prior to current year taxes, in cash, certified check, money order or by credit card, to obtain a registration clearance.

Taxes can be paid online beginning July 1, 2025, viewed at www.reddingct.gov or paid by calling 866-923-8245. Do NOT include Fire District Taxes with your town payment.

MAIL PAYMENTS TO: Tax Collector, P. O. Box 1061, Redding, CT 06896-1061.

The Town Hall is located at 100 Hill Rd, Redding, CT. Town Hall hours are M-W 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and closed on Fridays. ■

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

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS / REDDING FIRE DISTRICT ONE / WEST REDDING FIRE DISTRICT TWO / GEORGETOWN FIRE DISTRICT

FIRE DISTRICT TAXES ON THE GRAND LIST OF OCTOBER 1, 2024, ARE DUE AND PAYABLE ON JULY 1, 2025.

Taxes on the Grand List of October 1, 2024, are due and payable on July 1, 2025. Payments must be postmarked by August 1, 2025, to avoid a delinquency charge. Payments postmarked ON or after August 2, 2025, will be considered delinquent and will incur interest at the rate of one and one-half percent per month, eighteen (18%) percent annually, from the original July 1, 2025, due date.

FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF TAX OR PENALTY. IF YOUR TAXES ARE ESCROWED, AND YOU RECEIVE A BILL, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY YOUR MORTGAGE HOLDER TIMELY.

The mailing addresses for the Fire Districts are as follows:

REDDING FIRE DISTRICT ONE
P O BOX 1130
REDDING, CT 06875-1130

WEST REDDING FIRE DISTRICT TWO
P O BOX 266
WEST REDDING, CT 06896-0266

GEORGETOWN FIRE DISTRICT
P O BOX 518
GEORGETOWN, CT 06829-0518

FIRE DISTRICT TAXES CANNOT BE PAID AT THE REDDING TOWN HALL. Fire District Taxes can be viewed online at www.reddingct.gov. We continue to promote contactless Payments. Please mail your payments as indicated above. ■

Patricia J Moio, CCMC, Redding Fire District One
Christine J Quigley, CCMC, Redding Fire District Two
Wanda Cardozo, CCMC, Georgetown Fire District

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

I write to recognize our retiring Police Chief, Mark O’Donnell. Mark’s tenure was significant. He has served with distinction since 1985 and during that time played an integral part in the Police Department’s transition from a small, state police-managed force to an independent agency in 2002. Since then, and with Mark’s ongoing contributions, the Redding Police Department became one of the first in Connecticut to achieve State of Connecticut Accredited Police Department status. In 2021, Mark was recognized by the Connecticut Police Commissioners Association as a Distinguished Police Chief, an exceptional achievement and well-deserved. He established and maintained an impressive management team led first by Captain Mark DeLuca and today by Captain Tim Succi. The talented officers and detective who report to Chief O’Donnell today – including the dispatch unit – are a testament to Mark’s leadership skills.

A few years ago, some in our community – like many elsewhere – questioned the value of policing and advocated for a smaller police budget. When they raised their concerns, Chief O’Donnell addressed them in a direct, public, transparent, and respectful manner. Our town benefited from Mark’s professionalism and decency during that conversation. As a member of Redding’s Board of Selectmen, I am forever grateful that Chief O’Donnell was the leader of our town’s law enforcement community.

Redding has been blessed with talented and dedicated public servants. Chief O’Donnell is foremost among them. My most sincere congratulations to Mark and his family on a job well done. ■

Michael Thompson
Redding Selectman

To the Editor,

These are deeply stressful times. Many of us are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and uncertain. The most important thing we can do right now is take care of ourselves and those around us. I believe most people are doing their best to hold things together, and often, that is all we can ask of one another.

At the same time, some moments demand that we speak clearly and without hesitation. I was disturbed to see a Nazi uniform appear during this year’s Georgetown Day festivities. However it was intended, it is inexcusable. Nazi symbols are not abstract and should not be so casually displayed. Nazi symbols are never acceptable. They carry an inherently hateful meaning, and any use outside of clear historical or educational context perpetuates that harm. They are reminders of genocide, war, and the deliberate destruction of democratic institutions. To see that history treated casually or provocatively in our own community is not only painful – it’s irresponsible and dangerous.

I am also horrified by the recent assassinations in Minnesota and other politically motivated violence across America. Violence aimed at political leaders is not just an attack on individuals – it is an assault on democracy itself. These murders are shocking, but they are not happening in a vacuum. Political violence is rising, and it is fueled by a climate of anger, misinformation, and dehumanization. It is fueled by a climate of silence that surrounds the casual use of symbols of hate.

I believe in calling these things what they are. I also believe in the power of response. This is a time to stay grounded and engaged, to stay connected and supportive. Speak out. Show up. Vote.

Protest when necessary. Be kind and be clear. Our values mean nothing if we do not live them out, especially when it is hardest to do so. ■

Aaron Bricker
Chairperson, Redding Democratic Town Committee

To the Editor,

Thank You! Thank You! to everyone who came out Wednesday evening, June 25, to be part of the Revitalize Georgetown Community Forum. We were inspired to see such strong and enthusiastic turnout.

Laura Pirie, working under a grant from the Connecticut Department of Environment and Economic Development, led the session with her multidisciplinary team and they made a detailed presentation of program approach, engineering issues, and market context. Most engaging were the break-out sessions that followed, where participants met in small groups and brainstormed ideas for what would make Georgetown a distinctive and successful village and a valued center for all of Redding.

In case you weren’t there, we will post a video of Pirie’s presentation and link it to a survey on the Town website. Through the forum and the online survey, you can help guide our planners and our Town to a renewed and vibrant Georgetown. We will be holding another public forum in September to review proposed development scenarios and select a preferred option for the Georgetown Revitalization Plan.

Please keep an eye out for the survey, and sign up for e-mail updates on Georgetown and the Wire Mill through the Town website (reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project). The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month and are open to the public. ■

Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee
Amy Atamian, Chair / Julia Pemberton, First Selectwoman

To the Editor,

I like to think our town is still the kind of place where neighbors reach out to help each other and decency is in our DNA. How disappointing, therefore, that on June 17 whoever rammed into and destroyed our Sunset Hill mailbox and did damage to our neighbor’s telephone pole while also knocking off said driver’s side view mirror and fender did not have the decency to stop. Perhaps this driver will consider making amends by leaving a note in our replaced mailbox. You know where we are. ■

Richard Keim
Sunset Hill Road

Redding Sentinel Ltd
News and Views of Redding, Connecticut
Publisher, Susan Clark
Managing Editor, Jessie Wright
Creative Director, Debora DeCarlo Rosa
Assistant Graphic Designer, Connor Feeney
Marketing Operations Manager, Nicole DuBois
Reporters:
Anne Young Albanese
Pamela Brown
Donna Christopher
Justin Reynolds
Rob Sample
Rocco Valluzzo

Printed by The Republican, Springfield, MA
Telecommunications by CCI Voice
www.reddingsentinel.org
203.938.3800

Contact us at:
editor@reddingsentinel.org
advertise@reddingsentinel.org
subscribe@reddingsentinel.org
publisher@reddingsentinel.org
legalnotices@reddingsentinel.org

Single copy price \$3.00 / Annual subscription \$95.00

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



Visit our website

Discovery forum sparks ideas for Georgetown

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Robert Moran

Community members worked in small groups to dream big about Georgetown.

A community discovery forum on the Georgetown Revitalization project last week gave residents the opportunity to learn about redevelopment efforts in Georgetown and share their ideas about the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property and the surrounding residential and commercial areas.

Hosted by Pirie Associates, a New Haven-based architectural and landscape firm, the forum was the first of three community engagement sessions. The planning project is funded by a \$200,000 Brownfield Area Revitalization (BAR) Grant awarded by the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

“It has taken us almost 10 years to get to this evening where we can talk about a future for not only the Wire Mill but revitalization of the Georgetown village,” said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton to a crowd of roughly 100 people on June 25 at Joel Barlow High School. “With that funding, we

were able to, through a very intensive process, select a very prestigious planning firm to work with on this project.”

In addition to the BAR grant, Pemberton also noted the Town has a \$1.9 million Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cleanup grant that is underway. A stabilization study will look at what are the likely future uses of the former Wire Mill buildings that can be saved.

“What we owe the Town as part of our obligation to you is a plan that captures your vision that can be implemented over time and has the tools to implement that in a regulatory plan,” said Laura Pirie, principal of Pirie Associates. “We were given eight tasks to make sure we paid attention to and integrated into our deliverables.”

These tasks include: a distinct identity for Georgetown; a net positive diverse cash flow; a sustainable development strategy that considers flood management and sewer capacity; a nature-forward response to systems and resources; a multi-modal connected destination district; adaptive reuse strategies for historic mill buildings; a draft zoning map and text amendment; and housing strategies for Georgetown’s unique scale and identity. Live input was collected at the session, with re-use of the mill buildings, housing strategies, and a distinct identity rising to the surface as priorities.

Following the information session, community members broke into small working groups, identifying areas they would like to see certain elements like transit solutions, programmed areas, open space, streetscaping, housing, parking, and more. The evening concluded with a group visioning session, with members reporting from the small-group sessions and expressing their hopes for the area.

The next large community engagement session in early September will be the options workshop, which will incorporate the gathered community feedback into three, concrete examples of development along with funding scenarios. It will feature an interactive format as well.

The final presentation, which will be held in the first or second week of December, will include a finalized concept or revitalization plan option with an economic analysis. Pirie expects the master plan and zoning recommendations to be completed in January.

“This whole strategy will be set around a thoughtful, incremental development strategy,” said Pirie. “We are asking you to dream big and to think deeply and boldly about what you would like to see in the village.” ■

For those who were unable to attend the Discovery Forum, a survey is now open at reddingct.gov/revitalize-georgetown-project

Selectmen extend conditional offer for new Chief of Police Department

By Jessie Wright

The Board of Selectmen have extended a conditional offer of employment to Robert Kalamaras for Chief of Police at Redding Police Department, following the retirement last week of Chief Mark O’Donnell. Kalamaras, who is a Redding resident, is currently Chief of Police at Fairfield Police Department, a position he has held for four-and-a-half years. He has been with Fairfield Police Department since January 2000.

Kalamaras will be required to undergo a background check, psychological testing, and a polygraph before contract negotiations can begin.

“I have every expectation and hope that those will be completed without incident and that we will be able to move on to the next steps,” said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton.

The job posting was open through May 1 and generated interest

from both internal and external candidates. Interviews were conducted in private Executive Sessions in May and June, according to the Board of Selectmen’s posted agendas.

“At this time, for this Department, we need an experienced Chief, and I think we will have a great team at the top of the Redding Police Department,” said Pemberton. ■

POLICE BLOTTER

Bomb Squad called in for WWII-era ammunition

Police activity from June 9 – June 22

By Donna Christopher

On Saturday, June 21, a resident on Cross Highway notified police she found World War II-era ammunition in her home while going through items that belonged to her deceased husband. Redding Police Department contacted Connecticut State Police, because among the items were a mortar shell and grenade that appeared to be live, said Chief Mark O’Donnell.

“We get these calls from time to time,” said O’Donnell. “The woman did not know they were there. She found them going through his things. The grenade was live, so we called the Bomb Squad.”

“It is standard practice for Bomb Squad personnel from the CSP Emergency Services Unit to be consulted for response in situations such as this. Bomb Squad personnel are equipped and trained to safely remove suspected live ordinance, and it is later safely detonated so as to be disposed of properly,” said Connecticut State Police.

Police activity

Officers assisted in 16 medical emergencies, five fire emergencies, and three wellbeing checks, for

which the persons were located and okay. Firearms permits were issued on June 10 and June 18. A firearm was surrendered on June 17.

Fraud and Larceny

On June 10, a fraud was reported on West Woodland Drive by someone who has power of attorney for her elderly mother. The report claims someone had scammed the mother out of \$80,000. The investigation remains open.

On June 12, someone on White Birch Road reported they mailed a check to a charity that never reached the charity destination and was cashed by someone. The investigation remains open.

On June 13, a resident on Redding Road reported a Weber gas grill had been stolen overnight. The investigation remains open.

On June 20, a person on Putnam Park Road reported someone had hacked into her cell phone, then charged numerous items to the number.

Traffic

Police stopped 80 motor vehicles on town and state roads. Police

issued two misdemeanor summonses, 23 tickets, 40 written warnings, and 15 verbal warnings given, for an infraction rate of 31%.

A routine traffic stop on June 9 resulted in a misdemeanor summons arrest of a Danbury driver. He was charged with operating under the influence, operating in an improper lane, operation without a driver’s license and held on \$35 cash bond. The Danbury court appearance date was June 20.

On June 12, motor vehicle accidents with injuries occurred on Umpawaug Road and Black Rock Turnpike. There were no reports available at the time of this release.

On June 15, a westbound motorist on Stepney Road struck a deer that ran into the vehicle’s path of travel, resulting in minor injuries.

On June 17, someone reported a driver had struck a mailbox on Sunset Hill Road, then drove away from the scene, striking a utility pole a short distance further. Officers responded and collected debris left behind from the evading vehicle. ■

Mark Svanda PAINTING, LLC
PAINTING & HOME IMPROVEMENT
Licensed & Insured • CT HIC Lic #0627856
Proudly Serving Redding for 33 Years

FREE ESTIMATE
203-470-4240
www.marksvanda.com
mark@marksvanda.com

Exterior Special
Free Exterior window cleaning with full Exterior paint jobs
Not to be combined with other offers, new orders only

Notes from a neighbor

The once and future mill | By Carter Wiseman

I have been driving by the Wire Mill buildings for many years, and every time I see them, I worry that something precious is in danger.

Most locals know the history. The original mill was built in 1848, closed in 1989, and has been mostly empty since then. Any number of plans have been proposed to save the muscular brick structures. But all have faced – and still face – formidable obstacles: rotting infrastructure, lingering pollution, and financing, to name a few.

Meanwhile, every town in our area is confronting some pressing issues, prominent among them housing for essential workers, seniors, and young people. But few have existing buildings that might accommodate them. For decades, local zoning has favored single-family dwellings on large lots. One town that did have an option is neighboring Westport, which has recently converted a 19th-century candlewick mill into condominiums. But that does nothing to serve residents who can’t afford a \$1.5 million starting price tag. A more encouraging example has emerged recently down the road in Weston. The so-called “four-corners” proposal to re-use an existing 19th-century building adjacent to Weston Center and expand it to include a mix of retail and housing is now under review by the Town. Some of the public reaction was predictable, especially from residents worried about “changing the character” of the community. But how does one define character? By the Connecticut of 1950? Or 1930? Would any of us want to go back to 1770, plowing with oxen and relieving ourselves in outhouses?

When I drive north on I-95, I see that many of the old factories in Bridgeport and Hartford – which for years sat empty, their broken

windows a measure of their cities’ decline – are now showing signs of life. Bridgeport has converted several old buildings for housing. Hartford’s venerable Colt factory, with its iconic onion dome, now houses apartments, office space, and a magnet school. Closer to home, the conversion of the former Granite Church to a cultural center provides a happy creative model. But as a non-profit, the funding probably has to come largely from donations. Communities can’t rely on philanthropy for everything. And developers deserve a profit. The hazard is allowing commercial interests to control the process.

Indeed. Three years ago, Westport’s Planning and Zoning Commission, apparently intimidated by the threat of state mandates that could override local ordinances, approved a sweeping zoning change to allow a wholesale redevelopment of the area adjoining the Saugatuck railroad station. It was a Trojan Horse. The \$300-million project includes a luxury hotel, a marina, a club, and an event space, along with some token “off-site” affordable housing. The irony is that the backers are marketing this White Lotus fantasy as quintessentially New England at heart. According to the promotion, it will offer “charming architecture reflective of the region’s rich design history,” including brick industrial buildings. In fact, it seems more like an upscale version of the pastiche façadism one now sees all along the Post Road.

There is a message here: The Hamlet backers are exploiting the memory of what Redding already has to sell a stage set for Westport residents and visitors weary of the Hamptons. Westport may have missed the boat. Redding may still have a chance to launch one. ■

Voters approve all items at special town meeting

By Rocco Valluzzo

Immediately following a public hearing, Redding voters approved several 2025 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act Program proposals at a special town meeting on Monday, June 23.

The program is designed to provide funding for municipal and tax-exempt organizations by providing a corporation business tax credit for businesses that make cash contributions to these entities. The proposals must be approved by both the municipality in which the programs are conducted and by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.

Under the Neighborhood Assistance Act Program, the Be-Foundation (which owns The Granite Church building) is seeking \$84,280 for window and door repair and restoration. The Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company hopes to raise \$87,000 for the continuation of a solar panel project, for which it has already raised more than \$33,000. The Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton is proposing to raise \$16,000 for an energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and cooling system for its building on Cross Highway. Redding Historical Society is seeking to raise \$24,000 for the restoration

of the Zalmon Read Barn and the addition of a Tool Museum.

A line-item transfer of \$233,000 in the 2024-25 fiscal year budget was also approved to fund police department overtime. Requested by the Board of Selectmen, the transfer was greenlighted by the Board of Finance in April. The Town has experienced an increased level of police overtime due to a number of situations, including two sergeants retiring, one officer resigning, and another going on maternity leave.

Also receiving approval was the reallocation of available 2024-25 capital funds for both the Town’s required match for the Community Center walking path construction and for road repair.

Redding was awarded a \$203,856 Connecticut Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant to construct the half-mile paved walking path with fitness stations and benches at the Community Center. The cost of the project is estimated at \$314,940. The Board of Finance voted to approve reallocating up to \$120,000 of \$209,000 unspent capital funds for the Town’s portion of the walking path project, with the remainder going to road repairs. ■

Selectmen consider partnership with redevelopment authority

By Rocco Valluzzo

To facilitate the Town’s development objectives in Georgetown, the Board of Selectmen is considering a possible partnership with the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority (MRDA).

A quasi-public agency, the MRDA assists municipalities with efforts to spur transit-oriented development, particularly focusing on the growth of new housing. This assistance can include helping municipalities develop “housing growth zones” that can significantly increase housing production. Municipalities must opt in to participate in the authority.

“They come in and they look at our zoning,” said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at the Board of Selectmen’s June 23 meeting. “If our zoning is likely to meet the kind of growth and housing that people are looking for, the kind of development, it would be certified. If not, and we decide we want to adopt different zoning, we would do that.”

Since the MRDA started last

year, 17 municipalities across Connecticut have opted into partnerships. According to Director David Kooris, between a dozen and 20 are currently considering forming partnerships or are in the process of doing so.

“Very walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods are the types of places that we were established to help support,” said Kooris. “We do have a focus on housing, but it is in some ways more subordinate to an overarching focus on economic and transit-oriented development.”

The MRDA has a \$90 million capital authorization from the State of Connecticut that can be used to invest in transit-oriented development, housing, building demolition or rehabilitation, or anything that falls under the headings of development or redevelopment. According to Kooris, it is a flexible funding source that can be tailored to meet a particular municipality’s needs.

Once a municipality decides to partner with the MRDA, it examines the zoning in its downtown

area. Its statutory obligation is to certify whether or not that zoning is likely to decrease the number of dwelling units.

If the MDRA has recommendations for changes, the Town itself would have to make them. Should the Town decide not to implement them, there is no obligation.

Once a development district exists, the municipality or a district or agency of the municipality can apply directly to the MRDA for infrastructure support or a developer or property owner within the district can apply to it for gap financing. Any application must comply with zoning.

“If we have recommendations, it’s up to the municipality whether to take them,” said Kooris. “We don’t have any usurpation of local control. We can’t force any zoning on you. We can make recommendations that we think are appropriate to help deliver the vision that you have articulated.” ■

Housing bill vetoed after suburbs, including Redding, push back / continued from page 1

protects from dense development.

“Redding has tried to do the right thing. We have made several efforts going back many years to incentivize affordable housing,” Pemberton said. She noted the allowance of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on lots with a primary residence beginning in 1970 as the start of those efforts. The Town also amended its zoning regulations two years ago to allow ADUs to be the maximum size allowed under state statute and reduce the parking requirements.

In 2014, Redding created two Incentive Housing Zones – one on Old Mill Road in Georgetown, the other where Old Redding Road intersects with Route 7 – that would allow higher density developments and a zoning overlay that would allow 100% affordable units if a project was developed by the Town or non-profit developer, and 10% affordable units if done by a private developer.

Still, Redding currently has zero units in its housing stock defined as affordable. (Note: Rents for ADUs are not currently tracked and ADUs are not included when evaluating a town’s affordable housing stock – something Pemberton said she’d like to see changed.)

“We have created a framework for the private market to do these things. It hasn’t. Now the State is coming in and saying, ‘Well, you know, you really need 300 units, and if you don’t do this, well, maybe we won’t give you funding for bridges or roads. And I just don’t think that’s right,’” Pemberton said. She also noted that the State has the obligation to adequately and equitably fund education, creating more communities in Connecticut, including urban areas, with access to high quality schools.

She did praise certain parts of the bill, including new financing options and incentives, and sees certain aspects of it being beneficial to the Town’s ongoing efforts to redevelop the former Gilbert &

Bennett Wire Mill site. “I think there are really good things in this bill. I think the financing pieces of it are absolutely essential, because we look at that financing report, you see how expensive it is to build housing.”

Lamont has now called for stakeholders to work on a new version of the bill in the next 90 days.

Some, including Speaker of the House Matt Ritter and House Majority Leader Jason Rojas, expressed frustration at the late-stage objections from the Governor.

“The veto is disappointing,” they said in a joint statement. “Our legislation, built off the foundation laid in past legislative sessions, was a comprehensive package of housing policies that included incentives, local options, access to resources, while acknowledging the importance of city and town leaders’ voices in making final decisions. The bill sought to encourage action on status quo policies that have led to the lack of access, availability, and affordability throughout our state. Individuals and organizations, as well as our executive branch colleagues, spent months weighing in, informing the final product that was debated and passed in both the House and Senate. In the end, a choice was made.”

Representative Anne Hughes, whose district includes Redding, had been a vocal proponent of H.B. 5002 and said she believes there is room for clarification and flexibility in the parts of the bill that many in the towns she represents find onerous.

“We were, and are, planning to address these concerns in a special session, to be called after we understand the implications of the federal budget on our state,” she said. “I remain determined and committed to making meaningful progress in addressing the housing crisis in our state – a lack of housing that hampers our economic growth and collective thriving.” ■

Strategic plan to evaluate emergency services / continued from page 1

having an outside, independent voice take a look at our town and give us a good, honest opinion of the direction we’re heading for.”

As part of the study, MissionCIT will conduct a survey among Redding emergency service representatives. Selectwoman Diana Carlino asked about the participation rate the company typically receives from other communities in surveys like this. Jeff Pinckney, MissionCIT’s primary instructor for EMS and Fire courses, noted that internal survey responses will typically have between a 50% to 80% return rate.

“Now, external surveys, when you’re dealing with the public, like other emergency services organizations, law enforcement, and dispatch, you can get a lot less from that,” he clarified. “We do that just to get a different perspective of people who are not intimately involved in the fire departments to give us their perspective on the service delivery.”

According to McKenney, the study scope should allow for adjustments during the project as needed. “So, if we see something that isn’t being covered, we can ask them to address and they will

offer to do so at no additional cost,” he said.

Pinckney noted that most of MissionCIT’s projects take about six months to complete. The project has a target starting date in September. ■

To learn more about MissionCIT, visit missioncit.com



BETHEL
POWER EQUIPMENT

GET YOUR BACKYARD SUMMER-READY!

Your one-stop shop for lawnmowers & other outdoor equipment essentials.

bethelpower.com

6 Francis J Clarke Circle | Bethel, CT | (203) 790-5889

Authorized Dealers | Factory-Trained Technicians

& Other Leading Brands

ER9 to adopt policy updates

From interactions with immigration authorities to healthy eating initiatives, here’s what is changing

By Anne Young Albanese

Numerous laws in Connecticut went into effect July 1, some of which directly impact school policies, including those in Easton, Redding, and Region 9 (ER9).

Dr. Jason McKinnon, Superintendent for ER9, said, “Last year, the Easton, Redding, and Region 9 Boards of Education completed a full update of all district policies. This year, we are revising select policies – such as those related to School Climate, Security and Safety, Visitors, and Wellness – to remain aligned with updated state statutes and new legislation. These policies are essential in creating a safe, supportive, and enriching environment for all students. The Boards believe these revisions strengthen our commitment to both students and all stakeholders.”

School Climate

The climate policy will replace the former bullying and safe school climate policy. The original policy was developed to ensure “norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.” People must treat each other with dignity, be engaged, respected, and solve problems restoratively. Redding School District will have a school climate coordinator working with school climate specialists at John Read Middle School and Redding Elementary School. Region 9 will have its own climate team. The school climate coordinator will then create a school climate committee.

The school climate committee helps with the school climate survey every year. The data from the survey are used to identify proposed revisions to the school climate improvement plan. The school climate committee develops and updates the plan, which must be submitted to the school climate coordinator for review and approval before December 31 of each school year.

The school climate policy aims to create a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills. Each school district must also focus on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by creating meaningful school-wide relationships and re-engaging disengaged students, educators, and families.

School Security and Safety

The school security and safety policy has been in place for numerous years. Each Board of Education developed and implemented an all-hazards district security and safety plan with a designated school-specific annex. These policies reinforce emergency preparedness, response capability, and

school safety and security.

The security and safety plan will be updated to include protocols for interacting with a federal immigration authority who appears in person or contacts the school or district. These protocols follow applicable laws and the Connecticut State Department of Education’s guidance. Each school must have at least one administrator designated to interact with federal immigration authorities. These administrators must request and record a federal immigration authority’s identification, including the name, badge or identification number, telephone number, and business card. The federal immigration authority must also have a warrant or other materials and specify the type of behavior the authorizing documents permit. The administrators need to consult with legal counsel or guidance developed by legal counsel regarding all types of interactions that might occur. Any other school personnel interacting with immigration officials must send them to the designated administrator.

The Superintendent has an all-hazards district security and safety committee at each school. This committee assists with any updates to the school’s security and safety plan and includes a local police officer, a local first responder, a teacher, the administrator who will be the in-school contact for any federal immigration authority, a school administrator, a special education department representative, a mental health professional, a student’s parent or guardian, and any other personnel the Board feels is necessary. This committee meets at least once a year to review and update the plan. Once the plan is finalized, it must be sent to the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection through its Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. School employees receive an orientation to any changes to the plan and violence prevention training every year.

Visitors and Observations

The policies regarding visitors and observations in schools direct how people can visit all school buildings if they have prior approval from the school principal or other designee. The policy states that the Board of Education can limit visits that overlap with administrative regulations. Parents may be able to view their students in their classrooms or observe proposed educational placements. The Board of Education might also curtail these visits for each district, and all visitors must comply with school security, health, and safety procedures. Confidential, identifiable student information is always protected.

The factors that determine the

appropriateness of a visit to the school include the frequency and duration of visits, the number of visitors, the nature of or the effect on a class or activity, and the age of the students. Upon arrival, each visitor must comply with all building security procedures, which may differ between the schools.

The most significant change to the visitor policy involves procedures for working with immigration officials.

Wellness

Each school has a wellness advisory council composed of representatives of the school food authority, physical education teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, and Board of Education representatives.

Nutrition education is part of each district’s comprehensive health education curriculum and is integrated into other classes as appropriate. Chartwells (the company that provides food services to all schools) markets healthy foods with posters throughout the schools. Families are provided with information to teach their children about health and nutrition and help them plan nutritious meals. The schools will provide suggestions for healthy alternatives for snacks and celebrations. Food may not be used as a reward. Fundraisers of unhealthy food are prohibited. No caffeinated beverages are available. Students with unpaid meal balances or without money to pay for a meal will still receive meals without being stigmatized.

Each grade has a written physical education curriculum that aligns with national and state standards. Students are required to have a minimum of 80 minutes a week of physical activity. Elementary school students have at least 20 minutes per day of supervised recess, outside if possible. Students have physical activity breaks every hour where appropriate. Physical activity can be used as a reward but may not be withheld as a punishment.

To ensure that the wellness goals are met, the Boards of Education will measure (and make public) an assessment of the wellness policy’s implementation to ensure district compliance and compare ER9’s policy with other model school wellness policies. This process may result in changes to the policy, which the Boards will make public.

The Redding Board of Education and Region 9 Board of Education voted to approve these revised policies at their June meetings. These policies are available on each school’s website in the annual handbook. Any changes will be completed before the students return to school in the fall. ■

MUSIC NOTE

Evita opens Musicals at Richter season with Redding talent

By Anne Young Albanese

For the past 41 summers, Richter Arts Center has been the home of Musicals at Richter. This non-profit theater program offers performances of famous musicals in an outdoor setting under the stars at 100 Aunt Hack Road in Danbury. This year, the first show will be *Evita*, choreographed by Matthew Farina, a teacher in the advanced learning opportunities program at Redding Elementary School. He will also perform as a featured dancer.

Farina has performed in more than 20 shows and directed and/or choreographed more than 30. He worked for four years as a choreographer at Joel Barlow High School and, in 2022, he was tapped to revitalize the school’s theater program. Two years later, he left that role to start the annual Redding Elementary musical. While working with the Joel Barlow High School theater program, he and his students won numerous Connecticut Drama Association Festival Awards. He has also had winning teams at the Seven Angels Theatre Halo Awards, Broadway Method Academy Stephen Sondheim Awards, the Connecticut High School Musical Theatre Awards, and the Onstage Critics Awards.

As a child in New Fairfield, Farina discovered his love of acting, singing, and dancing 36 years ago by watching the *Mickey Mouse Club* on the Disney Channel. His first love was dancing, which later expanded to a love of musical theater.

Farina earned a bachelor’s degree in communications with minors in Spanish and theater. During college, he discovered the Disney World College Program, a targeted internship program that helps educate students in their chosen field. Due to his theater experience, he was selected to work at the Tower of Terror attraction. He spent the day performing for guests, creating the eerie atmosphere required for the ride, which cemented his love for the theater.

Farina joined Redding Elementary School in 2007, making this fall his 19th year. He spent 10 years teaching third grade before moving to teach the advanced learning opportunities program, where he works with students in kindergarten through fourth grade in literacy and math. He also incorporates social studies when it fits into the lesson.

Musicals at Richter not only

will feature Farina’s work this summer, but also that of many Redding residents. Robert Bria, Executive Director of Musicals at Richter, will appear as part of the ensemble in *Evita* and as Scuttle in *The Little Mermaid*. He has lived in Redding on and off since 1972 and first got involved with Musicals at Richter in 1989.

“It’s really a wonderful place,” he said.

Recent transplant to Redding from New York, Jazzy Cores will be starring in *Evita* as Eva Perón. “I am a new resident of the beautiful town of Redding as of last July,” she said. This is Cores’s second show with Musicals at Richter, having played *Rizzo* last year in *Grease*.

Madelynn Saris is a 10-year-old Redding resident who is part of the youth ensemble. She has lived in Redding her entire life.

“Last year, my amazing elementary school teacher, Mr. Farina, introduced me to musicals, and I was instantly inspired. I decided to audition at Musicals at Richter, and it has been such an exciting journey!” Saris said.

Jared Shuford, a recent Joel Barlow High School graduate, also will be part of the ensemble. He participated in several shows in high school and also has performed at many community theaters. He said being in the show is “very fun and very different than what I am used to” particularly because the cast must work outdoors and face the summer heat. “Everyone is very nice and very kind,” he added.

This summer, Musicals at Richter will present two main stage shows, its annual Fairy Tale Theater, and a youth workshop. *Evita* will run from July 5 to July 19, and *The Little Mermaid* will run from July 25 to August 9. Fairy Tale Theater is a program performed by and for youths. Shows are once a week on Saturdays. The Youth Musical Theater Workshop will be performing *Beetlejuice Jr.* Workshop participants will learn about all areas of the theater, both on the stage and behind the scenes. The workshop will take place from July 21 to August 15 with performances on August 14, 15, and 16. ■

To learn more or purchase tickets, visit musicalsatrichter.org

Art under the sun

Five spots to explore this summer

By Justin Reynolds



Photo by Paul Salvesson

“Heirloom, 2022” by Kelly Akashi, on view at The Aldrich in Ridgefield.

Summer is the perfect time to slow down, step outside, and soak in some creativity.

Luckily for art lovers, there is no shortage of spots to peruse sculptures and other artistic creations in the open air.

Whether you’re looking to fill a lazy summer day with an exciting activity or just want to saunter through something beautiful on your evening walk, here are five

spots that offer a refreshing way to enjoy art.

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

258 Main Street, Ridgefield
Open dawn to dusk daily, free

Since the Aldrich first opened its doors more than 60 years ago, outdoor art has played an integral role in its operations. Case in point? In 2012, Redding’s own Jimmy Grassow’s “Corrugated Fountain” – a cardboard sculpture inspired by the Trevi Fountain – was exhibited outdoors for six weeks. Last year, the museum reopened its sculpture garden after a year-long, transformative renovation. Every Friday through Labor Day, the Aldrich will be open until 7:00 p.m. for happy hour (except July 4); visitors are encouraged to check out the sculpture garden during these events.

Continued on page 10





Country Homes, Equestrian Estates, Land

THINKING OF SELLING IN THE SPRING?
NOW IS THE TIME TO START PLANNING.
REACH OUT TO US FOR A COMPLIMENTARY VALUATION OF YOUR HOME

Bill Whitehead, REALTOR®
203.606.8536 | WilliamWhitehead@bhhsne.com

John Talley, REALTOR®
203.947.1057 | JohnTalley@bhhsne.com

Local Knowledge
Seamless Transactions
Personalized Service
Market Insights

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES | NEW ENGLAND PROPERTIES
NEW YORK PROPERTIES | HUDSON VALLEY PROPERTIES

456 MAIN STREET, RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877

 A member of the franchise system of BHH Affiliates, LLC.

Summer movies on the shore of Candlewood Lake

By Pamela Brown

Kids love going to the movies, but it's even more exciting when they can experience them on an enormous screen under the stars. On Thursdays, beginning July 11 and running through August 8, Danbury Parks and Recreation Department and Danbury Public Library are presenting their annual free Summer Movie Nights. Movies begin at dusk at Danbury's Candlewood Town Park on the grassy area near the beach at 36 Hayestown Road.

"We started showing movies at the lake in 2008, and it's always been popular with the community. The setting at the lake and the opportunity to spend time together is a big part of it. The fact that it's also free is a nice plus," said Shaun Ratchford, Director of Parks and Recreation.

The event is open to the public. "Not everyone can afford entertainment options like movie tickets or streaming services, so free movies ensure that all families have access to fun and enjoyable activities," said Rodrigo Fuenzalida, Civic Engagement and Marketing Coordinator at the Library. "Partnering with Parks and Recreation turns the event into a broader community gathering, attracting families, friends, and neighbors. It becomes

more than just a movie – it's a social event."

The organizers encourage people to bring lawn chairs and blankets. Food and non-alcoholic beverages are allowed. The concession stand at the park also will be open during the movie.

The Danbury Public Library selected the family-friendly movie line-up, which includes:

July 11: *Dog Man* – When a policeman and his police dog merge and turn into Dog Man, the hero embarks on a fun, action-filled adventure to stop the evil plot of villainous Petey the Cat to clone himself.

July 18: *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* – Sonic, Knuckles, and Tails come together in this action-adventure to battle Shadow the Hedgehog, a new mystery villain with unique powers.

July 25: *The Day the Earth Blew Up: A Looney Tunes Movie* – A 2D animated comedy and the first fully-animated feature-length film in Looney Tunes history, this brings Porky Pig and Daffy Duck together to save the world from the threat of alien invasion.

August 1: *Moana 2* – A musical adventure following Moana, the teenage daughter of a chief of

an ancient Polynesian village, who travels on a perilous adventure to Oceania and dangerous waters to help reunite different cultures.

August 8: *Mufasa: The Lion King* – Mufasa, an orphaned cub, and Taka, a friendly lion from a royal family, set out on an arduous journey to seek their destiny.

According to both Ratchford and Fuenzalida, the event is beneficial for all ages.

"It's critical for the city to offer opportunities to build and foster a sense of community. We want people to be able to relax and enjoy spending time together with their family and friends in a safe outdoor environment," said Ratchford. Fuenzalida agreed, adding, "The Danbury Library and Parks and Recreation's missions align through their focus on community engagement. By partnering, both organizations combine resources to create a fun, inclusive experience that promotes literacy, learning, and local connection in a relaxed, family-friendly setting." ■

For more information, visit danbury-ct.gov/277/Recreation-Department or call (203) 797-4632

First weeks of summer



(From top, clockwise): Concert on the Green by CT Grateful Dead All Stars, photo by Jessie Wright; National Llama Appreciation Day with Poverty Hollow Llamas at Lonetown Farm, photo by Miles Prusa; Owen Daniel and Teddy Goldstein perform at Make Music Georgetown while Zach and Levi set up the drums, photo by Irish Flare Photography; Residents gather for Redding's first annual Pride Picnic, photo by Miles Prusa; Liz Merritt and her son ring the season welcome bell on the Summer Solstice at Redding Grange #15, photo by Elizabeth Jensen; Redding women gather for a Summer Solstice celebration on Gallows Hill Road Extension, photo by Laura Cunningham.

Thank you to our advertisers

- Agriventures Agway

August West Chimney Sweep

Bethel Power Equipment

Best Round Golf

Coldwell Banker Realty
- Svanda Painting

New Pond Farm Education Center

Portofino Restaurant and Wine Bar

Bill Whitehead and John Talley, Realtors



GOLF CAR RENTALS & REPAIRS

Rent a reliable golf car for weddings, events, tours, or jobs - or bring yours in for fast, expert repairs!

Flexible Rental Plans • Competitive Rates • Delivery Service



(203) 792-4172
7 Francis J Clarke Circle
Bethel, CT 06801
www.bestroundgolf.com

WHY REDDING?

Everything a family of seven needs

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Kristi Slater

The Slater family moved to Redding a decade ago.

Living in Redding for almost a decade, Kristi Slater has found her happy place. “It’s our own little private haven. Although our neighborhood (one of, I believe, two remaining dirt roads in Redding) feels remote, we love the space and being surrounded by woods. It’s quiet and peaceful out here in the Redding Ridge area,” said Slater who settled in the perfect home on Old Hattertown Road with her husband, Terry, of 22 years and their five children – Trip, 16; Logan, 15; Sarah, 11; Brooks, 9; and Hunter, 7.

The couple homed in on Redding for its highly-rated schools, bucolic setting, and traditional vibes. “My husband, born and raised in West Virginia, gravitated toward Redding because of the natural environment and open space. Our home is a work in progress, but we love the yard and its amenities, both for the beauty of the outdoors, and it allows our big family to spread out and have a little room to breathe,” said Slater, who also noted the school system as a major draw. “We quickly fell in love with Redding

Elementary School. All my kids are athletes, including two in high school, so the proximity to Barlow has become a big plus.”

The quality of life is perfect for Slater’s family. “There’s so much here – community events, clubs, teams, schools, recreational facilities, churches, parks. I’m continually impressed with the schools, and the care and effort that the educators, administrators, and parents put into the well-being and future success of our children,” said Slater, adding, “The community connectivity also stood out to me – the organizations within Redding, across the ages, show up and support each other. People watch out for each other here, and care about their neighbors, and that’s meaningful. Redding is a place that empowers its people – from childhood on – and that shows.”

Some of those organizations and events include programs at Mark Twain Library and New Pond Farm Education Center, Concerts on the Green, Girl Scouts, the PTA’s parents’ nights out, the Memorial Day

Parade, Holiday Tree Lighting, First Church of Christ Congregational’s summer day camp, fireworks at Lonetown Farm, and numerous school sporting events.

“We love the parks and trails,” Slater added. “Sometimes we forget how spoiled we are to be able to pop into Huntington or Putnam Park, or the Redding Land Trust and Aspetuck Valley trails around our house even just for a quick walk, or we can make an afternoon of it with a real hike – all in our collective backyard.”

Despite a busy career with Frontier, Slater herself also is active in many community organizations. She serves as Treasurer of the Board of Easton Redding United Soccer Club and Team Manager of her daughter’s soccer teams; VP Membership on the Executive Board of the RES PTA; and volunteers with JRMS PTA and her church. She and her daughter also recently joined the Redding chapter of the National Charity League.

“I feel extremely blessed – my children, my home, a community where we’re safe and can thrive, and a career and job I enjoy,” said Slater, who also enjoys cooking, entertaining, reading, being outside in the sunshine, planting flowers, and spending times with friends.

“Get involved” is Slater’s motto and takeaway for others. “Come see all that Redding has to offer! There’s something for everyone – it’s one of the most inclusive places I’ve ever known. Take advantage of the gorgeous outdoors and meet people,” said Slater. “There’s something particularly special about Redding people, whether they’ve lived here for generations or are transplants like us. Most people are incredibly welcoming and friendly, share similar values and hopes for their families, and are so down to earth – it’s been such a pleasure to become part of the Redding community.” ■

Rare condition upends an active family

By Donna Christopher



Photo courtesy of Damon Gergar

A busy Redding family is still grappling with their new normal after Laura Rebecca (Becky) Gergar, mom to seven, was diagnosed with a rare case of paralysis this spring.

Becky first went to the emergency room May 1 with alarming symptoms after experiencing neuropathy for a few weeks prior. She noticed numbness and weakness on her right side that started in her right leg, then in her right arm. The condition worsened that day; then she felt no movement in her right leg and right arm.

Within 48 hours, she was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis – a rare, inflammatory condition of the spinal cord that can cause partial or total paralysis.

A week later, her symptoms suddenly spread to her left side. The numbness and weakness progressed, and soon she had lost significant function in her left leg as well. Further testing revealed that Becky’s Transverse Myelitis was triggered by an underlying case of Multiple Sclerosis, which was a surprise to the family.

Becky underwent seven weeks of hospitalization in Norwalk before a period of intensive in-patient physical therapy at Danbury Hospital to regain some of her motor function.

“The children miss their mother terribly,” her husband Damon said during an interview while she was still undergoing physical therapy. “It’s been really hard on my wife. My daughters can’t visit like they did when she was at Norwalk Hospital, because no kids under 12 can visit. It’s been especially hard on them.”

Damon, a retired New York Police Department detective who now works for a company that trains law enforcement and travels often for work, took over care for their family of seven children while Becky was hospitalized. Friends and community members came together to drop off meals and raise money to support her continued recovery. A GoFundMe page for the family has raised over \$22,000 since June 3.

“It’s an amazing town to live in with such a tight-knit community that looks out for each other,” Becky related to the *Sentinel* through e-mail.

Becky was discharged on June 11, just in time to attend her son’s graduation.

She said the long rehab helped to get her able to walk a few feet before sitting down with leg pain and weakness. Her recovery will be long, potentially many months to a year or more – with no guarantee of full function returning.

“My legs are completely numb, especially around my knees, then they become weak,” she said.

A more detailed explanation for her unexpected paralysis is still to come. The couple has met with a specialist at NYU Langone, who sent blood to Mayo Clinic in the

hopes of getting a more definitive answer and is planning to start her on infusion therapy.

As someone accustomed to running and maintaining a busy schedule – she often logged three to four miles every couple of days – Becky is adapting to her new physical limitations.

“In the hospital, I was putting all my efforts into getting stronger and better and letting go of expectations. I’d be on the phone still coordinating transportation for the kids and Facetime with my 15-year-old while he cleaned up the kitchen and the living room. I don’t want them to feel the world on their shoulders. I’m still here, and we can do it together,” she said.

Her future is uncertain, however. Becky currently works as a part time therapist and has no disability benefits or paid leave. Immediate challenges involve home adaptations for accessibility and coordinating care for their children, including a preschooler and four still of school age. Their older children are 18 and 20 and live at home.

Damon admires how his wife is facing the future and worries about the medical ordeal she has endured with several severe complications throughout.

“I told her we’ll install (a chair lift),” Damon said. “She said she doesn’t want it. She is learning in therapy to scoot up the stairs and doesn’t want that. My wife is determined to walk.” ■

To support the family, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/help-becky-walk-again-mom-of-7-fighting-rare-paralysis>

OBITUARY

Robert E. Friedman, D.D.S. January 23, 1928 – June 17, 2025



The family of Dr. Robert E. Friedman mourns his passing and celebrates the life of our patriarch, role model, and beloved Connecticut dentist. Bob died peacefully on Tuesday, June 17 at his home at Meadow Ridge in Redding at the age of 97.

Born in Bridgeport in 1928 to Yale Friedman and Sarah Mocher, immigrants from Czarist Russia, Bob was a proud first-generation American. He was raised in the city’s colorful Whiskey Hill neighborhood, where his family ran a general store and his father served as Justice of the Peace with legendary Socialist mayor Jasper McLevy. Bob graduated from the University of Bridgeport and Temple University School of Dentistry. As a young dentist, he served as a captain in the U.S. Army (1954-56) in France, where his exploits included European sports cars and fine wines. That all changed when he met and married the love of his life, Elaine Manasevit, of Bridgeport, in 1958. The couple settled in Fairfield.

Bob built a successful dental practice in Bridgeport and Fairfield, attracting legions of patients who often became close friends. Over his long career, he earned the highest honors in his profession – elected president of the Connecticut

State Dental Association, appointed a state Dental Commissioner, inducted into the prestigious Pierre Fauchard Academy, and invited to teach at dental schools in Israel, China, and more. He was a leader in the Jewish community as well, active in the United Jewish Appeal, the Jewish Home for the Elderly, and at Congregation B’nai Israel. In his precious spare time, he loved playing tennis, fishing in Long Island Sound, and travel adventures with his beloved wife of 66 years, Elaine.

Nothing was more important to Bob than his extended family and friends. His life was enriched immeasurably by Elaine and their three children who adored him, Dorian (Sander Lurie) of Washington, DC, Amanda (Jonathan Cohen) of Parkland, FL, and James (Alison Needle) of New York City, as well as four beloved grandchildren, Mara Lurie, Madeline Cohen, William Friedman, and Jack Friedman. He cherished his siblings, the late Frances Golden, Mark Friedman, and Eunice Silverman; his beloved nieces and nephew, Rita Gelman, Richard Golden, Sandra Friedman, Nedra Friedman, and Sharon Hirschik; and too many other cousins and lifelong friends to count.

The family expresses our gratitude to the compassionate caregivers who treated Bob like their own father, including Veronica Tracey, Michael Antwi, Christopher Harvey, Yomara Contreras (who was an angel in his life), and the caring staff at Meadow Ridge and RVNA Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to a charity that honors Bob’s values and legacy. We suggest the Dementia Society of America; Operation Smile; or the Music Fund or Rabbi Arnold Sher Social Action Fund at Congregation B’nai Israel. ■

AugustWest[®] Chimney, LLC

Making Redding's Chimneys Safer Since 1973

www.AugustWestChimney.com
203-226-0416



Rock ‘n Roots returns July 12 / continued from page 1



Photo courtesy of Redding Historical Society

music continues this year, with a line-up of rock, folk, country, blues, jazz, electric, and acoustic performances provided by local bands and musicians including the Williams Family Band, Dan Tressler and Friends, Phoebe Merrill, Sasco Dead, Vintage, and North County Band. Prior to the fireworks, Julian Davies will be performing the “Star

Spangled Banner”. Food trucks will feature pizza, tacos, and ice cream. Alcohol will not be sold or served. For children, there will be space for parent-supervised play. Dogs, cooking implements or grills, and pop-up tents are not permitted.

Dedicated long-time board members and volunteers attend and work the event, and more volunteers and members are needed and welcome, said Dimon. “It’s a festive experience, supporting the continuation of an historic place. We appreciate seeing friends and families enjoying the event.” ■

To learn more and purchase tickets, visit reddinghistory.org/rock-n-roots-revival or call (203) 938-9095

Portofino Restaurant & Wine Bar



Patio Open

Come join us on our Patio!
Happy Hour
6:00 - 9:00 every Thursday
Buy one, get one

213 Greenwood Ave. (Dolan Plaza) Bethel
Closed Mondays

203-797-8131
portofinorestaurantandwinebar.com

BOOK REVIEW

The Revolution Comes to Redding

Jonas Fairchild’s Journal, The Winter of 1778-1779

By Bruce Nelson and Brent M. Colley / 238 Pages / \$15

The American Revolutionary War lasted for seven years. After years of civil unrest, it started on April 19, 1775, and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783. Great uncertainty and privation tormented both sides during the conflict. The result of the war was British defeat and the birth of a new nation, the United States of America, and a new form of government, the federal constitutional republic. *The Revolution Comes to Redding* takes pains to show how harsh weather, uncertainty, and war, exacted sacrifice from every citizen on a granular level, physically and psychologically, during one winter of the war, the winter of 1778-79.

The pretext of this fictional account of actual events is that a journal has been discovered by a teacher who reads it to her students in 1955. This device allows the reader to become a student of history. As authors and Co-Historians for the Town of Redding Bruce Nelson and Brent M. Colley show, a common cause unites people; divided interests disrupt a settlement. Loyalists largely fled Redding during the course of the war. Loyalty to the cause of revolution was treason to the Crown. Suspicion and caution guided the patriotic townspeople of Redding, during the war. At the beginning of the American Revolution, there was no overwhelming consensus to fight. People took sides and were adamant, however. “The fact that some of our neighbors, all young men that we know, have chosen different sides in this war is most disturbing, and to me at least, sometimes rather sad indeed.” These words were ostensibly recorded by Jonas in his journal. When troops under the command of General Israel Putnam were billeted at Redding Ridge, the number of inhabitants tripled in size, and great sacrifices were willingly made by the citizens of Redding proper.

There were untoward incidents. As the authors report through Jonas Fairchild, Reverend Beach had

been adamant in his ardent support of the Crown. A drunken soldier discharged his musket in the general direction of the reverend at a church service, missing him. “This type of behavior must not be tolerated,” said John Fairchild, father of Jonas, and quoted by his son, “...we must not take to warring with our own neighbors.” Mud is the metaphor of difficulty and challenge in the book, mud and snow. “The road by our house worsens with each passing day...This war has been raging for over three years, and yet there seems to be no end in sight.”

Social philosopher Bertrand Russell maintained that every government is obliged to provide three things: security, justice, and conservation. The American colonist felt shortchanged. Security at home means also protections against government harassment. Justice includes civic justice, and economic justice with fair taxation. Conservation is detailed by authors Nelson and Colley by citing Native American understanding: “The Indians realized long ago that the land upon which they lived could only provide so much bounty...They knew the importance of conserving some of what they had for a future date.”

Alvin Goodman, fictional Principal of the Redding High School of 1955, is made to say, “...if history teaches us anything, it’s that we tend to repeat our mistakes all too often.” Published in 2017, *The Revolution Comes to Redding* tacitly acknowledged a schism beginning to run through the American electorate as it has several times in our history. This is why, as the authors of this excellent local tale would agree, the study of history is not only edifying, but always relevant. As Redding’s most famous resident, Mark Twain, famously observed: “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.” ■

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

Scam aware New tools in your detection toolbox

By Anthony Freyberg



Scammers have never had so many ways to steal your money, and the rise of artificial intelligence technology is making things worse. The impact of elder financial abuse is staggering – as much as \$61.5 billion in 2023 alone. But fortunately, the tools for fighting these frauds also are getting better and better. So, for the summer ahead, here are some of the latest scam-buster weapons.

Banks have some new and effective crime-detection methods, thanks to Microsoft and Theta Ray, to help spot financial crimes in the making before customers suffer a loss. These include screening individuals and companies against international lists of people with questionable backgrounds. Master-

card is now investing in AI and other methods to detect scams. They have also updated their Consumer Fraud Risk solution, which identifies and keeps money from being sent to scammers. A security company called Hiya has technology that can detect in real time AI-generated voices, often stopping them before your phone rings. Their phone app is free to download for Android and iPhone users.

The best defense against scams is for all of us to increase our vigilance. While perhaps counterintuitive, banking online actually can help prevent you falling victim to a scam. Among other things, it enables 24/7 access to review alerts and any suspicious activity. Monitor and freeze your credit. Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion are easily accessible and very helpful. Lastly, block unwanted calls and text messages. Check with your phone carrier or a trusted third party for free call and text blocking services.

Stay vigilant and enjoy a wonderful, scam-free summer. ■

LIBRARY CORNER

Mark Twain Library hosts annual meeting

By Erin Shea Dummeyer



Photo by Erin Shea Dummeyer

One of Dummeyer’s favorite nights of the year, over 500 people attended an author talk by Ron Chernow on his newest biography, Mark Twain, on June 12.

Thursday, June 26 was Mark Twain Library’s 117th Annual Meeting. I have included my remarks from last night below, as I think they sum up a wonderful year:

This has been an exciting year for Mark Twain Library as we embarked on a strategic planning process led by a team of staff and board members. Starting last fall, we collaborated with a cohort of other small-town libraries in Connecticut to develop a strategic plan that identified six goals to work on over the next three years to space plan, expand programming, offer faster access to books, embrace changing technology, reinforce our connection to Mark Twain, and ensure our fiscal sustainability for years to come. We have our work cut out for us, but this is an exciting time for the Library.

This fiscal year, we also had two new staff members join our team: Dolly Zurzuski and Rynne Shemanskis. They are great additions... expanding our programs for middle schoolers, especially after school, and increasing our outreach efforts in teaching community members how to borrow our digital items. And even though she technically started last fiscal year, Eileen Guiney has been a welcome addition to the Library as our new Head of Finance and Administration. I am so lucky to work with this staff of creative geniuses.

This year, we hosted 3% more programs, welcomed 3% more visitors, and lent out 4% more books and other items. In a year with a political landscape that feels fraught...books are being banned, the right to intellectual freedom is

getting challenged, and information literacy remains questionable, the Mark Twain Library has, blessedly, avoided some of these pitfalls and has gratefully been met with support from both sides of the political aisle.

Another highlight this year was receiving a remarkable private gift and a grant from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop to fund the conservation of Mark Twain’s original book collection. Our campus officially expanded this year as well, with the opening of the loggia last fall and a newly spruced up garden bed by our street sign, in memory of Connie Whitehead and others. And at the end of April, I had the distinct honor to present the Edith B. Nettleton Award to the illustrious Jen Wastrom for her years of dedicated volunteer service to this institution.

Finally, I have to mention one of my favorite nights of the year, which took place recently on June 12 when we hosted Ron Chernow to talk about his new biography of Mark Twain. It was truly a night to remember with almost 500 guests coming out to hear Mr. Chernow talk about his research on Mark Twain and share stories about his time spent in Redding.

I would like to close by thanking all our volunteers, partners, supporters, library users, Board of Selectmen and fabulous staff members for all their hard work this year in making the Mark Twain Library what it is – Redding’s destination for discovery, enrichment, and connection. Thank you. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

Summer is here, and so are summer reading lists. Here are some of my recommendations for books everyone should read.

Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry – This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is a frontier epic, an adventure, and a love story. You’ll travel to the small town of Lonesome Dove in Texas and meet an assortment of truly unforgettable characters.

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving – It’s the summer of 1953 in a small town in New Hampshire, and one 11-year-old’s foul baseball hits and kills another boy’s mother. But in this book, there are no accidents; the story that ensues is nothing short of extraordinary.

Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden – This brilliant debut novel tells the confessions of one of Japan’s most celebrated geishas. Here, appearances are paramount, and women are trained to beguile the most powerful men. This unique work of fiction is unforgettable.

A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole – This book takes its title from the Jonathan Swift quote, “When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.” It charts protagonist Ignatius Jacques Reilly’s relationships with the two women in his life. His adventures and observations of New Orleans show us the diversity of the city. This amazing

work was published 11 years after the author’s death by suicide and earned Toole a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1981.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold – When we first meet Susie Salmon, she is already in heaven. She mysteriously disappeared in 1973 and now watches her family as they cope with their grief. In the hands of a less talented novelist this story might be unbearable, but instead it is a suspenseful and touching story about family, memory, love, heaven, and living. “Sometimes the dreams that come true are the dreams you never even knew you had.” ■

Nod to the pod

Mike Birbiglia’s Working It Out: Ira Glass Returns: Ira Tries Stand-Up Comedy (For Real)

By Amy Maloof

A one-episode recommendation from a podcast you might love.

Many times, dear reader, have I wanted to recommend an episode from the very classic, very long-running *This American Life* to you, but alas: their 800-episode archive is so vast, it’s largely hosted on their website – and who is going to listen to a pod streamed from a website? (Of course, new episodes are available for free on NPR, and they do keep a 10-week backlog on podcast apps; but my very favorite episodes are long-booted.)

But! I found a way to bring you the delightfulness of its host, the iconic Ira Glass – as a guest on a friend’s podcast. Mike Birbiglia is a comedian and actor, and long-time collaborator with Glass. He’s known for storytelling stand-up, with a style that unwinds slowly,

and builds methodically. His signature voice – kind of monotone, kind of vocal-fry – is both charming and kind of insane-making, but you stick around for his genius timing and his thoughtful takes on life.

His podcast is standard interview fare, although his questions and listening skills are better than most. This episode is different, though, and I think it really stands out. Glass, 66, and an absolute legend in radio, tried his first (and only) stand-up set years ago and recently relistened to it. He thinks it was pretty good, but knows he needs tips for developing and performing more material. Birbiglia is happy to oblige. They sit together and listen to his set, pausing every few minutes for commentary or new ideas. Glass is entirely open and without ego, letting both the audience and

Birbiglia hear him alternately succeed and stumble. It’s a very neat examination of what makes stand-up, stand-up: how it differs from simple storytelling, how jokes are written, how even a good set can bomb. I learned a lot... and reaffirmed I’ll never try.

As I began to plan this week’s column, I was shocked to discover it’s July already. Summer always moves fast (until it’s early August and camps are over and the kids are bored and it’s 104 degrees with 900% humidity...then it doesn’t). July was also zipping along exactly two years ago when I first started writing these recommendations. And what a joy it’s been! Happy summer and happy listening, friends. ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Uncorked pours into the Georgetown dining scene

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Uncorked Georgetown

Georgetown’s dining scene continues to expand with the arrival of Uncorked Georgetown, a family-friendly restaurant that serves high-end food and aims to be an “unpretentious, cool place to be,” according to owner and chef Nick Martschenko.

The restaurant officially opened on June 6 and adds to Martschenko’s portfolio, which also includes South End Uncorked and The Back End, both in New Canaan.

Twelve years ago, Martschenko opened his first restaurant, South End, in New Canaan. When the lease expired, the chef made the difficult decision not to renew – “that place was my baby” – expanding his business into Georgetown instead, which he’s had his eye on for a while.

“I’m pretty excited to come into Georgetown,” Martschenko said. “I used to go to the [Georgetown] Saloon back in the day, so I knew of this sort of hidden village. We’re

hoping to become a mainstay here and become tied into the infrastructure of the town like we are in New Canaan, where we sponsor sports teams, hold events at the restaurant, and are just part of the community. I think that’s important as a chef and restaurateur.”

Located at 7 Main Street in the building formerly occupied by the Redding Beer Company, Uncorked Georgetown is open from 4:00 p.m. to close Wednesday through Friday and 12:00 p.m. to close Saturday and Sunday. Martschenko ultimately hopes to welcome customers seven days a week for both lunch and dinner.

The original South End Uncorked opened in New Canaan 10 years ago and was the product of Martschenko’s experience while launching his first restaurant, South End. Martschenko said when he was launching South End, he was the first in and last out of the restaurant, and nothing else was open

when he wanted a bite to eat mid-day or got out of work at night. He decided to change that.

“When a little spot became available in New Canaan, I jumped on it and opened a drop-in sort of place that’s open straight through [i.e., doesn’t close down after lunch] and open late,” he said. “The concept was well-received, and our service is top-notch. We pay a lot of attention to that.”

Originally from upstate New York, Martschenko never considered himself a chef while he was growing up.

“I ate mac and cheese and used to hide peas in my pockets as a kid to get them off the table,” he said.

While he was attending college at SUNY Geneseo, Martschenko started working in restaurants, “joining the industry without even realizing it.” Eventually, he found himself working at a catering hall in Long Island, and the chef there told him that he should go to culi-

nary school because he had a knack for the trade. He took that advice and enrolled at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.

“I started reading books, getting good grades – I loved it,” he said.

After graduating, Martschenko traveled through Europe and the United States, picking up short-term work in a range of restaurants along the way, including Michelin-starred establishments.

“You try to go somewhere and learn as much as possible in as short a time as possible,” he said. “I spent a couple weeks in San Sebastian, [Spain], living three stories below ground with 17 other cooks, and we didn’t get paid. I learned a ton in a couple of weeks. It was pretty amazing.”

Before opening South End, Martschenko was *chef de cuisine* at Gramercy Tavern in New York City, which at the time was rated number four in the country, he said.

If you attended Georgetown Day last year, you might have noticed activity at the new Uncorked location. Martschenko originally intended to open the restaurant in 2024, but his plans were thwarted when Main Street flooded during an historic rainstorm in August, bringing six feet of water into the basement of the building.

“The community came and worked here for days helping us clean up,” he said. “I thought, ‘You know what, this town is gonna be great.’ I want to give a shout out to Nic Palazzo in particular.”

The flood not only delayed the restaurant’s opening, but it

also strained its finances, leading Martschenko to remortgage his Greenwich house to cover the unexpected costs.

Uncorked Georgetown will offer live music and is also available for private parties and corporate gatherings. Highlights from the menu include a burger that was named best in the state, tuna tacos, lobster lollipops, dumplings, and a cheesesteak that Martschenko is particularly proud of. There are also tons of tasty cocktails along with a kids’ menu.

“I want families to come here. We aim to have the best chicken fingers in town,” he laughed.

Wondering about the name? Uncorked serves wine out of the tap, directly from barrels.

“I think we were one of the first to do that,” Martschenko said. “The place in New Canaan was so small that I did it because of space. But it’s also cost-effective; there’s no waste and no spillage.”

With two Uncorkeds under his belt, Martschenko sees additional locations in the future.

“We think we have a concept, and we hope to turn it into a brand,” Martschenko said. ■

For more information, follow @seuncorkedgeorgetown on Instagram, or call (203) 587-1088





\$10 OFF

your first purchase of \$50 or more!

Valid at all Agriventures Agway locations. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Not valid on delivered items, feed, hay, shavings, or wood pellets. Cashiers please use code PAPER. Expires 7/17/25.

New Milford • 126 Housatonic Avenue • 860-354-5673

Danbury • 92 Mill Plain Road • 203-743-7500

Shop 24/7 at agwayct.com - In-Store Shopping - Curbside Pickup - Delivery - Ship to Home



THE NATURAL WORLD

How to keep your lawn healthy in summer

By Terry Karpen



Photo by Terry Karpen

The hot weather in the summer months can severely damage lawns. Without proper care from June to September, the stress from excessive heat and drought can cause grass to dry out and turn brown. A stressed lawn becomes susceptible to weeds, insects, and disease. Maintaining a healthy lawn during the summer months requires attention to watering and mowing, and monitoring for weeds, insects, and disease.

Watering

The heat of the summer sun can damage a lawn quickly as moisture evaporates. Moisture is very important for a healthy lawn, and while there may be periods of

adequate rainfall, there will likely be periods of drought. So, it’s important to water when rainfall is scarce. The best time to water a lawn is in the morning, compared to watering during the hotter part of the day. This reduces evaporation and helps the grass remain hydrated and cooler throughout the day, thereby decreasing the risk of heat stress.

Deep, infrequent watering is better than shallow, frequent watering. It helps promote strong, deep root systems and creates a lawn that is more drought tolerant, as opposed to frequent short watering which creates weak, shallow roots. Lawns should receive roughly one inch of water each week, whether from rainfall, irrigation, or a combination of both. This is equal to three 20 to 30 minutes watering sessions weekly.

Mowing

One of the most common summer lawn care mistakes is cutting grass too short. Scalping the lawn can weaken it, making it more vulnerable to heat stress, weeds, and disease. Set the mower blade higher in the summer months. For the healthiest lawn, 3.5 to 4 inches is most desirable, and a general rule is not to cut more than one third of the grass blade each time you mow. Leave the clippings on the lawn; they will decompose and help feed the grass. Taller grass shades the soil, reduces evaporation, and promotes deeper roots. The result is a

lawn that is more heat and drought tolerant, has reduced weed growth, and is more robust.

Dormant lawns (those that have turned brown) should not be mowed. Keeping the mower blade sharp is crucial for a healthy lawn. A sharp blade makes clean cuts, like scissors. A dull blade tears the grass, causing damage and stress. Sharpen or replace the lawn mower blade on a regular basis.

Weeds

Summer weather accelerates weed growth. Regularly inspect your lawn and hand-pull weeds as soon as you discover them. This is an effective method for small areas. To prevent regrowth, remove the entire root system. A healthy lawn is a natural defense against weeds. Weeds are crowded out and prevented from establishing themselves.

Insects and disease control

Monitor your lawn for any signs of insects or disease. Early detection is key because these issues caught too late can lead to widespread damage.

Proper watering, mowing, and monitoring for weeds, insects, and disease – following these tips will be the best defense to keep your lawn healthy in summer. ■

Terry Karpen is proprietor of Queen Of Spades Gardens & Landscapes in Redding

If trees could talk

Branches of fruits | By Raymond D’Angelo



Photo by Raymond D'Angelo

A mature quince tree in a backyard on Cross Highway.

In a town that feels more like a rural village than a suburb, fruit trees aren’t just part of the scenery – in Redding, they are part of our lives. They help mark the seasons, flavor our kitchens, and give many local farms and nurseries ample opportunities for apple picking along with farm markets featuring fruits such as cherry, peach, and plum. Occasionally, one may catch a glimpse of backyard quince, apricot, or fig trees in containers. I am told that the mature quince tree in my backyard is one of the oldest in the state. Whether in backyards or at New Pond Farm, residents are planting or caring for fruiting trees as part of pollinator-friendly corridors and community orchards.

The local climate, classified as humid continental, supports a variety of fruit trees. While most discussions of trees in Redding begin with sugar maples, every spring, pick-your-own orchards of fruit trees burst into a host of colors – apple blossoms blushing pink, cherry trees raining petals like confetti, and peach buds whispering promises of sweet summer harvests. These fruit trees are more than just a charming feature of Redding’s landscape; they’re a source of local pride, and a delicious reminder that even in a place known for its cold winters, fruit trees can flourish.

Many residents swap seeds and seedlings through local events – like those hosted by the Redding Grange, Warrup’s Farm, or the Bethel/Redding plant and seed swap fostering neighborhood bonds. Seed exchanges and farm tours make it easy to learn about different varieties, grafted trees, or self-pollinating multi-grafts from other locals. Practices like pruning, mulching, and soil health management help to build resilient home orchards.

Across Connecticut, groups are planting climate-resilient heirloom apple varieties along with McIntosh and Northern Spy. Redding gardeners are informed about fruit trees through University of Connecticut Extension programs. In short, fruit trees in Redding are no longer simply sentimental landmarks – they’re active and evolving parts of community life: sources of education, environmental action, and shared harvests. To travel Redding’s roads is to slip between stone walls and forested hills, and fruit trees feel like quiet companions to the land. ■

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

Art under the sun

Five spots to explore this summer / continued from page 5

But you can also stop by and peruse the garden whenever the sun is out and your fancy is tickled.

For more information, visit bethelartsct.org

For more information, visit thealdrich.org

Weir Farm National Historic Park

735 Nod Hill Road, Wilton
Open dawn to dusk daily, free

Connecticut is home to one national park, and it happens to be right in our neck of the woods. Once home to American impressionist painter Julian Alden Weir, the 60-acre property Weir Farm National Historic Park is a hidden gem bursting with creativity. With winding trails, scenic meadows, and a pond – spots that have inspired countless paintings over the years, by Weir and a slew of other artists – Weir Farm is the perfect place to connect with art and nature at the same time. It’s also the perfect place to create art. The park offers free art supplies during the summer (first come, first served); colored pencil kits are available Wednesday through Friday, and watercolor kits are provided on the weekends.

For more information, visit nps.gov/wefa

Bethel Municipal Center

Downtown Bethel
Free

In April, Bethel Arts and the Sustainable Bethel Commission opened an outdoor sculpture exhibit called “Our Power, Our Planet – Sculptural Reflections” that features works created by eight local artists, which will be on display through 2026. Each sculpture invites passersby to pause and reflect about how art can spark conversations about our relationship with the environment. Feeling up for an adventure? Bring the family to explore downtown Bethel and stop for a bite to eat at one of the town’s many exceptional restaurants.

Philip Johnson’s Glass House

199 Elm Street, New Canaan
Open Monday and Thursday – Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you’ve never seen the Glass House, you’re missing out. Built between 1940 and 1995 by architect Philip Johnson, the 49-acre property has 14 structures – all architectural follies that are art exhibits themselves, each of which is more mesmerizing than the last. The property is also home to painting and sculpture galleries. The Glass House offers several different types of tours, all of which include up to a one-mile walk through the site’s hills and gravel paths. Tickets start at \$25, and children need to be at least 10 years old to participate.

For more information, visit theglasshouse.org

Storm King Art Center

1 Museum Road, New Windsor, NY
Open Wednesday – Monday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Up for a day trip? Consider heading over to Storm King Art Center, about an hour’s drive west on I-84. The 500-acre outdoor museum first opened to the public in 1960 and is dedicated to nurturing “a vibrant bond between art, nature, and people, creating a place where discovery is limitless.” Storm King has more than 100 permanent sculptures by artists like Alexander Calder and Mark di Suvero scattered across the landscape and also hosts temporary installations. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors, \$15 for kids ages 5 to 17 and students, and free for kids 4 and under.

For more information and ticket information, visit stormking.org ■

PLEASE JOIN US!

A TASTE OF THE HARVEST

New Pond Farm’s Annual Harvest Dinner
A beloved tradition, joyfully reimagined

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH
4:30PM

This fall, we invite you to join us for a magical evening celebrating community, connection, and conservation. Set against the golden glow of sunset and rolling farm pastures, A Taste of the Harvest is more than a dinner — it’s an unforgettable farm-to-table experience that supports a powerful purpose.

Enjoy live music, a spirited auction, and the vibrant energy of a night rooted in generosity and gratitude.

NEW THIS YEAR

Reserve your own table with a special package — a unique opportunity to elevate your evening while making an even greater impact.

We can’t wait to raise a glass with you!

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS \$175

Harvest Table – \$1,300 Reserved table for 8 guests Logo on event signage and website Recognition in printed program and social media	Field Supporter – \$700 4 tickets to the event Name listed in program and social media Premier seating
Garden Friend – \$350 2 tickets to the event Name in printed program	Seedling Donor – \$150 (non-attending) Name listed in printed program Thank-you postcard from the farm

Call to reserve your table: 203-938-2117 or register at newpondfarm.org/harvestdinner/

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Tom Waits
Tribute Concert

Tuesday, July 8
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Adult Concert, alcohol permitted
Topstone Park
72 Topstone Road
reddingct.gov/
parks-and-recreation

Georgetown Lions Club
Document Shredding Day

Saturday, July 12
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart Church
30 Church Street
reddingct.gov/events
\$

Rock ‘n Roots Music
Festival and Fireworks
Show

Saturday, July 12
4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Presented by
Redding Historical Society
Lonetown Farm
43 Lonetown Road
ticketleap.events/tickets/redding-
history/rock-n-roots-2025
\$

Want to feature an
upcoming event?

E-mail us at
advertise@reddingsentinel.org
for more information.

ARTS

Sundays, July 6 and 13

Concerts on the Green
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Goza (Latin) and
Logical Pretzel (Steely Dan)
Town Green
100 Hill Road
reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation

Tuesday, July 8

Tom Waits Tribute Concert
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Adult Concert, alcohol permitted
Topstone Park
72 Topstone Road
reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation

Thursday, July 10

**Kick Up Your Heels – Learn
Country-Western Line Dancing**
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Adult Concert, alcohol permitted
Topstone Park
72 Topstone Road
reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation
R

CHILDREN | TEENS

Monday, July 7

Build It Summer with Popsicles
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Grades K-4
Build with Legos, block, and more
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Monday, July 7

**Shark Week Kickoff –
Movie and Treats**
4:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Watch movie *Shark Tale*
and enjoy shark snacks
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Tuesday, July 8

Pizza Lunch and Crafts
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Tuesdays, July 8 and 15

Ride and Roll
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Bring bike or scooter for a
car-free, kid-friendly ride.
Redding Community Center
Field 3 parking lot
37 Lonetown Road
Call (413) 695-8561
with questions

HEALTH | WELLNESS

Saturday, July 5

Yoga at Marchant Farm
8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Outdoor class by Yoga Station
Marchant Farm
55 Chestnut Woods Road
yogastationct.com/book-class
\$, R

Thursday, July 10

**Core Principles:
Pilates at the Library**
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Tuesday, July 15

**Breathe: Summer Yoga
at the Library**
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

NATURE

Saturday, July 12

**Redding Community Hiking
Club – Norwalk River Valley
Trail**
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Registration required and
closes July 10
Led by lepidopterist
Victor DeMasi to observe
seasonal butterflies
Mark Twain Library
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Sunday, July 13

Nature Center Open House
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Speak with nature educators and
meet resident animals
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road
Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org

SEASONAL | HOLIDAY

Friday, July 4

Weston’s Family 4th Celebration
4:30 p.m. (Gates open)
Food trucks, live music,
fireworks begin 9:20 p.m.
Cash only
Weston Middle School
135 School Road
Weston
\$

Friday, July 4

**Wilton Fireworks Show
and Live DJ**
5:00 p.m. DJ begins
Music, food and fun; fireworks
begin 9:30 p.m.
Wilton High School
395 Danbury Road
Wilton
\$ to park

Friday, July 4

**Ridgefield Family Fireworks
Celebration**
6:00 p.m.
Food trucks, fireworks
begin at dusk
Ridgefield High School
700 North Salem Road
Ridgefield
eventbrite.com/e/ridgefield-
family-firework-celebration-
tickets-1394909474789
\$, R

Saturday, July 12

**Rock ‘n Roots Music Festival
and Fireworks Show**
4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Presented by
Redding Historical Society
Lonetown Farm
43 Lonetown Road
ticketleap.events/tickets/redding-
history/rock-n-roots-2025
\$

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Wednesday, July 9

**Redding’s Annual Garden
Produce Drive**
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Drop off extra produce
for those in need
Collection coolers at Redding
Grange #15 (499 Newtown
Turnpike), The Granite (5 North
Main Street), and Mark Twain
Library (439 Redding Road)

Saturday, July 12

**Georgetown Lions Club
Document Shredding Day**
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart Church
30 Church Street
reddingct.gov/events
\$

Saturday, July 12

YMCA Cook Out
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Free for members, all welcome
Riverbrook Regional YMCA
404 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonymca.org
R

Friday, July 18

Refreshments with Friends
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Breakfast goodies
and conversation
Heritage Center, 37 Lonetown Road

Saturday, July 19

Bethel Summer Shop & Stroll
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
In-store specials, vendors, music
Downtown Bethel
bethelchamberofcommerce.com/
shop-stroll

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
44 Portland Avenue
bethlehemplutheranct.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
St. Patrick Church:**
Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m.
and 10:30 a.m.

Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m.
Confessions:
Saturdays 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
and Mondays and Thursdays 7:30
p.m. – 8:00 a.m. and before/after
Weekday Mass
Eucharistic Adoration:
Mondays and Thursdays 7:00 p.m.
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

**Georgetown Oratory of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus**
Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m.,
and 12:00 p.m. (Latin)
Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30 a.m.
Wednesday: 6:00 pm. (Latin)
Holy Days: 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
First Fridays and Saturdays:
8:30 a.m.
Confessions:
Saturdays 7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. and
Wednesdays 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Eucharistic Adoration: Saturdays
5:00 p.m. following Vigil Mass
30 Church Street
jesusguild.org

Temple B’nai Chaim
Friday, July 11
6:30 p.m.
Shabbat at Topstone Park
72 Topstone Road
templebnaichaim.org

MEETINGS

Monday, July 7

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

Monday, July 7

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

Tuesday, July 8

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

Tuesday, July 8

Redding Fire District 1
Redding Ridge Firehouse
186 Black Rock Turnpike

Wednesday, July 9

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

Wednesday, July 9

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

Thursday, July 10

**Redding Historic
Cemetery Committee**
2:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Thursday, July 10

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

Thursday, July 10

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

Thursday, July 10

**Public Comment for Analysis of
Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives
Report**
7:30 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road

Tuesday, July 15

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

Wednesday, July 16

**Water Pollution
Control Commission**
7:30 p.m.
Virtual

Thursday, July 17

Historic Review Committee
6:00 p.m.
Virtual

Thursday, July 17

Democratic Town Committee
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Thursday, July 17

Democratic Caucus
7:30 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road





COLDWELL BANKER | REALTY



Alexis Bennett
203.313.3110



Marilyn Caravetta
203.512.1822



Kim Cuniberti
203.733.6976



Mary Dent
203.715.8584



Tim Dent
203.470.5605



Donna DiBartolo
203.858.0597



Susan Dolan
203.733.7303



Margi Esten
203.241.8453



John Frey
203.240.0624



Liz Furrer
203.733.0678



Debbie Gore
203.417.5692

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!



Joanne Grasso
203.733.9344



Jefferson Guthrie
203.788.9400



Carol Hanlon
203.240.1233



Sharon Hoverman
203.733.5073



Charlie Knoche
203.731.7770



Jodi Langford
203.733.8804

Celebrating freedom, honoring tradition, and wishing you a safe, joyful Independence Day surrounded by the comforts of home.

"One flag, one land, one heart, one hand, one nation, evermore!"

- Oliver Wendell Holmes



Heather Lindgren
646.932.4075



Peter Lunde
203.829.0230



Heather Payne
203.470.7069



Anne Schmiedel
203.470.9159



Marilyn Sloper
203.770.6240



Tim Martin
SVP of Mortgage Lending
NMLS 16273
GRARate.com/TimMartin
✉ tim.martin@grarate.com ☎ (203) 917-2800

THE
TIM MARTIN
Team



Equal Housing Lender Tim Martin NMLS 16273 - Guaranteed Rate Affinity, LLC is a subsidiary of Guaranteed Rate, Inc. NMLS #399847. For licensing information visit nmlsconsumeraccess.org. Equal Housing Lender. Conditions may apply.



Joseph Porricelli
Branch Vice President

203.515.6310
joe.porricelli@cbrealty.com



Ridgefield Office | 203.438.9000
Redding Office | 203.544.9591
ColdwellBankerHomes.com

Jennifer Margnelli
Assistant Brokerage Manager

646.245.1383
jennifer.margnelli@cbrealty.com

