# REDDING SENTINEL

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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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\$3

# Board of Education looks to modernize spaces at RES and JRMS

By Jessie Wright

As part of its 2023-24 capital funding request, the Redding Board of Education hopes to move forward with plans to modernize the layouts and furnishings of a few key spaces at both Redding Elementary School (RES) and John Read Middle School (JRMS).

After sending out a request for proposals in December 2022, the Board engaged Tecton Architects, an architecture, design, and master planning firm with offices in Connecticut and Rhode Island, to consult on the project. The spaces to be modernized include the Community Room and Library at John Read Middle School and the kindergarten wing and Grade 1-2 wing at Redding Elementary School.

A team from Tecton Architects met with district administrators, staff, and teachers earlier this year on February 3 to learn more about the spaces and examine what key improvements might looks like.

"Tecton had a very productive meeting," reported ER9 Superintendent Dr. Jason McKinnon at the Board of Education meeting on March 7. "They walked the site, they had conversations, they asked questions, and the school-based teams were able to provide some feedback on what it was like living in that space and what the future could look like."

Some of the themes and priorities that factored into the plan for improvements included updated storage solutions, additions of and access to small-group instruction and collaborative spaces, furniture that is flexible to configure, and soundproofing and safety.

After an additional meeting with administrators on February 24, Tecton provided a proposal for each of the spaces, which included new furniture, new storage setups, and in some cases, reconfiguring existing spaces with new doors and walls.

## Improvements at John Read Middle School

The Community Room at John Read Middle School would receive new, updated furniture, including chairs and tables with wheels. These would allow more flexible use of the space and help to facilitate collaborative groups and small group instruction. The chairs are also easily stacked.

The architects noted that overall, the Library at JRMS is in very good shape. Some new, modern furniture has been proposed which will invite students to comfortably read and hang out in the space, and

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Photo by Dana Taylor

The forsythia in bloom near Redding Community Center herald the beginning of spring. If you have a photo you'd like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

# Finance board approves capital projects

By Rocco Valluzzo

After reviewing the proposed budgets of three Town boards and commissions, the Redding Board of Finance approved several of the proposed capital projects at its meeting on Monday, April 3. All are items are to be voted on at a special town meeting.

The financiers approved a \$332,000 request from the unassigned fund balance for the Board of Selectmen for work to be done on the upper and lower ends of Sherman Turnpike. This project is part of a multi-year road plan, which also includes improvements to Umpawaug Road and the Redding Community Center Parking lot, according to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton.

"I would not want to wait on Sherman Turnpike; that has to be done," said Pemberton. "It is absolutely essential to do that road."

She added that no changes are proposed for the scenic road. The dirt section would remain unpaved

but brought into better condition by regrading.

As part of the modernization plan at Redding Elementary School, the financiers approved \$304,000 from the capital non-recurring project fund for the kindergarten and first and second grade wings of the building. The work would be done over the summer in time for the next academic year.

Currently, the kindergarten wing has six classrooms which do not all have permanent doors and have temporary dividers between them. According to Redding Board of Education Chairman Chris Parkin, that has raised a number of concerns, such as fire safety, physical plan security, and educational impacts.

The modernization plan calls for replacing the existing temporary walls with permanent ones. In addition, the rooms that are currently storage would be used as small group instruction rooms that could be shared by each of the pairs of classrooms open into them.

The combination of cubbies, tables, and storage lockers in the hallways would be replaced with a more uniform center of furniture and expectations for storage.

In the first and second grade wing, a number of temporary spaces extend into the main hallway. Parkin noted these could be better used for a variety of things, including storage of coats, bags, and other supplies, as well small group instruction and one-on-one intervention.

"The call here is to remove all of those temporary walls and to create collaborative spaces in the middle, which would result in two main corridors going up and down a considerably wide central corridor with temporary walls on both sides," he said.

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# Redding's Big Outdoors

# What lies beneath

By Scott MacMillan



Photo by Scott MacMillan

The Hull Cemetery sits in a roadside clearing between the Redding Roadhouse and Mark Twain Library. Its mottled headstones are lined up in straight rows, which is odd for an old cemetery. In fact, these are the relocated graves of the old Burr Cemetery, whose inhabitants once rested in

the flood zone of what is now Saugatuck Reservoir. The Bridgeport Hydraulic Company moved the cemetery when it flooded the valley starting in 1939.

If you're Gen-X like me, you're probably thinking of the actor Craig T. Nelson, screaming at the top of his lungs in final scene of

Poltergeist: "You son of a bitch, you left the bodies and you only moved the headstones!"

Rest assured, the company (now Aquarion, a subsidiary of Eversource) moved the bodies. Most of them.

James Lomuscio's gem of a book Village of the Dammed ("dammed" – get it?) tells the story of the populated parts of Redding and Weston now submerged beneath 100 feet of water. The entire Weston village known as Valley Forge was lost to the reservoir, which now supplies much of Bridgeport's drinking water.

Bridgeport's drinking water.

Lomuscio's book captures the heartbreak of families who had lived there for generations, some of whose property was seized via eminent domain. It also confronts the unsettling fact that everything we now enjoy about Saugatuck Reservoir, including the unspoiled woods around the Saugatuck

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# Proposed Cross Highway tree removals reduced to 85

By Donna Christopher

Eighty-five trees should go, down from Eversource's initially proposed 124, along Town-owned land on Cross Highway, according to Redding's Tree Warden Charles Hyatt who evaluated the trees and culled the list, working with former Tree Warden Sean McNamara and Eversource arborist Sam Berg.

The welcome news for some was met with skepticism by others and dominated the discussion at the March 21 meeting of the Planning Commission as the group reviewed Eversource's request for alteration of a designated Scenic Road and considered a draft of a new Town tree ordinance.

Eversource submitted an application in December 2022 to the Town's Planning Commission to remove what the utility had identified as 124 "hazard" trees as part of the company's Resiliency Program, which aims to remove trees that could fall on or damage key electricity lines.

Hyatt, McNamara, and Berg were all in attendance at the meeting, as were First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton and the founders of the Redding Tree Conservancy, Laurie Heiss and Janice Rotchstein. Many residents of Cross Highway also attended and made comment.

"It's down to 85 trees. Those are now determined to be hazardous trees. No more clear cutting of the trees in the fall line," said Hyatt. "The trees we decided to not cut are more mature trees. I'm confident in a short time it won't look different than it does now. More sun and air is getting into those trees...all our thoughts are going towards the future keeping the scenic look of the road."

With the new tree removal list now complete, the next step is for Eversource to amend its application to reflect the new number. "We can't act on this application tonight until we see an amendment," said Planning Commission Chair Dan Barrett.

Berg said he will communicate with homeowners before he completes Eversource's application revision. Responding to a question from Planning Commission member Toby Welles, Berg said he has already spoken to 40 to 50 percent of homeowners on the road.

Each tree slated for removal will be tagged, and the public may review these and express disagreement in writing. The trees will then be reviewed again.

Hyatt and McNamara agreed that they will post the trees in an identical way. Orange ribbons stapled to the trees were mentioned. Hyatt will take photos of the trees and catalog them for posting on the Town website.

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# Editorial

You hold in your hands the 28th issue of the Redding Sentinel. In just two short weeks, we will celebrate our one-year anniversary of providing local news coverage to the residents of Redding and beyond. As we make plans to mark this occasion, there are a few ways you, as our readers, can get involved.

Write to us and let us know about your favorite story, column, or **photo** from the past year. What stuck with you? Made you laugh? Taught you something new about Redding? We love to hear what our readers look forward to seeing each Thursday.

If you know a student who likes to write or create art, encourage them to submit a piece to the Redding Sentinel Essay and Art Contest responding to the prompt, "I love Redding because..." Written pieces should be no longer than 400 words; art pieces can be scanned or photographed and sent by e-mail. Submissions are due by Friday, April 14. First place will be awarded to the top written and art pieces, and the works will all be published in our special anniversary issue.

Consider writing a Letter to the Editor. Our Letters section is always open to readers who have thoughts, feedback, questions, or proposed solutions to topics in town or on our coverage.

E-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org with your submissions. We look forward to celebrating Redding and our anniversary with you!

# Legal Notices

The Redding Zoning Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing for April 12, 2023 at 7:30 PM in person at the Town Hall Hearing Room 100 Hill Road Redding CT The purpose of the hearing is to consider the following applica-

Application #23-01Z - Proposal to amend Sections 5.6.2 and 5.12 as they relate to Accessory Residential Apartments.

All may attend the meeting and correspondence will also be accepted. The application may be viewed in the Zoning Office during regular business hours. Questions should be addressed to 203-938-8517. ■

> Matt Lecher, Chairman, Redding Zoning Commission

The Redding Zoning Board of Appeals has scheduled a public hearing via Zoom on Tuesday April 18th, 2023 at 7:00pm to review and possible vote on the following application

1. Application #04-01-23- 301 Redding Road (Map & Lot #37 & 42) Owner Scott MacMillan: Requesting a variance to build a roof that is an open roof structure with no walls over the riding ring. Redding Zoning Regulations Section 5.14.6 (c) be reduced from 100' feet to 40' feet.

> Elizabeth Williams - Chairman, Redding Zoning Board of Appeals

The Legal Voters in the Town of Redding, CT and those entitled to vote therein are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Annual Town Budget Meeting to be held in the Hearing Room of Town Hall in Redding, CT on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 1:00 P.M., for the following purpose:

1. To set the date and time for the Annual Town Budget Referendum for fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Pursuant to the provisions of CGS 7-7 amended by Public Act 81-228, the Board of Selectmen voted at its meeting duly warned and held on March 6, 2023 to remove the 2023-24 budget vote and any capital expenditure requests from the call of said meeting and send to a machine

To do any and all things legal and necessary to accomplish the above-named purpose and take any other action that may legally and properly come before the

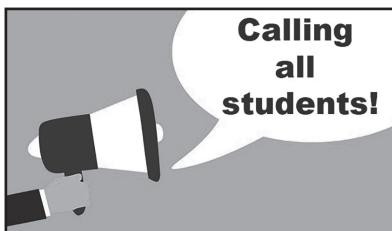
DATED at Redding, Connecticut this 6th day of April 2023. ■

> **BOARD OF SELECTMEN** First Selectwoman

Julia Pemberton

Selectwoman Margaret L. O'Donnell

> Selectman Michael Thompson



#### **Redding Sentinel Essay and Art Contest**

The Sentinel is holding a contest in honor of our first anniversary on April 20. Students are invited to submit a written piece (400 words or less), or a piece of art or photography

#### "I love Redding because..."

inspired by:

Submissions will be published in our April 20 issue, which will be mailed to all households in Redding.

> First place will be awarded to the top written piece and top art piece.

Send your essay or photographs / scans of your art submissions to

> editor@reddingsentinel.org by Friday, April 14

# **Land Trust holds Annual Meeting**

Elects new Trustees

The Redding Land Trust held its annual meeting Sunday, April 2 at the Community Center and on

Co-President Silvia Erskine reviewed the year's accomplishments, including replacement of the boardwalk at Lonetown Marsh and improvements to several of the trails in town. Co-President Gordon Loery previewed plans for this year, including a hike for National Trail Day on June 3, and the annual summer event on August 26 at Karraker Field. Treasurer Bruce Given gave a short presentation on financials. Investment income along with revenue from programs allowed the Trust to end the year in the black.

Nominating Committee Chair

Pam Elkow introduced two new Trustees, who were subsequently elected: Neil Grassi, architect, and Cole Tucker-Walton, writer and visual artist. The Board paid tribute to former Trustee Jeanne Ammermuller, who has moved out of town. Two current Trustees, Silvia Erskine and Bruce Given, were re-elected.

Lepidoperist Victor DeMasi gave an impromptu presentation about the decline of the butterfly population in Redding, and implored the Land Trust as well as those in the audience to support a bill (SB 963) in the Connecticut legislature that would strictly regulate the use of neonicotinoids in order to support pollinator populations. Many conservation commissions around Connecticut,

Redding's, supported the bill and DeMasi hopes to get Land Trusts to do so

The keynote speaker of the event was Andrew Fisk, Chief of the Bureau of Natural Resources of CT Department of Environmental Protection. Fisk gave an illustrated and informative overview of the health of the Connecticut River as seen through the status of various species of fish.

Following the presentation, the audience and Trustees mingled over refreshments.

For more information about the Redding Land Trust and to join, visit reddingctlandtrust.org

Board of Education looks to modernize spaces at RES and JRMS / continued from page 1



An image from the modernization project proposal, showing the "hodgepodge" of storage solutions currently in use at Redding Elementary School.

acoustic tiling would be added to the reading room to aid in soundproofing efforts. A small seminar room near the back of the Library, currently underutilized as a storage room, will have windows installed which look out into the rest of the Library, bringing in light to the space and encouraging its use as a small group room.

#### **Improvements at Redding Elementary School**

Changes to the kindergarten and Grade 1-2 wings at RES are more extensive than at the middle school. One of the most significant changes is the replacement of temporary walls and partitions within the kindergarten wing that currently separate the classroom areas with permanent walls and fire safe doors for each of the six rooms.

"Right now... the kindergarten wing is a secured space," explained Chris Parkin at the March 7 Board of Education meeting. "But the individual classrooms are basically within one secured space. This would create multiple secured spaces."

Small group instruction rooms would also be created from existing storage rooms currently adjacent to the classroom areas. Fire safe walls would be installed where there are now partitions, and doors would be added to access these rooms from inside the classrooms, instead of only from the main corridor.

A "hodge-podge" of storage areas and cabinetry is currently being used at RES, and McKinnon noted that Tecton paid close attention to how they might alleviate some of the clutter during their review of the spaces.

"The architects have been working with schools and teachers for a long time, and it's not foreign to them that generally if you haven't changed a space in a long time, you accumulate a lot of junk," said McKinnon.

To address the need for updated storage solutions, the plan would add or reconfigure storage units and cabinetry both in the corridors and inside the classrooms. After consultation with the teachers, out-of-use sink areas would also be removed from the classrooms, freeing up additional space for both storage and instruction.

#### **Capital funding request**

Members of the Board of Education and its facilities committee remarked on the impact these changes will make at the two schools.

"We walked these spaces on Tuesday and seeing the spaces as they are now and the design plans for the future, I think these improvements are going to be so, so beneficial to both schools," said Board of Education Member Laura Gibbons. "I'm excited about this project."

"If you were to walk RES, and just get an overall impression for the entire building, I think you would go right back to these two spaces at RES that we're going to modify," agreed Board of Education Member Mike Hoffman. "I think you'd go back there and say, 'Hey, I think we need to work on this area.' You know, the pictures are worth a thousand words.

The consultant fee for this project was \$27,550. The Board had initially considered applying for ARPA funding to cover this fee but was ultimately able to fund it from their budget, according to Parkin. The Board of Education unanimously approved a capital request of \$485,000 on March 30 to be sent to the Board of Finance for completion of the proposed updates. ■

#### Correction to the March 30, 2023 issue:

In the article "Zoners consider warehouse, turf field" article on page 3, the turf field was incorrectly identified as part of the Nest athletic facilities improvement project at Barlow. While both the turf field and Nest building are part of the enhancements that the Region 9 Board of Education has proposed go to referendum in May, the Nest refers only to the building, not the overall project. We regret this error.

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

# **Planning considers** course for Georgetown master plan | By Donna Christopher

The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee has recommended that the Planning Commission take some action on either hiring a planner to develop a master plan for Georgetown or writing it themselves, according to Planning Commission Chair Dan Barrett.

The Planning Commission discussed development of a master plan for Georgetown at its March 28 meeting. First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said she looked at several neighboring towns' master plans and found that RFP's (request for proposals) were issued from their planning and zoning commissions. "Our planning and zoning are separate, so the question of where that would originate, I want to discuss with my colleagues on the Board of Selectmen," said Pemberton.

"I feel it's important for us to have a plan for Georgetown that takes into consideration all the different things we've studied over time. We studied the old mill site, and a private developer did a master plan for the wire mill. We have looked at things in a way that wasn't unified for the whole process," Pemberton continued. "We have a sewer plan that has a capacity for Gilbert & Bennett. We have property owners in Redding that don't have sewer capacity. We have Redding owners that might want to develop their property. We should do this now because we have a sewer capacity (study) going on."

Planning Commission member Steve Gagnon said there are many considerations when looking at how to develop the neighborhood. "Have you (the Selectmen) reached out to other developers to give a concept of this area?" he asked Pemberton. "Would it be good to have a medical building here, housing here, an artist's rendering? Everyone has an idea what they want. At the same time, you can't put 500 apartments in with no school."

Pemberton noted that the Gilbert & Bennett site is already zoned for certain uses, including housing and commercial and that the master plan by a private developer that was approved back in 2007 included specifics.

"The most important thing is to have a basic set of guidelines that are large-scale that the Planning Commission puts together," said Planning Commission member Toby Welles. "We have a lot of understanding of what Redding needs."

However, Barrett noted, "We're not master planners. The Town will (need to) hire one."

Pemberton said the Town would seek public input as any plan is developed.

"The plan would be a vision of members of the community to make a decision on," she said. "It has to be reflective of the wants of the community or address the needs of the community or you've got a plan that goes on the shelf." ■



# Selectmen approve grant application

By Rocco Valluzzo



An image from Google Maps of the Cross Highway bridge over Little River.

Hoping to secure additional funds for road work in Redding, the Board of Selectmen unanimously endorsed a grant application for the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP) at its March 27 meeting.

The TRIP provides State funds to municipal governments for infrastructure improvements in rural areas of Connecticut. Funded activities may include transportation capital projects such as construction, modernization, or major repair of infrastructure.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton met with transportation planner from the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) to discuss potential uses for the grant. If secured, the funds would be used for work on the Cross Highway bridge over Little River.

Redding is one of three communities in WestCOG eligible for this grant program. The Council will choose two projects to submit.

"We are often disadvantaged in

Redding, because we are not an environmental justice community, nor are we disadvantaged," said Pemberton. "But this kind of grant can only go to a rural community, and Redding is considered 70%

Pemberton added that there was not much time for the Town to submit the application, with the deadline being March 31. WestCOG will then submit the application to the Department of Transportation in April.

"It's just the application we're talking about," said Pemberton. "It doesn't commit us to accepting the funds or anything else other than your endorsing the grant application."

Selectwoman Peg O'Donnell thanked Pemberton for putting together the application, noting it is often difficult for towns like Redding to receive state grants for projects.

"As you said, we're a small town, and we don't fit a lot of the boxes. So any money that we can garner that's gonna help us to keep our roads in better shape is a great idea," she said. "So thank you, and thank you to WestCOG for bringing that forward to us." ■



# Helping cyclists enjoy a "brake"

Eagle Scout candidate to construct tables at Bethel Supercross BMX Track

By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of Owen Bower

Bower prepares for construction this weekend of the new picnic tables at Bethel Supercross BMX Track.

Redding teen Owen Bower grew up riding his bike at the Supercross BMX Track in next-door Bethel. When the time came for Bower to develop, plan, and implement a project to earn his Eagle Scout designation, giving something back to the track was a natural decision.

Bower, a member of Redding's Boy Scout Troop 15, will spend the upcoming Easter weekend building six picnic tables at the facility, which is adjacent to Bethel's Mitchell Park on Old Hawleyville Road. This will give cycling enthusiasts and spectators a place to relax and rest - as well as to recharge for some friendly competition with other cyclists.

Several family members - including his dad, Terry, and uncle, Mike - will assist Bower on the project. Bower expects several cousins also to show up. "We have a lot of carpenters in my family," he pointed out.

Some friends and fellow scouts

will be on hand as well. "We have allotted three days to complete the project," said Bower. Logistically, he noted, the work could be finished in fewer hours, but he wanted to allow extra time in case any issues arise.

Now a junior at Henry Abbott Technical High School in Danbury, Bower's involvement in scouting began when he was in first grade. After he finishes high school, Bower plans to enroll in a college program to become a professional welder.

Terry Bower is a professional carpenter, and his son Owen learned carpentry skills while growing up. This is also not the first time he has lent his carpentry skills to community projects. Another beneficiary is the nearby Danbury Animal Welfare Society (DAWS) shelter.

"I built shelters for feral cats, which supports the animal rescue work they do at DAWS," Bower said. However, his Eagle Scout project is considerably larger in scope and began with the creation of drawings and blueprints for the six tables. Those blueprints, and the project plan, went to a district-level scouting team that reviews all Eagle Scout applications.

Once Bower received that group's thumbs-up, he embarked on another key element of the

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# BETHEL POWER EQUIPMENT

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# **S**PORTS

# Falcons softball team is young but hopes for improvement | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Freshman Natalie Wantke fields a ball during Joel Barlow High softball practice last week. A young team, the Falcons will have mostly underclassmen on their roster this season.

If the Joel Barlow High varsity softball team is going to see improvement in the 2023 season, it will need effort on the part of its younger players in particular.

A young team, the Falcons will be comprised of mostly underclassmen this season. Second-year Head Coach Mike Lanuk is hoping his players work hard every day, enjoy themselves while getting better, and come together as a team.

"We just want to make sure we're progressing and not regressing," said Lanuk, whose team opens their season this week. "Based on what we've done in the short time, already we are headed in that direction."

In addition to being a young team, the Falcons will also be a

small one, with only 15 players on their roster. While some players have already been assigned to certain positions, others will take more time in order to determine where they fit best.

While the Falcons do have a few players returning from last season, they also graduated several key people. Posting a 5-15 record, they finished sixth in the Colonial Division of the South-West Conference last year.

Barlow will miss Ava Slavinsky this season, an All-Colonial Division selection. A shortstop, she also saw time as a pitcher. The Falcons also lost centerfielder Jenna Geaney and second baseman Samantha Nilsen, both All-SWC honorable mentions. Noelle DeEssso, Sasha Feliciano, and Eva

Smith also graduated.

This year, Barlow will have just three seniors: captains Nicole Spinelli, Kelcie Petrone, and Tait English. Spinelli (All-Colonial Division) will be at first base and Petrone will see time at third base, possibly shortstop, and pitch a bit. English is an infielder as well as a potential centerfielder.

"Our captains do a great job on and off the field," said Lanuk. "They lead by example, and the rest of the team respects them for

Violet Ganim will be the lone iunior on the team this season and will have a starting role, according to Lanuk. The rest of the squad is comprised of sophomores and

Barlow's main pitcher will be sophomore Maggie Jiminez, who saw mostly time in the field last season. The remaining sophomores saw limited varsity time last year, but will now have to step up.

"They'll see more significant time than they did in the past," said Lanuk. "This year, they're going to get in a lot more. We are trying to get them ready."

A freshman who will play varsity is catcher Sophia Kelly, who will fill the void left by Smith.

Once again, Barlow will face tough competition in the SWC. Masuk and New Milford in particular will be strong, and Lanuk expects Brookfield to be the front-

"We want to improve upon last year – that means making the state tournament or making the SWCs," said Lanuk. "Of course, it would be nice to win more games than last year."

The Falcons opened their season on Monday, April 3 at home against Weston.

# New season, new coach for Falcons lacrosse

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Sophomore goalie Cole Bonanno makes a save during Joel Barlow High boys varsity lacrosse practice last week. The Falcons have some experienced seniors and juniors back from last season and will also count a number of sophomores to step up and help this year.

Along with a new season in front of it, the Joel Barlow High boys varsity lacrosse team will also have a new head coach to guide it.

Tyler Leahy will coach a young group, comprised mostly of sophomores. A number of players will step into starting roles as the season gets underway.

In terms of numbers, the Falcons are in good shape. They have 41 players in the program, which includes varsity and junior varsity (JV) teams.

An assistant coach for Barlow the last six seasons, Leahy was also the JV coach. At the varsity level, he succeeds longtime head coach John Distler, who led the team to a number of league and state titles.

Leahy inherits a team that posted a 13-7 overall record last year. Along the way, the Falcons reached the South-West Conference semifinals and the quarterfinals of the state Class M tournament.

They graduated a considerable amount of talent since then. Among the former players who will be missed is Nick Miceli. A midfielder and All-SWC First Team selection, he was Barlow's second leading scorer.

Another key loss is Zach Herman, a midfielder and All-SWC Second Team Selection. On defense, Barlow graduated Charlie Guidera (All-SWC Second Team), a long stick midfielder.

Defensemen Sebastian Hurlbut, Will Stewart (both All-SWC First Team), and Weston Keenan have also graduated. Short stick midfielder Mason Kulikowski (All-SWC First Team) has also

Barlow will have a handful of seniors this season, including captain Andrew Zaia, who Leahy expects to play a big role on defense. Fellow captain Adam Goodacre will also be on defense.

While the Falcons have some

holes to fill on defense, Leahy expects the team to be improved on attack with several players who had a lot of playing time last season. They should be strongest in the midfield.

There, Barlow has senior captain Danny Shaban (All-SWC First Team), who had 45 goals and 11 assists last season. Senior Griffin Ellis, who missed most of last season while recovering from ACL surgery, is back in the midfield as well. Charlie Falkowski was set to start in goal for Barlow this season but tore his ACL playing basketball in December.

The Falcons will also count on a few juniors, including Ian Lent. With 31 points last season, he will alternate between attack and midfield. Two defensive midfielders are juniors Cole Peterson and Dylan Taylor.

On attack is Tyler Ramirez (All-SWC second team). Barlow's leading scorer last year, he had 46 goals and 21 assists.

Taking over in goal is Cole Bonanno, who has been impressive in the pre-season according to Leahy. Joey Bonanno will be in the midfield and Luke Bonanno will split his time between the midfield and attack. Andrew Watson will start on defense.

The SWC will again have a number of competitive teams. Leahy thinks Weston, which was league and state Class S champ last year, will again be the team to

In Class M, Cheshire may be at the top. Daniel Hand, Notre Dame of West Haven, and Guilford should also be strong.

"I definitely expect us to compete for the SWC title and compete in Class M as well," said Leahy. "I think we'll get a lot better as the year goes along."

Barlow opens the season on Thursday, April 6 at home against Notre Dame of West Haven at 7:00

# Barlow baseball hopes for repeat performance | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Sophomore T.J. Baer squares up to bunt during Joel Barlow High baseball practice last week. The Falcons have many of their starting players back from last season and again hope to make a run at the state Class M championship.

As the 2023 season gets underway, the Joel Barlow High varsity baseball team will have plenty to motivate it to succeed. It should have the talent and experience as well.

The Falcons, who won the state Class M championship a year ago, will once again be working toward that goal. Head Coach Matt Griffiths is confident his team has what it takes to be successful.

"It's all about controlling what we can and playing our game the best we can every day," said Griffiths, now in his seventh season with the team. "If we can do that the rest will fall into place."

In terms of numbers, the Falcons seem to be in good shape. With about 32 players in the program, they will field varsity, junior varsity, and freshmen teams.

Many are back from last season's varsity squad, which posted a 23-4 overall record. Along the way, Barlow reached the South-West Conference semifinals and later captured its first state

Class M title in more than 50 years. The team did graduate a couple

of key players since then, however. One is right-handed pitcher Matt Scott. An All-SWC and All-State selection, the former Barlow ace is now a starter at Stanford University.

"It's always tough to lose such an exceptional player, but he gave the guys something to aspire to as players and leaders," said Griffiths. "So his impact is still felt – in that sense he's still here."

The Falcons also lost infielder Gaudio (All-Patriot Division), who is now playing at Trinity College. Infielder Diego Saez (All-Patriot Division) has also graduated.

Barlow also returns seven seniors, many with varsity experience. Griffiths expects all to contribute in some way.

"We are returning most of the team that helped us win the state championship last season, so they know exactly what it takes," said Griffiths. "There are a million different ways to practice and prepare but the actual experience of winning and the maturity and confidence that comes along with is invaluable."

In the outfield, Barlow has Will Scott (All-SWC), who is also the lead-off hitter. Charlie Basta (All-SWC Honorable Mention) will start in right field.

Barlow will also count on the leadership of first baseman Carter Jarvis and outfielder Braden Kurtz, both seeing varsity time last season. Right-handed pitcher Aaron Rodrigues had a productive off-season and has developed into a solid relief pitcher, according to Griffiths. Tyler Rowland (pitcher/ infielder) will make his varsity debut this season.

Iuzzolino (pitcher/ infielder) is recovering from knee surgery following football season and Barlow hopes to have him back before the end of the season.

Experienced juniors include Ian Nilsen (All-SWC) and Christian Nilsen. Both will start on the mound and hit in the middle of the lineup. Classmate Lauchlan Ellis will round out Barlow's starting rotation.

Also from the junior class, Asonovic (All-Patriot Lucas Division) returns at third base and will see some time on the mound as a closer as well. Cameron Forte will take over at shortstop, and Griffiths expects him to see some relief innings on the mound as

Two sophomores will also see varsity time. T.J. Baer was in center field last season as a freshman and Billy Bardani will take over at catcher.

Griffin expects a number of teams in the SWC will again be good this season and can take none lightly. Barlow must not think too far ahead and take one day at a

"We'll utilize that approach again, and prepare the best we can for the challenge ahead of us," he added, "The SWC is always a dog fight, and it's easy to get caught up in standings at any given point in the season - but it's important to keep a short memory and focus on the challenge of the day." ■

#### Helping cyclists enjoy a "brake" / continued from page 3

project: sourcing donations from businesses and others in the local community.

Bower had a bit of a head start, in that Ring's End had already donated some pressure treated lumber to the BMX track. He was able to secure additional donated lumber from the hardware-store chain.

"Renewal by Andersen donated screws and Ace Hardware donated hooks," said Bower. One important element he's adding to each table is a plastic plate imprinted with a QR code, which directs visitors to the BMX Track's website. Crit BMX Products of Cranston, R.I. donated these custom-imprinted

According to the BMX Racing website, the sport began in the late 1960's in Southern California and

mimicked motorcycle racing. The Bethel BMX Supercross Track is open from April through October. There are special BMX bikes you can purchase; you can rent these as well at the Bethel Supercross BMX Track, or a mountain bike or racer can work as well for begin-

Bower turns 18 this coming October and, as such, will age out from the Boy Scouts. This will be a bittersweet moment for him, as he has thoroughly enjoyed being a scout. His favorite activity?

"I've loved our camping trips," said Bower. "I also have enjoyed helping young Scouts in the transition to higher levels." Bowers hopes one day to return to scouting as an adult leader.

# A furry free period

#### Animal sanctuary visits JRMS

By Jessie Wright





Photos by Jessie Wright

Squeals of excitement and hushed "awwws" filled the Community Room at John Read Middle School on Tuesday, March 28 as ER9 Superintendent Jason McKinnon greeted students with a kangaroo cradled in his arms.

Two by Two Animal Haven, an animal sanctuary based in New York, had set up several animal enclosures and displays at the school that day at McKinnon's invitation. Students crowded around the bunny and chinchilla (which, along with the ferret, are the sanctuary's therapy animals),

stroking their fur and taking photos, while others gravitated towards Heather Iannucci, one of the founders of Two by Two Animal Haven, who was holding a ball python. "Which way are his scales going?" asked one student, before carefully stroking the

"It gives the children and the students a chance to see the animals that they normally wouldn't see," said Iannucci.

McKinnon, who was born in New South Wales, Australia, worked with Iannucci last school year to visit each school in ER9 with a kangaroo shortly after he was appointed Superintendent. He wanted to arrange something memorable and fun for the students at John Read Middle School again

"When it comes to education, kids remember stuff like this," said McKinnon. "This is just about students having the experience... I want students to know who their leaders are. It's just really fun for students to explore something different and be engaged and excited about coming to school." ■

#### **Odometers**

Before we start on technique, let's discuss bicycle odometers, with or without extra bells and whistles. I strongly advise something to track your distance and speed, but you may want more information, like: What was my maximum speed? What was my average speed? What time is it? How long did I ride? Where am I exactly? What's my cadence (revolutions per minute pedaling, or RPMs)? What about my heart rate and tracking my rides?

**Cycling in Redding** 

Talking technique By Matt Miller

The basic bike odometer will always tell you how far you went and how fast you are going, along with accumulated distance. The handlebar-mounted device has at least a timer which connects, nowadays without wires, to a sensor on your front wheel that notes each time the wheel goes around once. Calibrated to your wheel size, that translates into distance - so knowing the time, it can tell you speed and distance.

Most, but not all, odometers will calculate, at the end of a ride, your maximum speed and your average speed for the trip. If a clock is built in with the timer, you obviously get the time too. Knowing your pedaling cadence (RPM) helps some riders, which requires another sensor on your pedal crank. Personally, I don't use that.

The other way distance (and speed) can be calculated is if the odometer has a built in GPS, which then can also tell you where you are. Now you're getting fancy, and as you might guess, your cellular phone can do the same thing, if an appropriate application is installed. There are handlebar mounts for phones as well. With a phone app, you can also keep track of your performance not only for that ride, but for all your rides, and even compare your performance with other enthusiasts. That's not the way "I roll," but to each his

It's all your call, but I'm fine with simpler versions, because I don't really want my phone in front of me. I carry it in a pocket for obvious reasons, but I don't want to be tempted to look at it all the time. Next thing you know, you'll be checking a text or answering the phone. There's a reason why you can't use hand held devices while driving, and that logic is vastly more critical on a bike, even if you're not touching it. Here's the thing. You CANNOT look at detail on your phone and be riding safely at the same time. That's the delusion of multi-tasking, which is really having your brain go very quickly back and forth between two or more objectives. You can't fully concentrate on two things simultaneously – something has to give. So, give all this some thought before you buy that odometer.

#### **Basic riding**

Pedaling - Seems pretty straightforward, right? Before we even talk about how fast to pedal, let's get your pedaling stroke sorted. As I noted in getting fitted for your bike, your leg at the bottom of each pedal stroke should be almost, but not completely, straight. A little bend is good, but not so much that you feel cramped. And you should not be rocking back and forth. Try to make it very smooth. Sure, you're pushing down with your bent leg, but to make the stroke smooth, you are also pulling up with the other leg. That sounds a little weird, but think of each stroke like you are pawing the ground at the bottom, like a horse would paw the ground. Your maximum power is in the bottom of the pedaling cycle, between around 3:30 and 7:30 on a clock. And now you understand why I want you to wear cleats! It's

pretty hard to "pull up" on a flat pedal.

How fast should you pedal? You may have wondered why modern bikes have so many gears. It's because research has shown that your maximum efficiency on a bike has you pedaling somewhere between 60 and 90 RPM's. Serious racers go even higher. Unless I'm climbing a steep hill, I try to keep it a bit over 80. How do you do that with all the rolling hills and changing road conditions? You change gears a lot.

Riding those rolling hills and curves - For better, not for worse, most bike riding involves flats, descents, hills, and turns. It's always changing. Sounds like Redding, huh? Nothing very profound here, but each variation requires a little different handling.

Turns - Depending on your speed and the tightness of the turn, lean into a turn with your body leaning with the bike. If it's pretty tight, put your turn side foot at the top of the stroke and push down with the outside foot. This will help with balance, and in extremely tight turns, keeps that turn side pedal from hitting the ground. Ideally, like a car, brake before the turn, if you need to, and accelerate out of it. Both hands on the bike, please.

**Downhills** – Crank it if you feel comfortable and get into a low position to reduce air resistance. If your highest gear is just spinning, don't pedal, and really flatten yourself. If, on the other hand, you don't want to go too fast, it's OK to feather your brakes lightly and sit up straight.

Climbing – A mild to moderate hill is handled by using the lowest gear available to keep up your RPM's. If that won't do it, you can stand up, which I'll discuss in the next installment. Make sure you change to a lower gear BEFORE hitting the hill. You don't want to get part way up and have to change to a lower gear under pressureanticipate.

Stopping - It's important to unclip your right foot before coming to a stop and putting your foot down. It's hard to unclip from a cleat if you're pushing down hard on the pedal, which is also true going up a hill.

Hand positions - With drop style handlebars (the ones that loop under) you have at least 3 hand positions. This is also a good reason to consider this type of handlebar, because a straight bar has only one hand position, and it's nice to move around for comfort. Position 1: Hands on top, over the brakes and near the shifters. This is the basic "go to" position for comfort and safety. Position 2: Hands on top bar. This is good for a change when there is nothing challenging around. Position 3: Hands on the bottom (in the "drops"). This is best for speed with less air resistance because you're lower.

What about riding one handed? You need to be comfortable riding with one hand on the handlebars; you may want to get a drink of water from your water bottle while you're riding, not to mention needing to signal or wave. I won't discuss riding "no hands" in these articles, but it's not that hard. Your bike, believe or not, will track pretty straight, and even turn, with body control. If you don't believe me, try walking your bike down a paved driveway just holding the

If you've absorbed all this and have practiced some, you can now handle just about anything out there. In the next (and last) part of this series, we'll finish with some more advanced techniques.

Meanwhile, go outside and

#### Clue board game comes to life at First Church By Kimberly Fais





Photos courtesy of First Church of Christ, Congregational

On the evening of March 18, a volunteer cast of professional entertainers, local parents, and high school theater students fostered a sense of comedy and intergenerational camaraderie by bringing to life the board game Clue for a group of middle school sleuths. The mystery took place at the Clue Estate (the First Church of Christ), and the evening began with a dinner party briefing from The Butler, played by Youth Group Leader, Ginny Wood. With no time to waste and the criminal afoot, two dozen middle schoolers raced around the building in teams to solve the what, where, and whodunnit of a theft in an event

best described as half scavenger hunt, half live-action social deduction game.

Players questioned a dozen costumed characters found throughout the fictional estate. They could strategically delegate and even barter listening in on teams' investigations. They still had time to immerse themselves in the theme, playing along with the actors.

Everyone gathered in the final minutes of the evening to learn the culprit and celebrate their successful teamwork. The solution drew a huge cheer. "Live Clue was so much fun!" said 6th grader Kate Duggan. "I liked being part

took a while and it wasn't easy, we figured it out!" This time, it was Madame

of a team and working together to

solve the mystery. Even though it

Rose the Fortune Teller with the Medieval Silver Goblet in the Teahaus Lounge. Will another mystery befall the Clue Estate at 25 Cross Highway? Theatrical players and game players alike hope so. "It's like taking all the best things in life and combining them all to make a really fun night!" said 6th grader Scarlett Wood.

Leaders designed the game to get the kids listening to each other and working together, to introduce them to people in their community who care about them, and to help them own the whole space of the campus' largest building. "All ages need third spaces where we can exist somewhere away from home and school or work," said Kimberley Fais, the Director of Children's Ministries. "Youth Group is a third space, one we don't just provide but create together by being here. We're an open door to a kinder, more joyful, less fragmented world," she said. "That's what we're making here. That's a prayer in action."

The church continues the annual event each year as an intergenerational outreach and rite of passage. Participants see what makes the event memorable and may aspire to join the cast, bringing their own characters to life. Adults and youth gain skills transferable to other service and leadership roles and network in a supportive environment. ■

> For more information on First Church, visit firstchurchredding.org



# Remembering Redding

# The Georgetown story – its past, present, and future

Part Two: A factory town | By Brent Colley



Immigrant employees of Gilbert & Bennett outside of a box house on Portland Avenue.

Prior to the Civil War, Gilbert and Bennett had several businesses - curled hair, woven wire, and glue. Their role in glue production was a short-term venture, but it proved profitable and highlights the company's flare for innovative products that could be sold off and reconfigured into new products. Gilbert and Bennett studied how glue was dried and made, and they found that because glue was dried on cotton netting, it would stick to the cotton, making it expensive to separate and ruining the adhesive quality of the product. They resolved this problem by developing a tightly woven wire netting upon which glue could be dried. When the glue was dried on Gilbert & Bennett netting, it was separated with little difficulty and had high adhesive quality; Gilbert & Bennett had revolutionized the glue-drying process. This new process was showcased during the 1853 World's Fair, and Gilbert & Bennett's glue business division was sold off soon afterwards, because they knew there would be copycats. The tight hexagonal wire weave used to dry glue was remarketed as poultry wire, an innovation they patented.

This cycle of innovation, product protection via patents, and profitability led to woven wire becoming the focus of the business, aided by the arrival of the railroad and the telegraph which greatly increased the company's markets and expansion capabilities. Skilled labor was essential within this plan and highlights the important role the railroad and global immigration played within this timeframe. If the company had had

only local talent to pull from at this stage, the scale of growth that both Gilbert & Bennett and Georgetown experienced in the late 1800s and early 1900s probably would not have been possible. With hiring agents on the docks in New York City interviewing immigrants as they passed through immigration at Castle Gardens and later Ellis Island, the company was able to find new employees with the skills to fulfill Gilbert & Bennett's exact needs and provide immigrants with a one-way train ticket to Georgetown where they could (and did) immediately begin a new life. It proved to be the perfect recipe for a flourishing factory town, finished with a family-minded leadership team living amongst its employees.

The factory-centric mindset of all employees, from top to bottom, was a very important component of Georgetown and Gilbert & Bennett's success. The factory was the core, the heart, the culture; failure was not an option, and so when troubles arose, everyone pulled in to solve the problem together. The Civil War years are noteworthy, as they proved to be very stressful with many male residents deployed, the Southern and Western product markets for wire severed by this North and South conflict, and piles of freshly drawn wire from the newly built wire drawing factories left to wait and potentially rot. Luckily, through discussions, brainstorming, whatever you wish to call it, an employee (or perhaps a group of employees) came up with the idea to create window, door, and porch screens which

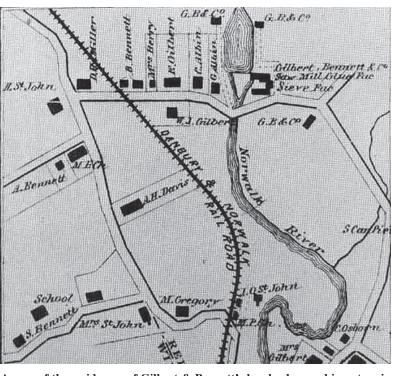


A 1913 advertisement for Gilbert & Bennett's revolutionary product, PEARL wire cloth.

would potentially replace what was being used at that time... either cheesecloth or nothing at all. The idea succeeded, and resilient innovation won over conflict. This product, which became known as Gilbert & Bennett's Pearl Cloth, was the mortar that set and secured the foundation for Gilbert & Bennett and Georgetown's future

As new investment, products, and factory expansion continued at the company, new immigrants continued to migrate to Georgetown, having been either recruited or having heard of the business from friends, family, or worldwide news. Gilbert & Bennett was internationally known by now, and for those seeking the American Dream, it was in an ideal location. It wasn't the big city, but it provided all that many immigrants dreamed of – beauty, tranquility, and safety, with village shops and craftsmen, churches, and housing. Local shops, grocery stores, butchers, fish mongers, craftsmen, and more were directly connected to the factory and if one wished to, one's pay could be applied to your accounts with these businesses.

Affordable housing within walking distance to work was a big draw to new employees and their families, as they could begin in rented rooms or duplex tenements, and should they save and work hard enough, Gilbert &



A map of the residences of Gilbert & Bennett's key leaders and investors in

Bennett would fund their mortgage at an affordable rate. Portland Avenue is the most significant example of factory housing that you can view in the present day; obviously the houses have been altered and updated, but you can see the duplexes and the larger tenement box house designs. Portland Avenue was known as the "League of Nations", because so many different immigrant groups lived there. To the best of my knowledge, the road name comes from the cement used for the foundations of several houses, Portland Cement.

As immigrants from more and more countries made their way to Georgetown, more and more churches set roots there, and before long, there were five churches of different denominations within one square mile. As I was being taught the history of Georgetown, this was how my grandfather and his friends helped me understand where the ethnic groups lived and that gave me a nice mental picture.

In the first part of this series (published March 2), I mentioned "Great Governance" as a teaser to this chapter of Georgetown's history. What I want to point out is that Gilbert & Bennett's owners, investors, managers, and employees all lived in Georgetown. They were all awakened by the same factory whistle each

morning, and heard it again every day - noon and night. That whistle was the audible cue to all: wakeup, get ready, get to work, go to lunch, return from lunch, etc. Everyone heard it, and everyone followed it. If you ignored it or were late, there was a good chance you were in big trouble with your boss or your wife.

North Main Street, Church Street, and South Church Street properties were the locations where most owners, investors, and managers lived (see the map included here). North Main Street is right next to the factory, and that is where the owners, William and Edwin Gilbert lived. David H. Miller, the director, was on the corner of North Main Street and Church Street. Key investors Aaron Davis, Hiram St. John, and Matthew Gregory lived on Church Street (west and south). Gilbert & Bennett workers always had direct access to their leaders, and that is very important to understand when we look at why Gilbert & Bennett and Georgetown became the benchmark for how to succeed in American business

In the next segment of this series... Part Three: Chicago World's Fair, Gilbert's Farm, The Miller Era. ■

> Brent Colley is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding

# Redding residents speak up!

By Susan Clark

Redding's League of Women Voters held their 5th annual Speak Up! on Wednesday, March 29 at the Community Center. About forty people attended, many of whom asked questions of the elected and appointed officials there to represent Town government. The elected officials present to answer any and all questions were First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, Board of Finance Vice-Chair Ward Mazzucco, and Planning Commission Chair Dan Barrett. Present as well were appointees Dr. Jason McKinnon, Superintendent of ER9

schools; Angelica Fontanez, Head of Social Services; Angela Caes, Park and Recreation Commission Co-Chair; Shaun Donnelly, Chief Building Official; and James Gracey, Head of Facilities.

There were several questions and comments about signage in West Redding – both about signs to direct drivers to the Business District and stop signs to manage traffic. The signs were moved during the road realignment a few years ago and questioners noted they would like them put where they will be more effective. Owners and representatives of several West Redding businesses spoke in support of measures to bring more business to the area through better signage, but to do it safely by managing speeding. First Selectwoman Pemberton responded positively to the suggestions, but also pointed out that the Town does not have total control over signage on Station

Questioners from other areas of town spoke about speeding, which they feel has gotten worse since the pandemic. Pemberton responded that the Police Department

places patrol cars and / or automatic speed cameras at locations that are made known to them.

A few people spoke about litter along our roadways, which they believe has also gotten worse since the pandemic. Pemberton responded that she is working to add at least one more clean-up day to the long-standing annual Earth Day celebration clean-up and hopes to pressure lawmakers to add a 5 or 10 cent deposit fee to nip bottles. The Town currently receives funds from the State fee of 5 cents for every nip bottle sold.

Dr. McKinnon fielded several questions about the education curriculum, as well as praise for his transparent budget and strategic approach.

One questioner asked First Selectwoman Pemberton whether there was anything she could do about train whistle noise, to which she replied simply and emphatically "no". After laughter from the audience, she explained that she's been reading noise ordinances from other towns and, at the State level, there is a carve-out for services such as trains.

Finance board approves capital projects / continued from page 1

The financiers also approved \$65,000 from the Town capital project fund for an alarm panel at John Read Middle School.

With the lifespan of the current filtration membranes at the Georgetown Sewage Treatment Plant ending soon, the financiers approved \$330,000 from the Town's debt service fund for the Water Pollution Control Commission for the purchase and installation on new membranes.

"We started to notice a decline in the performance of the mem-

branes that we have," said Commission Chair Amy Atamian. "We had an incident that required us to haul quite a bit of sludge in the neighborhood of \$80,000 between December and the beginning of March."

Although uncertain that the membranes would have to be replaced this year, she felt they would probably have to be replaced the next. The project would have to be done in warm weather due to performance issues with the plan in colder temperatures.

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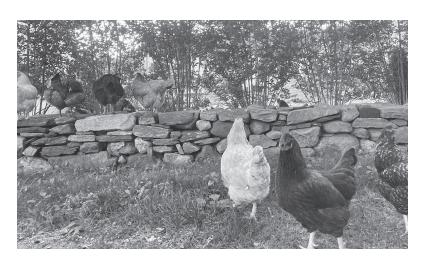
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## Chicken expert or "poultry curious"? Join in during The Great Egg Weekend at Redding Grange

By Pamela Brown





Photos by Laurie Heiss

The Great Egg Weekend, a firstever three-day egg-stravaganza organized by Redding Grange #15, will take place Friday, April 21 through Sunday, April 23. The weekend will feature egg and hen-related events and activities for chicken experts and novices alike. The weekend programming is open to the public; a \$3 donation per family is suggested for each event.

"We coined the term 'poultry curious' for people who are interested in chickens," said Laurie Heiss, Grange member and Great Egg Weekend Co-Chair. "There are a lot of backyard coops in Redding, and, particularly in the Grange group of people, there are many who are interested in agriculture and husbandry. Redding has been an agrarian society for a long time, and it stopped – and now it's coming back in a new form. The most common farm animal raising in Redding is chickens."

The weekend kicks off with a **Potluck Dinner and Egg Tasting** on Friday, April 21 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Egg tasting stations will feature exotic eggs, such as duck and turkey, and guests are encouraged to bring their own eggrelated dishes for sharing. Cheese and crackers will be served. "It's a social hour for people who are into poultry," explained Heiss. A matchmaking bulletin board will also be unveiled to help connect

people in the local "chicken community". "They can list what they have to barter or share, if they're looking for help with their coop, or want to find a mentor," Heiss continued. "A lot of this weekend is bringing newcomers into the pretty extensive network of poultry keepers in Redding."

On Saturday, April 22 from **4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.,** a panel of Grange members and experienced chicken keepers will provide attendees an egg-ucation with an A-to-Z discussion on the activity and Q&A. "We want to offer knowledge to people who are thinking about keeping chickens or who just got them and don't know a lot and want to learn more. We're going to keep it light, educational, connecting people, and getting people excited," said Grange member and Co-Chair Cecilia Staunton. "It's fun to keep chickens. They give your life meaning, and you get excited to share it." Staunton will display the set-up she uses for her new chicks.

In addition, Erica Hayden, a certified veterinary technician from Kensington Bird and Animal Hospital, will present a discussion on health-related and preventative issues related to chickens. Visitors will also receive informative handouts.

The weekend concludes with an outdoor Family Fun Day on Sunday, April 23 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Kids can participate in fun activities with prizes, including egg trivia and word find; an egg memory game; a scavenger hunt; chicken or egg bingo; egg-onspoon relay; egg roll; and egg toss. Additionally, there will be egg blowing demonstrations, displays from Redding vendors, and baby chicks on view. Representatives from Wildlife in Crisis of Weston will also offer a presentation.

"I've always learned from other people, and I can share something and help someone else be a better coop-keeper," said Heiss, who has raised chickens for over 25 years.

Redding Grange #15 is a local chapter of the National Grange, one of the oldest organizations in the United States, founded in 1867 as a coalition of farmers. "It's an agricultural fraternal society," explained Heiss, adding that it aims to promote communitybuilding and fellowship.

"This egg weekend with a focus on poultry is emblematic of who and what we are. Come and meet new people, learn a little bit, eat some good food, see some baby chicks, have fun with your kids, and hang out with cool people," she said. Staunton agrees. "It's something new and different. It's friendly and wholesome." ■

For more information, visit reddinggrange.org or e-mail community@reddinggrange.org

# **Monthly free Saturdays** foster appreciation of contemporary art at The Aldrich | By Pamela Brown

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield offers free admission to visitors and families on the third Saturday of every month to encourage a deeper understanding and enjoyment of contemporary art.

"We're always working to make the Museum as accessible as possible, and removing barriers for entry around admission helps to make The Aldrich a welcoming place for the entire community," said Cybele Maylone, Executive Director.

From 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on these Saturdays, families with children aged six and younger can participate in Story Time, a program developed in partnership with the Ridgefield Library. Preregistration is required.

"Each month, the Library selects a book that is in conversation with art on view in the Museum. Collaborating with the Library on these programs has opened the world of literature to our audiences and brought stories and storytelling into the Museum in new ways," explained Maylone.

The month of April (the free Saturday date is April 15) will explore themes of re-growth and resilience in nature and art by looking at *Last Steps*, a sculptural work by Davis Shaw and reading The Curious Garden by Peter Brown. Visitors will have the opportunity to create their own clay planters as part of the program. Maylone noted the program is often at capacity long before the event, so she encourages people to look months ahead if nothing is available in April. May's theme (May 20) will be family and travel. Visitors will explore artwork by Hangama Amiri in the galleries, read Where Butterflies Fill the Sky by Zahra Marwan, and create their own butterflies.

A one-hour Discovery Tour at 1:00 p.m. takes visitors throughout the Museum's different galleries. "They're offered to connect our visitors with the exhibitions on view through guided tours with Museum educators. The tours are designed so that families can participate together and are geared towards visitors of all ages," said Maylone. A self-guided tour is also an option. The Aldrich recently published a Discovery Guide, a free companion piece available at the front desk that encourages exploration and art making.

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, one of the oldest contemporary art museums in the U.S., serves as a leading incubator for artists at critical creative junctures, providing a collaborative platform engages and inspires.

"Young children are incredible audience contemporary art. They have rich imaginations and they're curious and creative," said Maylone. "The Aldrich - and Third Saturdays in particular - is the perfect place for visitors of all ages to discover new contemporary art." ■

For more information on Third Saturday programming, call (203) 438-4519 or visit thealdrich.org

#### Redding's Big Outdoors: What lies beneath / continued from page 1

Irail, exists because those families lost their battle with a corporate

Photos of the antediluvian valley are rare. In some places, including the old Redding Glen, along what is now Route 53, the Saugatuck seems to rush through scenic gorges. In others, the valley appears as a wide plain.

One of the best places to enjoy the woods around the reservoir is the newest portion of the Saugatuck Trail, previewed in my last column. Starting on a footbridge over Little River near the intersection of the Newtown and Sherman turnpikes, the trail heads south, hugging the eastern shore of the reservoir before turning inland. About a mile in, along a ridge, my daughter, age seven, looks down a steep slope to her left and declares, "It's a canyon!" The trail then hairpins and goes right into the canyon.

Now about the old graveyard: According to Lomuscio's book, Bridgeport Hydraulic exhumed

what remained of the remains some were more then 200 years old at that point, the coffins and bodies having returned to the soil – placed them in small boxes, and reburied them in the Hull Cemetery.

Yet the author also quotes a game warden and patrol officer who reports finding, in the woods around the reservoir, "cracked, leaning and half-buried eighteenth-century headstones from the part of Burr Cemetery above the flood line where remains had not been exhumed." So they left some of the bodies after all.

Lumuscio's book does not divulge the location of the old cemetery, but it's discoverable by overlaying a 1931 map on top of a current one. It is a short walk from the Little River footbridge. Do not try to go there, for the land now belongs to Aquarion and is clearly marked: "Private Property. No Trespassing For Any Reason." Do not pull your car over to a convenient pull-off on the side of Newtown Turnpike, enter the woods,

go to the water's edge, and look for remnants of the old cemetery beneath 80 years of decaying leaf litter. A trusted source say you won't find any.

Instead, continue down the marked trail for one of Redding's more secluded walks. It is 3.4 miles to the next trailhead, just over the Easton border on Black Rock Turnpike. The trail descends and ascends through several more canyons formed over the centuries by Saugatuck tributaries.

There are no roads, no backyards for miles. Around dusk, stop and listen, and in the gloaming - which is a horror movie word if there ever was one - the only sound is the creaking of a long dead tree leaning against a swaying hemlock, taking its time returning to the soil.

Scott MacMillan is a volunteer Trail Tender and the author of Hope Over Fate: Fazle Hasan Abed and the Science of Ending Global Poverty

# **Ground yourself with** nature-based meditation

Join a guided meditation on Wednesday, April 12 By Pamela Brown



In today's challenging world, it's important to slow down and take a moment to be calm and rest your mind and body.

"It's having a sense of peace even when there is chaos all around, kind of like being in the center of a storm," said Mary Bottero, a local meditation teacher and leader. "If you can get into this center and find that inner sanctuary, peace, and calm within yourself even when everything's brewing all around, that's something you can always carry with you."

To help people experience that sense of tranquility, Bottero, of Redding, will lead a free guided meditation on April 12 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Redding Heritage Center. Bottero is certified by the Awareness Training Institute in partnership with the University of California at Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, teaches international group online meditation classes, and is a moderator for the Compassion Course through the New York Center for Non-Violent Communication.

With a nod to Earth Day, the class will focus on nature and feeling grounded. "It felt right to do something about spring and rebirthing," said Bottero who will start with a discussion of the symbiotic relationship we

have with breath, trees, carbon dioxide, and oxygen and lead into a guided imagery meditation. It will end with an opportunity for participants to ask questions and to reflect on their experience and share it with the group.

"It's about connection, a safe place to feel held and supported with a group of like-minded people who, some are curious about meditation, and some have dabbled in it and want to learn more. It's open to anybody who needs a little peace and quiet and is trying to find stillness," she said. "I hope they feel grounded, centered, and feel connection, and feel held, not only by the Earth but being held within the group itself. I think more people need connection. We need to feel rooted and supported."

Bottero shared the importance of taking a pause and a breath when life gets stressful. "It's cultivating resilience," she said. "We're always doing instead of being. It's important to rest. This is an hour you're taking for yourself, kind of a gift to nurture and take care of yourself." ■

> For more information or to register, contact the Heritage Center at (203) 938-9725 or e-mail mpilato@townofreddingct.org



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# Business Spotlight

# Connecting kids with nature at Two Coyotes Wilderness School | By Justin Reynolds

For more than 20 years, Two Coyotes Wilderness School (TC-WS) has been helping students from infancy through high school connect to nature, their hearts, and their communities.

"We do this by teaching earthliving skills and nature-connection practices and by facilitating community-building within our programs," said Maggie Gotterer, Executive Director of TCWS, a non-profit educational organization with campuses in Newtown, West Granby, and Killingworth.

TCWS was originally founded in 2000. Gotterer, who grew up in Redding, learned about TCWS in 2017 when the Executive Director position became available.

"Having grown up in Redding, I was amazed to learn that this organization existed in my own backyard, but I'd never heard of it," Gotterer said. "Our core philosophy centers on Indigenous wisdom that reminds us that humans are part of and interconnected with nature, though modern forces have separated us from that connection."

In college, Gotterer was a student guide for Georgetown's Outdoor Education program, leading backpacking and rockclimbing trips for other students.

"I built my experience as a non-profit leader working in food justice and food policy in Bridgeport, where I moved after college, and where I have now lived for 12-plus years," said Gotterer, who also serves on the boards of Bridgeport Generation Now and Green Village Initiative.

TCWS works with young people of all ages. The school offers a Coyote Pups class for kids through the age of 5, who attend with a caregiver.

"I'm in that program with my two daughters, ages 2 and 4, and have been since they were 3 to 6 months old," Gotterer said. "It's for the adult caregiver as much as it is for the little one."



Photo by Justin Pegnataro

The school also has drop-off school-year programs, which start for 5-year-olds and continue through high school.

"Youth spend a full day outside with us each week at one of our locations," Gotterer said. "We offer 8-to-10-week seasonal classes in the fall, winter, and spring and full-year programs, which are 33

Currently, TCWS doesn't offer short-term classes.

"We excel at long-term mentoring programs where we can have a deeper impact by being part of a child's life as they grow and step into different stages of their life," Gotterer said. "Now that we've been around for a while, we have staff who started as Pups, graduated as Fire Keepers, complete our Mentors in Training and Rites of Passage programs, and then join our team. It's incredible to see what these young people bring as they work alongside other mentors who are 20, 30, 40, 50 years old but didn't have the same lived experience growing up at Two Coyotes."

Each year, more than 650 students come to TCWS from all over the state, a "wide range of towns in Connecticut," Gotterer

"Our school-year programs are supplemental education, because they are with us one day a week, and they are in a homeschool or public or private school the other four days," she said, adding TCWS has a team of four administrators and 20 to 35 mentors working in the field, depending on the season.

TCWS is committed to equity and justice. To this end, the school has a scholarship program designed to make TCWS more accessible for students facing financial hardships.

"We give away as much in scholarships as we can," Gotterer said. "Last year, it was close to \$90,000. The demand grows every year, and we do our best not to turn anyone away. We depend on donations to fund scholarships, and we also dedicate excess revenue to ensure we can make space for everyone, regardless of our fundraising."

TCWS just opened up summer camp registration for 2023, and the school will open up registration for the 2023-2024 school year this

"Summer camp is hugely popular, because so many kids can't participate in our school-year programs," Gotterer said. "But I would say our core mission is best expressed in our school-year programs." ■

> For more information, visit twocoyotes.org

# **April in Paris**

Get transported to France through MTL photo exhibit By Lisa Goldstein



Photo by Lisa Goldstein

Images that capture the magic of Paris and the dramatic beauty of Normandy's Mont Saint Michel grace the walls of the Mark Twain Library rotunda in its current photo exhibit Capturer la France, which is on display through the end of April. The photographs were taken by Bill Balch, of Meadow Ridge, who has been traveling on photo expeditions since 2017, documenting everyday people and picturesque landscapes.

Balch ventured on this particular photo sojourn in May 2022 and admitted that cityscapes might be his favorite genre, which is what made Paris the ideal spot for him to visit for a photo exposé. "I find it much more interesting to have medieval streets that you can find in Europe and make those views of old homes and old buildings or old churches come to life," he confessed. "I really like shots of bridges over still water, especially if the lights are on."

Lighting plays a big role in all of the photos Balch chose to showcase in this exhibit. He opted to take many of them at sunset, sometimes waiting long hours and often returning after hours when tourists no longer crowded the shot. He would then make even more adjustments in editing the photo to create just the right image to evoke just the right feeling for the viewer. His photos on display clearly reflect that focus on the lighting.

One of his personal favorites

was a beautiful curving street in Paris's Montmartre district where the lights had not been turned on yet, so in post edit, he "turned them on" for a more dynamic effect. When capturing the Louvre, he remembered, "there was a party going on and the lights came on around 10 o'clock, so we didn't have to turn the lights on artificially. But we did enhance it later because I really wanted it to pop."

The images on display at the Library most definitely pop. The fact that Paris jumps out at you is precisely what attracted exhibit coordinator and Redding resident June Myles to this collection of photographs. "When I learned that Bill had spent a week photographing in France, instantly, April in Paris came to mind! I love Paris, who doesn't? So I thought a 'thru the lens' vicarious trip to Paris would be perfect for the

Capturer la France will be on display through April 30, 2023, and can be viewed during the Library's regular business hours. This is one of the many featured MTL rotunda exhibits that showcase arts and culture. Balch previously showed his photos in the Library last September in an exhibit which featured images he and a fellow travel photographer friend took on safari in Africa. ■

> For more information, visit marktwainlibrary.org



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# BOOK REVIEW

#### **Plant Partners**

Science-based companion planting strategies for the vegetable garden

By Jessica Walliser

204 pages / Storey Publishing / \$24.95



Continuing the garden theme from last week's special garden issue, this week's book review is on an extremely useful guide for vegetable gardeners which was published in 2020.

If you grow vegetables, and especially if you follow organic practices, you are most likely familiar with the concept of "companion planting." It is said that if you plant carrots near tomatoes, for example, you'll increase yields and deter pests. The "three sisters" approach used by Native-Americans to grow corn, squash, and beans together to the benefit of all three is another example of companion planting.

What sets Walliser's book apart is that it is grounded in science rather than tradition and anecdote. The author is a horticulturalist and self-described science nerd who has done the hard work for us of seeking out and reviewing many modern studies about plants and how they grow. Rather than focus on just the plants, she explores and explains the ecosystems under which our veggies will thrive. Soil and fungi, in particular, are given

more attention than in any garden book I've read.

The author guides us in the use of companion planting to improve soil, deal with weeds, battle pests and diseases, and improve pollination, all with an emphasis on using our own observations and experience. Walliser writes intelligently and with precision - she's clearly an experienced gardener -- yet in a conversational tone. She has a broad and deep perspective and cites the scientific studies behind her recommendations.

Starting with soil, she builds a diverse world in the garden of your imagination. By the end of the book, you'll understand the importance of holding back on the pesticides and other killers in favor of letting nature do its work, with you as a gentle guide pushing and pulling as need be to ensure you get the produce you want while doing the most you can to build the soil and ecosystem that will support your efforts in the garden for years to come.

There's no magic in her recommendations, just reporting out on the science. Yet the findings she presents will change the way you think about your garden environment and how to make it produce well for you, and the world around you. Plant Partners is very much worth the read. I'm tempted to give you my top takeaways from the book, but I'll hold back and encourage you to read it, and learn from it, yourself.

> Review by Susan Clark

# LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

In the library world, tours are a gift economy. Hopefully I'm not divulging an industry secret when I say that librarians love giving tours of their libraries just as much as they love snooping around other's. Just ask my family, who has toured many libraries with me while we are on vacation.

Most notably, about ten years ago, I visited the Conjuring Arts Research Center's library – yes, a magic library - simply because I asked for a tour. During this tour, I got to see some of Houdini's shackles, peruse rare books and manuscripts related to magic, and learn about the services the Center offers magic researchers. Delightfully, their online catalog is called "Ask Alexander" after Alexander, the Man Who Knows, who was one of the world's most famous mentalists. Get it? Hardy har har.

Similarly, whenever someone

asks for a tour of Mark Twain Library, I do my very best to say yes. The most popular questions from visitors usually relate to Mark

"Is Stormfield the original house?" Not exactly. The original burned down in 1923, with a smaller replica built the next year in the same location.

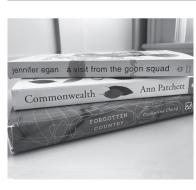
When looking at the glass case of books that Twain donated to the Library to start our collection, the question always posed is, "Were these all of the books he gave the Library?" The short answer to this is, "Probably not." When the Library first opened, even though Twain was already very famous, people did not realize he would go down in history as the quintessential American writer. His books were not handled with the precision and care that we employ with them today, and they were lent out to library users regularly. Some never returned.

"How does the Library relate to his daughter?" Twain's daughter Jean died tragically while taking a bath at their home in Stormfield on Christmas Eve. Later, Twain sold her farm and used the proceeds to fund the library building project. This is why there is a plaque outside the original building that reads, "Jean Clemens Memorial Building." What a beautiful way to honor his daughter's memory.

Our staff are used to receiving "Twainiacs" at our little outpost here on Redding Road. We have talking points ready to go for these curious Twain tourists, and if it's not too busy, we can even provide a fifty-cent tour. Next time you're around, ask at the desk. ■

> Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

# Good books for good readers By Jessie Wright



I don't know if it is the beautiful spring weather or the seemingly ubiquitous expertise of our local lepidopterist, Victor DeMasi, but I have had butterflies on my mind this week. These beautiful creatures got me thinking about the "butterfly effect", or the idea that small things can have non-linear impacts on a complex system. This concept has been a stylistic feature of some of my favorite recent reads - books which chart

fascinating, compelling stories of characters whose lives intertwine or are deeply impacted by a chance encounter, the decision of a stranger, or events that unfold long before their own time.

A Visit from the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan is an enormously enjoyable read, and the 2011 Pulitzer Prize-winner for fiction. I had great fun following the threads of how the book's thirteen stories overlap and interact. It is a vibrant, cutting look at how family, friends, colleagues, and even strangers all affect one another's lives and legacies.

Commonwealth by Ann Patchett had me at its first sentence: "The christening party took a turn when Albert Cousins arrived with gin." What follows is a sharp, moving novel that follows several members of an extended, blended

family. With a bottle of gin one day in Southern California, the stories of several generations are written and revised.

Forgotten Country by Catherine Chung examines how a country's politics and cultural norms can reverberate through the lives of its citizens and families long past the generations who emigrate. On a more micro-level, equally powerful reverberations can come from the small moments between parents and children or between siblings. This is a beautifully written book, but there are moments of true heartbreak - I wouldn't recommend taking this one on spring break. ■

#### Proposed Cross Highway tree removals reduced to 85 / Continued from page 1

the Town Clerk knows.

"You will know before we see that application again and before tree cutting happens," Barrett said. "We'll be back at this meeting. We will talk about this application before we approve it."

"Should the Planning Commission approve the application, they (residents) can still challenge a tree," added Pemberton. "I want to make sure people understand they have that right."

One of the aspects of continued dispute is the boundary of private and Town property lines.

A number of property owners on Cross Highway have challenged the accuracy of the GIS (geographic information systems) used to determine the property boundaries for Eversource's application for tree removals on Town-owned land. The GIS used on Cross Highway "has some funny property lines," said Hyatt. "I motioned to keep the walls as

doesn't feel like we should have jurisdiction over shade trees."

According to Pemberton, as a matter of policy if there's any question of the property boundary, there would be an A2 survey. "Let's say there's a debate over a tree that is a Town tree...we don't want to take down a tree on private property. I would use the property survey if there's any dispute over the trees," she said.

"What if the tree straddles?" Welles wanted to know. "If it gets into more detail, we'll discuss that at the Selectmen's meeting," Pemberton said.

Resident Cecelia Staunton requested further clarification on how property lines are determined in this process. "It sounds a little wishy washy. When is that going to be really determined? A lot of people don't have an A2 survey, and if they want to get one it's \$2,000. I think Toby brought up a good point about grey areas, trees

are all here because we are trying to save things," she said.

Pemberton said Aimee Pardee, Redding's Land Use Director, could assist in answering that. "There is a boundary map filed in the Town Clerk's office, and there should be indicators in there where the property line is. We want to use the map, not the GIS, which is a digital rendering of those original

Garner Lester, a resident on Cross Highway, said there are 17 trees on or near his property on the tree removal list and he has no idea what those trees are. "It's the fear of surprise," Lester said. "Personally, I feel a little bullied by the whole process. It would be great, but I haven't heard from anybody."

"It sounds like you will hear from Eversource," Barrett said.

Heiss noted that Cross Highway is a scenic road on public property. "I want to make sure that you

before you cut 85 down," she said.

In addition to Hyatt's analysis of the trees with McNamara and Berg, Welles offered to go on the road to review the trees as well. "If I see something I feel is in doubt, it's something I will ask about, to find out what the criteria was to make that tree selected to be taken down," he said.

An avid cyclist, Welles said he's seen sections of town with tree removals he worries could happen on Cross Highway. "I go up to the top of Taunton Hill by the Hoyt Hill Nature Preserve....and it's worth taking a look to see what an unbridled version of this program would look like. It's pretty awful, to be honest, decimation."

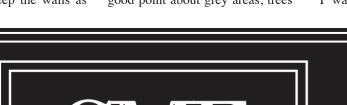
Residents wishing to challenge any of the trees identified for removal, either because of the tree's condition itself or its location, can contact Hyatt within ten days of the trees being tagged and posted. Barrett said the Commission will

Pemberton said she'll make sure our boundaries for town trees. It that straddle the property line. We wouldn't overlook any of the trees look at tree disputes on a case-bybase basis.

"Further comment is another step, superior court if there continues to be disagreement," Hyatt noted. "So, there's plenty of time to comment and if there's any opposition, we'll hear it out."

However, Hyatt did note that there are impacts to drawing the

"We've put a lot of time into it. Sam (Berg), Sean and I, we know our business. We've been trusted by the communities to make these decisions for 40 years; there's no reason not to let us do our job and get this thing past us. If we get caught up in hearings, we are going to miss our window to get these hazard trees out...the road won't be evaluated again for four to five years. If it's not a hazard now, it will be a hazard when the tree crew comes through again,"



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# THE NATURAL WORLD

# At conservation conference, some ask, "Open space for whom?"

By Cole Tucker-Walton



March 25, 2023. It was a gray, early-morning drive from Redding to Wesleyan, where the Connecticut River suddenly hooks southeast on its descent from Canada, but the Usdan University Center was bright with volunteers and exhibitors already plying their

tote bags, stickers, and mugs.

Some 550 name tags awaited attendees eager to return inperson to the Connecticut Land Conservation Conference after three years at the computer. They were welcomed by Executive Director Amy Blaymore Paterson, who pointed out that the pandemic has made conservation of open space and public lands even more important, as safety measures and relocation to the suburbs caused "an unprecedented surge in usage." Hinting at several workshops devoted to culture, race, and regional organization, she urged that beyond business as usual, conservationists must focus on "including more people along the way."

Andrew Fisk, Chief of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources, followed, acknowledging that the State depends on partnerships with smaller organizations in its conservation work. He highlighted the role of imagination in the open

space movement, imagination that decades ago pictured a more harmonious relationship with the land and created a legal tool - the conservation easement - for private landowners. At 9-something on a Saturday morning, he voiced a credo there for the taking: "Damn it, I'm gonna commit my life and time and energy to that vision."

The question of where to turn one's imagination was dramatized by the array of compelling workshops squeezed into four time slots on two pages of the conference program book. Attendees chose between recordkeeping landscape planning for mental health, between beavers and youth mentorship. Redding was represented in the offerings, too. Katie Blake of Highstead described how birds can serve as the focus for regional partnerships. Costumed as a bee, local lepidopterist Victor DeMasi seemed slightly awed by the turnout for his "Pollinators in My Backyard" workshop.

The hallways and cafeteria hummed with attendees from farflung towns and backgrounds, all energized by a shared commitment to stewarding the environment. Some were newly minted in the field. Others, like Gordon Loery, Co-President of Redding Land Trust (RLT), and John McLeran, Redding's Open Space Manager, had been to the conference many times.

Between beavers recordkeeping, trails boundaries, land trusts have plenty to do in their own back woods. But some presenters were emphatic: in 2023, stewards must expand their definition of conservation. Attendees were aware that they were mostly "white toast," as one put it, and many expressed their worry that younger generations were not materializing to continue the work. At a panel for young environmental activists, Suffield high schooler Keila Silva said conservationists should "target the popular kids," while amplifying the voices of people who have lived with environmental injustice. She spoke to the power of charismatic figures, recounting a visit to her school by famed Black environmentalist Dr. John Francis, who told students, "We are the environment." Her co-panelists agreed that conservationist organizations must seek out people who already care, and create opportunities for them to pitch in. Katharine Lange, of Mass Rivers Alliance, added some practical

advice: "Pay your interns." During a later workshop by Jessica Harrison and David Sutherland, an attendee from Kent voiced a similar concern, noting that there's effectively nowhere for his seasonal interns to live. This dilemma has caused him to see subjects like affordable housing as complementary to conservation. A municipal planning director in the audience went further, asserting that "affordable housing is conservation," since it reduces a town's footprint on the land, allows people to spend time or money on volunteering and enjoying trails, and keeps young and workingclass people invested in a region. Another attendee said that friends and colleagues from rural towns still seem surprised that people in her city feel just as connected to nature as they do.

Of course, the ceaseless flow of water profoundly links residents of both city and country. As attendee Joe Welsh, President of the Shelton Land Conservation Trust, put it, "The land doesn't know

where one town ends and another begins." But as much as panelists and attendees might have wished otherwise, a cultural divide was evident during the conference, even in casual comments. During the panel with young activists, Alex Cardoso, a high school volunteer from East Granby Land Trust, said that social media could be an important source of climate change information, if only there were more of it. Silva gently countered that her TikTok account was filled with scenes of damage and resilience from storms in Puerto Rico. Algorithmicallycurated feeds reflect the fact that environmental degradation has more direct consequences for some communities than others.

Co-panelist Alex Rodriguez, Environmental Justice Specialist for Save the Sound, said two very personal events inspired his activism: a deal made between his hometown of Bloomfield and a water bottling company in 2016, and the suffering of loved ones in the aftermath of 2017's Hurricane Maria. Without a direct link to events like these, he noted, people's attention can glide right past. He pointed out that until 2022, New Haven was ranked one of the "asthma capitals" of the country, with lower-income and communities of color affected most - a result of limited housing options and the smog from commuters and shipping trucks. Meanwhile, wetlands are healthier and second-growth forests are flourishing in towns nearby with 70 years of singlefamily zoning.

As conservationists broaden their view from protecting land in and for one town to protecting land for the benefit of a whole region, differing experiences will invariably meet. Speakers from UConn's Natural Resources Conservation Academy (NRCA) said that such meetings require cultural humility.

As an example, the facilitators asked attendees to imagine chaperoning a school hiking trip during which students of color choose to talk and listen to music while White students hike in silence. What might explain the divide?

One woman responded that if she were in charge, the whole group would be quiet, but acknowledged that a school setting with friends might call for different expectations. "To play devil's advocate," said a man who punctuated his words with soil-darkened fingers, "kids need guidance, and if I'm leading the hike, I'm the boss." Another attendee cautioned him that it might be the students' first hike, and music might make them feel safe – although "they certainly wouldn't be on their screens." (This article's author thought of a hike he had recently spent entirely on Zoom.)

Having received the perfect setup from these three attendees (all White), facilitator Dr. Laura Cisneros said, "I'm from Puerto Rico, and every week we'd go to the jungle, play music, roast a pig." This reminded another attendee of a pair of viral TikToks from August 2022 that showed at least eight CT State Police vehicles responding to complaints at Hammonasset Beach. Troopers found people at an event, sponsored by a Black-owned game business (University of Dope) and a social club for Black professionals (There's Nothing Better), simply dancing. In other words, how people act in nature is a cultural custom.

Later, when the presenters asked attendees to reflect on how often their organizations practiced cultural humility, the devil's advocate raised his hand. With the hint of a sheepish smile beneath his white beard, he said, "Well, never."

After the conference, attendees, presenters, staff, and volunteers mingled in the halls. Those manning tables gave away their last tote bags as others snacked on cheese, crackers, soda, wine, and microbrews. A young Black presenter looked at the Polish name on a young White attendee's tag and asked if she could try to pronounce it. "Sure," he smiled, and they were still laughing, stumbling over the syllables, as the attendees from Redding headed for home. ■

> Cole Tucker-Walton is a member of the Redding Land Trust Board of Trustees

# **Butterflies** in our backyards

Spring Azures | By Victor DeMasi



Photo courtesy of Connecticut Butterfly Atlas / An adult Azure

Warm days of early spring might bring a tiny, stunning, iridescent blue lepidopteran your way (that's the scientific word for butterfly), and that's an Azure butterfly.

Azures are hard to identify exact to a species group. Spring Azures look very much like their cousins, all beautiful, but they wing on a different time of year, which makes identification a cinch. Redding has probably five species of Azures, but much like

how ornithologists don't give a definite name to various warblers, we don't give a definite name to the more summery fliers. They all look the same! Lepidopterists that specialize in this group always disagree on who's who.

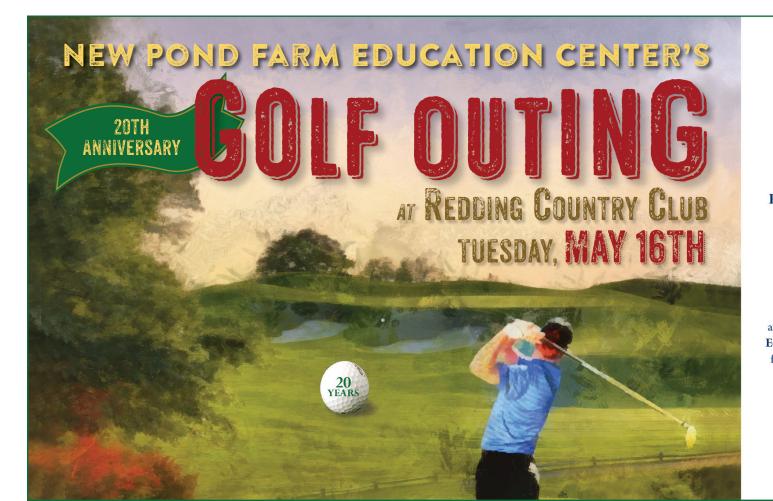
Woodland paths and forest margins are the places to look for Spring Azures, where females search for special plants to place an egg such as Dogwood or Viburnum. Males are often close

by, searching for a female to - oh you know what. Eggs placed on flowers soon hatch caterpillars, which are tended to by ants much like sheep by their shepherds.

If you see Spring Azures, send me a message at monarchvictor @gmail.com and a picture too if you can sneak in close enough. I am entering all sightings in the Peabody Museum database.

Victor DeMasi is a curatorial affiliate at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. His field work with butterflies contributed almost a thousand citations to the Connecticut **Butterfly Atlas** 







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families, and adults throughout Fairfield County. We hope to see you there!



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MEETINGS

Monday, Apr. 10

Town Hall / Hearing Room

(Subject to change to virtual

**Board of Finance** 

7:30 p.m.

or hybrid)

100 Hill Road

townofreddingct.org

#### Arts

#### Saturday, Apr. 15

**All Ages Discovery Tour** 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Guided group tour of the museum's current collections. The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum 258 Main Street Ridgefield thealdrich.org R

#### Sunday, Apr. 23

#### **MTL Open Mic: A Literary Event for Teens and Adults**

3:00 p.m. All literary genres welcome, readings limited to five minutes each. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org  $\mathbf{R}$ 

#### CHILDREN, TEENS

#### Thursdays, Apr. 6, Apr. 20 and Apr. 27

#### **Nature Explorers** Grades K-2

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Grades 3-5

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.Three-part series full of outdoor

nature adventures. New Pond Farm Education Center

101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \*waitlist only

\$, R

#### Wednesday, Apr. 12

#### **Kids Paint and Movie Party:** The Giggling Pig @ Greenwood **Features - The Super Mario Bros Edition**

Ages 4-18 10:00 a.m. – Paint class begins (children may be dropped off for the class) 12:00 p.m. – Movie begins

(parents must return for the start of movie) **Greenwood Features** 

269 Greenwood Avenue

greenwoodfeatures.com/gigglingpig \$, R

Wednesday, Apr. 19

#### **Creating a Compelling College Application (for High School**

juniors and parents) 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.Zoom Easton Public Library eastonlibrary.org R

#### Sunday, Apr. 22

#### **RES PTA Science Fair**

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Kindergarten – 4th Graders will present their science projects and inventions to kick off the S.T.E.A.M. Festival Festival is 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.Redding Elementary School 33 Lonetown Road facebook.com/RESPTA R

#### $C_{RAFTS}$

#### Thursday, Apr. 20

#### The Collective @ MTL: A **Community Pop-Up Market**

3:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.Shop small, independent vendors for unique gifts and treats. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org

#### Sunday, Apr. 30

#### **Newtown Spring Craft Fair**

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Edmond Town Hall 45 Main Street Newtown ctcraftfairconnection.com

#### $H_{\text{OLIDAY}}$

#### Friday, Apr. 7

#### FairfieldMoms 3rd Annual **Easter Egg Hunt**

Egg Hunt 1: 10 a.m. (Ages 5 and under) Egg Hunt 2: 10:45 a.m. (Ages 5 and under) Egg Hunt 3: 11:30 a.m. (Ages 10 and under) Egg Hunt 4: 12:15 p.m. (Ages 10 and under) Silverman's Farm 451 Sport Hill Road Easton eventbrite.com/e/fairfieldmomseaster-egg-hunt-2023tickets-559567620817 \*sold out \$, R

#### Saturday, Apr. 8

#### Eastern European Egg

**Decorating for Children (10+)** 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Learn a traditional Ukrainian craft and create decorations and unique gifts. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

#### Nature

#### Saturday, Apr. 8

#### **Monthly Plant Swap**

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Bring a plant, take a plant, or drop off unused seed packets. Rainy Day Paperback 81 Greenwood Avenue Bethel rainydaypaperback.com

#### Wednesday, Apr. 12

#### Spring Astronomy with the **Treworgy Planetarium**

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Recommended for ages 8 and up. Grace Farms 365 Lukes Wood Road New Canaan gracefarms.org \$, R

# WWW.MARKTWAINLIBRARY.ORG At the Redding Community Center, 37 Lonetown Road An event for the whole family! Food • LIVE Music • Silent Auction • Games • Crafts • Bouncers and more! All proceeds go to the Mark Twain Library

#### Friday, Apr. 14 or Friday, May 5

#### **Spring Migration: Birding** with Joe Bear

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org R

#### Monday, Apr. 17

#### A Therapist's Garden

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Redding Garden Club presents guest speaker Erik Keller, Master Gardener and Horticultural Therapist at Ann's Place. Light lunch and meeting to follow. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road reddinggardenclub.org \$, R

#### Friday, Apr. 21 -Sunday, Apr. 23

#### The Great Egg Weekend at Redding Grange

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Friday) - Friends of a Feather Potluck Dinner 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.(Saturday) – Expert panel and Q&A on hen keeping 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Sunday) – Family fun day All activities are free, with suggested \$3 donation per event Registrations encouraged, walk-ins welcome Redding Grange 399 Newtown Turnpike reddinggrange.org

#### Tuesday, Apr. 25

#### Wildflower Ramble & Brown **Bag Lunch**

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Raindate: April 26 New Pond Farm **Education Center** 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

#### Saturday, Apr. 29

#### **Frothy Forage**

Rain date: Sunday, Apr. 30 2-hour time slots beginning at 12:00 p.m. A hiking and beer tasting experience with activities for the whole family. Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org \$, R

#### Religious Services

# **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**

#### Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom) 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemlutheranct.org

# **Calvary Independent**

**Baptist Church** Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. 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 Maundy Thursday (with foot

washing) April 6 at 7:00 p.m. Good Friday - Stations of the

April 7 at 12:00 p.m. Good Friday - Tenebrae Style April 7 at 7:00 p.m. Easter Sunday - Holy Eucharist, Rite II

April 9 at 9:00 a.m. 184 Cross Highway christchurchredding.org

#### First Church of Christ, Congregational

# Easter Sunday, April 9

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 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

Holy Thursday – April 6 8:00 p.m. Mass (St. Patrick) to be followed by a procession of the Holy Eucharist to Mercy Hall for Eucharistic Adoration until midnight. Good Friday – April 7 10:00 a.m. Confessions (St. Patrick) 3:00 p.m. Liturgy (St. Patrick) Easter Vigil – April 8 8:00 p.m. (St. Patrick) Easter Sunday - April 9 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., and 10:30 a.m.

Mass (Sacred Heart) 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Mass (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

#### Wednesday, Apr. 12

#### **Budgeting 101 and Online Banking Workshop**

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Offered by The Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut and Newtown Savings Bank 78 Triangle Street Danbury E-mail

brailyn.rodriguez@caawc.org to register

#### Thursday, Apr. 13

#### **Racial Justice Film Series: Home** from School: The Children of Carlisle

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Easton Public Library 691 Morehouse Road Easton eastonlibrary.org

#### Saturday, Apr. 15

#### Household Hazardous Waste & **Electronic Waste Drop-Off**

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Danbury Public Works Garage 53 Newtown Road Danbury HRRA.org

#### Tuesday, Apr. 25

#### CT Author Talk: Living with a **Grieving Heart** 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

In-person Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org

#### Friday, Apr. 28

#### Alien Abduction: The Betty and **Barney Hill Story** 6:30 p.m.

Paranormal investigator Barry Pirro explores the most investigated case of alien abduction of all time. Recommended for ages 18 and up. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R

Tuesday, Apr. 11

#### Fire District #1 Meeting

7:00 p.m. Redding Ridge Firehouse 186 Black Rock Turnpike townofreddingct.org

#### Tuesday, Apr. 11

#### **Planning Commission**

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

#### Wednesday, Apr. 12

#### **Zoning Commission**

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

#### Wednesday, Apr. 12

#### **Zoning Commission Public** Hearing

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

#### Thursday, Apr. 13

#### **Redding Historic Cemetery** Committee

2:00 p.m. Town Hall 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

#### Thursday, Apr. 13

#### **Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee**

6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room Subject to change to hybrid or virtual 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

#### Thursday, Apr. 13

#### **West Redding Fire District Commissioners Meeting**

7:00 p.m. West Redding Firehouse 306 Umpawaug Road townofreddingct.org

#### Monday, Apr. 17

#### **Board of Selectmen** 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room Subject to change to hybrid or virtual 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

#### Tuesday, Apr. 18

#### **Zoning Board of Appeals** 7:00 p.m. Zoom

townofreddingct.org

#### Tuesday, Apr. 18

**Conservation Commission** 7:30 p.m. Old Town House 23 Cross Highway townofreddingct.org

#### Wednesday, Apr. 19

#### **Annual Town Budget Meeting** 1:00 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

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

# Want to feature an upcoming event?

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



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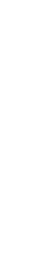
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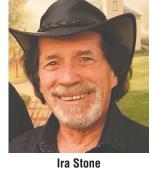
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