



REDDING SENTINEL

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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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\$3

Selectmen approve proposed budget

By Rocco Valluzzo

The Redding Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a budget of \$16,306,554 for fiscal year 2023-2024 at its special meeting on Monday, March 6. This figure represents an increase of 2.48%, or a total of \$694,897 over the current year's budget.

Included in this total is \$200,000 to fund the Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC) for the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

OPEB typically refers to medical and dental insurance that is provided for retirees or people who have left service but have attained a certain number of service years for age; it provides a way for them to bridge their healthcare until they are eligible for Medicare. Depending on the employee group, the Town provides a contribution.

"A number of towns were kind of ignoring their obligations," said Selectman Michael Thompson in reference to these benefits. "We have taken it upon ourselves not to do that and to fund them and do it over the next couple of years to make sure we're in the right place."

Redding previously funded OPEB by transferring amounts from its unassigned fund balance. This had to be approved at special town meetings which resulted in a correction to the bottom line of the Town's operating budget, according to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton.

"When it comes out, it is recorded as an expenditure out of the Town's operating budget, even though the source of the funds is the unassigned fund balance," explained Redding Finance Director Jim Sanders. "My expectation is that we will fund it from tax receipts. I don't think we will continue to fund it out of the unassigned fund balance."

Selectwoman Peg O'Donnell said, "I'm really in favor of putting it in our operating budget. If the Board of Finance feels that they want to fund it from the unassigned fund balance, that certainly is something they will discuss and they might want to do, but I think it's cleaner and easier for the Board of Finance to see the numbers if they see everything. And they can see what it is we need."

The Selectmen also unanimously approved a motion to send the 2023-2024 annual budget and any capital expenditure requests to a machine vote and then send a letter to the Town Clerk of this intent.

The approved proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Finance at a public hearing on Monday, March 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Redding Community Center. Other components of the Town's 2023-2024 budget will also be discussed, including the Redding Board of Education's proposed numbers. Members of the public are encouraged to attend the public hearing and make comment. ■



Photo by Susan Clark

Lonetown Farm in late winter. If you have a photo you'd like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

State lawmakers tour Joel Barlow

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

(From left to right): State Representatives Chris Poulos, Anne Hughes, and Jeff Currey with E9 Superintendent Jason McKinnon, ER9 Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Pierson Ugol, and Region 9 Board of Education Chair Mike D'Agostino.

On Thursday, March 9, State Representatives Anne Hughes, Chris Poulos, and Jeff Currey (House Chair of the Education Committee), met with administrators, educators, and students at Joel Barlow High School (JBHS) for a tour and conversation about the district's concerns and needs.

Poulos is also a Spanish teacher and Instructional Leader for the Humanities at Joel Barlow.

The visit was one of several that Currey and other lawmakers are making to public schools around the state in recent months, in an effort to observe at the ground level what unique challenges are

affecting education today.

"As we learn and identify best practices and what's working in public education, my hope is that we can replicate those practices through policy," said Poulos.

ER9 Superintendent Jason McKinnon, Assistant Superintendent Stephanie Pierson Ugol, Region 9 Board of Education Chair Mike D'Agostino, and Redding Board of Education Chair Chris Parkin spoke with the lawmakers about a range of topics at the start of the visit, including how state formulas for special needs reimbursements uniquely affect ER9 schools, the "Right to Read" bill and its new reading program requirements, and ER9's budgeting processes.

The group then heard from students who are involved in peer-to-peer mental health support at JBHS, followed by several classroom visits, including courses in history, science, and art, as well hearing a debate by students on whether or not the State should define class size caps for local schools. ■

REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

Lucius Pond Ordway / Devil's Den Preserve Godfrey Pond Loop

By Ethan Parisen



Photo by Ethan Parisen

Southwest of the scenic Saugatuck Reservoir, you will find the largest and most visited preserve

in Fairfield Country, The Lucius Pond Ordway / Devil's Den Preserve. The nearly 1,800-acre expanse was created by the late Katherine Ordway through various donations made from 1966-68 and was named after her father, a renowned businessman known for his ties to the multinational conglomerate, 3M. The preserve sits on the border of Redding and Weston and is part of the 70-mile Saugatuck Valley Trail System. Local flora and fauna include over 500 types of trees, the rare Ghost Pipe flower, and such animals as the red fox, coyote, and venomous, yet non-aggressive, Eastern Copperhead. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Preserve was closed to support social distancing measures but reopened in

August 2021.

For my inaugural visit, I opted for the 1.2-mile Godfrey Pond Loop. Considered an "easy" route, the relatively short trail is known to be both picturesque and educational. The pond itself was born when workers dammed two brooks when constructing a sawmill in 1767 and is now considered a small lake with scattered remains of the former structures. You will have to leave the pups at home, as the entirety of Devil's Den is off-limits to dogs.

I began my hike just after sunrise and was lucky enough to have the trail to myself. The trailhead is located at the end of Pent Road in Weston and has parking for roughly ten cars. With the trees

Continued on page 4

District applies to waive "Right to Read" requirement

By Jessie Wright

Redding School District is hoping to be granted a waiver from complying with a controversial new State reading program requirement for next school year. The district filed its waiver application on February 28, according to ER9 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Stephanie Pierson Ugol.

The new requirement for the 2023-2024 school year, which was included in legislation passed in 2021 known as the "Right to Read" bill, mandates that all school districts in Connecticut select and implement a comprehensive reading program for Kindergarten – Grade 3 from a list of vendors approved by the State's Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success. Districts were notified of the requirement on September 29, 2022 and asked to provide the State with their selected reading program by December 15, 2022. There are currently seven State-approved programs.

"From the end of September to December 15 was simply an inadequate amount of time for us to do our due diligence, for us to research those programs, to learn about those programs... to talk directly to the people who are implementing those programs and get the teacher perspective as well as the perspective of a vendor," said Pierson Ugol. "We decided to submit the waiver as it allowed us to go through a very comprehensive review of what we were currently doing to see how it measured up against the expectations of the State. And that was productive, although it was time consuming, certainly."

The "Right to Read" legislation aims to systemize a statewide reading response in Connecticut based upon the Science of Reading, a body of research identifying successful approaches to literacy instruction. The bill also aims to counteract the statewide reductions in literacy rates among students following the Covid-19 pandemic. "All early readers across our state will now benefit from a research-based approach to literacy, giving them the academic foundation they deserve," said Amy Dowell, Director of Education Reform Now CT, in a statement last September when the requirements were announced. "We know there is a right method for literacy instruction – one that's backed up by evidence – and, starting in 2023, we will finally see all Connecticut public schools using it."

While there is general agreement on the importance

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EDITORIAL

This is the Sentinel's summer job fair issue, where local employers and job seekers have provided information to help find good matches for employment in the upcoming summer months. You are all encouraged to peruse the job fair and associated features on page 6 and 7 and see if any of the opportunities might be a good fit for your needs.

With this eye towards the sunny summer months, there is also another type of "sunshine" being celebrated this week. The News Leaders Association, along with The Society of Professional Journalists, are hosting Sunshine Week from March 12-18, an initiative to promote open government, access to public information, and to celebrate journalism's role in shining a light on the corners of government secrecy.

Newspapers and media outlets across New England are participating in Sunshine Week with editorials, essays, graphics, and forums. The Sentinel is proud to participate – both because we believe in the importance of a free press to democracy, and because local print newspapers like ours are found in fewer and fewer towns across the country.

Access to public information is essential to ensuring citizens are empowered members of their own communities. There are many ways to increase access to public information – the essay alongside this editorial by Justin Silverman, the Executive Director of the New England First Amendment Coalition, suggests a few ways. We also believe that supporting and encouraging non-partisan, local sources of news is another, important way.

In our inaugural issue in April 2022, resident Nancy Pelz-Paget, Director of Enhancing Redding's Future, wrote, "Having a newspaper like the Redding Sentinel will help residents understand the Town government, the issues on which residents should be informed and are asked to weigh in. The newspaper is important in helping to maintain our democratic and Town traditions." Our goal continues to be to provide unbiased coverage and analytical reporting on issues of municipal importance each week so that residents have a trusted source of information that may serve as an entry-point for civic involvement and deeper questioning.

Thank you for your support – just by reading the paper, you are doing your own small part to celebrate the sunshine. ■

LEGAL NOTICES

The Redding Zoning Board of Appeals has scheduled a public hearing via Zoom on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. to review and possible vote on the following applications

1. Application #03-01-23 – 171 Redding Road (Map & Lot #42 & 40) Owner Stephen Santa & Lauren Dzwil – Requesting a variance to reduce lot frontage from 50' feet to 46' feet for a front porch across the front of the house. Redding Zoning Regulation Section 4.6. Variance requested is 4' feet.

2. Application #03-02-23 – 3 Side Cut Road (Map & Lot #12 & #17) Owner SC-3 LLC; Agent Joseph R. Cugno of Cugno Architecture LLC, 113 Westport Road, Wilton CT 06897 – Requesting front and side parking yards section 5.6.4 (8'-6", 7'-8", 8'-5" in lieu of the 6' side setback and 25' front setback) and second floor decks and building encroachment Section 4.6 (3.5' & .9' in lieu of the 15' side set back.) ■

Elizabeth Williams
– *Chairman, Redding Zoning Board of Appeals*

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the residents of the Georgetown Fire District of the Annual Budget Meeting to be held on Tuesday March 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Georgetown Fire District Office, 61 Redding Rd, Georgetown CT.

THE CALL OF THE MEETING WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

To take action on the 2023-2024 Fire District Budget

As proposed by the Commissioners.

Dated at Georgetown, CT this 1st day of March 2023. ■

Will Ely
Commissioner

Elio Cavicchia
1st Deputy Commissioner

Jim Mecozzi
2nd Deputy Commissioner

At a meeting of the Redding Conservation Commission on 3/07/2023, the following actions were voted:

App'l #23-04, Mr. & Mrs. Jack Hay (owners), Alex Avila (agent), 315 Black Rock Tpke. Approved with conditions an application for an addition and general remodeling within the regulated area. To stabilize the bank of the stream.

App'l #23-05, Franklin Mosquera, 70 Lonetown Road.

Approved with conditions an application to excavate for a retaining wall in the back yard, soil to be used for grading, to stabilize property, maintain silt fence, add hay bales and an additional retaining wall in the front yard within the regulated area.

The above-referenced files are available for inspection at the Redding Land Use Office. ■

David R. Pattee
Chairman

Pursuant to Section 7-394 of the CT General Statutes, notice is hereby given to the Legal Voters and Taxpayers of the Town of Redding that the Annual Audit Report (Annual Comprehensive Financial Report) of the Town of Redding for the fiscal year ended

June 30, 2022 is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk for public inspection. ■

MICHELE R. GRANDE,
MCTC-MMC
Town Clerk
March 13, 2023

Correction to the March 9, 2023 Issue

In the article "Redding's Big Outdoors" on page 1, the incorrect acreage of Couch Hill Preserve was included. It is just over 70 acres. We regret this error.

INTERESTED IN STUDYING JOURNALISM?

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Questions: students@nenpa.com
Deadline: March 31, 2023

JOURNALISM EDUCATION FOUNDATION of New England

Police Department honors DeLuca, promotes two members

By Jessie Wright



Photo courtesy of Redding Police Department

Captain DeLuca was presented a plaque for his 30 years of service by the Board of Selectmen on March 8. (Left to right): Selectman Michael Thompson, Selectwoman Peg O'Donnell, Chief Mark O'Donnell, Captain Marc DeLuca, and First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton.

The Redding Police Department (RPD) was busy with celebrations last week, as it honored Mike DeLuca upon his retirement

after 30 years of service and promoted two of its members to new ranks.

On Wednesday, March 8, a ceremony was held at Town Hall for Captain Marc DeLuca, who retired last month. Friends, family, and Town employees attended as DeLuca was presented with a plaque and well wishes for his next chapter.

On Thursday March 9, the department promoted Sergeant Tim Succi, a Redding native and 20-year veteran of the RPD to the rank of Captain. Officer Anthony Signore, a 21-year veteran of the RPD was promoted to Sergeant. Both began their careers at the RPD.

"I am very pleased to see these officers promoted with the unanimous support of the Town's

Selectmen," said Chief Mark O'Donnell after presenting the two men with badges reflecting their new ranks. "Captain Succi and Sergeant Signore are two of the best individuals I've worked with during my 38 years in this Department."

Selectman Michael Thompson added, "Redding is fortunate to have such a strong bench in its Police Department. I thank Captain DeLuca, recently retired, for his many years of service and wish him the best. I am grateful that we have experienced and well-qualified offers like Tim Succi and Anthony Signore to move up the ranks. I know our Town and its citizens will benefit from their continued service and thank them for agreeing to take on greater responsibility." ■

OPINION

Honor Sunshine Week by requiring hybrid access to government meetings

By Justin Silverman

During the early months of Covid-19, governors in New England states issued executive orders allowing municipalities to meet online so long as the public could attend remotely. The democratic benefits of this arrangement quickly became evident. According to a public official quoted in a 2020 study, the changes "made it a lot easier for residents who have other things to do, to be heard. People with family obligations, elder care, or child-care issues."

The executive orders that prompted these changes, however, have long since expired. New England states have resorted to a patchwork of live streams, short-term remote meeting requirements, and in some cases, reverted back to pre-Covid policies and in-person meetings only.

There's a better way forward. Permanent changes need to be made to state laws to require both in-person and remote access to government meetings. People with young children, health issues, disabilities, work commitments or other circumstances that prevent in-person attendance at these meetings are at risk of again being shut out of the democratic process. At the same time, there are benefits to in-person meetings that must continue along with this expanded access.

Now is an ideal time to contact your state representatives and make this need known. Sunshine Week is March 12-18 and is a celebration of open government and freedom of information. The sunshine reference is attributed to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis who famously wrote that "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants." In other words, an informed citizenry is the best check against government corruption. We should use the occasion to demand the permanent changes necessary for all members of the public to effectively engage with the government and stay informed.

The 2020 study — published in the Journal of Civic Informa-

tion and authored by Jodie Gil and Jonathan L. Wharton — involved nearly 100 municipalities in Connecticut following the state's Covid-19 emergency orders. It found that the majority of these municipalities experienced the same or increased participation during their public budget deliberations as they had previously. While these towns also experienced learning curves and other unexpected challenges, the authors' findings reinforce what many of us have come to believe during the last three years: the public is more likely to participate in meetings when given multiple ways to do so.

Massachusetts lawmakers recently recognized this reality with legislation (HD3261/SD2017) that could serve as a model for other states. The bill would apply to all executive branch agencies and municipal bodies subject to the state's Open Meeting Law. It phases in over seven years a requirement that they meet in person and also provide remote access and participation, but demands swift compliance by state agencies and elected municipal bodies. Non-elected municipal bodies with logistical or budgetary concerns can apply for hardship waivers. The legislation even creates a trust fund that will financially support those needing assistance. The waivers, however, are available only until 2030. There must be universal compliance by that time.

While each state has its own local considerations, there's no reason why other open meeting laws cannot ultimately require hybrid access. (Don't know what legislation is introduced in your state? Use the legislation trackers at nefac.org/FOIguide.) Remote meeting technology is becoming more prevalent, less expensive, and greatly needed by citizens unable to attend in person. At the very least, open meeting laws should be changed to incorporate the following:

• **Hybrid Access** – The public needs in-person access to

government meetings along with the ability to attend and participate remotely. Both forms of access are critical. While remote meetings will make government accessible to those who cannot otherwise attend, citizens still need face-to-face time with their representatives without their commentary being muted or disconnected from a Zoom line.

• **Hard Deadline** – The ultimate goal is to have all public bodies meeting in a hybrid form. The ease of reaching this goal will vary from one government agency to the next. States should set a clear and hard deadline for all government bodies to comply, taking into consideration challenges such as staffing, funding, and logistics.

• **Funding** – A common argument against hybrid meetings is the cost of the required equipment and technology. While these costs have decreased significantly, they can still impose a burden on small towns with limited funding and staffing. States should earmark funding specifically for the purpose of hybrid meetings and help those municipalities that genuinely need the assistance. Consider it an investment in democracy.

There have been few silver linings to emerge from Covid-19. Remote access to government meetings is one of them. It provides equity and engagement in our democracy that many members of our communities would not otherwise enjoy. We need to change our open meeting laws now to make sure this access is available long after the pandemic has run its course. ■

Justin Silverman is the Executive Director of the New England First Amendment Coalition.

The non-profit non-partisan organization is the region's leading advocate for First Amendment freedoms and the public's right to know about government. Learn more at nefac.org

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Should Connecticut incentivize media productions? State lawmakers and film industry butt heads over future of film tax credit

By Donna Christopher

The future of Connecticut's 30% tax credit for the film industry is on the line as state lawmakers debate phasing it out and industry professionals call for it to be increased. Many local producers, crew members, and actors worry that losing the incentive will mean that industry work will go to other states where the financial benefits of filming are more attractive.

In New Jersey, the credit is 35% of the qualified film production expenses paid by the taxpayer during a tax year. In New York, production companies currently may be eligible to receive a fully-refundable credit of 25% of qualified production costs and post-production costs incurred in the state, but Governor Kathy Hochul wants to increase that amount to 30% starting in 2024.

Five House Democrats in Connecticut have introduced legislation to phase out the state tax credit (House Bill 5423, An Act Phasing Out the Film Production Tax Credits), including Redding's District 135 Representative Anne M. Hughes. The Sentinel sought comment from these lawmakers but did not receive a reply by press time.

Conversely, representatives in the film industry are calling on lawmakers to expand the programs. On February 15, 2023, members of the State's Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee indicated they will consider "An Act Concerning the Film and Digital Media Production Tax Credits," though no bill has been drafted as of the beginning of March.

A recent study conducted by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) found that the State's tax credit programs for film, TV, and digital media production have furthered economic development, leading to nearly 3,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs in the fiscal year 2020. The study also found the incentives boosted Connecticut's economy by nearly \$359 million.

The study claims that the tax incentives "encourage screen producers and investors to build infrastructure and commit on a longer-term basis. This means that the state has a very strong platform for future growth... The incentives have created a production ecosystem and a cluster of businesses. The Connecticut incentive also encourages focus

on the state, which means that producers focus on sourcing in-state workers where they might have looked at other states."

Jonathan Black, co-owner of Chair 10 Productions in Newtown, said the credit is good but needs to be improved to encourage even bigger projects to set up their productions in Connecticut. Black recently moved to Connecticut from Los Angeles with his wife (and Chair 10 co-owner), Lauren. Their company is currently working on a production in Danbury, among other projects.

Black told the Sentinel he believes increasing the tax credit would draw long-term investments from companies to bring their productions to Connecticut, including network television, streaming series, and feature films.

He and those working in the industry in Connecticut worry that without a better incentive, media companies will take their productions to the states where the tax credit is more favorable.

Critics of the tax credit program argue that production companies can sell their tax credits to other companies and do so often at discounts in order to obtain cash more quickly. Former DECD Commissioner David Lehman in 2022 suggested a review of the program among lawmakers and to cap the amount or lower the tax credit percentage, but there have been no changes made so far.

In an article in the *CT Mirror* earlier this year, Shelley Geballe, a member of *CT Mirror's* Board of Directors, commented, "It's like a bigger and bigger hole in your pocket." Geballe is the author of a report for Connecticut Voices for Children, an advocacy group aimed at improving the well-being of Connecticut's children and families, specifically those that have been historically disadvantaged.

The Connecticut Voices for Children report claims that data from the Commission on Culture and Tourism show that "tax credits have largely been subsidizing out-of-state personnel and businesses."

"Data in a spreadsheet provided to a General Assembly subcommittee looking at tax credits showed that only 11% of the \$113.2 million of state revenues lost through the 'film tax credit' subsidized production expenses that were classified as

"actual Connecticut expenditures," the Voices for Children report continues.

On the other hand, advocates like Black argue production projects draw big business to the area, including new jobs.

He cited examples of one of his company's production crews calling in an order of up to 100 pizzas from a local restaurant for catering during production days and booking several hotels for cast and crew.

His company hires local staff and trains them, he said. "They can work, earn sometimes \$1,500 to \$2,000 a week, get medical insurance and benefits, improve their lives," Black said. He hopes Connecticut would have a tax credit favorable enough to draw a large multi-season television or streaming series which would set up their production schedule in cities like Bridgeport and Danbury where the economy needs a boost.

Black mentioned the loss of Blue Sky Studios (a CGI animation company known for making the *Ice Age* movie series, among others) in Greenwich when Disney shuttered it in 2021. He noted that in their last year, the company received a large tax break from Connecticut, but then left the state. Opponents of the incentive worry about this occurring with other companies. "Their concerns are warranted," he said. "I'm trying to help the state in areas that need help in education, training, career training, hiring minorities - so production, wardrobe, set design, painting, and carpentry. We have a boot camp training program. The whole system is to support building the infrastructure."

Black believes there is a lack of understanding of how the tax credit works and the impact of the income that comes in from a production on a local community.

"(Opponents) have the thought, 'We don't want to give Hollywood money' and they're frustrated giving the tax credit to these big companies, helping the bigger guys like ESPN, WWE...not the little guy," Black said.

He noted that his company lost a large Hulu TV series to production in New Jersey and believes gaining support for the tax credit is favorable for the people that live in Connecticut.

"I want to help people understand how the waterfall effect helps people in the state," he said. ■

Data gap analysis finds more areas of concern Gilbert & Bennett site evaluation continues

By Rocco Valluzzo

As the environmental data gap analysis of the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property in Georgetown nears completion, 11 new areas have been found that could contain hazardous materials.

Representatives of the Middleton-based engineering firm Tighe & Bond presented their findings to the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee at its Thursday, March 9 meeting. These areas of concern were not previously identified as part of the data previously conducted by Tighe & Bond during a study in 2005.

According to project manager James Olsen, among the areas of concern (AOC) were a pair of buildings which contained a gas generator that was used to power adjacent engines. The generators took in coal and it converted to gas, producing a waste product called coal tar.

Mark Paulson, also of Tighe & Bond, noted that the "reverse twist" building contained a number of vehicles in various states of disrepair, some of which had staining beneath them, another AOC.

He noted the use of pesticides, as well as petroleum, were found along the railroad tracks. One of the former dwellings contained an underground storage tank that has since been removed, but there was still some impact beneath the basement.

Aerial photographs of the property indicated what appeared to be agricultural fields in the new warehouse building area, which contain pesticides. In two buildings, automotive repair activities were in progress.

"We also observed soil piles," said Paulson. "There's always a

concern with soil piles, because we don't know where they came from."

According to Olsen, one of the big questions was whether or not the possible presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) was a concern. These were used in the manufacturing of wire and metal to make them corrosion resistant. To screen for it, he recommended some selective groundwater sampling.

"It's going to come up at some point, whether it be a developer or the DEEP," he said. "They are going to ask, 'What is your rationale for not testing for it?' I think it would be something that's hard to rule out. With the nearby water supply wells, it's going to be asked for sure."

Olsen also added that Tighe & Bond has started to put together a work plan to address some of the costs for remediation work. Although there may not be enough funding in the current grant to cover all these data gaps, the firm has looked into applying for another assessment grant.

"I think the prudent thing to do is to go through these data gaps and figure out which are the significant ones and then tackle those first and see if maybe we can close them out - some of the AOC that have not been investigated, maybe the PFAS, maybe do a select round of investigation and get the data that are needed to address those as well as to factor into the valuation of clean-up alternatives and costs," he said. "That's something we would probably recommend in the next step, to look at those and really drill down - which are the most significant data gaps and how much it's going to cost to address these." ■

Selectmen explore road work funding

By Rocco Valluzzo

With the proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-24 not including additional monies for road work, the Redding Board of Selectmen explored other options for the repair and replacement of roads in town at its special meeting on Monday, March 6.

According to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, Redding has 135,000 in the budget for road repair maintenance, such as sealing cracks and filling potholes, and \$10,000 for drainage work. There is also \$327,000 in the town aid road fund.

But there are several other priority road projects in town, including the Redding Community Center parking lot, and about 2.3 miles of road work. Pemberton has estimated this to be about \$1 million.

For years, the Town has

financed the cost of repair and replacement of its roads primarily through issuing bonds. The Selectmen and the Board of Finance are now re-considering that strategy, as the cost of debt service on these bonds balloons.

"We had this discussion with the Board of Finance for the proposal to build up a fund for our roads so that we are not borrowing, but we are paying as you go," said Pemberton. "But we are not proposing raising taxes in order to do that."

Instead, the Selectmen are proposing to use some of the taxpayer monies in what is now a very healthy unassigned fund balance to pre-fund that work, which will not accrue to an operating budget line item.

Continued on page 4

Tri-district music concert

Easton, Redding, and Region 9 to perform March 23

The three districts that make up ER9 - Easton, Redding, and Region 9, will put on a combined music concert on Thursday, March 23, a renewed tradition from years past. Students from all five schools will perform music in several styles as part of chorus, band, and orchestra groups.

The concert will be held at Joel

Barlow High School in the Lower Gym, located at 100 Black Rock Turnpike from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Communication from the districts noted that this event typically brings very large crowds, and recommended attendees consider carpooling and arriving early. Additional parking will be made available for family and

community members that may need assistance getting into the building. ■

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SPORTS

Knights finish in Division III quarterfinals

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Spencer Thomas led the Joel Barlow-Weston-Abbott Tech hockey team with three goals in the first round of the State Division III tournament on Monday, March 6. The Knights defeated Wilton 6-2 but lost 4-0 to Conard later in the tournament to end the season.

The start of the State Division III tournament was an offensive bonanza for the Joel Barlow-Weston-Abbott Tech (JBWA) hockey team.

The fifth-seeded Knights were off to a good start when they opened up things against 12th-seeded Wilton. Putting forth their best offensive effort of the season, they cruised to a 6-2 victory on Monday, March 6, at the Danbury Ice Arena.

The Knights wasted little time in getting on the board. Just two-and-a-half minutes into the action, Tommy Kane put his team in the lead with the first of his two goals. Josh Gyolai got the assist.

Although the Knights were called for three penalties in the first period, they killed each off successfully. Wilton, however, still managed to score before the frame ended, courtesy of a goal by Nikolai Naydenov with just over a minute left to tie it at 1-1.

JBWA took advantage of a high-

sticking call against the Warriors in the second period, scoring on the power-play at the 10:58 mark courtesy of Kane with Spencer Thomas getting the assist. Once again, the Warriors responded with Naydenov netting the equalizer with 2:04 left.

That was as close as Wilton would come to catching the hosts. High sticking and interference calls against the visiting team with less than two minutes remaining in the period put them down a couple of skaters, and the Knights took advantage of the situation, making it a 3-2 game with 52.4 seconds to go on the first goal by Spencer Thomas. Emmett Arees and Kane assisted, with the Knights back in the lead after two frames.

Thomas struck again two-and-a-half minutes into the third period with another assist going to Kane. The former assisted on a goal by Kai Smith with 7:35 to go, coming on the power play.

Completing his hat-trick,

Thomas scored an unassisted goal with 4:17 left as the Knights advanced to the next round.

An offensive drought, however, would hamper the Knights when they took on fourth-seeded Conard of West Hartford in the quarterfinals three days later. Unable to find the net, they fell 4-0 to end the season at the Edward Bennett Rink in West Haven.

It marked the only time this season that the Knights were shut out.

“Of course I’m always hoping to go further (in the tournament), but I am very pleased with where this team stood at the end of the year compared to where we were at the start and what the attitude was at the start,” said JBWA Coach Bob Stearns. “They’re a great group of kids who really played as a team.”

Although Conard did score four goals in the game, they were spelled out over the course of the action. The first was five-and-a-half minutes into the action with Gavin McGowan putting his team ahead for good. Luke Shaffer got the assist as the Red Wolves led 1-0.

The Knights kept it close for the rest of the frame, and it was still a one-goal game heading into the second period before Aiden Emery scored two goals in succession with Jack Hodgson and McGowan getting assists.

With the Knights unable to find the net and with less than a minute to go in the third period, Conard put the official stamp on the game with 30 seconds left to play courtesy of a goal by Torin McGoldrick, ending the season for the Knights.

JBWA finishes the season at 13-10-1. ■

Cycling in Redding

Getting started | By Matt Miller

We hope you enjoy this first piece in a five-article series that will get you ready for a season of bike riding around town.

You know how to ride a bike. You used to love it when you were a kid, but you’re nervous about riding the roads of Redding or surrounding towns, and maybe it’s been a while. All those cars, curvy roads, and narrow shoulders can be daunting.

Take heart. You can do it, and you absolutely should.

I’ve been riding these roads for over forty years. Sure, there is some risk, but with proper gear, technique, and appropriate precautions, it’s wonderful and safe out there. And it’s so much better than that indoor bike that may as well be a clothes rack these days anyway. Think healthy exercise, ever changing views, and fresh air – just like when you were a kid. Remember what your mother told you. “Go outside and play.”

This will be the first of several articles about riding, with future coverage on essential gear, basic technique, safety, and advanced bike handling. There are many books and plenty of internet-based expertise available, with far more detailed information on all things bike related – so consider this a primer and a not-so-gentle nudge.

Let’s start today with what kind of bike should you get. Assuming you don’t have one sitting in the garage, start by deciding your goals:

- Do you want to stick to pavement or are you also interested in dirt roads and gravel bike paths?
- Do you hope to cover longer distances eventually (something over fifteen miles), or do you just want to cruise around your neighborhood?
- Apart from the sheer joy of being out there, do you see this as just fun or some serious exercise?

Bikes keep evolving, but the elegant and fundamentally brilliant design of two wheels, with a chain-driven power train, has been around since well before the turn of the last century. Only now they have gears and brakes too!

Let’s assume you want to ride, at least some of the time, on asphalt. That means you need a “road” bike, which can be anything from a racing or touring frame with thin tires and curved “drop” handlebars to a slightly more heavy duty frame with wider tires and a bit more tread. Most bikes you see out there on our roads are the former type and are, to my mind, the better choice. They are designed to

go faster with less weight and road resistance and will have a wide range of gear choices. Usually, there will be two “chain rings” in the front, and at least six rings on the rear tire, giving you at least twelve gears that will take you up steep hills but also a high enough gear for speed downhill.

The other alternative, with somewhat wider tires, is now termed a “gravel” bike, which have become very popular. They give some people more confidence with uneven road surfaces and can be ridden on gravel and dirt roads (or “rail” trails) comfortably. Not a bad option.

However, if you are at all serious about riding, don’t get a “hybrid” bike, which, in theory, can be ridden on both roads and on trails. In reality, they are not very good on either. If you want to save some money and have no aspirations other than to take short rides in your neighborhood, these are okay. But if you aspire for more, you’ll soon want a better bike.

Basically, the other two types of bikes you’ll see in a bike store are cruisers and mountain bikes. The former, with fatter tires and a wider seat, are really for city riding or for short rides – nothing serious. Mountain bikes are heavier, with much wider big tread tires – great for dirt trails, but total overkill on pavement. Would you like to drive a 4-wheel drive monster truck with studded giant tires on the highway? You get my point.

The new kid in town is the E-Bike (short for electric bike). They come in many styles and have electric motors that can help power the bike from a little to a lot. I have no expertise on these but suggest, if you’re interested, that you try normal riding again first.

OK, ready to get out there? If you have a bike sitting in your garage, and you want to start with that, make sure it’s fully checked out for safety and is tuned up. If you’re not good at this, take it to a local bike shop. On that note, I do suggest using a shop that only deals with bikes – that’s where you’ll get the best advice and expertise, and you can check out what’s new. This is not the time to go to Walmart.

If you’re going to spring for a new bike, even if you have some idea what you’re looking for, you may be a little overwhelmed by choices – frame material, wheels and tires, seats, pedals, gearing options and, of course, price. I’ll cover all this in the next article, along with other essential accessories. Then we’ll get you out there on the road. It’s easy. It’s like riding a bike. ■

Lucius Pond Ordway / Devil’s Den Preserve Godfrey Pond Loop
Continued from page 1

still bare, there are several homes visible from the trail, one of which stands out. An expansive compound, boldly colored with bright pink, green, and yellow that sits on the corner of the pond is the home of none other than Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones. Richards purchased the home in 1985, and it has since become one of the most famous homes in Fairfield County.

From the trailhead, head east and then north on Laurel Trail which is clearly marked with signage. At the first junction with Godfrey Trail, keep to the right. Just before the pond, there is a small path to the left which leads to what seemed to be remains of the sawmill with a large wooden sign that reads “Godfrey Pond Sawmill Site 1767-1976”. Turn back to continue on the connector which naturally guides you counterclockwise around the east side of the pond. The connector ends at Godfrey Trail where you take another left that follows along the pond’s north shore. You’ll soon intersect with Laurel Trail which leads back to the trailhead and car lot.

The trails are marked with yellow, red, or white blazes. Red for cross country skiing, yellow for hiking only, and white on trails

that are part of the Saugatuck Valley system. Several bridges throughout the loop are great points to pause and take in the beautiful views of the pond and the surrounding wetlands. The trail is famously muddy and rocky, so be mindful of footwear choices and leave the stroller in the car.

A simple and charming hike, Godfrey Pond Loop is a great option for families or a picnic with friends. With spring right around the corner, I plan to return to see the trees and forest come to life and continue to explore more of what Devil’s Den Preserve has to offer.

Happy Exploring! ■

Do you like to hit the trails? The Sentinel is looking for additional volunteer contributors for Redding’s Big Outdoors. E-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org for more information.

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New Pond Farm Education Center

Redding Ridge Engine Repair

Selectmen explore road work funding / Continued from page 3

Redding ended the previous fiscal year with an unassigned fund balance of \$10.6 million. It is since grown to \$12.2 million.

“We know that we have a surplus coming out of the prior fiscal year, and perhaps there’s an opportunity here once we have a number in terms of road work, which would be a capital asset, to ask for a portion of the unassigned fund balance to be restricted by the Board of Finance for the specific purpose of capital road work,” said Redding Finance Director Jim Sanders. “From my perspective, that’s maybe a better use of the

unassigned fund balance.”

Sanders noted that the current expenditures proposed for 2023-24 is 23.2% of the general fund. The Board of Finance policy is a 16.7% minimum. This amounts to about \$3 million beyond that percentage.

Sanders also said another use of this unassigned fund balanced would be to start reserving money for future uses in terms of road work. This would get the Town positioned to borrow less in terms of doing road work.

Tilcon, a New Britain-based construction and aggregates

company, is scheduled to examine the Community Center parking lot and about 2.3 miles of roads in town. By the time a public hearing is scheduled on the work, the Town can provide more detail to the Board of Finance regarding the amount it is going to need.

“I would love to see a start on this plan,” said Selectwoman Peg O’Donnell. “We may have to start small but I think it’s moving in the right direction. It could take a long time before we really get it all in place.” ■





New Pond Farm Education Center

is looking for a few more wonderful counselors and lifeguards to complete our summer camp staff! If you enjoy working with children in a beautiful outdoor setting, New Pond is the perfect place to be!

Positions Available:

Assistant Counselor: High school seniors, college students and college graduates.

Lifeguard: Must be age 20 or above. This position has an option of also working as a counselor.

Camp will run from **June 26-August 4** with an orientation week starting on June 19.

Please send a cover letter, resume, and the names of two references to emily@newpondfarm.org.



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

Barlow debate team gears up for state competition

By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of Barlow Debate

(Left to right) Coach Randall Smith, Judah Friedman '23, Tyler Lakin '23, Cade Fravel '25, Griffin Speck '25, Owen Fellows, '25, Luis Diez '25, Catherine Gutowski '23 (co-captain), and Quinn Speck '23.

"Stop arguing!" was one of those commands many of us heard – too often – from our parents. Yet, one popular student group at Joel Barlow High School has built a 20-year tradition of teaching students quite the opposite.

This is Barlow Debate, which has been going strong since 2003 under the guidance of Coach Randall Smith. In the process, it's earned more than 600 awards in the process, including last year's statewide championship.

Thirty students in all four grades participate in Barlow Debate: freshmen and sophomores make up the team's novices and juniors, and seniors make up the varsity squad. They compete with about 50 other member schools in the Connecticut Debate Association (CDA), a league consisting of public, parochial, and private schools.

Its next milestone: the CDA's annual statewide competition, which is set for Monday, March 27 at Stamford High School. Qualifying for that event is based on the team's performance in six "opens" held statewide this year, Smith explained.

"For the first time in the past few years, all of the events this year are in person," said Smith.

"And our seniors this year are the only ones on the team who can remember in-person tournaments."

Learning to debate is an important skill for any student, in Smith's view. "Back in the early part of the 20th century, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, 'If you want to find out if an idea is any good, talk about it!' In recent years, not enough of that happens."

On the national scene, political discussion has instead become a "football-field," in Smith's view. Blame gets passed back and forth, and neither side engages in any discussion of solutions to the issues of the day. "I want to ensure that when my students arrive in the halls of power – if they do, they are prepared to offer well-reasoned arguments that lead to solutions," Smith noted.

In the early 1990s, Smith excelled in debate as a Barlow Student. When he became a teacher at his alma mater in 2003, he turned what had become a waning team into one of its most popular student organizations. His secret?

"My best move was to give the students control of Barlow Debate," said Smith. Elected co-captains are completely responsible for setting agendas, team logistics and planning and delegating

responsibility. Under their direction, students also choose their own topics for debate.

"It can definitely be difficult to get kids into this organization, because it is a big commitment of time for everyone," said Smith. "Yet, they've kept it going because they take pride in it. It's theirs. There have been some years at Barlow where there have been more people running for co-captain of the debate team than for student body president."

In addition to the CDA event in Stamford, Barlow Debate will take part in debating events at a host of additional forums including Loomis-Chaffee School in Windsor; Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford; and Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, MA.

Later this spring, the group will also take part in this year's north-east regional competition of the Ronald Reagan Great Communicator Debate Series. The event is slated to take place on May 12-13 at Chaminade High School in Mineola, NY. At that event, competitors will all debate a proposal for national public service.

Each year, the team has a series of summer practices to keep students' debating skills fresh and sharp. But it's not all work: At the end of each year, the team hosts May Madness. It's an opportunity for students to debate topics that range from humorous to downright ridiculous.

"This year's topic will be 'let's ban immigration from Middle Earth,'" Smith said, referring to the mythical setting of J.R.R. Tolkien's books. One key argument will be that because Middle Earthers are elves, and elves are immortal, immigration would bankrupt the social security system.

While pursued a bit in jest, such debates have relevance to real-world issues. "They're great kids, they're funny, and they all are looking forward to May Madness," said Smith. ■

RES students win State Reflections arts competition

By Jessie Wright

Maya Khanna and Juliana Avgerinos, both students at Redding Elementary School, have won first place in the CT PTA's Reflections competition.

The Reflections competition is run through each state's PTA (Parent Teacher Association), in which over 300,000 students in grades Pre-K through 12 create original works of art around a student-selected theme. These works of art can fall into several categories – Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, and Visual Arts. This year's theme was "Show Your Voice!"

The program is meant to provide "opportunities for recognition and access to the arts which boost student confidence and success in the arts and in life," according to National PTA.

The Redding Elementary School PTA had selected both Khanna and Avgerinos as finalists and sent their works to the state competition. Khanna's

submission placed first in the Dance Choreography category and Avgerinos placed first in Music Composition. The students' works will now go on to be judged at the national level against other first place winners from across the country.

Other ER9 students were recognized for their works in the state competition, including Natalie Gilbert, who placed third in the High School division for Film Production from Joel Barlow High School; Austin Bradford, who placed second in the Middle School division of Music Composition from John Read Middle School; and Chad Pranzo, who placed fourth in the High School division for Photography from Joel Barlow High School.

All winners (first through fourth place) will be honored at the Reflections Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, May 10 at Fairfield Woods Middle School in Fairfield at 7:00 p.m. ■

Scholarships available for high school senior women

Weston's Chapter P of P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) announces that scholarships up to \$2,500 are available to college-bound women who reside in Weston, Redding, or Easton.

Candidates must exhibit excellence in academics, leadership, and extra-curricular activities, plus participation in community service and a demonstrated financial need.

The deadline for applications is April 3, 2023. More information, as well as an application, is available at peochapterpct.org or you can contact the chapter by e-mail at peochapterpct@gmail.com ■

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WISDOM BEGINS WITH WONDER

PRE-K THROUGH 8TH GRADE



SUMMER

Seeking a summer job

Hello,
My name is Alex. I am 15 years old. I am not looking for any specific type of job, but the only real job experience I have is babysitting younger kids which I am very experienced in.
I am going to be available for the majority of the summer, except for July 14- July 30. I have absolutely no expectation for pay and will also accept volunteer jobs.
Thank you for your time,
Alex

Hello!
My name is Ava. I'm currently a junior. I hope to study nursing, and in the interim, I am completing an internship at Hancock Hall, a hospice facility in Danbury. By the summer, I will be certified as a nursing assistant.
I'm looking for a summer job in a hospice care facility or nursing home. My hours are flexible, and I can work weekends.
Thank you very much!
Ava

My name is Erik, and I'm a Finance student at UCONN.
This summer I'm providing a fully licensed and insured painting service!
Collegiate Painting Services is ready to give you a free, no-obligation estimate!
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If you'd like a fantastic paint or stain job from hard-working student painters
OR
Are looking for a full-time painting or production manager position this summer
Reach out!

Interested in hiring one of these young people?

Contact the Sentinel at summerjobsreddingsentinel.org and we will work to put you together.



Lyla is 14.5 years old, a good student, MVP of her JV Field hockey team, and a member of the national charity league. She will be a sophomore in high school next school year.
She is great at almost any sport she tries, loves theater, animals, children, and helping others.
Lyla is looking for babysitting jobs in Redding. She has her Red Cross babysitter's certification. Lyla can help individual families or summer camp programs.
Also interested in hostess positions and bussing tables at a restaurant.
Lyla has also worked on a farm, cleaning, organizing, caring for the animals, feeding, etc.
Thanks in advance for your consideration!

Hello,
I'm an upcoming junior. I'm a bilingual student who speaks English and Spanish fluently, I'm hard working in and outside of school. I've had previous job experience in camp counseling and I'm interested in any variety of service or labor intensive job. Thank you for your consideration.
-Lucas

New Pond Farm Education Center has some fantastic summer positions open!

- Summer Camp Lifeguard
- Summer Camp Lead and Assistant Counselors
- Property Helper (mowing, haying, trail work and more!)

Please visit our website for more information newpondfarm.org



From camp to career | *By Justin Reynolds*



Photos courtesy of Riverbrook YMCA

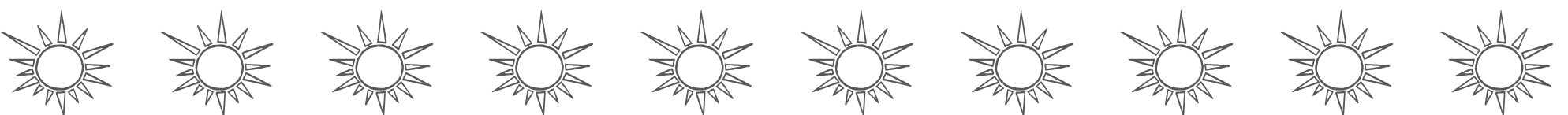
For over 50 years, Riverbrook YMCA has helped people young and old maximize their personal potential. Located at 404 Danbury Road in Wilton, this branch of the YMCA serves folks from Redding, Wilton, and Norwalk.
Every summer, youth from around the area attend and work at the YMCA's summer camp, Camp Gordyland. The camp is held on a 22-acre site which includes an outdoor and indoor swimming pool, a pond, a mini-golf course, a ropes course, ball fields, an archery range, and a fishing area, among other facilities.
It turns out that Camp Gordyland has done a great job at helping the Riverbrook YMCA fulfill its mission of maximizing personal potential over the years. Many people who attended the camp as

kids have gone on to do all sorts of impressive things in their careers – camp alumni include lawyers, engineers, finance professionals, congressional aides, teachers, military personnel, police officers, musicians, and firefighters.
At the same time, many folks who started out as campers or camp staff have stuck around, rising through the ranks to become program directors themselves at Riverbrook YMCA.
Kimberly Fejes started working at the YMCA when she was 19, after her freshman year of college. Fast-forward 14 years, and Fejes is now Riverbrook's Early Childhood & School Age Development Director.
"The culture of the staff here is why I wanted to come back each summer," Fejes said. "I ended up

staying year after year. Being here to help children develop and grow has become a passion for me."
Over the last 14 years, Fejes has seen campers become staff members and then go on to become program directors at Riverbrook or pursue other interesting careers.
"It's been amazing," she said.
Those who attend Camp Gordyland — campers, staff, and directors — are affectionately known as the "Gordyland Family".
"Whether you're a new camper or staff, you're welcome and part of the family from day one," Fejes said. "We are here to share in your joys, support you through your challenges, and celebrate your successes."
Camp Gordyland caters to kids between the ages of 3 and 15, and staff members are at least 16 years

old. Per Fejes, camp directors usually start off as campers, then become counselors in training, staff members, and heads of staff before becoming one of the top dogs.
"Staff return year after year and look forward to seeking leadership opportunities or, when they are eligible, to apply to work here," Fejes said. "As an example, we have an after-school counselor who's a senior in high school right now. I've known her since she was in the first or second grade and have seen her grow as a counselor in training. Now, she's become head staff, and we look forward to the day she becomes one of our camp directors."
Even if staffers ultimately choose to explore careers elsewhere, "camp provides

real work experience and teaches 21st-century skills, like customer service, problem solving, creativity, innovative and critical thinking, collaboration, perseverance, and more," she said.
Additionally, many staff members receive letters of recommendation from supervisors, which can help them when they apply for college and graduate school.
"Our camp mottoes are: make friends, make memories, make a difference," Fejes said. "We're all about making friends on day one. We love it when the holidays roll around, because old campers and staff members come around and want to see how camp has changed and who's working there."
Last summer, Riverbrook YMCA hosted its 30th Annual Color Games, inviting old campers and old camp directors to join in on the fun.
"Previous staff are now parents of campers," Fejes said. "It's great." ■





JOB FAIR

Available summer jobs

New Pond Farm Education Center is seeking an experienced LIFEGUARD AGE 20+, who is excited to work with campers at an outdoor pool.

New Pond Farm is a dynamic environmental education center that hosts an outdoor summer camp for children ages 6-12. The lifeguard is responsible for supervising all pool activities, administering first aid, enforcing safety procedures, and ensuring compliance with state licensing requirements. Full job description at newpondfarm.org

***Position includes the option of working as a counselor for a full day of work**

To Apply: Please send cover letter and resume to Emily Ciffone at emily@newpondfarm.org

New Pond Farm Education Center is seeking experienced and enthusiastic LEAD COUNSELORS who love working with children in the outdoors

New Pond Farm is a dynamic environmental education center that hosts an outdoor summer camp for children ages 6-12. Lead Counselors are college upperclassmen or graduates and are responsible for leading daily outdoor activities based on the provided curriculum. Lead Counselors work with an Assistant Counselor to ensure the health and safety of all campers. Full job description at newpondfarm.org.

To Apply: Please send cover letter and resume to Emily Ciffone at emily@newpondfarm.org

New Pond Farm Education Center is seeking experienced and enthusiastic ASSISTANT COUNSELORS who love working with children in the outdoors

New Pond Farm is a dynamic environmental education center that hosts an outdoor summer camp for children ages 6-12. Assistant Counselors are high school upperclassmen or college students and are responsible for supporting the Lead Counselor with daily activities. Assistant Counselors work as part of a team to ensure the health and safety of all campers. Full job description at newpondfarm.org.

To Apply: Please send cover letter and resume to Emily Ciffone at emily@newpondfarm.org

Redding Park and Recreation

Lifeguard positions at Topstone Park beach.

Candidates for Lifeguard positions must be at least 16 years old and have an active Waterfront Lifeguarding certificate or be enrolled in a class. Experienced preferred. Hours vary but weekend work is required of all guards. Apply at Redding Park and Recreation. Ask for an application @ (203) 938-2551 or rblick@townofreddingct.org.

Join our Summer team at the Riverbrook Regional YMCA!

Camp Staff

- Wilton YMCA - Camp Gordyland (held at the Wilton Y)
- Norwalk - Camp Sunrise - (held at All Saints School, Norwalk)
- Norwalk - Race for Chase - Triathlon Program for kids ages 6-12 to learn and enjoy the sport of triathlon.

All candidates must be 16 years of age by 6/26/2023.
Camp Staff make \$15/hour.

To learn more about our Job Openings and apply: wiltonymca.org/employment-opportunities

Questions contact: Kimberly Fejes kfejes@riverbrookymca.org

Redding Park and Recreation

Lifeguard Supervisor positions at Topstone Park beach.

Park Supervisors should have a minimum of 3 years as a lifeguard and be at least 20 years of age. Supervisory experience and LGI certification preferred or must agree to sign up for Lifeguard instructor class (LGI). Salary commensurate with experience. Apply at Redding Park and Recreation. Ask for an application @ (203) 938-2551 or rblick@townofreddingct.org.

Redding Park and Recreation

Summer Day Camp Staff – Redding Park and Recreation Day camp. We have a limited number of summer camp counselor positions available as well as positions as aides for students with special challenges. Camp runs between 6/26 and 8/11. A mandatory training will take place the week before it starts. Apply at Redding Park and Recreation. Ask for an application @ (203) 938-2551 or email Michele at mwaring@townofreddingct.org

Join our Summer team at the Riverbrook Regional YMCA!

Lifeguards and Swim Instructors

- Wilton YMCA

All candidates must be 16 years of age by 6/26/2023. Lifeguards make \$15/hour.

To learn more about our Job Openings and apply: wiltonymca.org/employment-opportunities

Questions contact: Samantha Lusher slusher@riverbrookymca.org

Easton Community Center Summer Camp Counselors

The Easton Community Center is looking to hire Camp Counselors to supervise campers and make sure they learn and have fun! Counselors will be responsible for running daily activities and ensuring the safety of our campers. Being reliable and able to build good relationships with children are two essential traits of a Camp Counselor. If you're patient, energetic but strict when needed, we'd like to meet you.

- \$15 - \$18 an hour depending on experience.
- 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday
- Contact Sarah Gonzalez, Assistant Camp Director at the Easton Community Center if you would like to apply! Sarah@eastoncc.com

First Church, Congregational Volunteer Counselors and Interns

Unpaid Junior Counselors and Day Camp Volunteers (entering grades 6-12): Help elementary kids with field day activities and camp favorites like tie-dye. Or if limited availability, aid setup/cleanup. Event June 26-30, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Permission slip and orientation required. Certificates and reference letters awarded.

Unpaid Interns (tracks for teens and adults): Participate in visual and performing arts, community service, leadership, assisting program staff. Launches seasonally. Certificates and reference letters awarded.

First Church Redding, 25 Cross Highway. Inquiries to main@firstchurchredding.org

First Church, Congregational Paid Nursery Care and Substitutes

Sunday mornings, special events.

High school diploma+.

Background check. First Aid/CPR certified or willing to certify.

\$25/hour.

First Church Redding, 25 Cross Highway
Inquiries to main@firstchurchredding.org

How to ace an interview

By Sharon Epstein

Are you a teen who has a job or internship interview coming up? Do you know someone who does? For students without much - or any - interview experience, the prospect can be daunting. The good news is that by learning basic interview techniques, teens can increase their confidence levels and make a positive impression in interviews. I've taught these skills to my students, and I always enjoy seeing their confidence grow. For this article, I also spoke with Redding's Park and Recreation Director, Rob Blick, to get his insights about what he looks for when interviewing students for summer jobs.

Know Your Strengths.

The better you know yourself, the more comfortable you'll be talking about yourself in an interview. Start by making a list of your positive qualities. (Are you determined, friendly, a leader?) Next, list your accomplishments, awards, interests, and hobbies. Ask your parents and friends too; they can provide a perspective you might not have thought of.

"It's good to be proud of your accomplishments, even if they're small," said Blick. He added that there might be accomplishments you haven't considered. "If you're busy and do a lot, that's an accomplishment."

Find Examples to Talk About.

Come up with four or five examples that illustrate the positive qualities or experiences you'd like to highlight. Strong examples include leadership, ability to work as a team member, a meaningful activity, and a time you overcame an obstacle. It's common to feel like it's bragging to say, "I did this" or "I helped my team do that", but practice will help you become more comfortable talking about yourself.

Do Your Research.

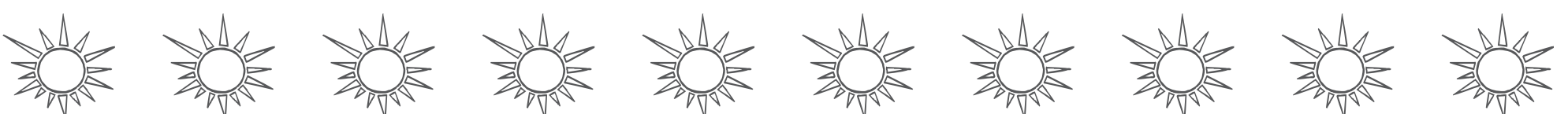
Go to the company's website and jot down the key points that make you feel you'd be a good fit and excited to work there. Interviewers like applicants who are prepared and enthusiastic.

Practice Answering Common Questions.

Practicing is the best thing you can do to prepare. You should know how to answer some of these common interview questions and prompts: Why do you want to work here? Tell me about a couple of your strengths. What's a weakness you have? What are your favorite subjects in school and why? How would your friends or teachers describe you? What are you proud of? Tell me about a time you faced an obstacle or challenge.

"There will be questions that are about you and your life," said Blick. "Think about what you're proud of - maybe it's a choice or a difficult decision." Blick noted that he'll often ask, "Why is your best friend friends with you?" because he likes to hear that perspective. You can find more

Continued on page 9



“Irish heritage is just a part of my identity, like a fingerprint”

Residents reflect on St. Patrick's Day | By Pamela Brown



Photo by Carol Morgan

Celebrating their Irish heritage at Meadow Ridge: left to right: John Lynch, Nick Lacey, Jack Neafsey, Dick Farrell, Lillian Lynch, Susan Auslander with her dog Black Jack.

The Irish are known for being proud of their heritage. Many residents of Meadow Ridge trace their roots back to the Emerald Isle, and over the past week have enjoyed several events to celebrate St. Patrick's day. Meadow Ridge will also host a “Mix 'n Mingle” reception on Friday, March 17 with festive Irish music and refreshments in the botanical skylit atrium.

Some of the residents happily shared their thoughts, traditions, and memories around being Irish.

John Lynch (in his own words)

“Nothing better than an Irish man. . . My grandparents came from the ole sod. Grandfather Tim was born in the Blasket Islands off Cork, accessible only by boat. In 1905 he moved to Springfield, Massachusetts and had five children. I have fond memories of us all singing together accompanied by an accordion.

When I was a manager at United Technology, I always wore a green carnation in my lapel. Here, at Meadow Ridge, I still enjoy corned beef and cabbage and a beer. My wife, Lillian, is half Irish and Italian. She always joins in the fun!

Nick Lacey

Nick Lacey's grandfather arrived from Ireland on the Lusitania in 1908 and changed his name from Leacy to Lacey. He remembers meeting his Irish cousin, Padge Leacy, at JFK Airport in 1995 and instantly recognizing each other by their family resemblance. The following year, the Lacey's visited their kinfolk in Ireland.

Dick Farrell (in his own words)

“I worked in New York City for many years and on St. Patrick's day, weather permitting, my good associate Bert Rosenberg, a nice Jewish boy, and I would head to Fifth Avenue to see the parade, stay a few minutes, then head for a good Italian restaurant to toast Saint Patrick. A good ecumenical day.”

Sheila Creatura (in her own words)

“My married name is Sheila Creatura, but my family name was Sheila Kathleen Lavery. My paternal grandfather emigrated to the United States from Armagh, Ireland, and my husband's father came from Italy some time later. It's been a tradition in our Creatura

family to drink a toast on July 4th to Patrick Lavery and Grazio Creatura, who were brave enough and desperate enough to make the perilous journey in hopes of a better life.

I grew up in an Irish Catholic parish in Bridgeport, where St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with the obligatory ‘wearing of the green’ and a musical review in the parish hall in which my brother and I always performed the pseudo-Irish songs popular at the time.”

Susan McMahon Auslander (in her own words)

“Here I am, a stealth Irishman, as my married name is Auslander. However, my dad was a McMahon and my mom was a McNamee; they were grandchildren of immigrants. Some have said that the map of Ireland is on my face. Irish heritage is just a part of my identity, like a fingerprint. I also think it might be a source of my sense of humor (not taking oneself too seriously). Corned beef and cabbage is not my favorite meal, but I have sat through many a meal of this on Paddy's day. I have visited Ireland twice, once in '58 as a single person traveling Europe alone, and again in the 70's when Dublin was cleaner and more prosperous. I'm delighted that one of my grandsons, Peter B. Auslander (who also has the map on his face) will spend spring term of his junior year at Boston College at Trinity, in Dublin. St. Patrick's Day is also my oldest son's birthday. We named him Michael David (not Patrick) as many said we should.”

Jack Neafsey (in his own words)

“All of my grandparents were immigrants, born in Ireland between 1855 and 1880. They came to America under different circumstances, but all were escaping the lack of opportunity in Ireland under British rule. St. Patrick's Day reminds all of us that we are a country of immigrants, all of whom are seeking a chance to make a contribution. St. Patrick's is a fun day, but its meaning is much deeper than corned beef, green beer, and To-Ra-Lor-Ra-Lura!” ■

On the menu with...

John O'Brien | By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of O'Brien's Pub and Grill

Authentic Irish food is on the menu at O'Brien's Pub & Grill at 83 Lake Avenue in Danbury. “O'Brien's is a traditional Irish pub house like back home, full of locals, with a friendly atmosphere,” said owner John O'Brien. “People enter as strangers and leave as family, with plenty of good times and laughs to be had.”

Initially opened in 2010, the restaurant shut down in 2015 due to a fire and re-opened in 2016 with a new, inviting space for dining and enjoying some “craic” (gossip) at the bar. “We make you feel like you're coming to a friend's house for a beer,” said O'Brien. The restaurant serves house-made food, with an emphasis on authentic Irish fare, including shepherd's pie, bangers and mash, Irish fish and chips, and the Dubliner and Belfast Burger. It also serves a full Irish breakfast. On March 17, the restaurant will be hosting a St. Patrick's Day extravaganza featuring free T-shirts, necklaces, hats, and cozies.

O'Brien traces his roots to Tipperary, Ireland. “I was born and raised in the old country and moved here in 2009. I'm extremely proud of my Irish heritage,” he said. “I appreciate Ireland's natural beauty, the music, the craic, and its rich history. I love being able share Irish culture and cuisine through O'Briens. Slainte!”

To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, O'Brien offers his recipe for shepherd's pie below. “It's a traditional Irish comfort meal bursting with flavor and a staple in every Irish household. It's easy to recreate and even tastes better the next day,” he said. “The recipe has been passed down from my family for generations. My grandmother made this every Sunday, and we would spend the afternoon together.”

O'Brien had some fun with an Irish-themed Q&A.

Guinness or Budweiser?
Guinness 100%!

How do you celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

We celebrate down the pub, with friends and family.

Favorite Irish quote?

Ireland would be a great country if you could put a roof on it.

Most popular Irish food request at your restaurant?

Shepherd's pie or corned beef and cabbage

Do you like the color green?
Love the color green.

Most memorable St. Patrick's Day memory?

2010 is my most memorable Saint Patrick's. Our first year open, the pub was full, and everyone had an amazing day. ■

Shepherd's Pie | Serving size: 6

Meat filling ingredients:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 cup chopped yellow onion
1 lb. ground beef (or ground lamb)
2 teaspoons dried parsley leaves
1 teaspoon dried rosemary leaves
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 Tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup beef broth
1 cup frozen mixed peas & carrots

Potato topping ingredients:

1 ½ - 2 lb. russet potatoes (about 2 large potatoes peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes)
8 Tablespoons unsalted butter
1/3 cup half & half
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
3/4 cup cheddar cheese

Directions

- Add oil to a large skillet and place it over medium-high heat for 2 minutes.
- Add the onions. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Add the ground beef, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon.
- Add the parsley, rosemary, thyme, salt, and pepper; stir well.
- Cook for 6-8 minutes, until

the meat is browned, stirring occasionally.

- Add the Worcestershire sauce and garlic. Stir to combine. Cook for 1 minute.

- Add the flour and tomato paste; stir until well incorporated and no clumps of tomato paste remain.

- Add the broth, frozen peas, and carrots. Bring the liquid to a boil then reduce to simmer. Simmer for 5 minutes; stir occasionally.

- Set the meat mixture aside. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

- **Make the potato filling.** Place the potatoes in a large pot; cover with water. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer and cook until potatoes are fork tender, 10-15 minutes.

- Drain the potatoes in a colander; return them to the hot pot. Let the potatoes rest for 1 minute to evaporate any remaining liquid.

- Add butter, half & half, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Mash the potatoes and stir until all the ingredients are mixed together.

Assemble the casserole:

- Pour the meat mixture into a 9x9 (or 7x11)-inch baking dish. Spread it out into an even layer.

- Spoon the mashed potatoes on top of the meat, carefully spreading into an even layer.

- Top with cheddar cheese. Bake for 20 minutes; let rest for 20 minutes before serving. ■

Local bagpiper marches on

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of George Cohen

George Cohen has been playing the bagpipes over 20 years.

George Cohen may be retired, but he could start a second career as a bagpiper. After all, he's been playing the great Highland bagpipe for over 20 years.

“I love playing it. I can't believe people pay me for doing what I love to do,” said Cohen, a retired gastroenterologist in Ridgefield and Newtown and a 48-year Redding resident. “I love the sound of bagpipe music.”

Cohen, whose father was Jewish, traces his interest in Ireland to his maternal grandfather, Joseph Patrick (Paddy) White, who was a big Hibernian and owned Paddy's Clam House, a well-known seafood restaurant in New York “where I grew up,” Cohen said.

However, it wasn't until Cohen was around 50 years old and one of his patients mentioned that he was a member of the Celtic Cross Pipe & Drums of Danbury that he took up the bagpipes himself.

“It's something I've always wanted to do,” Cohen said. Soon after, he became a member of the group that shares a love of Celtic music and culture. “I began playing the chanter (the wood part of the instrument with the finger holes that's attached to the bag) and learned the fingering and some of the tunes and embellishments,” he explained. “For a year I was instructed by the pipe major of the band, then I took private lessons for about 20 years.”

Cohen's repertoire includes traditional Irish and Scottish tunes, including airs, marches, strathspeys, jigs, hornpipes, and reels. “The songs depend on the occasion that inspires a certain sentiment or feeling that people easily warm to. When people hear ‘Amazing Grace’ it creates an emotional experience,” he said.

At the height of his playing, Cohen was a member of the house band for the Ancient Order of Hibernians and performed in about 40 parades, concerts, or other events throughout the year. “I practiced every day, much to the dismay of some of my neighbors,” he laughed. Cohen also played at local venues, and at weddings, funerals, and parties, along with competing as a soloist in regional competitions. “I didn't compete to

win. I competed to learn the tunes and hone my skills.”

Due to the pandemic and recent health problems which affected his hands and feet, Cohen resigned from the band and didn't play for the past four years – but has since resumed. “I'm glad I'm getting back into it,” he said. He still meets weekly with fellow musicians. “I get together with very good pipers and we sit around a dining room table and we play just with the chanter. We play fairly challenging competition tunes. It's rewarding for all of us.”

Now Cohen's son is following in his father's footsteps. “He wanted to learn, and he sits in on our Wednesday night session,” said Cohen. “I'm happy.”

Especially around St. Patrick's Day, Cohen recalls his visits to Dublin with his wife, Jinny. “It's a beautiful city. The pubs are excellent,” he said, bringing to mind the sometimes-rowdy events he's played at Connecticut bars. “I want people to have a good time. People really like to hear the bagpipes – a little bit of piping goes a long way!”

You can catch Cohen's bagpipe playing on Thursday, March 16 at the St. Patrick's Day Concert and Tea at the Heritage Center at 10:30 a.m. On Friday, March 17, he will be performing throughout the day in Bethel at Broken Symmetry Gastro Brewery, Putnam House Restaurant, and Edison Kitchen. ■

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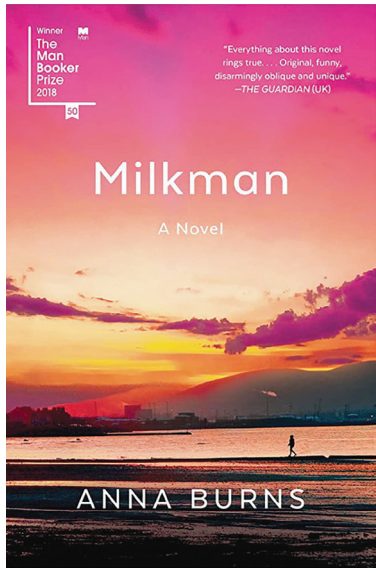
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BOOK REVIEW

Milkman

By Anna Burns

360 p.p. Graywolf Press \$16.00



Milkman by Anna Burns was one of the last books my New York City-based book club read before Covid-19 shut down the world. Shortly after we had cozied ourselves up in a friend's Brooklyn living room to discuss this compelling, anxious, and clever novel, we found ourselves in our own strange, new isolating reality.

Revisiting this book on the third anniversary of the pandemic shutdowns was poignant for me personally, but also added new dimensions to the brilliance of Burns's creation. Set in Northern Ireland during the The Troubles, *Milkman* is a near-stream-of-consciousness account of a young woman being stalked by an older, married para-military officer and the impacts that the constant threat of conflict can have on a community.

Burns chooses to leave most of

the characters – and even the setting – unnamed. She gives universality to a personal account (Burns has said the novel draws in many ways from her childhood in Belfast); *Milkman* could be set in any city, anywhere, happening to anyone. The possibility of freedom lost, of relationships marred by doubt and uncertainty, of power shifting according to unspoken rules, is not confined to this story, and Burns masterfully communicates this through her choice of form.

Everything is political in *Milkman* – who someone dates, how someone reads, what cars someone likes. Choices – mundane and significant alike – are politicized into identities with real consequences. The parallels to our world today are frighteningly easy to draw.

The power – and risk – of womanhood is also a recurrent theme in *Milkman*. In a month when we celebrate remarkable women throughout history, this book reminds us that even “ordinary” women have extraordinary power.

The undercurrents of violence, unbalanced power dynamics, and fear permeate the novel, yet the book remarkably remains an enjoyable read. The narrator's guidance of the reader through her world remains witty, and matter-of-fact amidst the disturbing realities she recounts. No matter the setting, *Milkman* reminds us, life goes on. ■

Review by Jessie Wright

How to ace an interview | Continued from page 7

common questions online.

Prepare for Interview Day:

When interview day arrives, dress appropriately (nothing too revealing, ripped, or wrinkled), arrive at least five to ten minutes early, and shut off your cell phone. Remember to be personable, friendly, and enthusiastic about wanting the job. And relax; it's normal to be nervous. Take a deep breath, and remember you're prepared.

Know How to Start and End an Interview.

Greet your interviewer warmly and with a smile. (“Hello, Mr. Jacobs, it's nice to meet you. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.”) At the end, thank the interviewer and make sure to say you enjoyed the experience. (“Thanks for taking the time to meet with me, Mr. Jacobs. I really enjoyed talking with you.”) Saying you enjoyed the experience is important; it helps leave the interviewer with a positive impression.

Use Good Body Language.

Show the interviewer you're interested with good body language: sit up straight; look the interviewer in the eye; don't fidget, twirl your hair, or yawn; and have good energy. “Good body language helps indicate you want the job,” said Blick.

Ask Questions.

Create several questions you can ask that aren't easily answered

by the website. Blick said, “Ask questions about the position, your role, the work that you'll do. The questions should indicate you know something about the organization.” He suggested to inquire about the pay for the position later in the hiring process.

Send a Thank You Note.

E-mail a thank you note right away. The tone should be positive and appreciative but not too casual. Make sure to correctly spell your interviewer's name and title; double-check if you're not sure

Some Final Tips:

Blick explained that he likes to see teens call about the job themselves rather than having their parents call for them. “We prefer to deal with the person who's going to be our employee,” Blick says. He added, “A follow-up phone call by the student after a couple of weeks is appropriate.”

If you know your strengths, do your research, use positive body language, and have examples to tell, you're on your way to feeling comfortable and confident and having a successful interview. ■

Sharon Epstein owns *First Impressions College Consulting in Redding, where she specializes in college application essay writing and teaching interview skills to teens and young adults. Learn more at firstimpressionscollegeconsulting.com or her blog at ApplyingToCollege.org*

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

Last Thursday, I had the pleasure of experiencing the return of Mark Twain Library's Hermes Art Series with a bluegrass concert featuring Compton & Newberry. Events in the Hermes program series showcase the artistic spirit that is so integral to the Redding community. In the past, the Library has hosted Flamenco dance, puppetry, bebop music, and more. So, it was such a treat to witness the return of this series after a pandemic-im-

posed hiatus.

Because we had over one hundred people register for the program, we moved the concert downstairs to our main reading room in order to accommodate more guests. This added to the fun, because our regular library users were treated to a surprise bluegrass concert. I heard one person who had come in to use our mobile printing service on the phone saying, “Yeah, I'm at the library now.

I'll be a little late - there's a bluegrass concert happening here!”

I am grateful to our Hermes Art Series Advisory Committee for using their connections to book Compton & Newberry for an evening concert here. We are so excited about the return of this popular series! ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library.

Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

As I think I have mentioned before in this column, once I discover an author I love – some somewhat obscure, some wildly popular, some old, some new – I usually end up reading everything they have written. One of those lesser-known authors is Jeffrey Lent.

Lent was born in Vermont and grew up in Western New York. He has a somewhat brooding style that immediately takes a hold. He

also spent time living in North Carolina; his first book begins there and ends up in Vermont. After I stumbled upon his first novel, *In the Fall*, published in 2000, it rapidly moved into my top ten favorite novels ever. Dealing with the past, tensions of race, the crushing weight of guilt, and the intensity of forbidden love, it spans three generations from the end of the Civil War through Prohibition. This expertly plotted first novel

introduced a very ambitious and talented writer.

Lost Nation followed in 2002, then *A Peculiar Grace*, *After You've Gone* and most recently, *A Slant of Light*. With themes encompassing family-fracturing secrets, the healing power of love and art, double murders, and old loyalties, all of Lent's atmospheric and beautifully written novels deserve a read. ■

Library's Hermes Arts Series returns

By Lisa Goldstein



Photo by Lisa Goldstein

Mike Compton (left) and Joe Newberry (right) perform as part of the Allen and Helen Hermes Art Series on March 9.

In contrast to the hushed whispers commonly heard amidst the book stacks during the day, the Mark Twain Library rang with the rhythms of bluegrass on Thursday night, March 9 when renowned musical duo Mike Compton and Joe Newberry played for a captivated audience. The crowd listened intently as the two wove stories in-between sets of old-time American bluegrass, strumming on a variety of string instruments that elicited quite a bit of foot tapping, rocking in seats, and ended with loud whoops and a standing ovation.

Most attendees were local to the area and came out for their love of the arts. The concert was part of the Library's Allen and Helen Hermes Arts Series, which had been on hiatus during the pandemic. Steve Brandler, who has lived in Redding for fifty years and took up the

ukulele during quarantine, was so mesmerized by the duet-singing, two-man string band that he took time to chat with them during their brief intermission. Brandler said as soon as he hears a Hermes program is scheduled, he signs up. “These Hermes Series are really top notch!”

Some ventured from more than an hour away just to hear the musical mastery and magical harmony of Compton and Newberry. Sue Vorchheimer and her daughter drove from Vernon after discovering through her Twitter connection with Newberry that they would be in Redding. “I just love people that can play. I'm in awe of it,” she said.

The Hermes Arts Series came about in 2003 as a way to offer a series of art events, from music to literature to visual arts, that would enrich the quality of life

for the community of Redding. The program began after Redding residents Allen and Helen Hermes donated their home of 50 years to the Mark Twain Library Association. Both Allen and Helen were extremely active in the community. Allen, who was a visual artist, frequently exhibited his work in the annual Mark Twain Library Art Show and Helen was one of the founders of New Pond Farm. They lived in a home on the 19-acre property on route 107 often know as “Jean's Farm” as it was once owned by Mark Twain's daughter Jean. Twain sold the property nearly 100 years earlier and used the proceeds to start the library that now bears his name. By donating their home to the Mark Twain Library Association, the couple provided the funding for the Library's enlargement and renovation in 2000. A small portion of their grant was also set aside to fund the Hermes Arts Series.

“We are overjoyed to have the Hermes Art Series back at the Library to showcase some of the art and artists that Allen and Helen Hermes wished to bring to the town of Redding,” said Library Director Erin Dummeyer. “We are honored to continue their legacy of art appreciation and grateful to the committee for their work on this series.”

Compton and Newberry were thrilled to be back as well. They first performed to a packed Mark Twain Library in June 2019 and were scheduled to return in May 2020 but had to cancel due to the pandemic. “We missed playing together,” Newberry admitted to onlookers in the midst of the first set. “We missed that energy

Continued on page 10

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THE NATURAL WORLD

Rolling out the red carpet

How to help welcome migrating species back to Redding | By Jen Wastrom

We are empty nesters here in Redding. While some non-migratory species like the black capped chickadee (nesting inside tree cavities) are still in residence, most birds have flown south for the winter.

Bird migration – one of nature’s most inspiring wonders – is instigated by hormone levels related to changes in day length, temperature, and food availability. These chemical messages trigger what results in the massive movement of birds between their breeding and wintering habitats. Twice a year, some 350 species of North American birds make these epic journeys. But human impact has put the environments necessary for successful migration in serious jeopardy.

Here in Fairfield County, a richly beneficial route called the Pollinator Pathway has recently taken hold to combat these negative impacts. The Pollinator Pathway is movement that started in Wilton and now has spread to over 200 towns in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania led by numerous local conservation organizations and volunteers to create a network of pesticide-free, native-planted private and public properties for pollinators – bees, butterflies, and birds.

Although winter is still here, consider implementing these few valuable steps this spring to welcome migratory species and pollinators back to Redding:

- leave clippings on the grass after mowing – they act as a natural fertilizer
- consider the use of organic

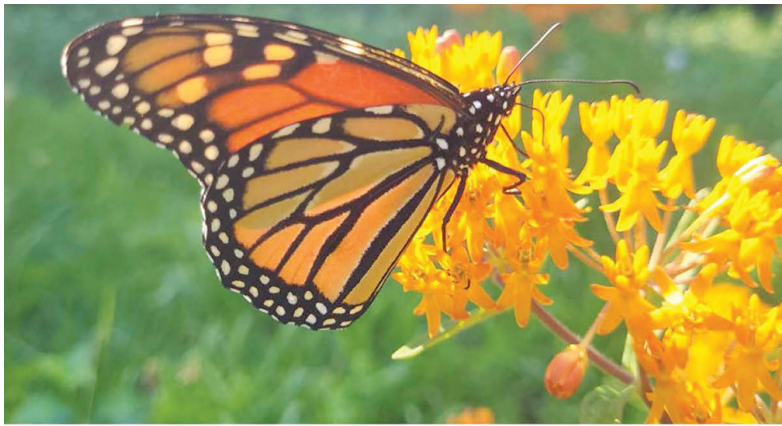


Photo from Connecticut Department of Transportation

fertilizers or none at all

- reduce your lawn area – replace some of your lawn area with native flowers, shrubs, or trees
- plant native, pollinator-friendly plants

In April, a ruby throated hummingbird, emaciated from its exhaustive journey, will appreciate the healthy red carpet you’ve prepared.

A few interesting migration facts

1. The Ruby-Throated Hummingbird – a lively summer resident at Highstead – migrates across the Gulf of Mexico’s open water. This portion of their miraculous solitary flight takes up to 20 hours to complete, with a heart rate of 1,200 beats/minute and wings that beat 53 times /second.

2. Monarch Butterflies migrate 3,000 miles to their winter roost in the mountains of Mexico. Their numbers in this area are diminishing due to winter habitat loss and the sharp decrease in milkweed plants, where monarch

butterflies lay their eggs and which monarch caterpillars rely on as their only food source.

3. The Artic Tern has the longest migration of any species, travelling the length of the Earth twice each year. Over its 30-year lifetime an Arctic Tern, occasionally spotted on the Connecticut shoreline, will fly 1.5 million miles between Greenland and Antarctica, the equivalent of three trips to the moon and back.

4. The Bobolink is a long-distance migrant, traveling over 5,000 miles south of the equator to Argentina for the winter. These songbirds arrive in Connecticut in early May, nesting in large grassy fields. While 10-20 breeding pairs have been counted recently in and around a conservation area in Redding, much of the nesting attempts in New England are destroyed by early hay harvesting.

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Photo from Connecticut Audubon Society



Photo by Jessie Wright

District applies to waive “Right to Read” requirement / Continued from page 1

of using a Science of Reading approach in literacy education, many educators and administrators from across the state have expressed concern over the new requirement, citing both the lack of time to properly research the pre-approved reading programs and the wide-ranging circumstances amongst districts and students’ needs that may not fit within a universal approach.

In November 2022, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), issued a strongly-worded letter arguing that the Connecticut State Department of Education was overstepping its legislative bounds with the new requirements.

“My concerns are really that a one-size-fits-all program hasn’t really been proven to work in education on a large scale,” said ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon in a March 9 meeting with state lawmakers at Joel Barlow High School. “One of the reasons why it doesn’t work is that there are 500,000 students in the Connecticut public schools... over 100,000 students

are considered chronically absent, 10% of the Connecticut population is considered English language learners, 36% are considered eligible for free meals, another 10% are considered eligible for some type of reduced meal, and of course the teacher shortage... there are a lot of what I call ‘independent variables’ and how do you control from a research perspective what those independent variables are?”

McKinnon noted that in Redding, currently 77% of students in Grade 3 are reading “at goal” or higher, with the goal to increase those numbers to 83% by 2026, compared with the statewide rate of approximately 50%.

“It’s hard for Easton and Redding to think about a box program, because what if our students actually decline as a result of a change when we initiate a program, when we’re already close to the ceiling?” said McKinnon.

According to Pierson Ugol, Redding currently uses a combination of three resources in its K-3 reading instruction:

Units of Study from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project; Heggerty; and a reading program called Foundations.

“The complement of those three programs together, we believe satisfies the requirement,” explained Pierson Ugol. “That doesn’t mean that we don’t see some weaknesses in what we’re currently doing, and we certainly always want to better our instructional approach to support the development of literacy in young students.”

Pierson Ugol noted that many of the other schools in lower Fairfield County also use a similar combination approach, and most have also applied for a waiver. Pierson Ugol prepared the application for Easton School District in addition to Redding, both of which were approximately 100 pages.

“I am tremendously grateful for the thoughtful and committed work of our elementary literacy specialists, both here in Redding and also in Easton,” she said during a recent meeting of Redding’s Board of Education. “It did give us an opportunity to

really look very carefully at our resources and view them against sort of the state expectations and more clearly identify where we could improve our practice.”

If a waiver is granted, Redding would not be required to select one of the state pre-approved reading programs for next school year. That doesn’t mean, however, that the district wouldn’t consider switching at some point to a comprehensive program.

“We’ll continue to do that research, and the hope is that the State will indeed grant us our waiver, which will give us the flexibility and gift of time to do that good work and then ultimately make a decision,” said Pierson Ugol.

“A benefit of having a comprehensive, core program, is that it takes some of the guess work out of the planning that our teachers need to do,” she continued. “But we also want our kids to experience real books – real books in the real world are not in a bound textbook with questions in the margin. There is a need to also have the students

experience real world literature, so that’s one of the things we’re looking for as well.”

Pierson Ugol stressed that she believes any change in this area should be deliberate, and not made in haste.

“I’m always planning through the lens of Pre-K through 12 – so you don’t want to make a disruptive, important decision for just a small segment of that student population, because you don’t want the students having to re-learn how to be at school. So it’s really important that we see how this fits in and if need to make further changes, then we plan that over several years.”

For now, the district will wait to hear about the status of its waiver application, though the timeline for decision-making is unclear.

“We have not been given any guidance regarding the reviewers, the timeline, the feedback, or whether it will be a back-and-forth process... or whether it will be a simple ‘accepted’ or ‘not accepted’,” Pierson Ugol said. ■

Library’s Hermes Arts Series returns / Continued from page 9

between you and us.” That energy was clear in the smiles and laughter that erupted from the crowd throughout the evening.

“They were a natural choice to be our first program back from the Covid hiatus,” said Library Adult Program Coordinator Elaine Sanders. “And, since they had a New England tour planned, the timing was perfect.”

The Hermes Arts Series Executive Committee and Advisory Board of local residents who are active in the arts recommend artists and events. Compton and Newberry discovered Redding from friend and colleague, soundman Fred Newman, who is part of that Advisory Board. The duo met roughly fourteen years ago and found a musical chemistry immediately. “It was fun from the beginning and when that happens you want to do it again and again,” said Newberry. They have played all over the country and internationally in both

small venues and large coliseums. They both called the Mark Twain Library one of their favorite spots due to its historical and intimate setting, where “people can really see what we’re doing.”

Since its inception, the Hermes Arts Series has produced more than 40 programs including afternoon workshops and evening performances on everything from improvisational acting to puppetry, mask-making to drumming, and more recently, a Woodstock Anniversary tribute, a Sesame Street Anniversary Panel, and a Kurdish National Dream lecture. In the past, the Hermes Arts Series featured three to four programs each year, which the Library intends to continue going forward. ■





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ARTS

Monday, Jan. 9 - Friday, Mar. 24
Easton Arts Council Winter Celebration of the Arts + Member Art Show
Check eastonlibrary.org for open hours.
Works by 50 artists and photographers from Easton and neighboring towns. Contact Elizabeth Katz at katz.elizabethi@gmail.com with questions.
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Saturday, Mar. 18
CMEA Western Region Middle School Festival
2:00 p.m. – Orchestra and Concert Band
4:00 p.m. – Jazz Ensemble and Choir
Wilton High School
395 Danbury Road
Wilton
cmea.org
\$

Thursday, Mar. 23
Easton, Redding, and Region 9 School Districts Concert
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Carpooling is encouraged
Joel Barlow High School
Lower Gym
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Tuesday, Mar. 28
Comedy Night in the Backspace
6:30 p.m. Doors open
7:00 p.m. Show
Nod Hill Brewery
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
nodhillbrewery.com
\$, R

CHILDREN, TEENS

Saturday, Mar. 18
STEM at New Pond Farm (Grades 1-4)
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Monday, Mar. 20
Lego Building and Snacks! (Grades K-4)
4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
After school snacks and Legos
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Saturday, Mar. 25
RES PTA International Festival
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Celebrate culture and traditions from around the world, with entertainment, crafts, food trucks, and more.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
E-mail questions to respta4kids@gmail.com

Monday, Mar. 27

Pirate Party! (Ages 4-6)
3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Pirate crafts, stories, snacks, and cartoons.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

HOLIDAY

Thursday, Mar. 16
St. Patrick's Day Concert and Tea
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
10:30 a.m. Bagpipe performance
Irish treats, bagpipe music, and tea. Bring your own cup and saucer.
Register by emailing mpilato@townofreddingct.org or 203-938-9725
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org
R

Sunday, Mar. 19
Greater Danbury St. Patrick's Day Parade
2:00 p.m.
Main Street to Lake Avenue
Danbury
gdicc.org

Saturday, Mar. 25
Easter Egg Hunt in the 25Y Pool
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Wilton Family YMCA
404 Danbury Road
Wilton
wiltonymca.org
R

Tuesday, March 28
Easter Egg Trees
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Decorate hand-blown eggs and create an Easter tree.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Friday, Mar. 31
Free Flashlight Egg Hunt (Grades 3 - 5)
8:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Arrive by 7:45 to check in
A twist on the traditional egg hunt by Ridgefield Parks & Recreation
Recreation Center Fields
195 Danbury Road
Ridgefield
ridgefieldparksandrec.org
R

Saturday, Apr. 1
Free Annual Egg Scramble
11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Children will collect eggs, meet the Easter Bunny, and enjoy springtime in the park.
Co-sponsored by Ridgefield Parks & Recreation and the Ridgefield Rotary Club.
Ballard Park
485 Main Street
Ridgefield
ridgefieldparksandrec.org

NATURE

Thursday, Mar. 16
Nature Talks with The Nature Conservancy: Oceans, Our Global Watchdog
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Grace Farms
365 Lukes Wood Road
New Canaan
gracefarms.org
R

Thursday, Mar. 16
Planning the Perfect Vegetable Garden with Homefront Farmers
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
In-person and Zoom
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Saturday, Mar. 18
Gardening Basics: Planting Cold Weather Crops
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Drop-in program
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org

Saturday, Mar. 18
Watching for Woodcocks at Bennett's Pond State Park
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Join Woodcock Nature Center and the Ridgefield Conservation Commission for an evening observing the American Woodcock.
Bennett's Pond State Park
550-695 Bennetts Farm Road
Ridgefield
Woodcocknaturecenter.org

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

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

Calvary Independent Baptist Church
Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.
Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.
Nursery provided for all services
711 Redding Road
cibcredding.org

Christ Church, Episcopal
Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
184 Cross Highway
christchurchredding.org

First Church of Christ, Congregational
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
25 Cross Highway
firstchurchredding.org

Long Ridge United Methodist
Sundays at 11:30 a.m.
201 Long Ridge Road
Danbury
longridgeumc.com

Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart) and 5:30 p.m. (St. Patrick)
Sundays: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (St. Patrick); 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (Sacred Heart); 12:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart - Latin)
Weekdays: 8:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays (St. Patrick); 8:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays (Sacred Heart); 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays (Sacred Heart – Latin)
Eucharistic Adoration: 7:00 p.m. on Mondays (Sacred Heart); 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays (St. Patrick)
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
30 Church Street
St. Patrick Catholic Church
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

Temple B'nai Chaim
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.
82 Portland Avenue
Wilton
templebnaichaim.org

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, Mar. 23
A Thriller Author's Guide to Getting Published
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Library / Maria Parloa Community Room
189 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
bethellibrary.org
R

Saturday, Mar. 25
48th Annual RVNAhealth Wellness Fair
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Community event providing health screenings, expertise, and information.
East Ridge Middle School
10 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield
rvnahealth.org

Wednesday, Mar. 29
5th Annual Speak Up
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Hosted by the League of Women Voters of Redding, this is an open community forum for key leaders to answer questions from community members.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
lww.org/local-leagues/lww-redding

Thursday, Mar. 30
Amazing CT Tales - A Podcaster's Journey
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Learn from Mike Allen, storyteller and former journalist, about his decision to start a podcast on Connecticut history.
In-person and Zoom
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

MEETINGS

Thursday, Mar. 16
Board of Assessment Appeals
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Mar. 16
Region 9 Board of Education Budget Workshop
7:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Thursday, Mar. 16
Democratic Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Mar. 20
Board of Finance Public Hearing on Budget
7:30 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Mar. 21
Region 9 Board of Education
7:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike
er9.org

Tuesday, Mar. 21
Zoning Board of Appeals
7:00 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Mar. 21
Conservation Commission
7:30 p.m.
Old Town House
23 Cross Highway
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Mar. 22
Region 9 Board of Education Curriculum Committee
1:30 p.m.
Zoom
er9.org

Thursday, Mar. 23
West Redding Fire District Commissioners Meeting
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Mar. 27
Board of Finance
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room and Zoom (Hybrid)
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Mar. 28
Planning Commission
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Mar. 29
League of Women Voters 5th Annual Speak Up
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

Refer to townofreddingct.org for up-to-date location and meeting information.

This Week's Featured Events

Board of Finance Public Hearing on Budget
Monday, Mar. 20
7:30 p.m.
Opportunity to discuss proposed 2023-2024 budgets.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

RES PTA Interational Festival
Saturday, Mar. 25
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Celebrate different cultures and traditions around the world with crafts, games, and food.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
Questions e-mail respta4kids@gmail.com

5th Annual Speak Up
Wednesday, Mar. 29
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
An open forum for leaders to answer questions from community members hosted by the League of Women Voters of Redding.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
townofreddingct.org

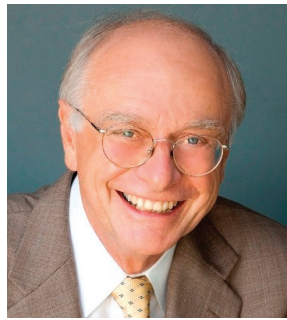
Want to feature an upcoming event?
E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.



COLDWELL BANKER REALTY



Mike Anderson
203.770.3349



Jack Baldaserini
203.788.4040



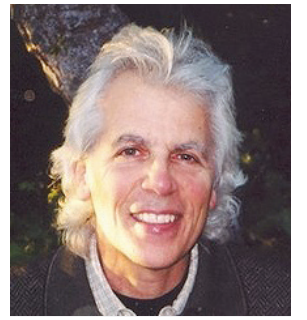
Peri Bartro
203.240.5919



Barbara Baughman
203.241.9444



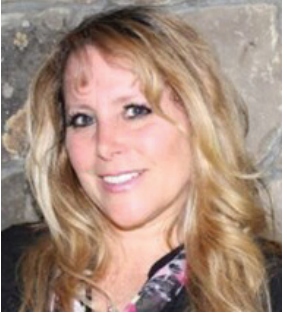
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203.313.3110



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Carol Hanlon
203.240.1233



George Hanlon
203.240.1234

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

It takes more than luck to buy or sell a home. Coldwell Banker Realty Ridgefield and Redding offices and staff wish you a Happy St. Patrick's Day.



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Denise Taylor
860.977.3699



Terri Tournas
203.561.5893



Adrian Voss
203.241.7957

Call Mary to discuss your mortgage options.

Applicant subject to credit and underwriting approval (2022102-1745808)
Mary Dent NMLS ID: 260216 | CT - LO-260216 | GRA NMLS ID #1598647 (Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) | CT - Lic # MCL-1598647

Mary Dent
VP of Mortgage Lending
C: (203) 715-8584 grarate.com/MaryDent
O: (203) 974-1733 Mary.Dent@grarate.com
230 Greenwood Ave, #1A, Bethel, CT 06801

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