

# REDDING SENTINEL



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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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## Putnam Park becomes camp once again as Scouts mark America 250

By Rob Sample

The site of General Putnam's Revolutionary War encampment was filled with more than 275 Scouts from the Aquila District of the Connecticut Yankee Scouting Council last weekend, as the groups took part in an "America 250" celebration from May 15-17 at Putnam Memorial State Park.

The event kicked off with a campout Friday night, with most of the participants remaining for two nights of camping and packing up Sunday morning to return home. Twenty-seven Scouting troops took part in the event; though it was run by the Aquila District, which includes Cub Scouts Pack 118 and

*Continued on page 5*



Photo by Caleb Cunningham

Fog over the Saugatuck Reservoir after rainfall. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, e-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org).

## Beyond Barlow: Redding high schoolers find their niche at regional magnet schools

By Rob Sample

Redding students Daniel Anderson and Jace Simson depart for school at much the same time as their high-school peers throughout town – they even ride a school bus. But instead of a journey of a few miles to Joel Barlow High School, the ride is about 15 miles and about 25 minutes longer.

Their destination: the Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Multi-Magnet Campus, where Anderson, Simson, and about a half-dozen other students from Redding attend high school. Fairchild Wheeler is a magnet high school, one of several in Fairfield County that Redding students can attend. It draws students from as far away as Waterbury.

Magnet schools are the product of the 1996 *Sheff v. O'Neill* court decision, in which the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the funding formula for Hartford-area schools resulted in inequalities

between poorer, urban school systems and the richer, suburban districts that surrounded them. Connecticut set up a statewide system of magnet schools, many of them in urban areas, to address the disparity.

Partly as a result, magnet schools actively recruit suburban kids to their campuses. The mix of magnet schools in Fairfield County includes three schools that offer half-day programs: Students in Redding and Easton who are enrolled in those schools attend Joel Barlow High School for half the school day, and the magnet school for the remainder.

Magnet schools often offer students an educational focus they might not otherwise have in a traditional setting. In addition, each school has an admissions process, which can be rigorous during years when a particular school becomes especially popular.

### Special curriculum or focus

Stamford's Academy of Information Technology and Engineering (AITE) and Fairchild Wheeler are all about technology. AITE Principal Tina Rivera said her school offers an immersive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) education with concentrations in biomedical sciences, computer science, and engineering. It also offers college-credit courses and online options, plus career and technical education courses.

"It's a wonderful opportunity and in Redding, I do an information session each year at John Read Middle School to acquaint students with AITE," Rivera noted. "We also have two open houses each year, one in November and one in January. We like to get the word out

*Continued on page 7*

## REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

### Summer at Topstone begins

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

Memorial Day Weekend is, for many, the unofficial kick-off to summer. For Topstone – Redding's only municipal park – it is the opening of the summer season at the beach and recreational area.

The park is a woody beauty, nestled between Topstone Road and Old Redding Road in West

Redding and encompassing the 25-acre Topstone Pond. Formerly part of the estate of renowned photographer Edward Steichen, the Town purchased a portion of the park's land in 1971.

While hikers, playground-goers, and dog walkers have been enjoying the miles of trails and its

playground year-round, the 280-acre park truly comes alive in the summer when recreation on the pond opens to pass holders. Several improvements to Topstone's offerings were completed in 2024 through funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, including a new playground, beach water table, and shade structure.

Opening weekend will be Saturday May 23 to Monday, May 25 this year, with swimming, kayaking, paddle boating, row boating, and canoeing available at the beach with lifeguards on duty. The beach will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on opening weekend and will continue to be open weekends only through June 22 until Redding schools are out of session. Then, the beach area will be open daily through the summer until August 26, reopening for the weekends of August 29 – 30 and September 5 – 7.

*Continued on page 4*

## Georgetown project to be incorporated into Town Plan of Conservation and Development

By Rocco Valluzzo

Though the Planning Commission has a large project in front of it for the next two years – updating the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) – they do not want to wait to integrate the Georgetown Revitalization plan into the Town's main planning document, which is updated every ten years.

The Planning Commission reached a consensus to perform a targeted "revamp" of Chapter 10 rather than waiting for the full 2028 POCD update. The group is working to align its schedule with that of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee and the Board of Selectmen in the coming months to focus on those updates to accommodate the new plan developed by Pirie Associates for Georgetown Revitalization.

Suzanne Goldberg of BFJ Planning of New York is joining as a staff consultant on July 1, 2026 to lead the technical drafting of the update. She has a background in city and urban planning and will be the primary point of contact for the Planning Commission.

"Their [BFJ Planning's] expertise is updates to POCDs and planning regulations and zoning regulations," said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at a Commission meeting on May 12. "One of the first tasks will be related to zoning as well. They'll be working on updates to our zoning regulations that are required under Public Act 25-1. So, they'll have a lot to do."

Planning Commission Chair Laurie Heiss emphasized that a year-long delay to wait for the full POCD cycle would be unacceptable. The Commission intends to have the Chapter 10 amendment in place by the end of this year.

"For us to put out a year's delay, that would not be in our job descriptions," said Heiss. "I think we discuss that plan, look at what's in Chapter 10, be ready, so that when we have someone in place on July 1, we're kind of ready to look at this and discuss the entire POCD together."

Commission member Steve Gagnon raised concerns about the redundancy of updating Chapter 10 now only to revisit it during the full POCD update in 2027-2028. Heiss noted that the POCD can be amended mid-stream as a "refresh."

According to Pemberton, one of the tasks the new consultant will have is creating a comprehensive schedule that works backward from the May 2028 POCD deadline. This will include verifying the specific statutory timelines and reviewing requirements for the Board of Selectmen regarding POCD

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# Municipal meetings deal with distasteful modern phenomenon: “Zoom bombing”

By Jessie Wright

At the virtual meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission earlier this month, First Select-woman Julia Pemberton was in the middle of a discussion with a group of residents about the location of the Community Garden when a surprise took over the Zoom screen: what appeared to be a graphic, AI-generated pornographic video. A few gasps and a shocked “What is that?” could be heard before Commission Chair Angela Caes shut down the meeting, ending the Zoom session and ridding it of the unwelcome participant.

Sentinel reporter Rocco Valluzzo recalled that something similar had happened during a virtual meeting of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Committee a few months earlier. The host of that meeting was able to remove the unwelcome participant and block the account’s reentry to the meeting, and the gathering continued.

Redding is not alone in this issue. The phenomenon, known as “Zoom bombing” occurs when accounts – either run by a human with nefarious intent or programmed bots – troll online listings of public Zoom meetings and join to disrupt them with inappropriate or

offensive content. Municipal meetings are especially vulnerable, because legal statutes require that they be publicly noticed and accessible to join.

While the occurrence was reportedly more common during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the volume of virtual meetings was much greater, incidents still occur. Zoom has provided some guidance to municipalities on practices that can help guard against “bombers” entering a meeting – they recommend using the “Waiting Room” feature, which allows a meeting host to manually admit participants as they join; setting the meeting to automatically “mute” new participants; not allowing the screen sharing capability for all participants; and setting the meeting to prevent removed participants from rejoining.

Back at the Park and Recreation Commission, Caes sent out an e-mail moments after shutting the meeting down with a link to a new Zoom session. As the new session got underway, she paused to take a phone call, thinking it may be a resident trying to access the new link. “Nope,” she said, as she hung up the phone. “It was spam.” ■

## LEGAL NOTICES

At a meeting of the Redding Conservation Commission on May 5, 2026, the following action was voted:

**App’l #26-03, Zachariah & Katharine Horan, 8 Archers La. Approved** with conditions an application for watercourse

stabilization and stream culvert installation within the regulated area.

The above-referenced file is available for inspection at the Redding Land Use Office. ■

David R. Pattee, Chairman, Conservation Commission

Notice is hereby given that there will be a caucus of all enrolled Republican electors of the Town of Redding on May 26, 2026 at

6:30 p.m. at Redding Town Hall, 100 Hill Road to endorse a candidate for Registrar. ■

# New holiday tree takes root on Town Green



Photo by Jessie Wright

New England Tree Movers planted Redding’s new holiday tree on the Town Green on Wednesday, May 13. The handsome Norway spruce is replacing the 48-year-old Colorado blue spruce that was removed in March due to disease. The Town’s holiday tree was first planted by Redding Garden Club in 1978 in honor of Edith Pharr for her contributions as Civic Beautification Chair. It is the centerpiece of the tree lighting celebration each December and remains lit on the Town Green through the holiday season.

Georgetown project to be incorporated into Town Plan of Conservation and Development / continued from page 1

amendments.

The Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee is expected to refer the final Georgetown Revitalization plan from Pirie Associates to the Board of Selectmen by June 11, 2026. The Selectmen will likely hold their first robust discussion on the plan in July, with a potential referral to the Planning Commission

in August or September. The package will include a conceptual parcel division map, text, and proposed zoning regulations.

“We will discuss it as soon as it is handed off, hopefully,” said Pemberton. “I’m certainly not interested in sitting on this conceptual plan. It’s been in the works for a long time.” ■

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

I’m writing in response to the May 7 article about rebuilding the bridges damaged in the August 2024 rainstorm. While I understand the financial strain on the town, I am disappointed by the consideration not to restore the Greenbush Road bridge and reopen this key route.

The article says Greenbush Road has the “least economic value” and serves “only a handful of properties.” I disagree. It also provides access for residents of Little Egypt Road and Huckleberry Road, serving far more households than the article suggests.

This is not simply a matter of convenience. For many residents, Greenbush Road affects daily travel, neighborhood safety, and property values.

I recognize that exiting Greenbush Road onto Newtown Turnpike has long posed visibility challenges. But that should lead to practical solutions, not permanent closure. For example, the town could consider making Greenbush Road one-way, as it did with the Brookside Road project.

In more than 20 years in this neighborhood, I have never used Greenbush Road to access Newtown Turnpike because of poor sightlines. Even so, it has remained a critical route to my home.

I am also concerned that the town has not fully considered the broader value of this area. 36 Huckleberry Road provides access to 26 Giles Hill Road, the largest privately owned parcel in Fairfield County and arguably one of the town’s most significant sources of tax revenue.

I urge residents of Greenbush, Little Egypt, and Huckleberry Roads to ask the town to reconsider this plan. If safety is the issue, the town should address it directly rather than accept the permanent loss of access for an entire neighborhood.

Respectfully,

John Talley, Huckleberry Road

**Spring Wild Plant Foraging**

May 30<sup>th</sup>, 10a-12p  
@ NEW POND FARM

Learn more and register at [newpondfarm.org](http://newpondfarm.org)

# How Redding’s budget compares

By Jessie Wright

Spring is municipal budget season. Redding voters passed all the budget items on the ballot on May 5, 2026, and many of our neighboring towns also recently held their budget referendums. The Sentinel reviewed the fiscal year 2026-27 operating budgets for municipal expenses and schools on the ballot in six of our closest neighbors, along with their new mil rates and voter turnout rates to see how we compare.

The average total operating budget increase among the towns was 4.63%, putting Redding’s 4.83% just over the mean. Municipal spending for Redding fell below the mean, while school spending for Redding fell above the mean by about 1.5 percentage points. (When calculating the average for school budgets, we combined Easton’s two education budgets into one total and Redding’s two education budgets into one total).

Voter turnout in Redding and Weston was considerably lower than any of the other towns reviewed this year, with both communities posting only single-digit rates.

Only one town did not pass its budgets as presented at referendum – Newtown voters rejected both its municipal and school budgets, sending them back to the Board of Finance for revisions. Their next referendum will be held on Tuesday, May 19, with polls closing after press time. ■

	Municipal % change	Municipal Result	Schools % change	Schools Result	Total % change	Mill rate change	Voter Turnout
Bethel	5.11%	Passed	7.14%	Passed	6.33%	4.20%	12.0%
Easton	6.16%	Passed	9.35% (Easton)	Passed	5.28%	6.94%	18.4%
Easton (R9)			-1.81% (Share of Region 9)	Passed			
Newtown	3.18%	Not passed	4.59%	Not passed	4.34%*	2.79%*	18.0%
Ridgefield	2.96%	Passed	3.34%	Passed	3.62%	3.52%	12.3%
Weston	5.39%	Passed	3.07%	Passed	3.71%	2.80%	4.9%
Wilton	4.40%	Passed	3.80%	Passed	4.00%	2.70%	13.6%
Redding	3.95%	Passed	3.95%	Passed	4.83%	3.15%	7.70%
Redding (R9)			7.95% (Share of Region 9)	Passed			

\* These numbers were rejected at referendum. Newtown will be holding a second referendum on revised budgets on May 19.

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# Redding works to solve transit challenges for its most vulnerable

By Rob Sample

The recent passage of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year included a small line item that represents a big win for people who require transportation assistance: Funding for a second driver for the two vans operated by Redding's Social Services Department.

This marks the culmination of a project that Angelica Fontanez, Social Services Director, began more than five years ago. "Redding has historically had just one wheelchair-accessible van, but in 2020 it was more than 20 years old, and it was falling apart," explained Fontanez. "In early 2021, Redding participated in a competitive grant process and was approved by the Connecticut Department of Transportation for a grant of \$76,000 in funding for a new van."

Covid-related supply shortages resulted in a delay of three years for delivery of the new van. Redding's old van – which was originally purchased with a private donation – was subject to increasingly frequent breakdowns. Finally, it stopped working – and it was too expensive to fix the many things that were wrong with it.

The Town was able to make do with a rented van during this period. In the meantime, the purchase price for the new van ballooned to \$125,000. The Connecticut DOT had to compensate for this funding gap.

As a stopgap measure, Social Services was able to purchase the older minivan it had been renting. "We were able to purchase our van at very favorable terms and with support from an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant through the

Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services," Fontanez said.

The Town then received the new van in late 2024 – but until the recent vote on the 2026-27 budget, Redding lacked half of the funding it needed to pay a driver for the older, smaller minivan. Now, there are two vans serving townspeople: one large, one small.

Fontanez credits funding from the Town, a host of State agencies, and the now-finished ARPA program with keeping the transportation program moving. She also is particularly thankful for the Town's passage of additional funding for the second driver, noting that the service meets a large need.

"We provide these rides on a need basis: Seniors and adults with disabilities don't need to be income-qualified for this assistance," Fontanez said. She added that elderly and disabled people who don't qualify for Medicaid or Medicare transportation assistance might otherwise lack transportation for visits to doctors or pharmacies or to shop for necessities, especially in a place like Redding that lacks public transportation options.

"These are people who cannot drive themselves to places they need to go," said Fontanez. "One of our clients found that a medical ride that was wheelchair accessible cost as much \$375 through a medical-transportation provider. Redding people need to know that help is available by just calling us."

The new funding in the Town budget begins in July. The various grants Social Services receives

from the State require reports throughout the year as well as re-application for continued funding. Fontanez, in the meantime, keeps a constant watch for new grant opportunities.

She also keeps an eye out for what other municipalities are doing to meet residents' needs. One recent trend is "microtransit" – a term describing towns and cities purchasing the services of firms that run small fleets of vans to serve spread-out suburbanites.

"Redding in particular is very, very spread out," Fontanez said. "Here, you can't have a regular bus line driving through town and picking people up at bus stops."

The concept has yet to make forays into the Greater Danbury area, but nearby Trumbull has been part of a two-year, State-funded pilot program that began in 2024 in the Bridgeport area.

This pilot program also includes initiatives in Norwalk, New Haven, Hartford, Milford, Guilford-Madison, the Naugatuck Valley, and New London. The program offers an "on call" service similar to Uber or Lyft, but with fares comparable to a city bus ride.

Fontanez hopes ultimately to partner with a firm such as West Haven-based M7, which employs drivers with special certifications enabling them to go into hospitals and other medical facilities if needed. "Now, I am waiting to hear back from the Connecticut Department of Transportation operating grant people – with the hope we can participate in the regional microtransit program," she said. ■

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## POLICE BLOTTER

### Police activity from May 11 – 17

By Donna Christopher

Police assisted in two emergency medical service calls, two fire department calls, and issued three firearm permits.

#### Traffic

Police stopped 33 motor vehicles, issuing two summonses, 13 infractions, four written warnings, and 14 verbal warnings in the one-week period. The infraction rate was 45%.

There was one motor vehicle accident on Black Rock Turnpike on May 12 in which a motorcycle rear-ended another vehicle. There were no injuries.

Police gained access to a vehicle on Lonetown Road after a report that a child was locked inside.

#### Warrant for risk of injury to a child

Police arrested two individuals after they turned themselves in May 13 on a warrant issued by Danbury Superior Court stemming from a March 2026 investigation into an allegation of injury to a

juvenile. The man was charged with cruelty to children, risk of injury to a child, third degree assault, reckless endangerment, third degree suffocation and first-degree unlawful restraint. He was released after posting bond. The woman was charged with risk of injury to a child and was released on a promise to appear with court-ordered conditions of release. Both were assigned a court date of May 15.

#### Other incidents

Police responded to a reported disturbance on Howes Lane on May 13. The incident stemmed from an ongoing dispute between contractor and resident related to work being performed at the residence.

Police responded to a call for a suspicious incident on Main Street in which a patron reported another patron drank alcohol and then drove. Drinks purchased were confirmed by patrol as non-alcoholic on receipts. ■



# REDDING

# MEMORIAL DAY

# Parade

HONOR ★ REMEMBER ★ THANK

SATURDAY, MAY 23<sup>RD</sup>



**ALL MARCHERS  
SHOULD BE AT THE  
REDDING  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL GYM  
BY 11:30 AM**



**PARADE BEGINS AT  
12:00  
NOON**



**MARCHING BAND!  
"PUSH & PULL"  
CHILDREN MARCHERS  
ENCOURAGED!**



# SPORTS

## Falcons win ninth straight match

*Girls tennis* | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High's Sylvia Calemmo won at second singles in matches against Notre Dame Prep of Fairfield and New Fairfield last week. The Falcons defeated the former 6-1 and the latter 4-3.

The success the Joel Barlow High girls tennis team has enjoyed lately is something they hope will carry over into the post season.

The Falcons, who host the South-West Conference tournament this week, won their last nine regular-season matches, including two last week. Visiting Notre Dame Prep of Fairfield on Monday, May 11, they dominated in all but one contest for a 6-1 win.

Their only loss came at first singles. Abby Dedaj faced some tough competition as she came up short 3-6, 1-6 to Notre Dame's Lucy Adams.

It was a different story for the remaining matches, which Barlow won with ease, surrendering no more than two games in any

contest. At second singles, Sylvia Calemmo defeated Mallory Yeater 6-1, 6-1 in straight sets.

Molly Lapatine posted identical scores in her win over Steph Brown in the number three spot.

Just missing a sweep at fourth singles, Stephanie Robinson defeated Sofia Fillardi 6-1, 6-0.

The doubles matches were not only a sweep for the Falcons, but they also posted two shutouts and just missed a third. They did not surrender a game at first doubles, with Jolene Paczek and Chloe Gustavson defeating Zulay Carranza and Frida Valdovonos 6-0, 6-0.

Identical set scores came at second doubles with Lidia Santangeli and Sarina Sulzberg beating Ryan Alexis and Millena Penna.

Genevieve Currie and Scarlett Wood formed the third doubles team that just missed a sweep of Ammia Popa and Amiya Malcolm before winning 6-1, 6-0.

It was a much closer contest when the Falcons hosted New Fairfield in the regular-season finale two days later. A strong performance in the doubles matches tilted the scales in Barlow's favor, as it held on to win 4-3.

The Rebels took two of the three singles contests, including the top spot. Catherine Tomaino held off Dedaj in two close sets 6-7, 5-7.

Barlow's only singles win came when Calemmo defeated Payton Pilner 6-3, 6-0 in straight sets.

Although Lapatine took the first set in her match against Katherine Pankiv, her opponent bounced back for a 6-3, 0-6, 1-6 win at third singles. Fourth singles also went to the Rebels with Sophia Pankiv defeating Robinson 0-6, 4-6.

Fortunately for Barlow, it swept the doubles contests. Paczek and Gustavson just missed a shutout in a 6-0, 6-1 win over Peyton Roemer and Katie Volpe.

Santangeli and Sulzberg posted a 6-3, 6-1 win over Augustina Spano and Emily DeVito. Completing the doubles sweep, Currie and Wood defeated Madison Cipilione and Kelly Biasetti 6-4, 6-1.

Following the SWC tournament, the Falcons will take part in the State Class M tournament starting May 29. ■

## Falcons remain in playoff hunt

*Baseball* | By Rocco Valluzzo

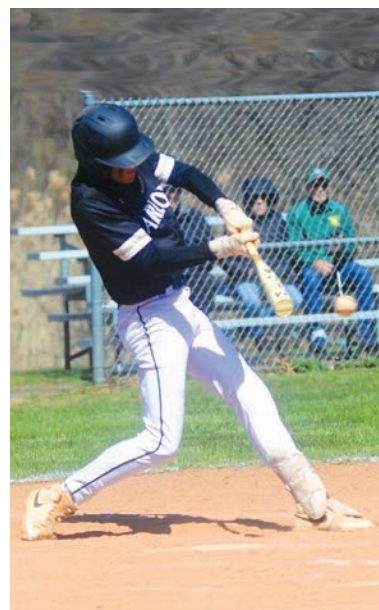


Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Cole Johnson prepares to connect with a pitch during a Joel Barlow High varsity baseball game. The Falcons' lone win last week was a 6-0 victory over host Pomperaug on Wednesday, May 13.

As the regular season winds down, the Joel Barlow High varsity baseball team hit a bit of a skid in its fight for a spot in the upcoming South-West Conference playoffs.

The Falcons came up short in three of their four games last week. The lone bright spot was when they visited Pomperaug on Wednesday, May 13.

Barlow pitcher Jimmy Kennedy threw a complete game, allowing no runs on four hits. He also had the offensive support he needed as the Falcons won 6-0.

Kennedy and Pomperaug starter Matt Nespoli were locked in a bit of a pitchers' duel for the first three innings. Although both teams

managed to get runners aboard during this stretch, neither could produce a run.

That would change in the top of the fourth. Drew Gutowski singled with one out and advanced to second on a ground ball. Ethan Goldstein singled to left field, and an error allowed Gutowski to score for Barlow's first run. Goldstein would score on a hit by Ryan Kelly to put the Falcons up 2-0. Kennedy retired the Panthers in order in the bottom of the frame.

The Falcons had a rally in the top of the sixth. Kennedy was hit by a pitch, and Goldstein walked to put two runners on base before the former scored on Kelly's single to right.

Desmond Kady's single to center brought in two more runs. Gavin Maryott capped off the rally with a single to left, and the Falcons were up 6-0.

Pomperaug threatened in the bottom of the sixth by getting two runners aboard but to no avail. Kennedy later retired the hosts in order in the bottom of the seventh for the win.

Kelly and Maryott each had two hits for Barlow with the former also driving in two runs and the latter driving in one. Esposito, Gutowski, Kennedy, Goldstein, and Kady, also had hits for Barlow.

Kennedy went the distance on the mound, giving up no runs on four hits while fanning eight and walking one.

Barlow, now 8-10 overall, finishes the regular season this week. ■

## Joel Barlow sports results and schedules

### Baseball

Results:  
May 11: Brookfield 8 / Joel Barlow 5  
May 12: New Fairfield 12 / Joel Barlow 0  
May 13: Joel Barlow 6 / Pomperaug 0  
May 16: Newtown 18 / Joel Barlow 8  
Record:  
Joel Barlow: 8-10

### Softball

Results:  
May 11: Brookfield 16 / Joel Barlow 0  
May 12: New Fairfield 16 / Joel Barlow 10  
May 13: Pomperaug 15 / Joel Barlow 3  
May 16: Newtown 13 / Joel Barlow 0  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 3-15

### Boys lacrosse

Results:  
May 12: Joel Barlow 19 /

New Milford 5  
May 13: Joel Barlow 25 / Notre Dame Prep 3  
Record:  
Joel Barlow: 7-8

### Girls lacrosse

Results:  
May 12: Joel Barlow 16 / New Milford 3  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 10-6

### Boys tennis

Results:  
May 13: Joel Barlow 7 / New Fairfield 0  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 9-3

### Girls tennis

Results:  
May 11: Joel Barlow 6 / Notre Dame Prep 1  
May 13: Joel Barlow 4 / New Fairfield 3  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 11-2

### Boys track and field

Results:  
May 11: Joel Barlow 121 / Harding 28, Joel Barlow 108 / Masuk 37, Weston 78 / Joel Barlow 72  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 8-7

### Girls track and field

Results:  
May 11: Joel Barlow 94 / Harding 40, Joel Barlow 88 / Masuk 57, Weston 80 / Joel Barlow 65  
Record:  
Joel Barlow 8-7

### Boys volleyball

Results:  
May 11: Joel Barlow 3 / Conard 0  
May 12: Joel Barlow 3 / New Milford 0  
May 13: Joel Barlow 3 / Masuk 0  
Record:  
Joel Barlow: 15-3

## A Prom to remember

Friday, May 15



Photo by Kenji Perretz

Barlow juniors and seniors gathered for a glittering Prom night on Friday, May 15, hosted at the Trumbull Marriott. (Left to right): Mason Perry, Colin Wantke, and Anthony Ackerson arrive at the event.

### Redding's Big Outdoors: Summer at Topstone begins / continued from page 1

The Park and Recreation Department also plans a series of special events at Topstone Park throughout the summer, including both family and adults-only concerts, lifeguarded beach activities, and group and private swimming lessons. Schedules are announced at [reddingct.gov/project/topstone-park](http://reddingct.gov/project/topstone-park).

It is free to use Topstone Park's trails, fenced dog park, playground, and dog beach (located off the Pond Trail, about a quarter of the way around after starting from the parking lot and walking counterclockwise). For beachgoers and boaters, there are several summer pass options that can be purchased through the Park and

Recreation Department. Redding residents receive a discount on all pass types, which include season family passes, season individual passes, weekly passes, and 20-use passes, as well as single-day passes. Visitors can also pay the day rate at the entrance table at the Park once the beach is open.

For those renewing a pass from last season, that can be done online at [reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation](http://reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation). For new passholders, an application can be found at [reddingct.gov/project/topstone-park](http://reddingct.gov/project/topstone-park) or picked up at the Park and Recreation Department at 37 Lonetown Road. ■





**Country Homes,  
Equestrian Estates, Land**

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# Post-parade picnicking with the Boys & Girls Club

By Pamela Brown



Photo by Jessie Wright

After Redding’s Memorial Day Parade, the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton again will host a family-friendly picnic for residents to continue the festivities.

“We look forward to welcoming everyone after the parade to further celebrate our veterans and the U.S.’s 250th anniversary. It’s a fun community atmosphere that supports the Club’s mission of serving local youth and providing impactful programs for children and teens in Redding and Easton,” said Lauren Murphy, Co-Chair of the event with Colette Faulknor.

The picnic will take place on Saturday, May 23 from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at 170 Cross Highway, on the Club’s outdoor open field with pavilion and picnic tables. Admission is \$10 per person in advance and \$20 per person on the day of the event.

“We’ve hosted this picnic in years past, but this is the third year since Meredith Schuchard, our Executive Director, brought it back – and it’s been really special to see it grow again,” said Murphy. “Carrying on this tradition feels incredibly

meaningful. It’s more than a picnic; it’s a chance to bring families, kids, and the whole community together in a fun, welcoming space. Seeing everyone reconnect and create new memories each year reminds us why events like this matter so much.”

The event is a large community gathering with a focus on picnic-style fun. “We typically see around 300–350 people attend, and it’s really grown each year, which has been amazing to watch,” said Murphy. “The picnic is geared toward the entire community – it’s a space where families, neighbors, and friends can all come together and enjoy time with one another.”

Adults will appreciate the Red, White & Brew Garden, sponsored by Redding Wine & Spirits. A curated selection of beer, wine, and refreshing seasonal beverages will be available.

There also will be a variety of entertainment for kids of all ages. Some of the activities include an inflatable obstacle course, a bounce house for little ones, inflatable sports games, arts and crafts, glitter

tattoos, and lawn games for all ages. Access to the playing field also offers more space for recreation.

Food will be provided by two food trucks, including The Chamo serving authentic Venezuelan cuisine, along with 900 Degrees Pizza Truck serving pizza fresh out of the oven. The Snack Shack concession stand will be selling candy, drinks and popsicles. Local vendors will be providing dessert options. A DJ will be spinning upbeat tunes.

In addition, a Silent Auction will feature an assortment of items that were contributed by the local business community, including a golf foursome at Redding Country Club, a gift card to Outdoor Sports Center in Wilton, a party at the Boys & Girls Club, a basket of items from The Shops at Auburn Landing, and more.

New this year, the Club’s Keystone Club, a service and leadership group for high school students, is working to raise money to attend the Boys & Girls Club of America National Keystone Conference in Orlando in July. Proceeds from sales at the Snack Shack will go towards the trip. “This would be the first time our students have attended and it’s a big deal,” said Murphy.

The picnic itself helps to fund several of the programs the Boys & Girls Club provides for local youth.

“Funds raised at the Memorial Day Picnic support high-quality programs, caring staff, safe facilities, and the supplies needed to ensure every child has access to a positive, engaging, and affordable experience through our Sports and After School Programming,” Murphy and Faulknor pointed out. “Every dollar helps us provide a safe place, supportive mentors, and opportunities for kids to learn, grow, and thrive.” ■

For more information, visit, [bgcre.net](http://bgcre.net)

## Putnam Park becomes camp once again as Scouts mark America 250 / continued from page 1



Scouts from Troop 66 in Easton were among the 27 troops that took part in the America 250 celebration May 15-17 at Putnam Memorial State Park. (Left to right) Ziv Kalita, Max Unfried, Miles Papageorge, Brian Sideleau, and Lucas Becker.

Troops 15 and 306 in Redding, Scouts from other districts were welcome to attend.

“The weekend was colonial revolutionary-themed, with lots of lessons about American history, civic duty, and Scout skills,” noted District Commissioner Jacob Cedusky.

The weekend included reenactments and talks on life during the Revolutionary War period by leaders from the troops, the Aquila District, the Connecticut Yankee Council, and other organizations.

Kristen Messerschmidt, a representative of the Eunice Dennie Burr chapter in Fairfield of the Daughters of the American Revolution, donned period dress to give attendees a glimpse of how Revolutionary-era women played a key role in the war effort. Putnam Park’s commemorative obelisk, which dates to 1888, served as a backdrop. Messerschmidt pointed out that women and children accompanied their husbands to the Putnam encampment for safety.

“In many places, staying home

wasn’t safe,” Messerschmidt pointed out. Danger came from both the invading British troops and loyalists – who were numerous in places such as New York City and Redding.

“So, they went to stay with their husbands, as camp followers,” she said, performing an assortment of duties that sometimes went beyond cooking and laundry for the troops. Mary Ludwig Hayes – known widely as “Mollie Pitcher” – fired cannonballs after her husband became ill on the battlefield at the battle of Monmouth, NJ and later received a military pension.

There was plenty of heroism off the battlefield as well. Connie Hemphill, Aquila District Chair, dressed as Rebecca Barrett of Concord, MA. “Barrett was the wife of Revolutionary Colonel James Barrett, and their farm served as a major munitions cache for the revolutionary forces,” Hemphill explained. “Notified by Paul Revere that British troops were marching, the Barretts and their townsfolk

successfully hid these munitions throughout the countryside and the British never found them.”

Scouts also took part in a reenactment of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, using inked quills to write, and learned about campfire cookery – using a cast iron Dutch oven – from the Connecticut Yankee Council’s Jeanne Lewis, also in period dress. The food prepared over a campfire was simple by necessity and consisted mainly of root vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, and potatoes flavored with small amounts of meat. The same vessel was also used to bake cornbread – prepared from the grain that predominated in Revolutionary times.

Other educational stations had the Scouts taking part in colonial games, fitness training, the reenactment of a battle against the British, and training and marching drills as Minutemen. Others explored Connecticut Revolutionary War history, colonial-era tools, and field medicine during the war. ■

Photos by Rob Sample  
Aquila Scout Leader Connie Hemphill dressed as Rebecca Barrett, the wife of a Revolutionary War officer.



# Beantown bound

## Eighth graders ready themselves for Chicago field trip

By Anne Young Albanese

Next week, 78 eighth graders from John Read Middle School will load into coach buses and travel with 10 adults to visit Boston, “The Cradle of Liberty,” for the first overnight field trip in the district in over three decades.

“Several parents from the community advocated for an overnight field trip for the eighth graders,” explained Maria Frederick, John Read Middle School’s Library Learning Commons Specialist and the staff lead for the trip. After some research, staff determined that a two-day, one-night trip to Boston would be the best option.

The itinerary will be a busy one. It will include a visit to Quincy Market, which was built from 1824 to 1826, to accommodate a growing number of vendors and patrons to neighboring Faneuil Hall. Students will visit The New England Aquarium, a non-profit research and conservation organization home to 2,000 species of sea life, and the Museum of Science, which uses hands-on learning to educate students about a variety of science

concepts. They also will tour Fenway Park, home to the Green Monster and the Boston Red Sox, and will visit View Boston, an Observation Deck located at the Prudential Center. Finally, the trip will take students on a guided tour of the Freedom Trail, which focuses on the history of the American Revolution in Boston.

“The upcoming eighth-grade trip to Boston marks an exciting new element of Redding’s middle school programming,” said Laura Worosz, Chair of the Redding Board of Education. “The intention is to eventually offer similar opportunities to all fifth through eighth graders. The Board was unanimous in its support of these trips and is happy to support programming that offers so many developmental, social, and educational benefits to students.”

Students each had to pay \$340 for the trip. The Redding Board of Education contributed by offsetting the cost of bus transportation. The Redding Education Foundation sponsored 12 students with financial assistance. ■

# Redding Prevention Council rolls out new school initiatives

By Anne Young Albanese



LEND A HAND, SAVE A LIFE

Main Street during Georgetown Day on June 7, from 12:00 p.m. to 5:30 pm.

Competition winners are eligible for a grand prize Target shopping spree, a Prospector Movie Theater gift certificate, or additional gift cards.

### Joel Barlow High School

Redding Prevention Council also is working with Joel Barlow High School and local businesses to provide opioid response kits for accidental overdoses. These kits contain Narcan, clean gloves, fentanyl test strips, and instructions. These kits are currently available with Redding EMS, the fire stations, and at the Redding Police Department. The kits are available at no cost.

The group is in the process of placing two opioid response kits at Joel Barlow High School. The first kit will be installed outside of the cafeteria. The second kit will be located near the athletic fields. The school and the Redding Prevention Council are currently working together to determine the best location at the fields.

### Upcoming events

Redding Prevention Council will host a virtual Naloxone training on Tuesday, May 26 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. on Zoom. Attendees will learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose; administer naloxone (Narcan); and advocate for overdose prevention in your community.

The group will also conduct a virtual suicide prevention training on Wednesday, May 27 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ■

For more information and to see a list of upcoming meetings and events, visit [reddingpreventioncouncil.org](http://reddingpreventioncouncil.org)

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# OPINION

## Weave, wire, root, and branch with me

By Kate Thomason Keeler



**Inheritance: Family Tree**



**Paintings by Kate Matheson Keeler  
Ophelia's Flowers**

Why make paintings in a day when artificial intelligence can create an image in a one-word prompt? To *make* a painting. Why create a real time event in a day of social media platforms? To embody connection. Since this past February, I have had the thrill and opportunity to display a group of my paintings and prints at The Granite in Georgetown. The Keelers, the band I share with my husband, Dylan, has been able to perform many times. It has been an opportunity, like the name of the exhibit, to weave, wire, root, and branch out.

My installation weaves together diverse threads: Buster Keaton film stills, family photographs, the language of plants, and the story of St. Clare. It also incorporates Shakespearean characters, ancient myth, anatomical and cellular diagrams, and flora and fauna imagery. The architectural space brought the paintings of my grandmothers and great-grandmothers back to life. On opening night – a Bluegrass Thursday – the music and artwork seemed to hold a dialogue, evoking my grandmothers' own singing and musicianship. It was the closest I have ever come to experiencing synesthesia. Furthermore, The Granite embodies the collective storytelling of my husband's family, honoring their multigenerational involvement with the Wire Mill and the Gilbert family.

During my final artist talk and reception for the exhibit, *Weavings, Wires, Roots, and Branches* on May 22, I will walk attendees through a video projection and slideshow informed by local historians Julie Hughes, Bruce Nelson, and Brent Colley, unveiling the sources of my paintings, prints, and collages. These diverse threads and roots are braided together from personal history, collective myth, and scientific worldviews. Photos and anecdotes of family members and local history, paired with silent film still clips from the early 20th century, weave together into a visual display celebrating the many acres of wires,

roots, and branches that inspired this exhibit.

Georgetown and the web of towns that branch around it are made up of people who live in intertwined forests. The towns making up and surrounding Georgetown are so woven together it's hard to know where one ends and another begins. Such is true with the interconnectedness of life in a forest, the staggering biodiversity of plants and mushrooms and the exchange of carbon. Moving here from Brooklyn, I literally blissed out on plants, and learned to listen to the roots and branches, blossoms and bugs that have taken over much of the content of my paintings.

Around the time I moved to Redding, I was forever changed by the writings of Sophie Strand who wrote a book of essays interweaving mythology and biology in ways that transformed my artwork. She writes in her book *The Flowering Wand*, "Just as fungi originally taught plants how to root into the soil, so myths teach us how to root into relationship with our ecological and social ecosystems. They narrativize a deep understanding of our connection to more-than-human time scales." Strand taught me how to *weave* myth, personal story, and science in my painting, as I aim to express *my* ultimate truths.

Across the street from The Granite is the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Collection, archiving thousands of photographs and blueprints, old ad posters, and even samples of the wires made in the factory. Julie Hughes, archivist, walked me through the tip of the iceberg of local artifacts housed there. There are photographs of the weavers at the Mill. Most weavers were women who represented a strong contingent of the Mill starting from the late 19th century. They created wire cloth or mesh for window screens, garden trellises, chicken coops, and pet pens. Georgetown's past is rooted in Wire Mill operators, often called Wire Drawers, and weavers.

Weavers spin the fabric of life.

Mythological stories weave elements of the divine with humanity, imparting wisdom, warnings, and truths. You can interlace a myth and scientific theory in the same breath, or the same painting, processing life through logic *and* metaphor, addressing explanation *and* meaning. I weave imagery. My personal stories map to a larger mythic, cosmic, and scientific expression told by roots, branches, weaving, and wires. Myth is a mirror.

Several of my current paintings depict my grandmothers, great-grandmothers, and great-great-grandmothers, surrounding them with the flora and fauna that define their characters. Among these is *Inheritance: Family Tree*, which portrays my namesake grandmother, Katy Stokes, alongside her young mother. They are encircled by plants from my grandmother's backyard – including pomegranates pregnant with mythological meaning, white crepe myrtles, and roses of Sharon – all intertwined with twisting DNA helixes. Through this imagery, a scientific lens interweaves with personal history, creating a collective symbolism of family and the natural world.

Like fungus taught plants to make roots, let us teach each other to plant, nourish, and sustain our roots right here. As many of us experience a pervasive anxiety over global changes and artificial intelligence, the call is to unplug and talk to a person face to face, listen to live music, make something with your hands. Let time go by slowly. Why make paintings in a day when an image can be created by artificial intelligence? To *make* the painting.

Digital work and the world wide web are incredible, limitless opportunities. The overstimulation, anxiety and depression, perceptions of alienation, and disconnection they might bring, however, can be soothed by plugging into weavings, wires, roots, and branches of a local community. The Granite, appropriately named something heavy, textural, embodied – and from the earth – is a physical space in time, where music and art flourish beyond expectation. Infinite gratitude to Rich Wenning, the cultivator of this space.

Come plug in. On May 22, join us for the final artist talk and reception at 6:00 p.m. for the exhibit, *Weavings, Wires, Roots, and Branches*. Let us weave our fragments together with images, stories, music, and conversations into "more than human time scales," a local, complex, biodiverse fabric. ■

*Kate Thomason Keeler is a Redding-based artist, musician, and writer*

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## The Aldrich to showcase Connecticut's rich creative legacy with decennial celebration

By Donna Christopher



*Photos by Donna Christopher*  
Executive Director Cybele Maylone gave a preview and walk through of the Sculpture Garden at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum where *The Aldrich Decennial: I am what is around me* opens June 7.

Works by 40 Connecticut artists will fill the galleries and Sculpture Garden at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield when "*The Aldrich Decennial: I am what is around me*" opens June 7 and runs through January 10, 2027.

The museum-wide exhibition marks the inaugural 10-year celebration of its contemporary exhibitions program and will feature a wide range of artists connected to Connecticut, none of whom will have had a solo museum exhibition in the state before. All works will have been created within the last decade.

It will be the first time The Aldrich is presenting an exhibition that will take over the entirety of the museum's building and grounds, said Executive Director Cybele Maylone. The expanded Sculpture Garden, which reopened last November after a \$3.25 million renovation on the three-acre campus, features trees and walkways lined with native pollinator plants, a stone amphitheater and walking path with accessibility, and is open to the public who can step off Main Street or park and enjoy the outdoor space.

The Decennial will be the first of a recurring 10-year survey at The Aldrich. It will showcase the scope of practices by the different artists at different stages of their careers in Connecticut. Conceived of and led by the Museum's Diana Bowes Chief Curator Amy Smith-Stewart, the first edition of the series will be curated by Smith-Stewart and Curatorial and Publications Manager Caitlin Monachino. Smith-Stewart and Monachino conducted over 100 art studio visits to understand the tenor of creation across the state when envisioning the exhibition.

The exhibition's title, "*I am what is around me*," is an excerpt from the American poet Wallace Stevens's poem *Theory* published in 1917. Stevens lived in Hartford for 40 years, and many of his poems were inspired by the city.

Public programming such as artist talks, curator tours, and happy hours on Friday evenings will accompany the months-long event.

"One of the things that this exhibition also gives us an opportunity to do is kind of re-articulate what a rich place for art and culture Connecticut has always been. I've lived in Connecticut for about eight years and feel that when I tell people I live in Connecticut, they often say 'I've driven through Connecticut to get to Boston.' It is important, particularly when it comes to art. And artists. It is a really under-recognized, but very, very rich place for creative activity," Maylone said.

The museum aims to place contemporary artists within the context of this rich history, representing a range of ages and backgrounds.

"The Aldrich only presents exhibitions that are composed of works of art that we borrow from artists, other museums, and private collectors, and the museum has always had an interest in Connecticut," explained Maylone.

Among the exhibition events, performance artist Tim Youd will retype the novel *Revolutionary Road* by Richard Yates on site each day from June 7 through June 21.

*Continued on page 8*

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## MUSIC NOTE

# America 250 concert to blend local history and talent with national celebrations

By Pamela Brown

Many of the America 250 events in Redding this spring have been leading up to a patriotic concert just a week away on Saturday, May 30. The words of Abraham Lincoln and the music of Charles Ives, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, and more will be featured in a multi-faceted performance held at Joel Barlow High School at 7:00 p.m. by musicians from the Greater Bridgeport Symphony.

"The concert is a full evening of patriotic music performed by the Greater Bridgeport Symphony," said Sean McNamara, event organizer. It will feature Charles Ives's *Three Places in New England*, an orchestral piece, with the second movement, "Putnam's Camp, Redding, Connecticut," referencing Putnam Park, and music from *West Side Story*, composed by Leonard Bernstein. "The composers – Ives, Bernstein – are connected to Redding, and we should celebrate them," McNamara pointed out. "It's amazing that they lived within miles of each other at different times."

The concert will also include a reading of quotes from Mark Twain and Joel Barlow and portions of

the Declaration of Independence. Redding's own Diana Canova will be narrating Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*, a timeless 1942 musical composition for speaker and orchestra by the American composer that celebrates America's spirit. It features powerful orchestral music interspersed with spoken excerpts from Lincoln's writings and speeches. Canova, a professional actress, director, writer, singer, and voice teacher who directed theater programs at John Read Middle School, Helen Keller Middle School, and Joel Barlow High School for more than 30 years, will bring Lincoln's words to life. The narration has been performed by notable Americans over the years, including James Earl Jones, Marian Anderson, and Maya Angelou.

"I'm honored to be part of this concert," Canova said. "This is a lovely way for the community to get together and have some hope for patriotism. It's a beautiful piece of music and the words are incredibly important right now. People need to hear Lincoln's words for this country. I'm hopeful we can come together as a nation. I would like to think we are all

reaching toward the same goal of unification."

McNamara is grateful to Canova for sharing her talents at the concert. "Diana has inspired generations of Redding students through theater and voice. Having her return to Joel Barlow High School to narrate one of America's most iconic musical tributes to Lincoln feels especially meaningful as we celebrate the nation's 250th birthday," he said. "The Civil War is an important part of America. *Lincoln Portrait* is poignant and speaks to America."

In addition, a select group of student musicians from Joel Barlow High School will be performing a series of patriotic favorites alongside the Greater Bridgeport Symphony, including *Yankee Doodle*, *America the Beautiful*, and more.

"I always love seeing the kids coming together singing and creating art. It's wonderful," said Canova. With music, we can communicate with each other on a whole other level. It goes right through to the soul." ■

For tickets, visit [Redding250.com](http://Redding250.com)

## Shoppers find treasures at annual Community Tag Sale



Photo by Jessie Wright

The Heritage Center hosted its 6th annual Community Tag Sale on Friday, May 15 in the Community Center parking lot. Nearly 25 households hosted tables with household treasures to browse, from dishware to outdoor games to antiques.

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### Beyond Barlow: Redding high schoolers find their niche at regional magnet schools / continued from page 1

to our neighboring towns about our school."

Anderson and Simson both attend Fairchild Wheeler's Aerospace/Hydrospace Engineering & Physical Sciences School – which focuses specifically on aerospace and marine sciences.

"I'm definitely interested in aerospace, including possibly becoming a pilot," said Anderson, who lived in both Fairfield and Easton before moving to Redding. Fairchild Wheeler also houses schools for Biotechnology Research and Zoological Sciences and Information Technology and Software Engineering.

Besides providing a look at what a student might like, the curriculum can also give a student early perspective on what, ultimately, they do not wish to pursue. The interdisciplinary nature of both AITE and Fairchild Wheeler gives the student an opportunity to switch to another track.

"After attending Fairchild Wheeler, some of my classmates have discovered that they don't like a particular curriculum," said Anderson. "This is one way to find out."

That curricular focus is also evident in the three half-day magnet schools that Redding students are eligible to attend. The Regional Center for the Arts (RCA) emphasizes theater, film, dance, and music and currently enrolls eight students from Redding and Easton, with 15 expected to enroll next year. Students split their time between Joel Barlow High School and the RCA campus in Trumbull.

Similarly, five Region 9 students attend the Trumbull Agriscience School, which also has a half-day curriculum. The Bridgeport Regional Professional Aquaculture School is open to Redding and Easton high schoolers, but none are currently enrolled there.

#### Enrichment opportunities

The Center for Global Studies at Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk immerses a student in a foreign language and culture. The emphasis is on Asian countries, noted Principal Julie Parham, with curriculum in Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese. That focus involves studying the literature and history of those cultures, in addition to language.

"CGS usually has a student from Redding every few years," noted CGS Principal Julie Parham. Though one Easton student attends CGS this year, there aren't currently any students from Redding enrolled. CGS occupies a dedicated wing of the larger Brien McMahon campus and, prior to 2017, students attended classes in science and math alongside their Brien McMahon peers. That year, however, the state required CGS to have its own teachers in those other core subjects.

Because CGS is intentionally global, visits to international locations are part of the curriculum. "Each CGS student has an opportunity to spend two weeks in their study country, which is a wonderful benefit for them and for which we fundraise to help parents make it happen," said Parham. "We have 10 sister schools from those countries, and their students come spend time at CGS as well."

There is a globally oriented magnet school on the elementary level as well: Danbury's Western Connecticut Academy for International Studies. "As an internationally themed magnet, part of that focus is teaching kids how to love and care for the Earth," said its principal, Dr. Jeanine Pocoski.

Accordingly, the week of April 19 had a weeklong assortment of programs and events centered on Earth Day. These included scavenger hunts, a community-service day, and a campus clean-up. Special events included a sing-along with 98Q DJ Rich Minor, a school parent; and a concert by singer/songwriter John Farrell, who also leads the school's Bridges of Peace and Hope club. The school currently has two Redding students, both in early grades. In addition, Fairchild Wheeler's Simson is an alum.

#### Diversity by design

Because magnet schools were originally set up to address income disparities and racial differences among urban and suburban districts, diversity is baked into their design. Their purpose is to promote racial, ethnic, and economic diversity while offering specialized, high-quality curriculum. Magnet schools are a key part of an overall public-school-choice program statewide;

other initiatives include vocational and technical high schools, agricultural centers, chartered schools, endowed private schools, designated high schools, and the state's Open Choice program.

As such, "diversity" isn't just part of a course assignment. Many kids who attend magnet schools enjoy meeting people from different communities and backgrounds, forming the basis for lifelong friendships. This was borne out during a WCAIS welcome back assembly after Spring Break, when Pocoski asked students to comment on what it feels like to be a student at WCAIS – and what sets it apart.

"I was blown away by the kids' responses," said Pocoski. "The student responses were focused on becoming world leaders and having school experiences which expose them to different parts of the world and cultures. Many of the responses also spoke volumes to the culture we have here – which highlights the importance of diversity, acceptance, and learning from one another, no matter what background or town we come from."

One Redding mom, whose two young children attend WCAIS, echoed Pocoski's remarks. "The international factor and the diversity of the student body appealed to us," she said. "I love it. It's an amazing school."

#### Getting there – and who pays for it

While many parents of kids who attend private schools often provide their own transportation to and from campus, magnet schools within Fairfield County offer decent inter-district transportation programs. The transportation cost is shared by the State, the student's local district, and, in certain cases, the host district. These programs are offered for reasonable distances: Fairchild Wheeler has experienced an uptick in interest from students in the Naugatuck Valley and Waterbury, although busing is only provided as far as Waterbury.

The same principle holds true for public magnet schools in more-distant areas such as New Haven and Hartford (which are not covered in this article). Students and their families are welcome to apply but must provide their own transportation if they choose to attend.

Because just two students attend one elementary school (WCAIS), the budgetary impact for the Redding School District is relatively minor for both tuition and transportation. At the secondary level, transportation costs for magnet schools amounted to \$25,000 in 2025-26 for the Region 9 district, which encompasses transporting Easton students as well as those from Redding. That is an "all-up" total and the budget doesn't break it down by individual school. The amount is expected to remain level in the 2026-27 Region 9 budget.

In 2026-27, Region 9 student enrollment at Fairchild Wheeler is expected to be 17 students (up from the current 13); the proposed budget allocation for tuition there is \$55,250 – the biggest local line item for magnet schools. More details can be found on the budget website at: [sites.google.com/er9.org/region9budget/home](http://sites.google.com/er9.org/region9budget/home) under the "Districtwide" cost center.

#### What parents say

Jace Simson's mom, Dani Simson, is now the PTA President for the Aerospace/Hydrospace school at Fairchild Wheeler. While she had initial reservations about the distance from home, she's happy that Jace is there.

"He can take classes at the other two schools as well," said Simson, who grew up in Weston and attended those local schools. "Jace is going to graduate from Fairchild Wheeler with an entire semester of UConn classes completed. He's made some great friendships at the school, and it's been a wonderful experience for him."

Though the school has its own aviation club (to which Anderson belongs) Simson described it as a bit light on other forms of extracurricular activities. No matter: He takes part in theater at close-to-home Joel Barlow High School, including a role in last year's production of the musical *Urinetown*.

#### Available schools

- **Western Connecticut Academy of International Studies** (Elementary)  
201 University Boulevard, Danbury; (203) 778-7462  
[sites.google.com/danbury.k12.ct.us/ais/home](http://sites.google.com/danbury.k12.ct.us/ais/home)

- **Center for Global Studies** (Secondary, full-time)  
400 Highland Avenue Norwalk; (203) 852-9488  
[cgs.norwalkps.org](http://cgs.norwalkps.org)

- **Academy for Information Technology and Engineering** (Secondary, full-time)  
411 High Ridge Road, Stamford; (203) 977-4336  
[aitestamford.org](http://aitestamford.org)

- **Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Multi-Magnet Campus** (Secondary, full-time)  
840 Old Town Road, Bridgeport; (203) 275-3337  
[fwc.bridgeport.edu](http://fwc.bridgeport.edu)

- **Regional Center for the Arts** (Secondary, part-time)  
23 Oakview Drive, Trumbull; (203) 365-8857  
[rca.cestrumbull.org](http://rca.cestrumbull.org)

- **Trumbull Agriscience** (Secondary, part-time)  
536 Daniels Farm Road, Trumbull; (203) 452-4200  
[ths.trumbullps.org](http://ths.trumbullps.org)

- **Bridgeport Regional Professional Aquaculture School** (Secondary, part-time)  
60 St. Stephens Road, Bridgeport; (203) 275-2926  
[aqua.bridgeportedu.net/home](http://aqua.bridgeportedu.net/home)

- **Henry Abbott Technical High School** (Secondary, technical)  
21 Hayestown Avenue, Danbury; (203) 797-4460  
[abbott.cttech.org](http://abbott.cttech.org)

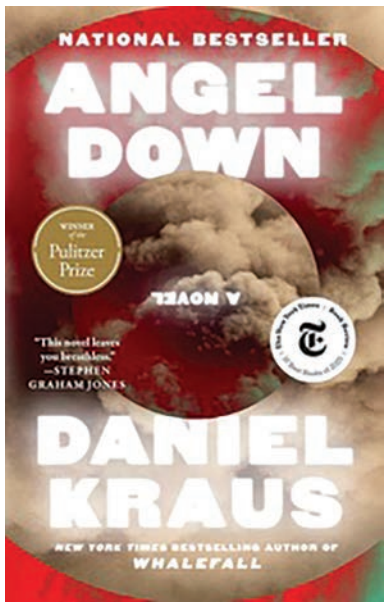
*Note: Connecticut's network of vocational-technical high schools long predates Sheff v. O'Neill and the formation of State-funded magnet schools. Each vocational-technical school draws upon students from a network of communities within a geographic region: the campus for Redding and other Western Connecticut towns and cities is Henry Abbott Technical High School, located in the eastern portion of Danbury. Each student graduates with a high school diploma and a certificate in their Career Technical Education area. ■*

## BOOK REVIEW

### Angel Down

By Daniel Kraus

304 Pages / Atria Books / \$28.99



*Angel Down*, by Daniel Kraus, is a novel about World War I written in one continuous sentence, to suggest that war among human beings has no real beginning and no end. It is the story of a man who find his humanity in a place that has none. It tells the story of Private Cyril Bagger, who is described in the book's prophetic first few words: "Cyril Bagger considers himself lucky..." But the last few words in the first continuing paragraph, italicized for emphasis claim: "*That old Bagger luck has just run out...*" In the context of unrelenting blood and guts violence, an opposite premise, then, but also prophetic. Survivor or victim, then, good luck or bad luck, angel or vision, which is it? The novel, ultimately an existential inquiry, will answer this question, offering an ambiguous portrayal.

One question implicitly asked inside the horrific machinery of war is, what does it mean to be human? For those who read him in a certain way, Kraus will be sure the reader appreciates the extremity and tragedy of war, but also its strange clarifying context. "...to slow would be to think too hard of Arno, who will be dead before Bagger makes it back, dead not despite his goodness but because of it..."

Last week, Daniel Kraus won the Pulitzer Prize in Literature for *Angel Down*. He has written a brilliant book about waste and war and insight and death. Kraus is a literary writer of fiction, and an artist, and therefore claims

for himself an artist's way with conflict and contradiction. He does not give soft soap to war and death. He has tried, and very much succeeded, in writing a novel about the human experience of fighting *The War to End All Wars*, which became the mechanized first of many, fought in one of human history's bloodiest centuries.

According to Christian folklore, the Angel of Death appears at the end of life to separate the soul from the body. British subject Cyril Bagger's father was an Anglican bishop, drowned in the sinking of the *Lusitania*. In extremis, Bagger cleaves to early understanding of angels and God.

But Bagger does not read the Bible in the trenches under fire, but sniffs it to trigger early memories resonant of home and peace. The Bible his father gave him for war becomes for Cyril, not words to live by, but scents to die by. And we sense delusion.

Kraus, in *Angel Down*, speaks lucid understanding to the pitiable ironies of war, when every promise, made by God and man about the nature of life and death is experienced as its opposite. An elderly French couple are discovered eating mice to survive. In view of such hellishness, Bagger craves hope but remains a realist, "...and so maybe the angel is nothing special, nothing at all..."

Maybe. The reader must bring his mind and experience to the narrative. 1. Could a just God place a human being in such a living hell raining blood and disembodied parts? 2. Is the angel real, or does the angel exist only in the mind of Cyril Bagger? 3. After Kraus's brilliant account of trench warfare, what does the last line tell the reader about human beings and about God and Man?

Readers will have differing viewpoints about this novel. Daniel Kraus has written a searing 21st century novel about the savage realities of the 20th century that takes on the inherited belief structure of the 19th century, finding it inadequate to horrors human beings create for themselves.

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

## LIBRARY CORNER

### Would libraries be invented today?

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

This week, the Connecticut Library Association (CLA) honored five politicians for their library advocacy work in Hartford in helping pass our eBook and Freedom to Read bills. I was honored to host the ceremony here at Mark Twain Library, because four of the five legislators honored are Fairfield County-based, and I am President of CLA this year. It is a truth universally acknowledged that any evening with politicians must contain some speeches, so it became an opportunity to hear from a few

of our state senators and representatives about their love of libraries.

One of the speakers that evening noted that if the concept of a public library were pitched today, it probably wouldn't get much traction. The idea of a public library – a place to come together as a community to share the cost of an informed and literate citizenry – is quite radical when you think about it. Surely, if the institution of public libraries had never existed and someone in 2026 said, "Let's open a storefront full of books, with fantastic public

programming and helpful, friendly staff at absolutely no cost to visitors," that person would be looked at with derision and asked, "But how will it generate revenue?" We take public libraries for granted as something that should exist in any place that values literature and community, but in truth they're quite revolutionary. Perhaps that is why Mark Twain once called them "trustworthy monuments" or "enduring memorials." ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

## Good books for good readers

### Meet the "first lady of Irish crime"

By Margi Esten

Fans of Tana French: her newest novel, *The Keeper*, is out and available at your local independent bookstore! This is the third in a trilogy featuring Cal Hooper, a retired Chicago detective who has settled in a remote Irish village and, much as he tries, he can't seem to escape the "detective" business.

*The Searcher* introduces Cal buying a cottage in Ardnakelty, hoping for a quiet retirement until he is asked to investigate a missing person. *The Hunter* has Cal trying again to enjoy his quiet life until a

con man arrives and his new friends are dragged into danger. Finally, in *The Keeper*, a young local girl is found dead, a vicious town dispute erupts, and Cal is pulled right back in.

*In The Woods*, published in 2007, is widely considered Tana French's most popular book, selling over a million copies and launching the acclaimed "Dublin Murder Squad" series. This debut novel won the Edgar, Anthony, Macavity and Barry awards for best first novel. Each book in the series features a

different primary detective or protagonist but they are best read in order: *The Likeness*, *Faithful Place* (my favorite), *A Broken Harbor*, *The Secret Place*, and *The Trespasser*, published in 2016.

If you love psychological mysteries, once you start in on French's series, I warn you it will be difficult to stop. Tana French is an American-Irish writer and actress who currently lives in Dublin, Ireland. *The Independent* has called her "the first lady of Irish crime." ■

The Aldrich to showcase Connecticut's rich creative legacy with decennial celebration / continued from page 6



The entire museum building as well as the newly renovated Sculpture Garden will be filled with the Decennial exhibition.

The novel, set in Connecticut, chronicles the unraveling marriage of Frank and April Wheeler in 1950s suburbia.

Two artist books and a painting by Tammy Nguyen will be on view. Her work *Horseshoer from Bandung at the Arrival of Spring* features a female rider moving through dense vegetation. A dinosaur looms in the background.

"For more than a decade, I've returned to spring as a charged moment. In the Homeric hymns, young shoots sprouting each spring are signs of Achilles coming back. His death was ideal. It happened at the height of his youth, preserving his memory at the peak of strength and beauty. I think of this story often. Spring as renewal, but also as haunting, a cyclical return rather than simple rebirth," the artist related in an e-mail. "The female

subject comes from archival footage of Bandung in 1955, when the city prepared for the first Non-Aligned Movement conference. Twenty-nine Afro-Asian countries convened in Indonesia to discuss a new world not aligned to the West. As a rider, she evokes more: a new Manifest Destiny? Newfoundland pride? Triumph? The ambiguity of nation-building sits in her posture."

Nguyen said she hopes it will evoke an array of responses from people that view it at the museum. "We all come to art at different points in our lives, days, weeks. Whether you're here with your kids, killing time before dinner, or actively seeking something to think about. All are valid entry points. I don't expect everyone to catch every reference or feel the same thing."

She described The Aldrich's

Decennial as "a major commitment to artists working here."

"The title, '*I am what is around me*,' comes from Wallace Stevens. That phrase captures how place shapes practice, how the environment becomes inseparable from the work itself. For an artist invested in nation-building, ecology, and how histories accumulate in a single image, being part of a show that asks what it means to make work here feels deeply aligned," she said.

Artist Gary Burnley said his work is about "absence and presence, what is missing and what is visible."

"I work with collage, so pieces are covered over while other parts are exposed. I'm interested in the viewer's reaction to and the questions that might be raised by what is absent or present, what has been covered up, physically absent, and yet still present in your mind."

Burnley said a viewer's reaction cannot be anticipated but depends on their own history and memory. "I hope to make them more aware and open to thought."

Making art is deeply connected to how he sees the world around him, and he hopes the images he creates help viewers see that world more clearly while the exhibition at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum gives his work the opportunity to reach a wider audience. ■

To learn more, visit [thealdrich.org](http://thealdrich.org)

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## Library serves up sweet afternoon at Meadow Ridge



Photos by Carol Morgan

Staff and volunteers from Mark Twain Library brought scoops and smiles to the 10th Annual Ice Cream Social at Meadow Ridge on Saturday, May 9. A capella singing by The Colgate Thirteen added to the sweet atmosphere.

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# Metal detecting in search of local history

## The Redding Relic Hunter and his treasure-hunting hobby

By Justin Reynolds



Are you curious about what hidden treasures might be buried on your property? There could be a free and easy way to find out.

After accepting a buyout from photolithography equipment manufacturer ASML – where he worked for more than a decade as an IT infrastructure engineer – George Anderson found himself with extra time and began looking for a productive hobby.

A few years ago, Anderson bought an inexpensive metal detector that ended up collecting dust in the closet. After seeing it one day, he decided that metal detecting was the perfect outlet.

“I went all in and bought the best hobby metal detector you can buy: a Minelab Manticore,” Anderson said.

Perhaps you’ve seen the Redding Relic Hunter page on Facebook, which Anderson launched earlier this year.

“It’s a place for me to try to connect with people who might be interested in metal detecting or would give me permission to explore their property,” he said, adding that he’s most interested in searching for treasures on properties that were developed in the 1700s, if possible. “I’ve found items dating back to the 1800s, and I’m trying to break into the 1700s.”

So far, Anderson hasn’t discovered anything earth-shattering. He routinely finds things like old pull-top lids from cans, horseshoes, nails, screws, and coins. He’s also found old glass bottles with metal inside of them, a street sign from the 1960s buried in Easton, and a garbage pit from the 1800s.

“It had all sorts of things – an old corset, an old boot, and a couple of intact bottles, including a Listerine bottle from before it was marketed as a mouthwash,” he said, adding that he takes his discoveries home and researches them, using AI to help identify his finds. “It’s fun to find things, but it’s also fun learning about the stuff you find.”

When I bumped into him on the beach at Topstone Park in early April, he’d found several coins and what appeared to be an old small-caliber bullet casing.

In addition to the thrill of hunting for treasure, metal detecting also has a hidden benefit: cleaning up the environment.

“You pick up a lot of garbage,” he said. “I find more nails and screws than anything else.”

The concept of metal detecting dates back almost 200 years. After World War I, early prototypes of metal detecting devices were used to locate unexploded bombs. During World War II, Józef Stanislaw

Kosacki, a lieutenant in the Polish armed forces, enhanced the design to detect mines, creating the first version of the metal detectors we see in our mind’s eye today.

Metal detectors use a coil to send electromagnetic signals into the ground, Anderson explained. When those signals hit metal, they create a small electrical current, causing the object to produce its own magnetic field. The device picks up that return signal, typically converting it into a tone that alerts the user to something below.

Each piece of metal responds to the signal differently, which helps metal detectorists identify what may be below the surface before they start digging.

“Still, it’s not an exact science,” Anderson said. “You really don’t know for sure until you dig it up.”

Anderson – who has lived in Redding with his wife for nearly 30 years and has two adult children – hopes members of the community give him permission to explore historical properties with his metal detector. He says old foundations, rock walls, and generally undisturbed tracts of land are best.

“If you have a place in the woods that’s undisturbed, a lot of stuff is not really that deep,” Anderson said. “When leaves come down and decay, they don’t add much depth to the soil over time.”

Recently, he found an 1864 Indian Head Penny.

“That was pretty cool,” he said. “Nothing I’ve found has had tremendous value, except to me as a trophy.” ■

*For more information or to give Anderson permission to detect on your property, visit [facebook.com/ReddingRelicHunter](https://facebook.com/ReddingRelicHunter)*

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## Notes from a neighbor

*Buttuned down* | By Carter Wiseman

I remember proudly the summer day my VW conked out on I-91 just south of Brattleboro, VT, on my way to a hiking trip on the Long Trail. I have never been mechanically gifted, but having read *How to Keep Your VW Alive: A Manual of Step-by-Step Procedures for the Compleat Idiot* by John Muir, I was ready. I popped the hood (in the back) and immediately spotted the problem: a broken fan belt. Using the wrench and spare that Muir had recommended, I had a new belt in place, and in minutes was on my way with a triumphant smirk.

That was then. It seems that making car repairs at even the fan-belt level now requires a PhD from MIT. Happily, there is one area in which fixing is still within reach of the average person: buttons.

Buttons rarely come loose these days, but in case they do, many clothing manufacturers provide extras. Men’s dress shirts usually come with two spare buttons stitched into the bottom of the placket (one for cuff, one for front). The spares for waistbands on pants often come in little plastic envelopes tucked in the pockets. The problem arises when a button does come off and the wearer must face the fan-belt moment.

I was brought up on the frugal adage: “Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.” I never

learned to darn socks, but my mother did teach me basic sewing. Her most important tips were to lick the thread to make it easier to get it through the eye of the needle, then throw a few loops around the stem of the repair and tie it off with a square knot. That tutorial has served me well over the years, perhaps extending the lives of some garments past the time when my family would like me to wear them in public. But the lesson has been lost on our children. I have patiently shown them the skills involved in reclaiming a garment whose only sin was to shed a button. They look at me indulgently, gently suggesting that an easier solution might be to list the shirt/blouse/jean/jacket on eBay for fans of vintage rags, or donate it to Goodwill – or toss it.

I explain to them that this is wasteful, irresponsible, and bad for the planet. They humor me, which I appreciate. But I am now stuck with a growing collection of little plastic bags, each one containing spare buttons for waistbands. I don’t think Goodwill has a button bin. However, there is room in the glass jar I keep for used wine-bottle corks (for which there is also no easy recycling option). In any case, should my corduroy’s waistband feel pressure following winter’s feasting, I’m more than ready for emergencies. ■

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# THE NATURAL WORLD

## The Outside Story: Holding space for songbirds

By Jack Beaudoin

One of the great joys of May in the Northeast is the dawn-break aubade of songbirds returning to summer habitats or passing through to their nesting grounds in higher latitudes. Mornings that only a month ago were silent – save the croaking crows and shrieking blue jays – are now filled with a polyphonic chorus of trills, chirrs, and fluted arias that quicken both body and soul.

This delight, however, can obscure the fact that birds are not only producers of sound but well-honed and astute listeners as well. While we only hear morning melodies, for the birds, these vocalizations and songs constitute serious life-or-death communications: the competitive labor of defending territories, wooing mates, raising their young, and sounding alarms. And, as ecologists are discovering, these crucial conversations are struggling to be heard above the din of our modern, mechanized world.

“It’s easy to underappreciate how important it is for these organisms to communicate by sound,” said Jason Hill, a quantitative ecologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies.

Given the almost unimaginable loss of roughly three billion birds in North America over the last 50 years – a decline that continues to accelerate across nearly half of the species scientists have studied – quantifying the impacts of noise pollution may help preserve our avian populations.

Natalie Madden and four colleagues recently completed a meta-analysis of 160 studies measuring the impacts of noise pollution on birds globally between 1990 and 2025. While the scientific literature

had previously documented the harms of climate change, the introduction of invasive species, habitat loss, chemical pollutants, and over-exploitation, Madden’s high-level assessment, published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, is among the first to demonstrate the many impacts of human-produced noise on birds across a range of traits, habitats, and species.

“We think of noise as an annoyance or a nuisance, but what we’re seeing here is that it’s actually a real hazard to them,” says Madden, a conservation science and policy analyst with Defenders of Wildlife. “It’s not just masking their communication or altering their risk aversion. It’s affecting all of these different types of behaviors.”

In addition to standardizing data from those 160 studies, which were often focused on particular species, habitats, or geographies, Madden’s research sought to discover differences in the ways that anthropogenic, or human-related, noise was mediated by specific traits and characteristics. It also tracked and measured how birds responded to noise pollution – for example, which species might change their song length, frequency, or timing.

Among Madden’s key findings: noise significantly reduces reproductive success across many species, impacting everything from the initial pairing to the survival of fledglings, and it also acts as a stressor that changes hormone levels (like corticosterone). It forces birds to alter critical survival behaviors like foraging and risk assessment. Crucially, traits such as preferred habitat and nesting style can determine a species’ vulnerability; high

noise levels impacted reproductive success, growth rates, and other physiological markers more negatively for birds that nest closer to the ground or in the open compared to tree dwellers.

Madden said the meta-analysis overturned one of her main assumptions about noise pollution. “Regardless of how loud the noise was, it was still having an impact on them, whereas I think we expected obviously louder noises to have more of an impact,” Madden said. “And then similarly, the source of the noise didn’t have much of an impact either.”

Hill believes a range of actions is needed to reduce the negative impacts of noise pollution: establishing wilderness preserves, using vegetation thoughtfully to dampen the impacts of development and infrastructure, and reducing one’s own contributions to the soundscape by using power equipment like lawnmowers and leaf-blowers less frequently.

“They’re not probably huge effects in and of themselves, but if we all stopped and listened around our houses, I’m sure we could find ways to reduce the amount of noise pollution that we’re generating at a household level,” Hill said.

And on fresh spring mornings like these, who wouldn’t prefer the song of a hermit thrush over the buzz of a lawnmower? ■

*Jack Beaudoin is a Maine Master Naturalist. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org*

## If trees could talk

### Tribute to a tree champion

By Laurie Heiss



The Eastern redbud near the Old Town House



Photos by Laurie Heiss  
Jo-an Blanchard Brooks

The plaque on the white clapboards of the east side of the Old Town House recognizes Jo-an Blanchard Brooks for “serving our community and the landscape in which we dwell.” It faces an Eastern redbud that was planted in her honor after Jo-an retired from the job of Land Use Coordinator after almost 30 years. And what did she do in her three decades of service to Redding?

The Land Use Coordinator advises and works with the Conservation and Planning Commissions on any issues involving wetlands, waterways, open space, subdivisions, scenic roads, new municipal buildings or roads, and the 10-year vision for the Town (called the Plan of Conservation and Development). But Jo-an did so much more. She was the eyes and ears for what might happen on all of the land throughout town: which parcels of wooded areas were important for preserving, who was selling parcels, who might subdivide and give land to the Town, who might donate land, and where the most important land was for the Town or Redding Land Trust or the State to preserve. In her role, she was a major savior of trees; trees that you enjoy along our miles of trails, on small set-aside parcels, along the roadside, or in a development.

When we were in contention

with Eversource recently over what trees they could remove from a designated Scenic Road, each tree had a number assigned; Jo-an offered to pay to cable #26, a beautiful heritage maple, if that would save it from being cut down. She constantly considered approaches for preserving open space trees in massive numbers over many acres, but also fought for one tree at a time. Among the true champions of Redding trees and green spaces was Jo-an, and she tag-teamed for many years with fellow champion, Mary Anne Guitart (First Selectwoman and Founder/President of Redding Land Trust). She and husband David had given a “protect in perpetuity” easement to the Land Trust, on a lovely stretch of flat land near Uncle John’s Road full of apple trees, saving trees 10 at a time.

I stopped by to take this picture in early May, and there was a small girl with her mother looking at the lovely Redbud in bloom. Her mother, seeing the plaque, explained that the tree was a way to remind us of someone and to remember them throughout time.

The young girl turned to the tree and asked, “What can I do to get a tree that remembers me?” ■

*If you have a tree or story to be featured in this column, e-mail [reddingtreeconservancy@gmail.com](mailto:reddingtreeconservancy@gmail.com)*



# Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday

with a full concert program of patriotic music featuring the Greater Bridgeport Symphony.

**MAY  
30**

**7:00 PM  
Joel Barlow  
High School**

**Three Places in New England  
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**Lincoln Portrait  
by Aaron Copland, featuring Redding actress Diana Canova**

**The music of West Side Story  
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies  
R = registration required

## This Week's Featured Events

### Memorial Day Parade

**Saturday, May 23**  
12:00 p.m.  
Local parade with community groups, fire engines, floats, and kids' push and pull – open to anyone to march  
Route begins at Redding Elementary School and ends at Old Town House  
23 Cross Highway  
reddingct.gov

### Memorial Day Picnic

**Saturday, May 23**  
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Family picnic, games, food trucks, beer garden  
Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton  
gbcrc.net  
\$

### The Hermes Art Series presents: An Afternoon with Grammy-Winning Artist Dan Pugach & His Quintet

**Thursday, May 28**  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

### Redding 250 Concert

**Saturday, May 30**  
7:00 p.m.  
Performance by Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra and Joel Barlow High School musicians of patriotic music, including *Three Places in New England* by Charles Ives  
Joel Barlow High School  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
redding250.com \$

## MEETINGS

Thursday, May 21

**Democratic Party Caucus & Democratic Town Committee Meeting**  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room  
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, May 26

**ER9 Joint Boards of Education**  
7:00 p.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons  
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Tuesday, May 26

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

Tuesday, May 26

**Board of Finance**  
7:30 p.m.  
Town Hall / Hearing Room (subject to change to virtual or hybrid as necessary)  
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, May 27

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

Monday, June 1

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

Monday, June 1

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

Tuesday, June 2

**Redding Board of Education**  
7:00 p.m.  
John Read Middle School / Community Room  
486 Redding Road

Tuesday, June 2

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

Wednesday, June 3

**Region 9 Board of Education Curriculum Committee**  
8:30 a.m.  
Joel Barlow High School  
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Wednesday, June 3

**Brown Bag Lunch with First Selectwoman**  
12:00 p.m.  
Town Hall  
100 Hill Road

Friday, June 5

**Region 9 Board of Education Committee on Academic Rigor, Standards, and Grading**  
8:30 a.m.  
Joel Barlow High School / Room A108  
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Tuesday, June 9

**Georgetown Fire District Annual Meeting**  
7:00 p.m.  
Georgetown Fire Department  
61 Redding Road

Tuesday, June 9

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

**\*\*Town offices will be closed on Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day**

## AMERICA 250

Thursday, May 21

**Tabling the Declaration**  
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Enjoy food and drink of Revolutionary era and work to draft a “modern” version of the Declaration of Independence  
Ridgefield Library  
472 Main Street  
Ridgefield  
ridgefieldlibrary.org  
R

Saturday, May 30

**Redding 250 Concert**  
7:00 p.m.  
Performance by Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra and Joel Barlow High School musicians of patriotic music, including *Three Places in New England* by Charles Ives  
Joel Barlow High School  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
redding250.com  
\$

Sunday, June 14

**Art is Revolutionary**  
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Free event for all ages with artist demonstrations, refreshments, live music, and hands-on activities  
Weir Farm National Historic Park  
735 Nod Hill Road  
Wilton  
ridgefieldct250.org/events/  
art-is-revolutionary

## ARTS

Thursday, May 21

**Redding Grange's Acoustic Open Mic**  
6:30 p.m.  
Sign up at 6:30 p.m., music starts at 7:00 p.m.  
399 Newtown Turnpike  
E-mail community@reddinggrange.org with questions

Friday, May 22

**Weavings, Wires, Roots, and Branches: Artist Talk & Reception**  
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Join Kate Keeler for artist talk and video projection on intertwined history of Georgetown  
The Granite  
5 North Main Street  
thegranitechurch.org/events

Saturday, May 23

**Will Evans – Concert**  
8:00 p.m.  
Music by folk-inspired singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist  
The Granite  
5 North Main Street  
thegranitechurch.org/events  
\$

Thursday, May 28

**The Hermes Art Series presents: An Afternoon with Grammy-Winning Artist Dan Pugach & His Quintet**  
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Thursday, May 28

**An Evening of Poetry with Ira Joe Fisher**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Friday, June 5

**Creative Cocktail Hour – First Friday**  
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
G-Town Arts  
5 Main Street  
gtownarts.com

## CHILDREN | TEENS

Friday, May 22

**Stories & Strolls (Age 1-5 with adult)**  
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  
Seasonal stories and seasonal walks  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

Friday, May 22

**In the Kitchen: Pasta Party (Grades K-4)**  
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Cook and enjoy a meal together  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
\$, R

## HEALTH | WELLNESS

Tuesday, May 26

**Bendable Body: Limber Up!**  
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Learn and practice an exercise method based in stretching  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

## HOLIDAYS | SEASONAL

Saturday, May 23

**Memorial Day Parade**  
12:00 p.m.  
Local parade with community groups, fire engines, floats, and kids' push and pull – open to anyone to march  
Route begins at Redding Elementary School and ends at Old Town House  
23 Cross Highway  
reddingct.gov

Saturday, May 23

**Memorial Day Picnic**  
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Family picnic, games, food trucks, beer garden  
Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton  
gbcrc.net  
\$

Monday, May 25

**Ridgefield Memorial Day Parade**  
11:30 a.m.  
Parade from Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church to Ballard Park  
Main Street  
Ridgefield  
inridgefield.com/events/  
memorial-day-parade

Saturday, May 30

**Bethel Pride Parade and Celebration**  
12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Parade begins 12:30 p.m.  
Municipal Center  
1 School Street  
Bethel  
bethelctpride.com/event-info

Monday, June 1

**Easton Pride Flag Raising**  
5:30 p.m.  
Speakers, ice cream, music and flag raising  
Easton Town Hall  
225 Center Road  
Easton  
eastonctpride.org

## NATURE

Saturday, May 23

**Redding Community Hiking Club – Stormfield**  
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.  
Start at the “Lobster Pot,” formerly part of Mark Twain's estate then continue on an easy-rated hike  
Register by May 21  
Stormfield  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Saturday, May 23

**World Turtle Day Celebration: Animal Meet & Greet**  
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Meet and learn about the farm's resident turtle species  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
R

Saturday, May 23

**NPF Walking Group: Late Day Ramble**  
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
New Pond Farm Education Center  
101 Marchant Road  
newpondfarm.org  
R

Saturday, May 30

**Redding Community Hiking Club – Aspetuck Trail**  
7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.  
Morning birding hike  
Register by May 28  
Aspetuck Trail  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

Wednesday, June 3

**Redding Land Trust Open Space Photography Show Opening Reception**  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Refreshments and announcements of prize winners  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org  
R

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, May 21

**Barlow Palooza**  
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Explore student presentations, arts, and sciences  
Joel Barlow High School  
100 Black Rock Turnpike  
joelbarlowps.org

Tuesday, May 26

**Redding Prevention Council Naloxone Training**  
10:00 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.  
Attendees will learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose; administer naloxone (Narcan); and advocate for overdose prevention in your community  
Virtual/Zoom  
reddingpreventioncouncil.org

## 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**  
Friday, May 22  
Shavuot Shabbat  
7:00 p.m.  
82 Portland Avenue  
templebnaichaim.org



# #1 WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

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 Marilyn.Sloper@cbmoves.com



118 Nursery Road, Ridgefield | \$1,695,000  
 Listed By Tim Dent | 203.244.2277  
 TimDentTeam.com



5 Side Cut Road, Redding | \$995,000  
 Listed By Sharon Hoverman | 203.733.5073  
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1. & 2 Based on information from Greenwich Association of REALTORS, SmartMLS Inc. 4/1/2025-3/31/2026. The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2026 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logo are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Anywhere Advisors LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

