

Neighboring towns adopt bans on rodenticides

By Donna Christopher

Redding officials are not currently discussing an outright ban on municipal use of certain rodenticides, while neighboring towns pass or consider restrictions.

Pest control companies frequently manage local infestations using rodenticides, which are highly toxic chemical baits typically housed in secured, tamper-resistant boxes placed along exterior walls and in alleyways. Redding currently uses a combination of snap traps, repellents, and bait stations to address rodent problems in some older municipal buildings as it weighs potential impacts on wildlife.

According to the Connecticut-based international wildlife advocacy group Friends of Animals, first- and second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides are lethal, tissue-persisting poisons that disrupt the blood-clotting process, causing target rodents to suffer

Continued on page 10



Photo by Chris Racette

Three fox kits made a patriotic picture on Drummer Lane ahead of the America250 Fourth of July celebrations. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Rock ‘n Roots Festival to share music and light up the skies

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Redding Historical Society

Rock ‘n Roots 2026 Music Festival and Fireworks Show, presented by Redding Historical Society (RHS), returns for its 10th annual fundraiser on Saturday, July 18 alongside local and national America250 celebrations.

“There’s a quiet satisfaction and enthusiasm among RHS volunteers to know that the original intent to host an event to bring people together to remember our nation’s history, the 4th of July, is now in its tenth anniversary year; and

particularly, that this anniversary year falls on the 250th celebration of our nation’s founding,” said Janice Dimon, RHS President. “We look forward to this year’s event – it’s our biggest fundraiser of the year. We’re grateful to our sponsors whose donations contribute to (covering) the expenses of this event and have made it possible for RHS to undertake the second phase of preservation of the Zalmon Read Barn.”

Live music will begin on Saturday, July 18 at 43 Lonetown Road at 4:00 p.m. A fireworks display, presented by Blue Sky Fireworks who have working with the event for 10 years, begins at 9:20 p.m. Adult and student tickets for the day are available, as well as an option to pay per vehicle for the fireworks display only. No pets are allowed, and the rain date is set for July 19.

Continued on page 10

REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

The patriotic legacy of our Town Green

By Willow Bradford



Photo by Jessie Wright

For 250 years, democracy has rested on the shoulders of discourse. It is upheld by the unique voices brought from each crevice of the country to expound on the necessity of self-government, equality, and natural rights. For America’s 250th, there is no better example of discourse than a town green, and Redding’s Town Green has endured as central to the

Redding community and encouraged the intersection of conversation and environment.

On the cusp of what would be America’s first of 250 years, the Redding Town Green was a portion of the 10-acre lot where the West Militia of Redding gathered. Beginning in 1754, this group acted as protection for Redding residents under the leadership of Samuel Sanford. The company was made up of members of the Congregational society, including John Read, Sr.

After John Read, Sr.’s death in 1771, the property rights were given to Reverend Nathaniel Hunn, yet the Town Green remained a militia meeting place until 1775 when both the West and East Militia were called for the Invasion of Canada and again to march in the Battle of Long Island.

The Town Green’s next use came in 1914 when the Redding Parade Association was formed, and its trustees took ownership of four acres of the original 10-acre plot. Those four acres were used by the

Home Guard for World War I military practice until 1918 when the land was sold to the Town of Redding for \$1,000. Thus ended the use of the Town Green for the armed forces and marked the beginning of its contemporary construction.

The 1950s brought the conversion of the old district schoolhouse into the present Town Hall office building as well as the official recognition of the adjoining green space as the Town Green. In 1986, the Republican Women’s Club, led by Katie Rook, decided the Green needed a new gazebo; however, this idea was met with much resistance by some in Redding, because many believed the Green was sacred and its historic integrity should be preserved. Despite the challenges, Katie Rook and the Republican Women’s Club did not give up, and the new gazebo was erected and dedicated to Redding veterans in 1987.

Around the same time, when the cold became too much for picking

Continued on page 3

Region 9 adjusts proposed high school cell phone ban after intense debate

By Anne Young Albanese

After an earlier version proposed a total ban on students’ use of personal technological devices at Joel Barlow High School, an updated policy allowing for limited access to these devices was approved by the Region 9 Board of Education last month.

At a special meeting on June 15, the Region 9 Board of Education accepted all proposed policies for the 2026-27 school year. While many of the new policies represented minor changes to existing rules to comply with State and Federal regulations, the proposed “Use of Private Technological Devices by Students” policy had elicited weeks of debate and public comments from board members, parents, and students at Joel Barlow High School.

The private technology policy states how students can use “privately owned desktop computers, personal computing devices, cellular phones, smartphones, smartwatches, network access devices, radios, personal audio players, CD players, tablets, walkie-talkies, personal gaming systems, Bluetooth speakers, personal data assistants, and other electronic signaling devices” while at school.

The initially proposed ban on the use of these devices at the high school was revised following debate to allow ER9 Superintendent Jason McKinnon to establish regulations that may allow high school students to access their technology in designated spaces. McKinnon is expected to allow students to use their devices during their lunch period in the cafeteria. The Region 9 Board plans to review the policy again a few months into the 2026-27 school year.

Public comment was again made during the special meeting, with residents speaking in opposition to the revisions and in support of a ban.

Danielle Cacace voiced several objections to high school students using technology during the school day, citing concerns about a lack of social interaction and bullying, noting that most cyberbullying happens at school. She also was worried about safety, arguing that if an emergency happens at the high school, parents rushing to the school could block staff or first responders from doing their jobs. In addition, Cacace told the Board that she believes that students would eventually bring their phones into the classroom, and the responsibility for implementation and enforcement of the policy would fall again on the teachers.

Kimberly Smith spoke as a former high school teacher currently working at Rogers Park Middle School. She said she discovered that phones are a disruption and

Continued on page 7

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Index

Big Outdoors

Letter to the Editor

Legal Notices

Real Estate

Library Corner

Book Review

Business Spotlight

Obituary

Calendar of Events

1

2

2

7

8

8

9

10

11



1 96852 05801 3

Dave Pattee retires from Conservation Commission after nearly four decades

By Grace DeMarco



Photo by Jessie Wright

Dave Pattee, in the first weeks of his well-deserved retirement, on the boardwalk at Lonetown Marsh, the first open space parcel acquired by the Town of Redding in 1968.

After serving on the Redding Conservation Commission for 39 years, long-time Redding resident and environmental advocate Dave Pattee retired this month.

“I’ve had a good run,” said Pattee, looking back on a decorated career dedicated to environmental preservation, conservation, and water treatment. Pattee’s impact has stretched from serving as Chairman for the Conservation Commission for over three decades and being involved in the Water Pollution Control Commission since its inception in the 1980s, to participating in the Advisory Committee for the Gilbert and Bennet Wire Mill and protecting wetlands in New Canaan and Weston.

Pattee first entered the field of environmental conservation during his time at Northeastern University in Boston, where he took part in a co-op program that exposed students to both classroom and work-force environments.

“I was fortunate enough to work for a consulting firm in a field then called ‘sanitary engineering.’ They designed wastewater treatment plants and regular water treatment facilities,” Pattee explained. “I thought, ‘boy, this is kind of interesting.’”

After graduating from Northeastern, Pattee then worked for BF- Goodrich in Shelton.

“It was there I finally got back into doing environmental-type stuff. That progressed into going to work for other companies in their corporate environmental groups,” Pattee said. “I did that for almost 45 years, so I acquired a lot of knowledge.”

Pattee’s introduction to Redding’s Conservation Commission took place over 40 years ago when then First Selectwoman, Mary Anne Guitar, asked him to join.

“I said, ‘I really can’t, because I take the train early in the morning and I don’t get home until after 7 o’clock at night,’ and they started their meetings at 7:30 p.m. I thought, ‘I’d like a chance to eat,’” Pattee laughed.

However, when his company’s headquarters moved from New York City to Memphis, TN, and he decided to remain in Connecticut, Pattee recalled Guitar finding out and saying, “Okay, Pattee, what’s your excuse now?” And so, Pattee was appointed to the Conservation Commission back in 1987.

In 1992, upon the recommendation from Founder of the Conservation Commission Sam Hill, Pattee was appointed to Chairman after the former Chairman passed away.

“And so, I became Chair, which I held until just recently,” Pattee said. “Thirty-four years.”

The Commission oversees the Town’s open space parcels and prepares an Open Space Plan every 10 years as a supplement to the Town Plan of Conservation and

Development. “There are probably over 2,000 acres of those floating around,” Pattee explained. “So, we have to go and look at those once in a while to make sure that nothing strange is happening.”

The group also serves as the Town’s Inland Wetland Commission, reviewing applications for work on properties that lie on or near protected wetlands.

“We do a site walk of every single application that comes in. So, that means working with the applicant and working with the rest of the Commission members to designate a time when we can go and look at the project,” he explained.

According to Pattee, the Conservation Commission’s functions and operations have remained stable throughout his time, adding that this is one of the group’s strengths. They have also maintained their tradition of in-person meetings, which allow for public attendance and participation.

Along with his work on the Conservation Commission, Pattee looked back on the 50-plus years he has spent in Redding.

“It’s always changing a little bit, but over the years, the commissions have tried to keep it kind of the way it was 50-plus years ago. And, to a large extent, I think we’ve succeeded pretty well,” he said.

Pattee added that one of Redding’s biggest attractions is its appearance. “People move here because they like the looks of it, they like the way the schools are run, they like the open space concept,” noting that almost 40 percent of Redding is open space between Town-owned properties, Redding Land Trust properties, and private property protected through easements and other agreements.

The Conservation Commission now falls into the hands of a new Chairperson, Aimee Pardee, who retired as the Town’s Land Use Director in 2024. Pattee exuded confidence in her abilities saying that he has “been able to pass the baton to somebody that is really knowledgeable about the regulations and how to do things.”

“I think the Commission itself will do very nicely,” Pattee said. “They all seem dedicated to the whole concept of preserving wetlands and open areas.”

Though the Conservation Commission is in good hands, Pattee’s dedication and passion for the work will be missed, though he intends to stay involved in the community by serving on the Water Pollution Control Commission and Wire Mill Advisory Committee.

“Dave is so integrated into everything we do here,” said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at last month’s Board of Selectmen meeting. “He’s someone you can’t even begin to comprehend replacing. There’s no replacement for Dave.” ■



Planners opt for “storybook” POCD style

By Rocco Valluzzo

Discussing the update of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) at its Tuesday, June 23 meeting, the Planning Commission reached a consensus to pivot from a data-heavy, statistical document to a “storybook” style strategy document that emphasizes vision and themes.

The Commission will focus on Chapters 1 through 8, while Chapters 9 and 10 are being handled via parallel tracks with external partners, including the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) and BFJ Planning of New York.

“We’re going to have WestCOG being our partner on that, and that’s going to be led by them, and the time is going to be driven by them,” said Commission Chair Laurie Heiss. “That really leads us to focus on chapters one through eight.”

Member Jess Gaspar proposed that the new version should function more like a marketing or strategy document, highlighting themes and goals rather than just population trends. Heiss noted that while the “story” of Redding is invaluable, the plan should be structured so that it doesn’t bury forward-thinking strategies.

To avoid confusing the external

consultants working with the Town on the project, Elizabeth Jensen suggested that the Commission first agree internally on what a model POCD looks like. By selecting one or two specific templates from other towns, the Commission can provide a clear jumping-off point for the consultants regarding their desired structure and graphics. The visual quality and graphics of the Old Saybrook and New Canaan plans were mentioned as potential models.

Community outreach (surveys and workshops) will be initiated early in the process to ensure the public’s voice informs the themes and goals from the outset. The Commission will utilize a multi-channel approach for the survey, including Town-wide mailings, QR codes in public spaces, and paper surveys for accessibility. The current POCD will be used as the primary baseline for the new survey to “take the temperature” of the community on existing strategies versus new needs.

“I do think that public input earlier is going to make a huge difference in the direction that we end up taking and in their acceptance and understanding of it,” said Heiss. “The questions on a survey become pretty important.”

Jensen emphasized the need for a transparent “logic” in the planning process, ensuring that public feedback doesn’t go into a “black hole.” Instead, the Commission should communicate why certain decisions were made based on the feedback received, using various tools to share community input.

Member Regina O’Brien highlighted that while the public may not have read the full POCD, the survey must be framed carefully by the consultant to extract meaningful priorities without over-promising.

Gaspar suggested that the Commission provide an initial “directional playing field” of goals to the community. This led to a consensus that the Commission must first internally agree on the themes of the current plan before asking the public what needs to change. This work also is intended to provide clear, unified direction to the consultant to avoid conflicting instructions.

Heiss will meet with consultants Suzanne Goldberg and Frank Fish of BFJ planning to discuss the work proposal and service agreement. Commissioners will identify its preferred POCD templates or examples before the next meeting. ■

Redding’s Big Outdoors: The patriotic legacy of our Town Green / continued from page 1

wildflowers, the annual Tree Lighting was created so that residents from all over Redding could gather for cocoa and community. Modern day, the gazebo is still an honored place, and every summer for close to four decades, Concerts on the Green are held next to it while a Parade Path, created by local volunteers as a botanical and historical resource in 2003, runs along the border of the Green.

The Green has undergone many

changes and many names in the hundreds of years it has been at the center of town – from a property described as “six acres, the Parade Ground,” to “six acres and two Roads, known as the Parade Land,” to the Town Green – but the thread that has woven its way across time is the conversation between Redding residents on that ground. Whether it was talk of the upcoming war or whether to build a memorial gazebo or catching up

over a second hot dog from the Girl Scouts sitting with friends in lawn chairs at a Concert on the Green, the story of Redding continues to be written by the people who gather here. ■

Thanks to the archives at Mark Twain Library, reddingct.gov, towngreens.com, and history-ofredding.net for information that contributed to this column

Join the *Sentinel* team as Managing Editor

The *Sentinel* is looking for its next Managing Editor, as our first Managing Editor Jessie Wright will be leaving us in the autumn to welcome her family’s third child.

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Redding lawmakers back Connecticut’s first homeschooling regulations

By Justin Reynolds

In May, Connecticut enacted its first statewide regulations governing homeschooling, creating new notification requirements for families and child welfare safeguards that supporters say will help vulnerable children. Both of Redding’s State legislators — State Senator Ceci Maher and State Representative Anne Hughes — voted in favor of the measure.

Opponents of the bill, including many homeschooling advocates, argued the law creates unnecessary government oversight, infringes on parental privacy, and could discourage families from homeschooling.

Among other changes, the law requires families to notify local school districts if they plan to homeschool, creates a formal process for withdrawing children from public school for parent-managed learning, and requires child abuse registry and Department of Children and Families (DCF) checks as part of the withdrawal process.

“The provision I consider most essential is the DCF background check,” Maher said. “Blocking a withdrawal when any adult in the home is on the child abuse and neglect registry or under active DCF investigation is the most direct protection this bill creates.”

“For most families who are already doing right by their children, these requirements are a small check,” she continued. “The in-person withdrawal and the annual form are administrative steps. The background check is the provision with real teeth, and it is aimed at a narrow but serious problem.”

Prior to passing the bill, Connecticut had “no meaningful oversight of homeschooling,” Maher said.

“A child can be withdrawn from school and simply disappear from

public view, with no record, no contact, no adult outside the home who is required by law to check on them,” she said. “The children I kept thinking about as we worked through this bill are the ones who needed someone to notice and found no one there.”

The law takes effect for the 2027-28 school year. Beginning with the 2028-29 school year, parents will need to file an annual intent-to-educate form with their local district by October 1 each year. Hughes said families already homeschooling before the law takes effect won’t be required to submit the annual notice of intent.

“I have met with homeschooling families in my district and visited their classes in Newtown and other organized learning spaces where they educate,” Hughes said. “I am consistently impressed by the quality of child-centered learning that is happening in these cohorts. I applaud their work and have confidence that they will continue to prioritize their children’s education in the setting that works best for them.”

Hughes doesn’t believe that these new “common-sense policies” will impede parents’ ability to continue homeschooling.

“For the sake of all children, we have prescriptions and harmful substances strictly labeled in child-proof containers. For the sake of all children, we require a process to withdraw from public school and annual due diligence check-ins to determine there are no open DCF child abuse [or] neglect cases within the household that the child will be withdrawn from school to learn in,” Hughes said. “I believe this is a fair process that can be accommodated to keep vulnerable children safer, even if these children aren’t mine or yours.”

HB 5468 gained momentum following the deaths of Eve Rogers, 12, of Enfield, and Mimi Torres-Garcia, 11, of New Britain. Both girls had been withdrawn from public school before their deaths.

“In those situations, withdrawal from school removed the child from the adults who were legally required to report signs of abuse,” Maher said. “The bill does not eliminate that risk, but it creates touchpoints that did not exist before.”

Hughes said her experience as an elder abuse prevention social worker influenced her approach to the legislation. In her work, she said, vulnerable elders who get abused are often abused by trusted family or household members.

“The same principle applies to children,” Hughes said. “If we can have at least some eyes initially, from the public school officials who are trained in mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, we at least have a prayer of noticing and checking in on these at-risk children before the abuse escalates in private.”

The bill formally recognizes “parent-managed learning” as a distinct educational option in Connecticut, replacing what Maher called vague language that existed until now.

“That recognition is a foundation and will help us understand how many children are learning at home and under what circumstances,” she said, adding that she’s not sure how many homeschool students live in the 26th District. “Connecticut has not had a mechanism to track how many people are being educated at home.”

Continued on page 5

Odyssey of the Mind team returns from World Finals



Photo by Kristina Scaviola

The Redding Park and Recreation Odyssey of the Mind team traveled to Iowa at the end of the school year to compete at the World Finals, showcasing their creative problem solving and teamwork and scoring 17th out of 34 in their division. (Left to right): Avery Bruton and Benjamin Funk (both 4th grade), Ryan Perez and Teo Scaviola (5th grade), and Zoe Rossov and Max Scaviola (3rd grade).

State funds to be allocated to John Read Middle School facilities

By Anne Young Albanese

The Redding Board of Education has opted to allocate a portion of the \$56,723 that was received from the State’s District Repair and Improvement Project (DRIP) to provide enhancements and upgrades for the Project Adventure equipment and facilities at John Read Middle School. DRIP funds are allocated to each school district in Connecticut based on a formula that accounts for district wealth, enrollment, and student needs.

Project Adventure is a nationwide program of adventure-based learning in which John Read Middle School participates to build social and emotional skills, group

development, and wellness. The Project Adventure challenge course is currently in the woods behind John Read Middle School, but elements have become unstable due to the growth of the trees and the shifting natural environment.

The plan is to purchase new equipment and beautify the Project Adventure location. The Redding Board of Education will purchase new portable equipment that can be placed and removed from the field for use. Capital funding for the first phase of the project was passed at the budget referendum on May 5,

Continued on page 7



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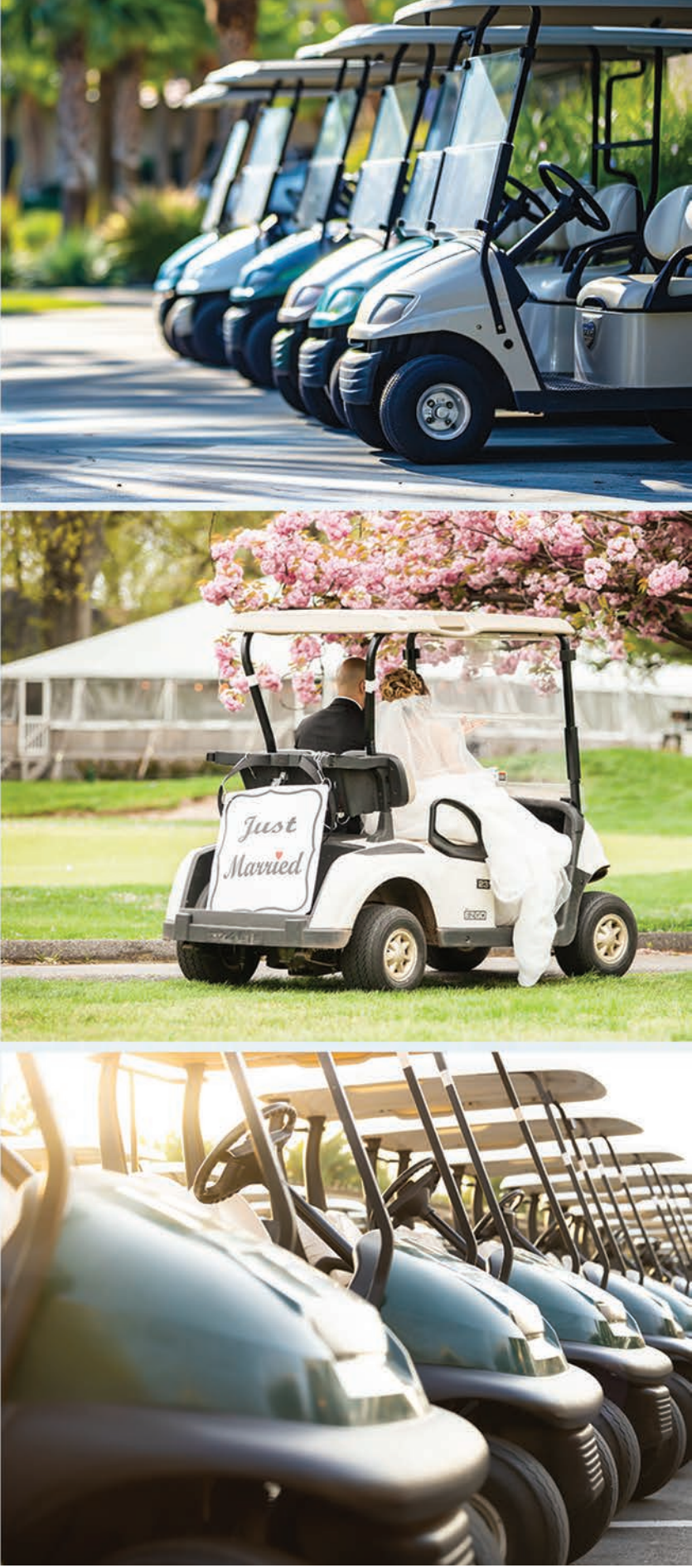
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Treasure hunting for a cause

“Help A Mutt” tag sale returns to benefit PETA

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Lia Albo
Lia Albo and one of her PETA rescue dogs, Oggi.

Lia Albo loves animals, considering them her heart and soul. “I’m a lifelong animal person. All a dog or cat wants it to give you love – it’s hard to understand cruelty to animals by individuals,” said Albo. Albo is taking that passion and putting it into action, opening her Redding home to the public later this month for her second Help A Mutt tag sale, with proceeds supporting animals and the mission of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

The two-day event takes place on Saturday, July 25 and Sunday, July 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 85 Pinetree Road. Admission is free. In case of inclement weather, the sale will be held August 1 and 2.

In 2024, Albo’s first Help A Mutt tag sale raised \$7,000 for PETA, the world’s largest non-profit animal rights organization. All the event’s proceeds benefit PETA. “PETA is the real deal. The point of this event is to raise money to help the chained dogs (and homeless cats) living in deplorable conditions in impoverished areas in the South and to help them spay and neuter in various areas outside the United States where overpopulation is a serious problem,” said Albo who has a decades-long relationship with

PETA and is a lifelong friend of Ingrid Newkirk, PETA’s Co-founder.

For the sale, volunteers from Redding and neighboring towns have been pricing hundreds of donated gently used and new merchandise. Donations were accepted through the first week of July. Shoppers will find multiple clothing racks; kitchenware; home décor; garden supplies; seasonal decorations; toys; sports equipment; coffee table and animal-related books; vintage furniture; and more. Multiple tables will feature eclectic costume jewelry, including new Invicta watches. “Everything is priced to sell, and no reasonable offer will be refused,” said Albo. “It’s such an upbeat event. We want to make as much money as we can for the animals. We’re happy to help people find a treasure while connecting with their neighbors, plus this sale keeps the landfills empty, and it’s all for a good cause.”

Albo was inspired by her mother who helped animals in need throughout her childhood. “In the early ‘60s, I grew up in the South Bronx where emaciated stray dogs with mange would run in packs. My mother would rescue them, and cats, too. I remember crying for their suffering. I became a vegan at age 20 because I didn’t want to take part in animal cruelty,” said Albo, dedicating her professional life

to animals as Cat Manager at the New Rochelle Humane Society and serving as the New York Coordinator at the Fund for Animals where she founded the first high-volume, low-cost, state-of-the-art spay and neuter clinic.

Albo developed a kinship with Newkirk while attending protests against fur and at veganism conferences. “We supported each other. She had a vision that all animals would be treated with ethics in mind,” said Albo, who lives with four PETA rescue dogs and two cats and takes in several rescues annually.

Daniella Ramadei, Director of Legacy Gifts for PETA, will be on-site at the event. “It’s my pleasure to help members with wonderful fundraising events like Lia’s Help-A-Mutt tag sale. I’ll be collecting donations, thanking shoppers for supporting PETA’s work, and sharing my own perspective as someone who has accompanied PETA’s fieldworkers as they provide essential services to neglected dogs near PETA’s headquarters in Virginia,” said Ramadei, who described Albo as the epitome of compassion for all animals.

“She’s helped foster and rehome many animals rescued through PETA’s fieldwork, including a chihuahua we brought back from Mexico where we organize free spay/neuter clinics in underserved neighborhoods,” said Ramadei. “If there’s a stray cat in trouble, it’s Lia to the rescue – no matter what hour of the night she’s called to do so. If someone in the Redding area calls PETA for help saving an animal in danger, or documenting a cruelty-to-animals case, it’s Lia we turn to.”

At age 70, Albo will continue fighting for animal rights. “I’m in this forever. We need to take animal cruelty seriously. We need more humanity, legislation, and enforcement, but we need money to do this work,” said Albo. “I saw the good that came out of my first Help a Mutt. Many people love animals and want to help. Redding is a wonderful, giving community, and the Redding people love their dogs and cats. Hopefully people become more aware that we need to live in harmony together.” ■

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Eagle Scout candidate aims to enhance a slice of the Great Outdoors

By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of Anikeev Family

Connecticut is celebrated for its stunning natural beauty, including its abundant state and local parks, forests, and hiking trails. Andrey Anikeev, a Scout from Redding’s Troop 15 and a rising freshman at the University of Connecticut, is spending his last summer before college helping to make a local preserve near his home more accessible to the public.

Anikeev is working to clear trails at the 68-acre Lillintonah Woods, a 68-acre open space maintained by the Town of Brookfield. One-third of the preserve is traversed by hiking and walking trails, but much is overgrown by invasive foliage, and access is also hindered by poor signage. Anikeev, a recent graduate of Brookfield High School, is pursuing the project for his application to become an Eagle Scout.

“Now, hiking in Lillintonah Woods is more like bushwacking than hiking,” said Anikeev. “My goal is to make it more enjoyable to explore the trails, rather than constantly having prickly bushes snag your clothes.”

Anikeev said the trails have become difficult to hike because of the presence of three invasive plants: Japanese barberry, firebush, and Japanese knotweed. The knotweed is especially challenging because of its tendency to form dense thickets and squeeze out desirable vegetation. The last significant clearing at the preserve last took place in 2018 following a major thunderstorm.

Anikeev noted that the trails offer excellent vistas of Lake Lillintonah – provided those views aren’t blocked by out-of-control vegetation. “The views could be so much nicer if the trails were cleared a

bit,” he said. “Besides removing invasive species, we are planting native plants, restoring several signs, and getting rid of some downed trees.”

One of the larger efforts will be rebuilding a small canopy at the trailhead, which features a signboard and a map of the preserve. There is also a marker sign over the canopy that needs refurbishment.

The project got the green light from Troop 15 Scoutmaster Joe Downey; Jeffery Bronn, Beneficiary representative of the Brookfield Conservation Commission; and District Leader Tom Bussmann. Work commenced on June 30, with Anikeev assisted by other Scouts from Troop 15 as well as several friends. Anikeev’s mom, Nadya; Downey; and Eagle Coach Ken Shupp will help supervise the work during the dates when work will be performed at the preserve.

Anikeev has spent the last few summers doing landscaping work for several homeowners in his area, so he has had some experience with invasive-plant removal. He has also helped other Scouts with their own Eagle Scout projects – including his sister, Katya, who became an Eagle Scout in Redding’s Troop 306 in late 2023.

“Helping others on their projects gives you time to spend with your fellow Scouts, and you learn important skills as well,” said Anikeev. “I’ll likely have about 25 to 30 people assisting me, though the composition won’t be fixed.”

Anikeev estimated the project to cost approximately \$350 to complete, including the purchase of work gloves for volunteers, stain, plywood, and tarps for carting out the debris.

Anikeev first joined Scouting in 2019 and expects to continue to take part in Troop 15 activities during his summers home from college. He’s also looking forward to exploring the abundant outdoor recreational activities in the area around the University of Connecticut campus in eastern Connecticut.

Anikeev said he also has benefited from living close to the Appalachian Trail and, in recent months, he’s joined several other Scouts on frequent hikes along the Trail. “We’ll pack a backpack and hike for a couple of days, enjoying the outdoors and time with friends by the campfire,” he said. ■

Redding lawmakers back Connecticut’s first homeschooling regulations / continued from page 4

While the two lawmakers supported the bill, they have different views on whether additional changes may be needed in the future. For Maher, who is not seeking reelection, the intent-to-educate requirement will help Connecticut learn more about the state of parent-managed learning.

“Once we have a clearer picture of how many children are learning at home and under what circumstances, we will be better positioned to ask the next set of questions about how to support their success,” Maher said.

Hughes, on the other hand, said she is not interested in further regulatory restrictions on parent-managed learning.

“I do hope our entire community can get on board with increasing

awareness and supporting protections for vulnerable children at risk of getting abused or neglected,” Hughes said. “I want our state to be one that constantly strives to do better by our children, families, and community to keep all our children safe and thriving.”

Maher said she wants homeschooling families to know that the bill “was not written with suspicion of them.”

“The vast majority of parents who choose to educate their children at home are doing it thoughtfully and with real commitment,” she said. “This law formally recognizes that choice for the first time in Connecticut statute, giving parent-managed learning a clear legal identity alongside public and private schooling.” ■

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If trees could talk *Surprise patriots* | By Janice Rotchstein



Photo from Shutterstock
Sugar Maple: Sap stymied British taxes.

I had no idea that trees were the silent heroes of our American Revolution.

They not only served as covert partners, triggered defiance, and provided medicine for soldiers, but they also supplied food, shielded colonial troops, and went into battle as banners for independence.

Fortunately, their offspring are found throughout Redding and in our backyards. So, this July 4 as I toasted the country’s 250th, I raised a glass to these surprise patriots.

The spark – Eastern white pines ignited the schism with England. Seems King George III demanded the tallest and largest in diameter be harvested as masts for his Royal Navy. Several New Hampshire sawmill owners refused for business reasons, beat up the Crown’s law enforcers, and ran them out of town. Known as the “Pine Tree Riot of 1772,” it gave other colonialists confidence to defy British mandates thereby triggering the “Boston Tea Party” in 1773.

Pines then became a symbol against oppression. They went into battle holding colonial flags with the motto “An Appeal to Heaven” — a plea that God defend the Revolutionaries’ right to resist tyrants.

Righteous rebel – Sugar maples challenged England where it hurt



Photo from Shutterstock
White Willow: Medicinal properties in the tree bark treated soldiers in war.

the most. They produced a patriotic and moral alternative to British-exported cane sugar. The tapped sap became a domestic sweetener that allowed our country to assert its economic independence and stymie the Crown’s coffers.

Wonder drug – White willows soothed soldiers who were wounded in battle. Doctors – faced with a severe shortage of medical supplies – used the inner bark to counteract fever, infection, pain, and insomnia. The tree’s high salicin content worked so well, it evolved to what we know as aspirin.

Public protestor – American elms, nicknamed “Liberty Trees,” stood for dissent. Known for their majestic size and shape, they were natural sites for rallies. When effigies of tax collectors hung from their branches, the British axed the elms. Yet nothing cooled the agitation fomenting under them nor dulled their moniker for unity.

Good news: As part of our land’s 250th celebration, a “Liberty Tree” species – one that resists Dutch elm disease – is being planted in towns throughout Connecticut.

Nutritional saviors – Pear, apple and black walnut trees were



Photo by Mary C. Boughton / Charles Burr Todd, “The History of Redding, Connecticut” 1906

American elm: Continental Army meeting site on Cross Highway.

important food sources during the conflict. Among the original trees planted by early settlers, their fruits and nuts stemmed hunger on the battlefield and at home while hard cider became a safe alternative to contaminated water.

Watchful warriors – White oaks were dubbed “Witness Trees” due to their location on many battlefields. With the war waging all around them, they served as strategic landmarks, roadblocks to British advances, and essential hiding places for our troops. The English infantry, who usually fought by marching in single file, found themselves ill-prepared for the clandestine, hide-and-seek skirmishes in our forests.

So, this summer as you visit Revolutionary War locations in Redding and neighboring towns, pause a moment. Drink in the sites and the quiet; read the markers and sense the sacrifice. As importantly, salute the trees rimming the fields and remember: their ancestors helped forge the good fight to make America the land of the free. ■

If you have a favorite tree story for this column, contact redding-treeconservancy@gmail.com

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Library Annual Meeting reports good news | By Susan Clark



Photo by Susan Clark
George Baker as John Adams

Members of the Mark Twain Library Association filled the Library meeting room on Wednesday, June 24, to learn how the organization fared during the past year and to be entertained by attorney George Baker appearing as John Adams for a special *America250* program.

Outgoing Chair Sheila Corr reminded members of highlights of the year, including the completed restoration of some of the books Samuel Clemens donated when he founded Mark Twain Library. The restoration was made possible by a generous gift. Perhaps less exciting but no less important, the flat roof of the 1970s “drum” addition to the building was replaced. The project came in on time and on budget.

The important fundraisers for the Library – the annual Art Show, Frog Frolic, Book Fair, and Annual Appeal – were all successful this year. Treasurer Joe Zinghini explained that the Library is in very good financial shape, in part to a generous bequest from Brian and Florence Mahony. Costs have been well-controlled by Library Director Erin Dummeyer and her team, as well.

The new slate of officers for the coming year includes Duncan Leslie (President), Meghan Huszagh (Vice President), Sheila Corr (Secretary), and Joe Zinghini (Treasurer). Melissa Capezio has joined the board for a new term.

Following the formal proceedings of the Library Association’s 118th annual meeting, “John Adams,” performed by George Baker, took the assembled members back to pre-Revolutionary times. Through music as well as words, the group learned about Adams’s education, outlook, and the fervor leading up to the Revolutionary War. It was a fitting presentation during the country’s 250th anniversary celebrations of the Declaration of Independence. ■

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

America250 Quiz

Test your knowledge of American and Connecticut history: Part I

As Redding and the nation celebrate America’s 250th anniversary, test how deep your knowledge goes on early American history and Connecticut’s role in the Revolutionary War. Do you have what it takes to be an America250 high scorer?

1. In what order did Europeans arrive in North America?
___ English ___ Viking ___ French ___ Spanish

2. Where was the first permanent European settlement located?
a. St. Augustine, FL b. Plymouth, MA c. Roanoke, NC

3. “Quinnehtukqut,” meaning “(beside the) long tidal river,” comes from which Native American language?
a. Cherokee b. Mohegan-Pequot c. Navajo

4. What Native American confederacy was near the Virginia colony?
a. Powhatan b. Iroquois c. Shawnee

5. What Dutch settlement later became New York City?

6. What war set the stage for the American Revolution?

7. What Battle is recognized as the start of the Revolution?
a. Ft. Washington b. Lexington & Concord c. Bunker Hill

8. Who said, “Give me Liberty or Give me Death”?
a. Patrick Henry b. Mark Twain c. Ralph Waldo Emerson

9. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

10. When was the Declaration of Independence signed?
a. 3 June 1776 b. 4 July 1776 c. 2 August 1776

11. From what Empire were the colonies declaring independence?

12. What was the nickname for pro-British colonists?
a. Loonies b. Redcoats c. Loyalists

13. During the Revolutionary War, which of Washington’s fortifications deployed a massive iron chain across the Hudson River to block British ships from moving north?
a. Fort New Jersey b. Fort West Point c. Fort Montgomery

14. Who was the Continental Army General, who committed treason by attempting to surrender the above-mentioned fort to the British?
a. Aaron Burr b. Benedict Arnold c. Henry Lee III

15. Name the General who headed the Continental Army:

16. Which young French nobleman joined George Washington’s staff?
a. Marquis de Lafayette b. Louis d’Anjou c. Pierre Charles L’Enfant

17. Who was tasked to prevent the British from attacking Danbury, CT again?
a. Benedict Arnold b. Israel Putnam c. Nathanael Greene

18. What 1777 battle convinced France to help the colonies?
a. Ticonderoga b. Princeton c. Saratoga

19. Why did the French join the Revolutionary War?
a. Claim Colonies b. Reduce British influence c. Join Gold Rush

20. How long did the Revolutionary War last before the British surrendered at Yorktown?
a. almost 8 years b. 4 years c. 2 years d. 6 years

21. Where is Yorktown?
a. Georgia b. Massachusetts c. Virginia

22. What treaty officially ended the Revolutionary War?
a. Treaty of Versailles b. Treaty of Paris c. Treaty of Tripoli

23. What document preceded the U.S. Constitution?

24. Where did the Constitutional Convention convene?
a. New York b. Boston c. Philadelphia d. Baltimore

25. Who drafted the U.S. Constitution?
a. Benjamin Franklin b. Alexander Hamilton c. James Madison

26. When was the Constitution signed?
a. 17 Sep 1787 b. 19 Jun 1779 c. 14 Feb 1783

27. Name one of two CT signers of the Constitution:

28. Who was the first U.S. president?

29. Name Washington’s aide de camp who created the US Treasury?
a. Aaron Burr b. Henry Knox c. Alexander Hamilton

30. Who was the first President to live in the White House?

31. Who was the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?
a. John Jay b. Nathaniel Hawthorne c. Francis Marion

32. What cracked symbol of freedom is on display in Philadelphia?

33. Who reportedly said: “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes”?
a. General Israel Putnam b. General Benedict Arnold c. Captain Gerom Morehouse

34. During the Revolutionary War, more soldiers died of smallpox than fighting the British. To fight the epidemic, General Washington made the controversial decision mandating troops be inoculated to stop the spread.
a. True b. False

35. Some sources claim that there was a “female Paul Revere.” Sybil Ludington, 16, also surreptitiously rode to inform her father that the British had attacked Danbury
a. True b. False

36. Under whose Presidency was the Louisiana Purchase?
a. Washington b. Adams c. Jefferson

37. Which explorers were sent to map The Louisiana Purchase?
a. Lewis & Clark b. Kit Carson’s men c. Mormons

38. Name the female Native American guide critical to the success of the expedition to map and explore the Louisiana Purchase:
a. Pocahontas b. Sacagawea c. Haboguwiga

39. Which animal was gifted to President Jefferson?
a. Turtle b. Llama c. Penguin

40. Who burned down the White House during the War of 1812?
a. British b. French c. Dutch d. Spanish

Quiz by Redding’s Jane Hamilton-Merritt and Schuyler Merritt

Answers to Part I will be published in the July 23, 2026 issue

An iconic building speaks volumes

The Branchville Railroad Tenement

By Megan Napoletano



Photo courtesy of
Ridgefield Historical Society



Photo by Megan Napoletano

Nearly two years ago, I drove past the Branchville Railroad Tenement. I can still recall how I felt the first time I laid eyes on it. I crossed the small bridge over the Norwalk River and saw the historic Metro-North train tracks ahead. The building’s front porch, red detailing, and abundance of windows gave the impression of a place shaped by travel and time. I knew immediately that there was a deeper story here that wanted to be told.

The Branchville Railroad Tenement is in Ridgefield at 14 West Branchville Road, just south of the railroad station at the junction of Portland Avenue and West Branchville Road. It is a Victorian Vernacular building constructed in three stages between 1853 and 1905. The building initially served as a storage depot for the Norwalk–Danbury Railroad. According to the Town of Ridgefield Planning & Zoning Commission *Branchville Transit Oriented Development Plan*, “It is the only known building of this type in the Town of Ridgefield and one of Branchville’s few remaining Victorian Vernacular commercial structures.” According to *Images of America: Ridgefield*, “Branchville was a thriving little village with stores, mills, a hotel, a machine factory, a noted mineral quarry, a post office, and a school. In the early part of the 20th century, a large number of Italians arrived and found work in the area, turning it into an Italian enclave.”

In the 1880s, the building’s owner, Abijah Fillow, converted the property into a hotel, which proved unsuccessful. In 1905, it was purchased by Italian immigrant Pasquale DeBenigno (from Corvera, Italy), who converted the structure into a three-story house: a saloon and grocery store on the first level, with the family living on the second level. The third floor housed immigrants, primarily Italian stone masons seeking work.

The general store was named “The Branchville General Store,” and it became the center of the Italian community in Branchville and neighboring Georgetown. The DeBenignos also made wine and reportedly had livestock on the property. According to Town of Redding Co-Historian Brent Colley’s historyofredding.net, “Tenement houses, like DeBenigno’s, offered a fresh start to Italian immigrants as they arrived at Branchville Station from 1910 to 1930. It is for this very reason that 14 West Branchville Road was entered onto the National Registry of Historic Places on August 12, 1982.”

When I interviewed Deirdre Regan (the building’s current owner), she, too, felt the building held a certain *magic*. “I was drawn to it. It looked like a saloon from the Wild West. I moved from New York City – it was vacant and foreclosed upon. I wanted a shop to do flowers. Every week for a year, I went online to check if it was for sale.

I went to Florida for a week, and that’s when it went on the market. Someone else bid and paid the asking price. I said to myself, ‘If this was meant for me, please let this offer fall through.’” The offer later did fall through, and Regan went on to open *The Flower Girl*, a flower shop that operated on the building’s first floor for seven years and earned the title *#1 Florist in Ridgefield*. The building now houses commercial space on the first floor, with residential apartments above.

Architect Philip Johnson, whose work helped shape modern American architecture, once observed, “It’s not the buildings, it’s the spaces between the buildings that are important.” Buildings like the Branchville Railroad Tenement were shaped by movement because of their proximity to the railroad. They exist at a threshold between past and present, where the stories of travelers, immigrants, and local residents intersect with the physical landscape. Historic buildings are among the most visible ways we connect with the past, but the places surrounding them often hold stories of their own.

When I drive past the building now, I think about the generations of people who passed through its doors. I think about the DeBenigno family – I think about Pasquale making wine, talking with locals in his store, and the conversations shared over pints in the saloon. I think about the Italian immigrants starting new lives in Branchville and how this small corner of the world became their home.

The Branchville Railroad Tenement has witnessed more than a century of change, and yet it remains a tangible link to the stories of the past. The next time you cross the Branchville train tracks and see this historic landmark, pause for a moment, because behind its walls lies the history of a community shaped by hard work, opportunity, and the dream of a better future. ■

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Region 9 adjusts proposed high school cell phone ban after intense debate / continued from page 1

can break up the flow of instruction. She saw that after her school’s personal technology ban there was an increase in students talking and engaging with each other.

Students at Joel Barlow High School can use personal technological devices in certain situations, apart from the new lunchtime allowance. Students can access them if needed for individualized education programs (IEPs). Students can use computers, laptop computers, or tablet computers if they are needed for educational purposes and are authorized by McKinnon. They can also be used for approved medical purposes.

Students’ technology may be searched if the device is on school property (at Joel Barlow High School or the surrounding property) or at a school-sponsored activity, according to the Board’s applicable

policy for search and seizure. In addition, students are responsible for their privately-owned technology. Joel Barlow High School and the Region 9 Board of Education are not liable for any privately-owned technology that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school or during a school-sponsored activity.

A new policy regarding the use of educational technology in the classroom was also approved. Titled “Policy Addressing Responsible Screen Time, Digital Learning, and Educational Technology,” this policy states that educational technology will be limited and must be approved by the Superintendent.

The Region 9 Board is not scheduled to meet in July. The next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, August 18 at the Joel Barlow High School Library Learning Commons at 7:00 p.m. ■

State funds to be allocated to John Read Middle School facilities / continued from page 4

2026. A portion of the State DRIP funds—\$20,000—will be used to fund what was planned as the second phase of the program. The Board also plans to use \$16,162 in DRIP funds to provide lower-level element enhancements to the Project Adventure area.

The remaining \$20,561 from the DRIP allocation will fund painting and improvements to the fifth-grade bathrooms. A full renovation of the bathrooms originally was part of

the district’s capital improvement plans for this fiscal year but was removed before referendum at the request of the Board of Finance.

“We originally had a larger bathroom project on our capital plan but later removed/deferred it. We will instead use some of the DRIP funds to paint and make repairs in those restrooms, but it will not cover the full project as originally scoped,” said Redding Board of Education Chair Laura Worosz. ■

REAL ESTATE

June 2026 real estate report

A look at trends in the local housing market

By Bill Whitehead and John Talley

June capped off a very active spring market, with homes selling, on average, 5% above their asking prices. While seven properties closed during the month – four fewer than in June of last year – buyer demand remains strong, as evidenced by the 29 homes currently under contract and expected to close in the coming weeks.

Year-to-date, the average sales price in Redding is down 24% compared to the same period last year, reflecting a shift in the mix of homes sold rather than a weakening market. Inventory remains limited, with just 25 homes currently available for sale compared to 33 at the beginning of July 2025. ■

Bill Whitehead and John Talley are realtors with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

June 2026													
Town	Current Inventory	Homes Sold		Average Days on Market		Average List Price		Average Sale Price		Percent Sale Price >/< List Price		Average Price/SqFt *	
	As of July 7	June	2026	June	2026	June	2026	June	2026	June	2026	June	2026
Redding	24	7	25	53	106	\$790,557	\$763,660	\$827,500	\$777,885	5%	2%	\$412	\$368
Ridgefield	50	36	109	72	91	\$1,334,442	\$1,424,889	\$1,399,162	\$1,453,166	5%	2%	\$481	\$461
Weston	27	21	51	69	82	\$1,467,857	\$1,394,510	\$1,576,610	\$1,474,169	7%	6%	\$419	\$437
Wilton	23	39	92	69	84	\$1,435,788	\$1,405,182	\$1,565,603	\$1,524,064	9%	8%	\$498	\$366
Easton	23	8	32	61	77	\$935,463	\$1,055,178	\$957,313	\$1,072,134	2%	2%	\$398	\$366
Bethel	18	20	68	65	80	\$587,730	\$618,597	\$599,631	\$630,606	2%	2%	\$312	\$306
Newtown	52	37	138	67	92	\$775,822	\$707,406	\$793,141	\$717,696	2%	1%	\$309	\$304
Average	31	24	74	65	87	\$1,046,808	\$1,052,775	\$1,102,708	\$1,092,817	5%	3%	\$404	\$372

REDDING SOLD - June	Sale Price	List Price	%/ List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
15 Old Mailcoach Rd	\$610,000	\$550,000	11%	\$412	33
5 Iris Ln	\$710,000	\$695,000	2%	\$526	71
18 Ledgewood Rd	\$797,500	\$749,900	6%	\$332	50
148 Old Redding Rd	\$800,000	\$750,000	7%	\$344	61
39 Seventy Acre Rd	\$850,000	\$799,000	6%	\$505	54
19 Marchant Rd	\$900,000	\$995,000	-10%	\$256	74
127 Limekiln Rd	\$1,125,000	\$995,000	13%	\$510	29
Average	\$827,500	\$790,557	5%	\$412	53

REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market	REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
37 Highland Ave	\$399,000	\$382	39	11 Long Meadow Ln	\$1,245,000	\$301	31
219 Redding Rd	\$499,000	\$404	123	18 Church St	\$1,275,000	\$434	37
71 Picketts Ridge Rd	\$499,000	\$537	172	281 Newtown Tpke	\$1,349,000	\$266	81
78 Black Rock Tpke	\$625,000	\$485	6	74 Black Rock Tpke	\$1,450,000	\$307	105
70 Dayton Rd	\$634,000	\$660	18	28 Goodridge Rd	\$1,500,000	\$317	53
268 Umpawaug Rd	\$749,000	\$293	96	12 Werf Dr	\$1,549,900	\$384	181
86 Fire Hill Rd	\$850,000	\$365	41	74 George Hull Hill Rd	\$1,595,000	\$333	68
299 Redding Rd	\$899,000	\$344	28	7 Long Meadow Ln	\$1,649,000	\$306	151
5 Side Cut Rd	\$995,000	\$353	66	2 Longwood Dr	\$1,745,000	\$279	46
149 Old Redding Rd	\$1,075,000	\$390	20	63 Turney Rd	\$7,400,000	\$786	204
16 Shady Ln	\$1,149,000	\$266	44	229 Umpawaug Rd	\$7,495,000	\$1,116	420
33 Old Stagecoach Rd	\$1,150,000	\$427	11	206 Umpawaug Rd	\$7,725,000	\$751	49
207 Redding Rd	\$1,200,000	\$384	28	Average	\$1,868,036	\$435	85

Listings continue on right side of table

* Calculated using livable square footage

LIBRARY CORNER

Your library card is your ticket to more than just books

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

When people think about Mark Twain Library, they probably think about books. But we also offer a lot of online resources to our library cardholders. I'd like to use this column to highlight a few of these more "under the radar" assets.

First, we have *Consumer Reports*. I don't know about you, but when I had to replace our washing machine, I found it completely overwhelming to try to decide what brand to choose. I wished for some kind of "pro/con" list I could use to decide between a top or front loader. And I wanted real, unbiased reviews that couldn't be promoted or purchased through sponsorship. Enter: *Consumer Reports*! You can access the database for free at a

library computer, or from home using your library card number.

Mark Twain Library offers free, unlimited, 72-hour access to *The New York Times* website and mobile apps from outside the Library or using WiFi. Over 100 of your neighbors accessed this database last month, making it the Library's most popular online resource. Once your 72-hour access expires, you can simply navigate back to our Research Databases page to renew.

Our newest database, Newsreel, is a free, non-partisan news app for anyone looking for an alternative to TikTok, Instagram, and other endless scroll social platforms. Something nifty about it is that it "gamifies" the news with quizzes after

stories so you can see how your news literacy stacks up against your neighbors (fully optional).

Last, the Palace Project is a free eBook and eAudiobook app that consolidates the Mark Twain Library and CT State Library book collections into one easy-to-use tool. I have been telling folks who have been hitting their Hoopla borrowing limit all about the Palace Project, because it's another place to find digital materials to borrow for free. The Library has so much to offer, all for free with your library card. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

I just started reading Ann Patchett's newest novel, *Whistler*. And I just learned she is about to receive the 2026 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. Her fourth novel, *Bel Canto*, published in 2001, won the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Woman's Prize for fiction and *The Dutch House*, her acclaimed 2019 novel was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. I could go on about her talent and accolades.

I am just 20 pages into reading *Whistler* and, as with all her previous novels, I am anxious to find some time just to sit and continue reading. *Whistler* opens with 58-year-old Daphne and her husband at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City when they realize they are being followed by an older man, who turns out to be Daphne's former stepfather. This chance reunion ends up breaking down decades of separation and

begins a journey of second chances, love, and family reconciliation.

Whistler is Patchett's tenth novel, and while some reviewers recommend reading them in their order of publication, I highly recommend every one and in any order. I have read them all and a few of my favorites are *Bel Canto*, *Commonwealth*, *The Dutch House*, and *Tom Lake*. She is one of my best-loved contemporary authors. ■

Notes from a neighbor *Flags of our friends*

By Carter Wiseman



Photo licensed through Shutterstock

England has a long tradition of flying flags over Buckingham Palace to let their subjects know if the monarch is in residence. Why that is necessary mystifies this Yank. Do the Brits have to behave better when the king is in town rather than at Balmoral? In any case, this practice set me to wondering about my own flag routine.

For many years, I would haul out a ladder to climb up the oak in our front yard early on July 4 and hang an enormous American flag. It measured five-by-nine-and-a-

half feet, and was given to me by the Veterans Administration after the death of my father, who spent a year in uniform during World War I. The size meant it could cover a casket, but I thought it should wave instead.

With time, the flag was battered by weather and grew ragged, so I put it away in one of those triangular boxes you see in the background of television shots of patriotic politicians. I missed the annual ritual, but I did not miss climbing the oak. So, I substituted a three-by-five-foot replacement ordered from Amazon. Instead of the oak, I hung it on a low-hanging beam next to our back door.

When my wife, who is of Irish parentage, suggested that I move beyond Old Glory, I quickly complied in time for St. Patrick's Day. Not long afterwards, our trash collector asked about the changed

flags. When I explained the system, Donny seemed miffed. "I'm Italian," he said. "What about me?"

That opened a range of opportunities. Our dog is a Lhasa Apso, a Tibetan breed. He now has a flag of his own. So does our house-cleaning team, who are Brazilian. The people who cut our grass and plow our snow are greeted by the colors of Costa Rica. When my grand-nephew comes to town, I break out the Mexican banner.

My flag locker is now stocked to welcome other workers, relatives, and friends from Scotland, Austria, Chicago, Germany, Buffalo (Bills), Ukraine, and the European Union. Ahead of this year's July 4, I wondered if I should rethink my original plan for the holiday.

In light of recent world events, a waggish English friend has suggested that we fly the Union Jack. I'm not there yet. ■

Garden to Glass

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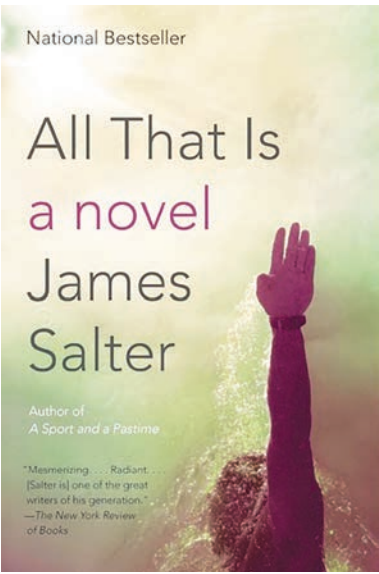
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BOOK REVIEW

All That Is

By James Salter

369 pages / Knopf/Doubleday Publishing Group



especially to events that cause unsympathetic feelings. And that might be the point.

Curiously, Salter spares no humiliation in describing accurately what happened to Philip (and, we suspect, by extension, to him), but the artist James Salter lets the reader know exactly how he feels. The author shrewdly forces the reader into making a judgement on Philip's behavior that will indict his choices in the moment while leaving the author elusive to criticism. But artfully, so that sour judgements, while clear to the reader, are observed though rarely explicit.

Salter's last novel, *All That Is*, was published two years before he died in 2015 at the age of 90. James Salter was a first-rate writer, who wrote books to clarify experience. *All That Is* presents the 20th-century as male-dominated, misogynistic, and with characters that express attitudes of their time (like the racist father of Philip's first wife). In this way, Salter presents his zeitgeist autobiographically, for analysis and thoughtful criticism. But it remains a job he forces the reader to take up.

If *All That Is* makes a point about the life of Philip Bowman, it is that he made the best of what gifts he discovered were suitable to exploit in the world he was born into. And, as it seems from this book, James Salter, soldier, citizen, and writer, lived according to his lights in a time of succeeding conflict and conundrum, war and peace. And for this brilliantly conceived autobiographical exercise, the 1950s and '60s post-war America was his time and place. ■

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

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Turning a lifelong hobby into a full-time business with Scott’s Handyworks

By Justin Reynolds



Photo by Tony Gale for Redding Sentinel

After more than 40 years of building, fixing, and improving things as a hobby, Scott Gunst turned his long-time handyman skills into a full-time business in 2022, launching Scott’s Handyworks.

“I’ve always been building things and making things,” Gunst said. “I specialize in carpentry – trim work, molding, framing closets, hanging doors – but I do a little bit of everything: light electrical, plumbing repairs, interior masonry work, and ceiling repairs. I do a lot of repair work when people are prepping to paint their house and notice wood rot on the outside.”

Before starting Scott’s Handyworks, Gunst spent his career in banking. But woodworking was always in the background. Gunst attributes learning his handyman skills to his father, who was a master carpenter by trade.

“I take a lot of pride in my workmanship — I like to sit back when I’m done and take it all in,” he said. “I am not going to walk away and say ‘I’m finished’ if things could have been done better. I treat client projects like they were at my own house. I’ve seen a lot of sloppy work out there, and I want everything I do to be perfect.”

For Gunst, no two days are the same. Usually, he sees two or three clients each day, picking and choosing the projects he takes on while recommending other workers for tasks outside his purview.

“I’m not picky, I just don’t take on anything that’s overwhelming,” he said. “The biggest job I’ve done was completely gutting a kitchen — taking down walls, making sure everything was structurally sound. I have my go-to people I turn to for something I wouldn’t take on myself. If somebody wants the whole interior of their house painted, for example, I’d recommend painters.”

When meeting with a new client, Gunst typically visits the property, discusses the project, and explains what’s feasible, what isn’t, and how long the project will likely take.

“I don’t quote a job right there

and then, because sometimes I have to research and buy special materials,” he said. “But you’ll get an estimate within a few days.”

Gunst said many homeowners underestimate repair work, overestimate their own skills, and end up creating larger, more expensive problems.

“They can get themselves into trouble,” he said. “If something doesn’t come out right, or if something isn’t properly supported, or if something is put together incorrectly, there can be real issues.”

Some clients even have furniture and other items shipped directly to him from places like Costco, Ikea, and Amazon so he can assemble and install them.

“I put a lot of stuff together,” he laughed.

Gunst and his wife moved from Scarsdale, NY to Redding in 2024 after retiring and downsizing.

“I love living in the woods, I love nature, and I’m an outdoors person,” he said. “My wife loves the serenity and solitude of where we live.”

Gunst’s new full-time gig aligns with their new pace of life in Redding.

“I love this work very much,” he said. “It gives me the freedom to be active and create.” ■

For more information, contact Scott at (845) 222-4683

A letter to my grandfather

By Laurie Heiss



Photo by Laurie Heiss

Dear Papa,

I’m writing just after midnight – yesterday was July 3, your birthday. You would be so old were you still here. I know how much our family loved the 4th holiday, always kicked-off by your birthday. I am flying your old flag at my farm out in middle-western Connecticut – I’ve made my home far away from Northwoods, Poolwood Farm, Sun-Meadow Farm, DuWayne Motel, and Chicago – my, my we had a lot of Midwestern land back then.

As for the old flag – it is a bit worn out... but has been with me in Redding for a long time. As for my farm, it is 1/20th the size of Sun-Meadow, but I carry on some of our farming traditions that thread back to our country’s battle for freedoms in the Pennsylvania farming countryside. I carry the DAR number of our earliest ancestors; kind of goofy, but I cherish our roots. As for the flag, the original pole is shorter now and splintered. I’ve wrapped it in good ol’ USA duct tape; it’ll survive.

The fabric itself has faded, almost pink... but all the flag-waving love of country our family has carried for the last 100 years is woven into it. I’m pretty sure you and Gramma were conservative, as farmers and industrious, small business owners. Certainly, Gramma’s Swedish parents were the soul of America, each of them starting businesses – with just enough left over to put all of their great grandkids through school... that is the dream, yes? We never talked about “party,” but I hope you’d be proud that I’ve been fighting for that old fashioned dream of America that we were raised on, next to the great cornfields that fed our Brown Swiss herd.

I’ve been struggling to eschew any label, but I’ve been fighting alongside people from all different backgrounds who love this country, our freedoms, and its moral ideals for nine years now. Not what I’d planned for my third career! You’d be dismayed now, as would our patriot ancestors, your son who served in the Army, my other Vietnam vet uncle, and those many Pennsylvanian farmers who protected that idea and then our flag.

I cherish it more than you would ever know, Papa. And I will listen to and work with anyone to make that tattered flag rebound, and mean something to the world. How much I loved our family’s 20th-century life unfolding in and west of Chicago. It is what I feel when I look at our old family flag, no matter how tattered it might have become. It is fixable; I will always fly it on your birthday and this country’s birthday. ■

Your loving granddaughter,
Laurie

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Against the odds, G-Town Arts celebrates 10 years in Georgetown

By Donna Christopher

Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center (G-Town Arts) marks its 10-year anniversary milestone with a June 20 opening of *Summer Love*, a month-long salon-style exhibition that fills the gallery from floor to ceiling with work by 93 artists. More than just another group show, it pays homage to the gallery’s community, to the artists who have contributed to its identity, and to the idea that serious art can thrive in an intimate, accessible space.

Unlike past tightly-themed exhibitions, *Summer Love* is intentionally broad, surveying artists from Amsterdam to Redding and New York, many of whom have made their homes in Connecticut and all who have shown at the gallery over the last decade.

A few days ahead of the show, Julie Durkin Marty, who opened the gallery 10 years ago with her husband Bob Marty (where they both also have studio space), shared what it means for the gallery to turn 10.

“I’ve tried to make it super accessible for people who aren’t ‘art people.’ Our goal is to make the gallery really casual. During Georgetown Day, a lot of people would come in, and they’re like, ‘I don’t know anything about art.’

You don’t have to know anything to be interested. I know a lot about arts, so that’s what I’m here for,” Marty explained.

Marty said visitors to the gallery can expect to see a full range in this exhibition: painting, sculpture, installation, photography, and works on paper.

G-Town Arts is a rare survival story: a small, free gallery that has become a serious professional platform for artists and an accessible cultural home for the community, in a time when many similar spaces have disappeared.

The 10-year milestone is a huge accomplishment and a sign of the gallery’s importance to the local arts ecosystem, Marty noted.

Abstract painter Stephen Maine describes his work featured in *Summer Love*, titled P16-0902, as a “dappled field of color.”

Maine’s wife, fellow artist Gelah Penn, of West Cornwall by way of Brooklyn also has work highlighted in the show.

“It was pretty obvious to me there’s a lot of love in the room, and many people who seem genuinely interested in the work they were viewing, not just their own. It’s a fun, lively group, and the level of the work is really good,” Maine said.

Moving to Connecticut from New York City eight years ago has been positive for the working artists.

“One of the reasons we’re glad we did is that we found a vibrant art scene and serious working artists outside the city,” Maine said. As a curator, writer, and art critic, he finds that reassuring.

Penn creates small-scale material-based abstractions using silk-screen, mesh, tubing, and fabrics. Her works in the Phantom Series are some eight or nine feet high. For *Summer Love*, she is exhibiting a smaller piece titled “Small Phantom #2” from 2024, which she describes as “layered and atmospheric, mysterious and compelling.”

Of the gallery, she said, “It’s a great community, because Marty manages to bring in a lot of good artists from all areas. It’s very nice.”

“The art viewing energy that used to be in the city, Brooklyn, Manhattan, the Bronx, is diffusing, but it’s getting stronger as it moves out of the city,” Maine added.

Katerina Lanfranco is a Brooklyn-based painter, sculptor, and mixed media artist who has been deeply involved with G-Town Arts since its inception. Not only has she exhibited her work there multiple

times, including most recently in *Through the Looking Glass* and the current *Summer Love* show, but she also has curated two exhibitions at the gallery.

“Nobody’s intimidated once they’re in. It’s getting them in the door,” she said.

Her art explores the intersections of nature, science, and fantasy, blending botanical illustration, sacred geometry, and mysticism. She describes G-Town Arts as “a very unique and special endeavor, because it’s run by two professional artists who love art and love supporting the artistic community and dialogue.”

Lanfranco highlighted the gallery’s professionalism, the breadth of its exhibitions, and its welcoming, artist-run spirit. Unlike many galleries that feel transactional or hierarchical, she finds G-Town Arts to be “a community” with “a generosity of spirit that starts from Bob and Julie and just really permeates the space.”

Her work on view are two triptychs painted during a summer residency at Lake George, dynamic landscapes that capture the essence of summer, and a recent painting inspired by the Chelsea Flower Show, exploring the interplay be-

tween wild and cultivated nature.

Mary Bailey, a sculptor and writer, is another key figure in the G-Town Arts community. A Redding resident, Bailey praised Marty for her dedication and the impact she’s had on the local arts scene.

Now on view is her wall-relief sculpture titled “Clouds Are Messages from Aliens” a new direction for the artist that blends her interests in writing and sculpture. The piece, a carved basswood cloud formed on a birch plywood base, floats off the wall and incorporates hand-lettered text, reflecting her fascination with the relationship between words and images. Bailey credits G-Town Arts, and Marty in particular, for challenging the idea that serious art only happens in New York.

After visiting numerous New York galleries, Bailey insists that “the stuff Julie’s showing is as good as what’s happening in New York.”

“In this little corner of Georgetown, she’s making something happen, and she’s making people pay attention.” ■

Summer Love is on view through July 25 at 5 Main Street. Learn more at gtownarts.com

OBITUARY

Jo-an Blanchard Brooks
November 10, 1930 – April 21, 2026



Jo-an Blanchard Brooks

“I saw myself as a devotee of nature – keeping the world in its natural state, to the extent that I could.”

Jo-an Blanchard Brooks, of Redding, died on April 21, 2026, at the family home, surrounded by her children. She was 95.

Born in New York City on November 10, 1930, she graduated from the Gardner School and then from Cornell University, where she met her husband, David Hopkinson Brooks. They married in June 1952 and raised four children on the Brooks family farm in Redding.

Jo-an devoted her life to land conservation. She helped form the Fairfield-Litchfield Environmental Council, lobbied for the Inland-Wetland Act and the creation of the Department of Environmental

Protection, and served as the Land Use Coordinator for the Town of Redding until her retirement in 2018. In 2025, the Town honored her contributions with a dedicated plaque alongside the redbud tree planted when she retired.

She was predeceased by David Brooks, her husband of 71 years. She is survived by her four children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A woman of strong convictions and an indomitable will, she will be deeply missed. ■

A burial service and accompanying gathering is scheduled for later this summer, when Jo-an Brooks and David Brooks will be buried together. Plans for the gathering will be announced to all.

Neighboring towns adopt bans on rodenticides / continued from page 1

from uncontrolled internal bleeding before passing a “super lethal” build-up of toxins onto the birds of prey and mammals that hunt them.

In April, Newtown became the first Connecticut town to ban both first- and second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides on all municipal properties, a measure to protect wildlife.

The Newtown Conservation Commission led the charge to ban these at Town-owned properties, and the Board of Selectman in Newtown on April 20, 2026 unanimously voted to ban the anticoagulants.

Rodenticide bans are challenging for municipal officials overseeing historic buildings that may be difficult to seal off to prevent rodent infestation, however.

The concern is genuine among officials in Redding, where Town Hall currently has mice. It is a building where mouse infestations have come and gone since First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton arrived there, she said.

“There’s mouse poop in my drawer right now,” she noted.

While there is no official discussion to ban rodenticides on Town properties, she said she did request the removal of a bait box last year at the Community Garden which is adjacent to a property that attracts birds.

“I am willing to look into whether we used an outside contractor and am having an ongoing discussion with the current provider based on what I have learned. I was unaware that we had bait traps outside at the time, and they were removed last year... It’s a legitimate issue. There is also the reality that some of these buildings are large and, as a practical matter, limited staff are keeping up with the rodent population. I am open to alternatives if a current provider can do a snap trap service. There have been periods of time when we had no rodent control. I do know we have mice in our building,” she said. “It’s been a long discussion regarding methods, such as sonic repellents and rodenticides whether they are anticoagulants, and there is no discussion about a ban at this time,” Pemberton said.

Despite the practical challenges of controlling pests in older buildings, regional initiatives are growing across Connecticut and New England to restrict the use of first- and second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) on Town-owned properties.

According to reporting by Boston.com (Boston Globe Media Partner), at least 48 Massachusetts municipalities have banned second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides on town-owned property, with 20 of those communities

seeking to extend the restriction to private property.

Newtown’s policy does not affect Newtown Public Schools, because the Board of Education is already prohibited from using those rodenticides under State law, First Selectman Bruce Walczak said.

He said he initially met with the Newtown Conservation Commission members Lisa Shirk and Chair Holly Kocet, who “did the research” and brought the policy to the Board of Selectmen and advocated for alternatives to anticoagulant rodenticides. Since the ban’s adoption, Kocet said the Commission has sought to encourage other municipalities to follow suit by contacting local conservation commissions.

They presented to officials in Southbury, where a ban passed unanimously by the Southbury Board of Selectmen on May 21, 2026 to prohibit the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) on all Town-owned properties and facilities.

On June 8, 2026 representatives from Newtown’s Conservation Commission and Friends of Animals presented information about the efficacy of a ban to the Ridgefield Conservation Commission. Following that meeting, the Ridgefield Conservation Commission also unanimously voted to carry out an initiative restricting the use of SGARs.

Ridgefield Conservation Commission Chairman Erik Keller told the *Sentinel* the presentation was “a master class of events” related to rodenticides.

“Three dead hawks have been found on Town property that had ingested an animal it predated on,” he said. The birds were found last March on Ridgefield’s McKeon Farm and were suspected of either having bird flu or rodenticide poisoning, according to Keller.

“The biggest thing we can do to prevent this is education,” he said.

The Easton, Redding, and Region 9 school districts, as part of a review of procedures, have revised their pest management program to transition away from first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides and adopt a rodent control product that utilizes Vitamin D3 (colecalciferol) as its active ingredient. Director of Facilities and Operations Mike D’Agostino shared a June 12 memo regarding integrated pest management with the *Sentinel*.

“This change reflects the Districts’ commitment to reducing potential risks to wildlife and domestic animals. Vitamin D3-based rodenticides are generally considered to present a lower risk of secondary poisoning to birds of prey, as well as household pets such as dogs and cats, when compared to traditional anticoagulant rodenticides.”

In Newtown, alternative pest control methods now being used include snap traps. The Commission also emphasizes exclusion, including sealing entry points for rodents into buildings, and sanitation as effective alternatives to rodenticides.

“It’s only mostly in the fall when they come in looking for shelter. There’s never really been an infestation. We believe that exclusion, closing up those spaces, and sanitation are key, as the first thing people should be doing,” Kocet said.

Friends of Animals, based in Darien, protects Connecticut’s birds of prey from rodenticides by advocating for legislative bans on toxic second-generation anticoagulants, publicizing wildlife toxicity data, and promoting non-lethal, preventative rodent control methods.

Their Media/Government Relations Manager Nicole Rivard pointed to 2026 testing from A Place Called Hope to give context to the harm rodenticides pose to birds of prey. She noted the testing requires a necropsy at the University of Connecticut and an anticoagulant rodenticide panel test at Michigan State University.

Out of 18 dead birds, 17 specimens tested positive for second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides.

“Prior to the 2026 round of testing, A Place Called Hope was up to 101 completed tests on killed birds and animals with 78 being positive for SGARS, including five bald eagles, seven great horned owls, an endangered barn owl, and 56 hawks,” Rivard said.

“Friends of Animals has also talked with Dara Reid from Wildlife in Crisis in Weston, the largest wildlife rehab center in the state. She estimates that at least 100 birds of prey and 40 foxes die in her care from SGARs annually.”

“Unfortunately, rodenticide and pesticide-ridden animals continue to come through our doors at even higher levels as time goes on,” Reid told Friends of Animals. “The most notable thing we’ve seen is an uptick in bald eagle poisonings as they move into suburban areas.”

Rivard said the influx of new homeowners to the state in recent years has added to the problem because one of the first things new homeowners do is hire a pest control company and a lawn service and they have no clue these companies are using the most toxic poisons.

“Rodenticides are supposed to be used as a worse-case scenario, not a preventative,” Rivard posited. “We promote sanitation and exclusion. All you need to do is tell your pest control company, ‘Don’t use these.’” ■

Ask The Redding Gardener

By Sean McNamara



Photo by Susan Clark

Sean,
Any idea what might be digging into the base of my cherry tree?

Susan, Redding

Well, Susan, thanks for the photo – I can see your cherry tree has some uninvited underground guests who decided to start their own little excavation project right at the root flare.

In Connecticut, the prime suspect is almost certainly a vole (meadow vole or pine vole). These little rascals are like the sneaky tenants of the garden world – they move in quietly, tunnel right against the trunk, and help themselves to the sweet, thin bark and roots of fruit trees like cherries. They make small, neat holes and shallow runways under the mulch without leaving big dirt piles like moles do.

Chipmunks are also common around here, and they do dig holes, but theirs are usually a little larger, and they’re more interested in storing acorns than girdling your favorite tree. This tight, persistent digging right at the base has “vole” written all over it.

The good news is you spotted it early, before they threw a serious house party. Here’s what I’d do:

Check if they’re still home: Place a small stick or leaf over the hole and check back in 12–24 hours. If it’s cleared away, they’re still active.

Rock ‘n Roots Festival to share music and light up the skies / continued from page 1

“Friends and families can relax and gather in a comfortable setting, enjoy an outstanding lengthy concert with a variety of bands along with good food, and end the day with a spectacular fireworks display,” said Dimon.

Rob Blick, Director of Redding Park and Recreation, noted it has become a beloved local event. “People LOVE it. It’s great that we have an event like this in town,” he said.

Besides the fun, Dimon explained Rock ‘n Roots serves a dual purpose.

“It’s a day to bring people to this historic setting to celebrate our country’s history, and also, to raise funding for the preservation and operational expenses at Lonetown Farm that was built circa 1788,” she said, noting the event also supports RHS’s mission to preserve unique landmarks throughout Redding. “This event showcases a primary historical area in this town – Lonetown Farm – that encompasses the Lonetown Farm House and Museum, and the Zalm-on Read Barn, the site first occupied and owned by descendants of the Read and Bartlett families, founding families of this town.”

Musical performances will feature a variety of Americana music provided by Redding and area bands/musicians including The Vondrooks – a rock band that plays ‘70s/‘80s/‘90s covers; Nick Depuy – an award-winning singer-songwriter-guitarist who plays folk, jazz, blues, and pop originals; Fairfield Collective – described as Mumford and Sons meets Bluegrass- Indy/Americana; The Mystery Train Band – Connecticut’s premier Jerry Garcia Band project;

Evict the tenants: Pull the mulch back 6–12 inches away from the trunk. Voles love that cozy cover – take it away, and they’re much less comfortable.

Install a barrier: Wrap the base with 1/4-inch hardware cloth, burying it 4–6 inches deep and extending it about 12–18 inches above ground. It’s the best long-term defense.

Trapping: Simple mouse-sized snap traps baited with peanut butter or apple slices placed in the runways are very effective.

Bottom line, Susan: Your cherry tree has a case of the voles, but it’s very fixable. A little targeted action now should stop the digging and keep your tree safe and happy for many more springs.

If you notice more holes appearing or want help narrowing down the best approach for your yard, just send another photo or drop me a note. We’ll get those little diggers moving on to someone else’s yard. ■

*Happy gardening,
Sean, The Redding Gardener*

Got more questions about critters, trees, or anything else popping up (or digging in) in your yard? Feel free to drop me an e-mail anytime or stop by Redding Nursery at 73 Hill Road.

and Iris Lies – a five-piece band playing folk and rock covers and original music. To specifically honor this year’s 250th celebration, three students, James Smeed, and brothers Hunter Lo and Noah Lo will perform patriotic music as the fife and drum trio, “Revolutionary Fife and Drum.”

Attendees are encouraged to enjoy the day by bringing along chairs, blankets, picnic baskets, and coolers. Pop-up tents, large beach umbrellas, grills, and other cooking implements are not allowed. No alcohol is sold. Food trucks will also be on hand, including Dough Boy Pizza, El Taco Loco, and Polar Pete’s Ice Cream.

“It’s a fun, friendly event. We hope to provide a memorable day of relaxation enhanced by food, inspiring music, and a spectacular fireworks show,” said Dimon who attends every year and volunteers her time to planning, setup, and take down along with other dedicated board members, volunteers, and RHS members and friends. “I enjoy the day of the event when everything comes together, and I can walk the grounds welcoming and thanking attendees, the musician and production crew, all the volunteers, and sponsors, including our Town’s Fire, EMS, and police. I truly wish this to be a welcoming event.” ■

For more information and tickets, visit reddinghistory.org/rock-n-roots-revival-1 or call (203) 938-9095

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Acoustic Series at Topstone – Mark Rust Thursday, July 9 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Free admission to Topstone from 3:00 p.m. onwards Topstone Park 72 Topstone Road reddingct.gov/ parks-and-recreation	Redding Grange Annual Garden Produce Drive Wednesdays, July 15 and July 22 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Drop off surplus garden produce and nourish our community Redding Grange, The Granite Church, Mark Twain Library 399 Newtown Turnpike, 5 North Main Street, 439 Redding Road reddinggrange.org	Teen Night at the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton Friday, July 17 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Water slide, snack shack, basketball, games, and more 170 Cross Highway bgcre.net/summer-hangouts \$, R	Rock ‘N Roots Music Festival and Fireworks Show Saturday, July 18 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Live bands, food trucks, and fireworks presented by Redding Historical Society Rain date: July 19 Lonetown Farm 43 Lonetown Road reddinghistory.org/ rock-n-roots-revival-1 \$
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ARTS

Saturday, June 20 – Saturday, July 25 Summer Love 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays Tenth anniversary exhibition G-Town Arts 5 Main Street gtownarts.com	Thursday, July 9 Acoustic Series at Topstone – Mark Rust 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Free admission to Topstone from 3:00 p.m. onwards Topstone Park 72 Topstone Road reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation	Friday, July 10 Sir Tone and Twang 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. All-vinyl sets of funk, soul, disco, twangy old country, rock, and everything in between Nod Hill Brewery 137 Ethan Allen Highway Ridgefield nod-hill-brewery.turntable-tickets.com \$	Sunday, July 12 Chamber Music Reading 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Sight read chamber music and meet other local musicians The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org R	Sundays, July 12 and July 19 Concerts on the Green 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. David Morgan (July 12) Ethan Fiske and the Big Love Band (July 19) Redding Town Green 100 Hill Road reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation	Wednesday, July 15 Old Time Jam 7:30 p.m. Calling all banjos, fiddles, and guitars! Play or come enjoy live Appalachian music 5 N. Main Street, Georgetown thegranitechurch.org	Saturday, July 18 Bear With Us Music Festival 3:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Music festival held to raise money for suicide prevention and mental health Greenwood Features 269 Greenwood Avenue Bethel linktr.ee/bearwithusfest06801 \$, R	Saturday, July 25 Artist-in-Residence Open Studio Program 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Meet July’s Artist, Jane Skafte, enjoy arts activities, and learn about the Artist-in-Residence program Weir Farm National Historical Park 735 Nod Hill Road Ridgefield nps.gov/wefa/index.htm
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CHILDREN | TEENS

Saturday, July 11 Cub Scouts Summer Splash 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Water activities, crafts, challenges Non-members welcome, grades K-5 Hoyt Scout Reservation 3 Marchant Road campmatch.ca \$, R	Saturday, July 11 Story, Hike and Meet and Greet 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Storytime, meet an ambassador animal, and enjoy a guided hike on the trails Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents R	Monday, July 13 Rockin’ and Reading with Al De Cant 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Interactive musical event for families with young children Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Tuesday, July 14 Family Checkout Chat & Chew 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Donuts, bagels, toys, and books Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Friday, July 17 Teen Night at the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Water slide, snack shack, basketball, games, and more 170 Cross Highway bgcre.net/summer-hangouts \$, R	Wednesday, July 15 Oyster Shucking Class 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Nod Hill Brewery 137 Ethan Allen Highway Ridgefield nod-hill-brewery.turntable-tickets.com \$, R	Friday, July 17 Refreshments with Friends Summer Picnic 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Snacks, beverages, and good company Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road	Thursday, July 23 Garden to Glass: A Botanical Cocktail Social 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Enjoy a botanical cocktail/mocktail tasting, seasonal savory bites, a hydroponic garden and greenhouse tour, and pop-up shop Hosted by Clover & Clay at Redding Flower Farm 130 Picketts Ridge Road cloverandclayct.com \$, R
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NATURE

Sunday, July 12 Nature Center Open House 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Meet and learn about ambassador animals Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road, Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents	Wednesday, July 15 Beyond the Trail: Take a Walk with our Executive Director 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Adults-only easy hike Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road, Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents R	Wednesdays, July 15 and July 22 Redding Grange Annual Garden Produce Drive 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Drop off surplus garden produce and nourish our community Redding Grange, The Granite Church, Mark Twain Library 399 Newtown Turnpike, 5 North Main Street, 439 Redding Road reddinggrange.org	Saturday, July 18 July Astronomy 9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Join team of volunteer astronomers on Astronomy Hill New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org/events/july-astronomy_2026 \$, R
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SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Saturday, July 11 Calligraphy that inspired a nation: Learn to write like America’s founders 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Use a dip nib and ink and scribe a line from the Declaration of Independence Wilton Historical Society 224 Danbury Road, Wilton https://wiltonhistorical.org/events/event/calligraphy-that-inspired-a-nation-learn-to-write-like-americas-founders/ \$, R	Saturday, July 18 Rock ‘N Roots Music Festival and Fireworks Show 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Live bands, food trucks, and fireworks presented by Redding Historical Society Rain date: July 19 Lonetown Farm 43 Lonetown Road reddinghistory.org/rock-n-roots-revival-1 \$	Wednesday, July 22 The State of Primary Care in the U.S. 12:15 p.m. Lunch from Ridgefield Cheese Shop 12:45 p.m. Presentation by Dr. Howard Selinger Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road E-mail mpilato@reddingct.gov R
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RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Sundays at 10:00 a.m. 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemlutheranct.org	Calvary Independent Baptist Church Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. / Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m. Nursery provided for all services. 711 Redding Road cibcredding.org	Christ Church, Episcopal Sundays at 9:00 a.m. 184 Cross Highway christchurchredding.org	First Church of Christ, Congregational Sundays at 10:00 a.m. 25 Cross Highway firstchurchredding.org	Long Ridge United Methodist Sundays at 11:30 a.m. 201 Long Ridge Road Danbury longridgeumc.com	Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish St. Patrick Church: Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 p.m. Sunday Mass: 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. Confessions: Saturdays 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. and Mondays and Thursdays 7:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m. and before/after Weekday Mass Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays and Thursdays 7:00 p.m. 169 Black Rock Turnpike sacredheart-stpat.org	Georgetown Oratory of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m. Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 12:00 p.m. (Latin) Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30 a.m. Wednesday: 6:00 pm. (Latin) Holy Days: 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. First Fridays and Saturdays: 8:30 a.m. Confessions: Saturdays 7:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. and Wednesdays 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration: Saturdays 5:00 p.m. following Vigil Mass 30 Church Street	Temple B’nai Chaim No services scheduled 82 Portland Avenue templebnaichaim.org	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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MEETINGS

Thursday, July 9 Redding Historic Cemetery Committee 2:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, July 9 Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Conference Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	Thursday, July 9 Redding Fire District #2 7:00 p.m. West Redding Firehouse 306 Umpawaug Road	Monday, July 13 Park and Recreation Commission 7:00 p.m. Redding Community Center / Multi-Purpose Room 37 Lonetown Road	Tuesday, July 14 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	Tuesday, July 14 Redding Fire District #1 7:00 p.m. 186 Black Rock Turnpike	Wednesday, July 15 Water Pollution Control Commission 7:30 p.m. Virtual	Thursday, July 16 Democratic Town Committee 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Monday, July 20 Board of Selectmen 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, July 21 Zoning Board of Appeals 7:00 p.m. Virtual	Tuesday, July 21 Conservation Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Wednesday, July 22 Zoning Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, July 23 Poll Worker Training 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Monday, July 27 OPEB Trust Board 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	Monday, July 27 Board of Finance 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, July 28 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	** Subscribe to e-mailed meeting alerts and agendas at reddingct.gov/subscribe
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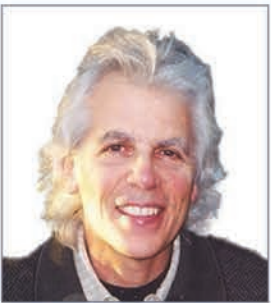
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