

Walking path paving pushed to spring

By Rocco Valluzzo

With winter soon approaching, as well as the need for re-grading in certain sections, completion of the new walking path at the Community Center has been pushed to the spring.

The Town was awarded a \$203,856 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant to construct the half-mile path with fitness stations and benches. The cost of the project is approximately \$315,00, which includes the Town’s portion of up to \$120,000 allocated from unspent capital funds from other completed projects.

Approximately half-a-mile in length, the path will have a less than 5% slope at any point, making it accessible for nearly everyone and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The path will be surfaced with three inches of bituminous concrete on top of six inches of granular fill.

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Photo by Brian Meehl

Father sun rises over the Saugatuck Reservoir. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Green Christmas, white Easter?

Experts weigh in with their winter predictions | By Donna Christopher



Photo by Jessie Wright

A layer of ice has formed already on ponds throughout town, including this area along Poverty Hollow Road.

Last Saturday, Jack Drake, the Redding native and Western Connecticut State University alumnus known as the “Danbury Weather Guy,” excitedly posted on his Facebook page where nearly 30,000 followers might check in: “Light snow is reaching the ground

throughout much of the state!” The lifelong snow lover had forecast the few flakes just right, noting they wouldn’t stick around. The system delivered a dusting and, as predicted, temperatures rose to above freezing by mid-morning.

The *Sentinel* checked in with Drake as well as Sarah Perreault, the Managing Editor of *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* based in New Hampshire, to get their reads on the type of winter that might lie ahead for Redding.

According to Drake, the winter ahead looks to be cold and dry, potentially a disappointing season for snow lovers, but a relief for anyone who skipped Florida.

“Over the past five years, we’ve had more winters that frustrated

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REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Winter Walk brings history to life



Photos by J.C. Martin

Putnam Memorial State Park hosted its annual Winter Walk on Saturday, December 6, where over 120 people gathered for a walking tour of the park, followed by an historical re-enactment skirmish. (Clockwise, from top left): Re-enactors from the Living History Guild, who portrayed Royal Artillery during the skirmish, fired an historic cannon which was first operated in the French & Indian War between 1754 and 1763. The weapon was then used by the Continental Army against the British during the Revolutionary War; A young re-enactor chatted with some of the children attending the Winter Walk; Park Historian Ellery Thomas Leary and Al Abraham, commander of the 5th Connecticut Regiment, led the re-enactors and visitors through the park; The Winter Walk took place the day before the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. As Bill Hagan, 38th Regiment of Foot Commander explained, “Re-enactors at the end of the event fire a final volley and mourn arms to remember those who passed on the day that will live in infamy.”

CTDOT plans to rehabilitate Route 107 bridge

By Donna Christopher

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) announced plans last week to rehabilitate Bridge No. 01304, which carries Route 107 over the Metro-North Railroad tracks in Georgetown.

The project involves addressing deficiencies associated with the existing bridge and providing a safe crossing for the traveling public on and below the bridge. CTDOT’s aim is to maintain the major bridge elements in a “Fair” or better National Bridge Inventory Condition Rating, and to bring the bridge into compliance with CTDOT requirements for load rating.

The present schedule indicates that the design will be completed in October 2028 with construction anticipated to start in spring of 2029, assuming acceptance of the project, availability of funding, and receipt of any required right-of-way and environmental permits. The project will be undertaken with a combination of Federal and State funds.

“That project is very welcome,” said First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton. She noted the bridge is currently in “Fair” condition, and the sidewalks are not ADA-compliant. “Anytime there’s an infrastructure improvement that we’re not paying for, I think it’s great.”

Rehabilitation of the bridge will increase safety of Metro-North Railroad and local pedestrian and vehicular traffic, said State Senator Ceci Maher and State Representative Anne Hughes in a joint press release.

“The work on this bridge will provide reassurances that our local bridges are up to requirements to meet safety demands today and in the future,” said Maher. “It’s important work, and I’m glad to see it underway in our community.”

“This is great news for Redding, whose residents have been concerned about the safety of the railroad crossing and the impact on neighbors and cars traveling through this community of a daily Metro-North train path,” Hughes added.

While the project is still a few years away, planning will begin now. The bridge is part of a major commuter thoroughway, linking travelers to Route 7 and Route 57.

“I hope that they manage the traffic well, because it’s a bottleneck,” said Pemberton. “So that could be a challenge for us.”

CTDOT said that they will keep the public informed and involved as the project takes shape. They also have asked the community to share its concerns or questions with CTDOT to assist in the project’s development.

If anyone has any questions or comments on this project, contact Gregory Funk, Transportation Principal Engineer, at (860) 594-3214 or by e-mail at Gregory.Funk@ct.gov and make reference to State Project No. PP116-0006 in your communications. ■

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EDITORIAL

The unsung heroes

Some of our favorite features in the *Sentinel* are stories of neighbors helping neighbors, people in our community seeing a problem to be solved and mobilizing to make a difference. From prospective Eagle Scouts creating activity boards for the elderly to students organizing blood drives, from organizations arranging food deliveries for those in need to neighbors helping businesses renovate and recover from historic flooding, Redding is full of people lending a hand to lift others up.

In next week’s issue, we will be publishing our annual highlights of local charities and organizations doing important work in our community. Our hope is to provide a guide for those considering their end-of-year charitable giving and to highlight resources for those looking to get involved, give back, or receive services.

But there are also smaller, less visible acts of kindness that we experience from our friends and neighbors daily. Help with errands or childcare, moments of compassion, filling in at work, sharing humor, extending patience when we might not deserve it – these acts are less likely to be publicized, but they help create the fabric of a community that takes care of one another.

If you have a story you would like to share about a local act of kindness or a neighbor or colleague you would like to recognize, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org. This holiday season, we will do our part to celebrate kindness, large and small. ■

Pre-school enrollment

By Jessie Wright

December and January are the months when many families register for pre-school. There are four licensed pre-schools in Redding, with several others in neighboring communities.

Partners in Education Pre-School at Redding Elementary School
Accepting applications until January 4, 2026.
reddingelementaryps.org/48628_2

Maple Hill Montessori School of Redding
Waitlist – enrollment opens December 20, 2025.
E-mail Jodi Barry:
jodi@maplehillmontessori.com

Westbrook Nature School
Priority enrollment for current and alumni families runs through December 31, 2025.
Applications from the general community are accepted starting January 1, 2026.
westbrooknatureschool.org

BrightPath Redding Early Learning & Child Care
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brightpathkids.com/us/locations/
redding or call (860) 580-5328

Parents can search for all licensed options in the surrounding area at 211childcare.org. ■

POLICE BLOTTER

Police activity December 2 – 7

By Donna Christopher

Police assisted in one family matter, settled one juvenile matter, and responded to a well-being check request in the one-week period. Police assisted two operators of disabled vehicles, four citizens, and in two emergency medical calls.

Fraud
Police investigated a fraud incident in which an account allegedly was opened in the complainant’s name. The account has been closed. A report of a wire fraud was made by someone on Meeker Hill Road and is under investigation.

Lost and found
An officer located a credit card and turned it over to the owner on Redding Road.

Noise complaints
Police investigated two noise complaints during the one-week period, but no source of the noise was located in either case. One of the reports came from a caller on Pocahontas Road on December 6 for loud bangs in the area, and one came from someone on Long Ridge Road on December 7 who reported four gunshots.

Traffic
Police stopped 50 motor vehicles, issuing one summons, 16 tickets, 14 written warnings, 18 verbal warnings, and no action in one instance. The infraction rate was 34%. Five motor vehicle accidents were reported during the one-week period, including one car versus deer incident on Peaceable Street; three two-vehicle collisions, one each on Pine Tree Road, Ethan Allen Highway, and Old Redding Road; and one one-vehicle incident on Simpaug Turnpike. ■

Walking path paving pushed to spring / continued from page 1

According to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, Southern Industries Corporation had scheduled the path for paving in the first or second week of November, but some other things, such as the grading on certain parts of the path, had to be done as well. Rain and the early onset of cold weather pushed back paving, which now could be done as early as April if the weather is warm and dry enough.

“We cannot pave in this weather, so we’re looking at a spring date,” said Pemberton. “It’s a beautiful walk.”

Pemberton noted the area behind the shed by Field Two is also quite steep and contains a switchback (sharp zigzag turn) to help walkers get down the hill.

Although not yet finished, a few people have been walking on the compacted earth and stone areas, which is not recommended. Park and Recreation Director Rob Blick said since the path will not be shoveled or de-iced in the winter, the Town will put up caution tape to close certain areas. Walkers can still use the grass sections and fields, which are safer.

“It can be slippery and muddy,” he said. “They’re going to have to re-pack it in the spring. Even the paved part was not meant to be maintained in the winter.” ■

LEGAL NOTICES

At a meeting of the Redding Conservation Commission on December 2, 2025, the following action was voted:
App'l #25-11, Kimberly Yash, 34 Pine Mountain Rd. Approved with conditions an application for deck replacement, installation of a generator, buried liquid propane tank, and installation of a retaining wall within the regulated area.
The above-referenced file is available for inspection at the Redding Land Use Office. ■

David R. Pattee, Chairman
Redding Conservation Commission

Notice is hereby given that there will be a caucus of all enrolled Republican electors of the Town of Redding on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 7:30 p.m. at the Redding Community Center, Community Room, 37 Lonetown Road to endorse the 2026-2028 candidates for the Republican Town Committee. ■

Jill Cilo, Chair
Redding Republican Town Committee

Third annual Menorah Lighting on December 14 | By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

For the third December in a row, the Town of Redding will host a Menorah Lighting outdoors at the Town Green to mark the start of Chanukah. The festivities are scheduled for Sunday, December 14 at 5:00 p.m. and will include traditional Chanukah songs, reflections, the lighting of the menorah, and treats.

“It will be a lovely event on the first night of Chanukah for the community to come together, kindle the first candle, and celebrate with songs, latkes, sufganiyot and lots of fun!” said Cantor Harriet Dunkerley of Temple B’Nai Chaim, who will be leading the event along with Redding’s Rabbi Jason Greenberg of Temple Shalom in Norwalk.

The past two years, all ages have gathered at the Town Green to celebrate the Jewish “Festival of Lights,” an eight-day celebration commemorating the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabean Revolt. This year, Chanukah is celebrated from the evening of December 14 through December 22. ■

Learn more at
reddingct.gov/events

Scam aware “I almost fell for it”: How to spot and stop seasonal scams

By Anthony Freyberg

The convenient digital tools and traditional gift cards we use during the holidays significantly increase the risk of fraud. Regardless of age, more than 85% of Americans report being targeted or experiencing some type of scam. Here’s a reminder of the red flags to be aware of this holiday season.

- Package scams that report a problem with your delivery and urge you to click a link to resolve the issue.
- Gift cards are a very popular holiday gift staple, but a whopping one-third of consumers report either giving or receiving a gift card which has no value.
- Prices far below those of other retailers – designer products for sale often at a fraction of their retail value.
- Coupons and deals too good to be true – Big discounts by text, e-mail, and social media ads just cannot be trusted.
- Shady payment options like wire transfer, money orders, and most especially gift cards. No legitimate retailer wants payment these ways.
- If you get a package delivery alert such as a wrong address, insufficient postage, or nobody home to receive it, contact the delivery company directly and confirm the details rather than clicking an unverified link.
- Purchase gift cards directly from the retailer’s website, keep the receipt, and register the card if possible.

How to protect yourself

- Go directly to trusted websites rather than using a search engine, and avoid clicking on sites that say “sponsored or advertisement.”
- Comparison shop so you can get a range of prices from legitimate stores.
- Pay with a credit card rather than a debit card. They have more built-in protections.

A very good resource is the free AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline (877-908-3360). There, you can speak with trained specialists who can provide guidance and support.

Remember, knowledge gives us power over these frauds. Have a safe and happy holiday season by staying vigilant and scam aware. ■

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Community collaboration shares over four dozen meals and flowers with neighbors in need

By Rob Sample



(Clockwise, from top left): Photo by Susan Clark / Gina Pilato, Jess Tyson, and Jessica Reisch prepared mashed potatoes on December 3; Photo courtesy of Ginger Smith / Christopher Caldwell, a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton and SOAR Together young leader, made delicious homemade donuts for the initiative; Photo by Susan Clark / The “stew crew” of Cynthia Simeone and Audra Kruk worked in the First Church of Christ commercial kitchen on December 3; Photo by Peggy Jorgensen / Members of the Redding Garden Club assembled flower arrangements to accompany the meal deliveries.

In a perfect display of community and holiday spirit, a group of people and organizations came together last week to cook and deliver 55 hot meals to neighbors in need. The effort was testimony to the community spirit that’s alive and well in Redding. Dubbed “Spreading Warmth... Sharing a Meal,” groups of people came together on December 3 and 4 to cook and bring freshly prepared meals and flower

arrangements to Redding residents, many of them elderly, with health conditions, or people who for one reason or another need either physical or social nourishment. Once underway, “Sharing Warmth...Sharing a Meal” came together quickly. It was the brainchild of Ginger Smith, Founder and Executive Director of SOAR Together, and Margherita Pilato, Program Coordinator for the Heritage

Center. Several dozen townspeople and a host of local organizations participated, including The Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton, Redding Neighbors & Newcomers, The Redding Garden Club, and the Redding-Easton chapter of the National Charity League. “In response to this fall’s government shutdown and SNAP

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Martine King appointed to Redding Board of Education

By Jessie Wright



Martine King was unanimously appointed to the Redding Board of Education on Tuesday, December 2 to fill the vacancy left by Meghan Bendish, who was elected to serve on the Region 9 Board of Education last month and whose resignation was effective November 30. King’s term will run for two years, with the seat up for election in November 2027. The Board of Education received two applications for the vacant seat. King’s appointment is effective immediately as of December 2, 2025. King, a registered Democrat, is an educator by training with over 20 years of experience in both New

York City and Connecticut. Her professional experience includes serving as a teacher, administrator, and adjunct professor for various school districts, charter schools, and non-profit organizations. She has served on the Board of the Easton Community Center and an organization in New York City that supported independent charter schools opening throughout the city. “I’m excited to be able to support the schools now with my kids being school-aged and to be able to really bring the skillsets that I have in non-profits, board experience, and education to be able to help everybody partner together and continue to improve our schools,” she told the Board of Education. She also has a strong personal connection to the Redding school district. She is the mother of a fifth grader and an eighth grader at John Read Middle School, and her husband grew up in Redding and went through the schools as well. “We moved here to raise our kids and for them to participate in the schools,” she said.

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SPORTS

Barlow will depend on speed, defense
Girls basketball preview | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Senior Mia Tartaglia (above) is captain of the 2025-26 Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team along with Ava Gillon. The Falcons will count on their speed to remain competitive.

While it may not be the tallest team on the court, the Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team hopes to use other qualities to its advantage in the 2025-26 season. The Falcons hope to use speed as a big part of their game. The ability to find open players when needed will also be key. “We do have some team speed,” said Head Coach Joe Carollo, now in his 18th season with the team. “We don’t have a lot of size. We’re hoping we can still use our athleticism to hold the fort down.” With 18 players in the program (varsity and JV), the Falcons will

be a little larger in terms of numbers. A combination of experience from last season and some new talent will also be put to good use. Several pre-season scrimmages against teams such as St. Joseph of Trumbull, Seymour, Bridgeport Central, and Wolcott will give them a glimpse of what to expect. The real test will be on Monday, December 15 when they host the Barlow Tip-Off Tournament. “I think our strength right now is we’re getting the ball to whoever is open,” said Carollo. “We’re unselfish. We play team defense, and those are the two things that are going to be what carries us.” Posting a 16-8 record last season, Barlow qualified for the South-West Conference (SWC) playoffs for the first time in several years. It also made the state Class MM tournament, reaching the quarterfinals before losing to East Catholic of Manchester. It will be without three key players who have graduated since then, however. Barlow will miss the leadership as well as the defensive play of former captains Sarah Asghar, Allie Ogden, and Agnes Davis. Asghar served as a utility player, while Ogden and Davis were guards. Fortunately for the Falcons, they return some talent, much of it resting with senior captains Mia Tartaglia and Ava Gillon, both starters last season. An All-SWC selection, Tartaglia will be at guard, and Gillon will give the Falcons a presence under the net at center. New to the team is classmate Amelia Winter, who has youth basketball experience. “She’s going to help the team in a

lot of different ways,” said Carollo. “She brings, toughness, smarts, and hustle.” Barlow has a large junior class with several experienced players who saw varsity time last season. At forward is Paige Jarvis. Emma Ogden and Sara Fenzel are guards. “All three of them are going to have different opportunities to start games and come off the bench,” said Carollo. “It’s nice that we have six or seven kids who could start, depending on the match-up we need. They’ll all contribute.” From the sophomore class is Madison Ross, one of best defensive players on the team according to Carollo. Freshmen who play year-round and could see varsity time include Gwen Miller, Piper Ward, and Brooke Cameron. “They have good basketball IQs and they have good skill sets for young players,” he said. “We’re projecting that they will contribute on the varsity level as well.” Barlow will face some strong competition in the SWC. Carollo expects Notre Dame Prep to be the team to beat, and Kolbe Cathedral has several returning players. If the Falcons hope to be in the hunt for a playoff spot once again this season, they must continue to handle the ball while under pressure and make open shots. Defensively, they will use man-to-man and zone strategies to keep opponents off balance a bit. “I’d like to think we can once again make the league playoffs if everybody does their job, execute, defend,” he said. “I’d like to think we can get the double-digit wins again. We’ll see how it all works out.” ■

Eight is magic number
Boys basketball preview | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Erik Kiernan is one of the seniors on the 2025-26 Joel Barlow High boys varsity basketball team.

Besides seeing some improvement on the court, the Joel Barlow High boys varsity basketball team will shoot for something else as it prepares to begin the 2025-26 season next week. The Falcons want to add a few more wins to their record. If they can get to eight, they will qualify for the post-season, something they have not accomplished in a while. “Our biggest challenge is going to be consistently meeting expectations,” said second-year Head Coach Corey Stevens. “I think we have a chance to surprise some people.” One of the things the Falcons have working in their favor this season is height, with 10 players standing at least six feet or taller. This will be a big help in the passing lanes as well as underneath the hoop.

Barlow had a fair turnout of approximately 35 prospective players for the program when practice started last week. The Falcons will keep 27 for three teams total (varsity, JV, and freshmen). Several experienced varsity players are back from last season. Posting a 5-15 record in Stevens’s first year as Head Coach marked an improvement from the previous two seasons. But the Falcons have graduated a couple of key players since then. They will miss former captains Jack Lippoth (All-SWC Patriot Division) and Joey Bonanno, who accounted for a lot of the scoring. Although theirs are large shoes to fill, Stevens noted that there are a number of players who are ready for the opportunity to step up, including seniors Ben Noome, Chase Bonanno, Erik Kiernan, and Sean Gabriel. At 6’ 9” tall, Noome will be at center. A forward, Bonanno can score around the rim, according to Stevens, while Kiernan and Gabriel are guards. From the junior class the Falcons have Ryan Kelly, Luke LaBarbera, and James Balatsos. Stevens expects all three to contribute in some way. A sophomore with varsity experience is Charlie Cruz, who played in most of the games last season. Tyler Stark, Alex Jezowski, and Robert Sammons also are competing for time on the court, and Stevens expects their roles will increase as the season continues. While the Falcons hope they can make it to the post-season, they

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Why CT lawmakers may take up universal school meals issue in 2026

By Laura Tillman

With food insecurity on the rise and changes to programs like SNAP, some Connecticut lawmakers are making a renewed push to pass legislation during the 2026 session that would guarantee universal meals for students across the state, regardless of their school district. Currently, students have access to a mix of free, reduced price, and paid meals, depending on household income, with some districts opting to provide free meals to all children.

(Editor's Note: Easton, Redding, and Region 9 school districts currently offer applications for free and reduced-price student lunch programs under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, or free milk through the Special Milk Program. Income requirements come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Income Eligibility Numbers for the lunch program and the Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Numbers for free milk.)

Here's what you need to know about universal school meals in Connecticut and why it may come up in next year's legislative session.

Who is eligible for free school meals in Connecticut?

There are three ways student meals work in Connecticut schools. First, there are students who get free meals — meaning breakfast and lunch. A family of four qualifies if they make less than \$41,795 before taxes for the 2025-26 school year. There are also students whose families pay a reduced fee for school meals. Again, for a family of four, these families must make less than \$59,478 before taxes. And there are students whose families pay full price because their income exceeds the limits for free or reduced-price meals. Lunch for these students typically costs between \$3 and \$4.50 depending on the school district.

But some districts offer free meals to all children. How does that work?

Under the Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP, if more than 25% of a school's population qualifies for free meals, then the school can choose to serve all students free breakfast and lunch. The school can then be reimbursed with Federal funds, at a rate of 1.6. That means, if 40% of students at the school qualify for free meals, the school will be reimbursed for 1.6 times that amount, or 64%. The school will then have to find funds within its budget for the other 36% of the student population's meals. Some districts have a

high enough percentage of students who qualify that they do not have to contribute any additional funds.

There are also a handful of districts that provide universal breakfast, but not lunch.

How many Connecticut districts offer free meals to students?

Currently, 63 districts participate, but at 12 of those districts, the program is only available at some of the schools. That's out of a total of 202 school districts in the state.

My district used to offer universal meals but doesn't anymore. Why?

In 2023, the FDA changed the CEP provision so that schools with 25% of students qualifying for free meals could opt-in to provide universal meals. Previously, the threshold was set at 40%. Some Connecticut school districts that fell within that 25% to 40% range decided to opt-in, but later determined the program was too expensive to continue and chose to opt back out.

What kind of food do students receive as part of universal meals in Connecticut?

There is no universal menu that school districts must follow in Connecticut, so different districts contract with different vendors. But all student lunches must include five components: a dairy, protein, starch, vegetable, and fruit.

Why do lawmakers and advocates want to provide universal meals in Connecticut, even in wealthy districts?

Food insecurity is hitting Connecticut residents hard. Disruptions to programs like SNAP caused by the government shutdown and populations being shut out of the program altogether have renewed calls for the State to do what it can to ensure that children are fed. The One Big Beautiful Bill excludes certain groups, including refugees and asylum seekers, from access to SNAP benefits as well as some young adults, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness.

But even before those restrictions were put in place, lawmakers in Connecticut have advocated for universal school meals for a number of reasons. While some school districts in Connecticut may have a low percentage of students who qualify for free meals, lawmakers and advocates say that making such meals universal has several benefits. First, when meals are available at no cost, participation in these programs go up.

"It changes the culture of the school meal program," said Marlene Schwartz, Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Health at the University of Connecticut. "It doesn't become just a program seen as something low-income kids participate in, it becomes something everybody does," reducing stigma and ensuring that kids who are hungry are fed. Children with full bellies, advocates say, are able to focus on learning.

Making such a program universal would also cut out the cost and time of the paperwork associated with parsing what meals are available to which students. That would allow directors of food programs to focus their time and energy on getting the best quality food to their students. Feeding more kids would also give smaller districts greater purchasing power to make bulk deals with vendors.

In Connecticut, the high cost of living also means that there are many families who do not currently qualify for free meals, but who are struggling with the cost of groceries and would greatly benefit, according to Schwartz.

"The gap between the amount you can make to no longer qualify and amount of money you need to take care of a family of four in Connecticut is many thousands of dollars, and in that gap are a lot of people who need help and aren't getting it," she said. Because low-income families qualify for free lunch, Schwartz said that most people assume that all kids who need free meals get them. "No, they don't!" she said. "They don't!"

How would Connecticut fund universal meals?

That remains to be seen, but one of the proposals on the table is a tax on sugary drinks. Schwartz, for one, is in favor of this idea.

"I thought that was the most brilliant idea I had ever heard," she said. "A public health home run." Because drinks like soda are linked with negative health outcomes, cities across the U.S. have used such taxes as a method to fight obesity and diabetes while simultaneously raising money for quality-of-life improvements for their citizens.

Philadelphia, for example, taxes such drinks at 1.5 cents per ounce and has used those funds to pay for a free preschool program, among other initiatives. ■

This article originally appeared in CT Mirror

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Considering Joel Barlow High School?

Mark January 5 on your calendar

By Jessie Wright

Joel Barlow High School will host its annual Program of Studies Orientation on Monday, January 5 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., where course offerings, graduation requirements, and the course selection process for the 2026-27 school year will be discussed.

Organizers note that the event is most useful for parents or guardians of incoming ninth graders or

new students, but families who would like clarification of options at Joel Barlow High School also are welcome.

The event will be held in the auditorium at 100 Black Rock Turnpike. In case of inclement weather, the orientation will be held on Thursday, January 8 at 7:00 p.m. ■

Community collaboration shares over four dozen meals and flowers with neighbors in need / continued from page 3

[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] crisis, we wanted to do something to help people," said Pilato. "Social Services is aware of who in Redding is in need, while we at the Heritage Center are in touch with what people would appreciate the most. We determined that the project would prepare hot meals for people during the holiday season, which they could pick up or have delivered."

"We wanted to develop a program to touch lives and bring community together," added Smith. "Local residents and community groups quickly came on board. It also was a great way for young people to show leadership in the community."

Both Smith and Pilato credited Redding newcomer Audra Kruk, a chef and caterer who recently returned to Connecticut from Nebraska, with making the event happen. Kruk's 30 years of experience has included serving gatherings of hundreds of people. Under her guidance, meals were prepared from scratch in the First Church of Christ, Congregational kitchen by teams of volunteers from Redding Neighbors & Newcomers, The Boys & Girls Club, First Church, and other community-minded neighbors.

The menu included a savory beef stew, freshly mashed potatoes, and a medley of roasted vegetables. Dessert included an assortment of cookies, brownies and cupcakes, all baked with care by National Charity League mother-daughter teams as well as middle schoolers who belong to The Boys & Girls Club's Torch Club.

Meals were accompanied by an arrangement of fresh flowers, prepared with love by the members of Redding Garden Club. The flowers were donated by Alice's Flower Shop in Bethel and SOAR Together.

"When people saw the flowers, that special touch made them

feel that people cared, that we all cared," Pilato said. "And everyone said the food was delicious. Yet Audra also made everything low in sodium, so that the meals would be in keeping with seniors' diets."

In this cooking endeavor, Kruk relied more on instinct than a formal recipe and much of the project involved what she termed "engineering."

"You have to work backwards," said Kruk. "When we first started planning this, my first question was 'What kind of containers are we going to put the food in to take to people?'" The chef also must make sure to have enough food on hand to prepare such a large number of meals, and to ensure it all portions out correctly."

There were a few logistical challenges as well. Early on, the number of dinners jumped significantly, from 30 to 55. Moreover, the pilot light on the Congregational Church's stove went out during the cooking process and re-igniting it involved two people.

Pilato said there has been some talk of making this project an ongoing one. "People who volunteered have said they would love to do this once a month," said Pilato. "We still do luncheons at the Heritage Center at least once each month, mostly with restaurant involvement. In addition, the Heritage Center hosts a meeting every three weeks, on Fridays, at which light food is served."

Kruk said she's all-in to participate in something like this again. So is her daughter, Keesha. While living in Gretna, Nebraska, the mom-daughter pair spent four years volunteering each Tuesday at a soup kitchen in Central Omaha.

"This was a first – and it will definitely be an ongoing thing," said Smith. "We want to continue to work together as a community collaboration to Spread Warmth and Share Meals in Redding." ■

Eight is magic number / continued from page 4

will face plenty of competition in the South-West Conference (SWC) along the way. Stevens expects defending champ Notre Dame Prep and runner-up Bunnell to be among the league's elite teams, and Kolbe Cathedral one to watch.

"The SWC is always a challenge," he said. "There are a lot of good coaches, and it'll fun to have some good competition."

Under new rules this season, if a team qualifies for the state tournament with eight wins, it will automatically make the SWC playoffs. Stevens would consider this a

major accomplishment for the seniors and those who went through the coaching transition last year.

"It would kind of validate all of the hard work that was put in over the off-season," he said. "They worked super hard to have a good year this year. I'm hopeful that it will all work out for them, and we'll reach our goal of getting at least eight wins and getting into the playoffs and give them a little bit of extra time in the gym together."

Barlow opens the season on Tuesday, December 16 when it visits New Milford at 7:00 p.m. ■

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REMEMBERING REDDING

Christmas recollections from an historian of old

By Brent Colley

Wilbur Fiske Thompson was born on August 3, 1854 in Brooklyn, New York. He spent part of his boyhood in Calanna, Wisconsin, where his father worked as a blacksmith. The family then moved to Georgetown, where Wilbur grew up with the rest of the Georgetown children. Georgetown was, in a way, home to the family because his mother, Mary Bennett, was born there. Edward Thompson, his father, was born in England.

When he got older, Wilbur worked for the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill and later moved to Danbury, where he worked as a carpenter for Sunderland Builders until retirement.

In his free time, Wilbur was a first-rate historian who wrote about the history of Georgetown in a manner that makes history fun and exciting. He often stated that in many cases, the information he offers is based on word-of-mouth stories told from one generation to the next, and it is evident that this methodology is effective (he got me hooked after I read my first article).

Wilbur F. Thompson died in Danbury on February 9, 1934, at the age of 79.

The following is an account of what Christmas in Old Georgetown was like in 1862, written by Wilbur F. Thompson and published on Christmas Eve of 1917.

CHRISTMAS IN OLD GEORGETOWN, 1862

Fifty-five years ago, our country was in the midst of a great war, not with foreign nations, as we are today, but with people of our own blood and kindred. From homes all over the Northland, men had gone forth to battle for freedom. Georgetown (with other communities of our State) was learning of the hardships of war. In 1861, many men of the village had enlisted and gone to the front, and on November 14, 1862, Co. E, 23rd Regiment, had been mustered into service and was on its way to the South with the Regiment.

The fall and early winter were days of anxious waiting and suspense. The 25th of November had not been a day of Thanksgiving, for in many homes the chair at the head of the table had been vacant. This fact, with the scarcity of money and the high cost of living, made the outlook for a merry Christmas very doubtful.

It had been the custom of the two churches of the village, Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant, to hold Christmas services for the Sunday Schools connected with the churches. Some of the members of the churches thought it would be well to dispense with the

Christmas services, while others did not want to give up the time-honored custom. It was voted to hold a union service for the children, in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Great preparations were made. The woods were searched for ground pine and other evergreens, to trim the church. A great spruce tree was placed in one corner of the church, and a platform built out over the pulpit rail. The young people and children were rehearsed in the parts they were to take in the great event of the year.

On the evening of December 24, 1862, the church was crowded with children and friends. The Christmas tree was brilliantly lit up with many candles and loaded with Christmas presents, cornucopias filled with candy, bags of popcorn, nuts, and raisins. After prayer by the Rev. Samuel Keeler, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the exercises of the evening commenced. Let us look over the old program and see if there are any names of those we knew long years ago on it.

Christmas Entertainment By The Georgetown Sunday Schools In the M. E. Church Dec. 24th, 1862
Programme – Part First

- 1 – Prayer
- 2 – Singing: *We Come with Songs to Greet You* – By the Schools
- 3 – Address: The Advent of Christ – Master C. Lester Bennett
- 4 – Chorus – *When the Day with Rosy Light* – By the Schools
- 5 – Dialogue: *Dress and Devotion* – Misses Sarah Jane Quick, Malvina B. Osborn, Rosalie N. Jennings.
- 6 – Solo and Chorus: Miss Alice St. John and the Young Ladies’ Chorus
- 7 – Dialogue: *Joseph and His Brethren Characters*: Joseph – Oscar Davey Ruben – Ezra P. Bennett Simeon – Charles Jelliff Levi – C. Lester Bennett Judah – Edmund S. Osborn Issachar – George W. Webb Zebulon – Eli G. Main Dan – Charles Lewis Napthali – Wilbur Jennings Gad – George Godfrey Ashur – Charles Gedney Potipher – LeRoy Adams Attendants -Willie E. Osborn, Willie R. Bennett, Willie H. Osborn
- 8 – Song: *Monitor and Merrimac* – Sidney A. Jennings, The Infant Drummer
- 9 – Dialogue: *Cold Water and Fire Water* – Masters C. Lester Bennett and Charles Jelliff
- 10 – Song: *The Blue Birds’ Temperance Song* – Misses Nettie Main and Alice Batterson
- 11 – Recitation: *A Child’s Thoughts on God* – Miss Allie Batterson
- 12 – Song: *I Want to Be an Angel* – by the infant classes
- 13 – Recitation: *The Rose* – Miss Susie Webb

- 14 – Recitation: *The Hope of our Country* – Master Charles Nichols
- 15 – Recitation: *The Child’s Lament for his Mother* – Master Willie R. Bennett
- 16 – Recitation: *A Visit from St. Nicholas* – Master Clarence Keeler

Part Second

- 17 – Recitation: *There None Shall be Missing* – Miss Emma A. Keeler
 - 18 – Dialogue: *A Mother’s Lament and the Child’s Reply* – Misses Cornelia A. Main and Isadore Osborn
 - 19 – Recitation: *The Widow of Nain* – Miss Augusta A. Lobdell
 - 20 – Singing: *Zion’s Pilgrim* – by the schools
 - 21 – Recitation: *The Flag of our Union* – Master C. Lester Bennett
 - 22 – Chorus: *The Dear Old Flag* – by the Young Ladies’ Chorus
 - 23 – Dialogue: *The Rainbow Red* – Miss Ettie N. Bennett Green – Miss Mary Godfrey Orange – Miss Carrie Jelliff Yellow – Miss Huldah Main Blue – Miss Della Olmstead Indigo – Miss Helen L. Keeler Violet - Miss Nettie Main
 - 24 – Recitation: *A Dream* – Miss Frances Jelliff
 - 25 – Song: *What is Home Without a Mother?* – Misses Addie Hurlbutt and Etta N. Bennett
 - 26 – Recitation: *Sun, Moon and Stars* – Merwin B. Keeler
 - 27 – Dialogue: *John Hasty and Peter Quiet* – Masters Edmond. S. Osborn and Willie H. Osborn
 - 28 – Solo: *Christmas Tree* – Miss Cornelia Main
 - 29 – Distribution of Gifts
 - 30 – Closing Chorus: *Merry Christmas* – by the schools
- Exercises commence at 6 and 1/2 o’clock. Admission, 10 cents.

The Christmas entertainment was a great success and was remembered for many years. Fifty-five years have come and gone since that memorable Christmas Eve. Many of those who were present have passed away. Those who are still living (residents of Georgetown, Wilton, Norwalk, Stamford, Westport, Bridgeport, and Danbury) may take pleasure in looking over the old program again, bringing back memories of the past.

The Methodist Protestant Church (Miller’s Hall) later became the Congregational Church of Georgetown. In 1862, the Rev. N. A. Rude was pastor. ■

Brent Colley is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding and Co-Founder of the Redding, CT History Project

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Art and the Christmas story

Art historian brings Christmas-themed lecture to Meadow Ridge

By Pamela Brown



Photo by Carol Morgan
Joan Kaskell will be sharing her expertise on art history this month at Meadow Ridge.

For centuries, artists have used the Christmas story as a theme in their work, offering different interpretations of the ancient event and sharing their own messages. Joan Kaskell, art historian and Meadow Ridge resident as well as longtime editor of the facility’s *Ridge Record*, will be exploring many of these works during *Art and the Christmas Story*, a lecture for residents at Meadow Ridge on December 16.

Art and the Christmas Story will examine the events surrounding the birth of Jesus as they appeared in the works of artists throughout the centuries. This art recounts the birth of Jesus, and how the shepherds, the three wise men, and angels visited Mary and Joseph.

“Art and Christmas are among my favorite lecture subjects. The presentation won’t be from a religious point of view; I will be focusing on the art,” said Kaskell, who holds a Master’s degree in Art History from Hunter College and who subsequently had a longtime career as a lecturer at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. “I

take it from the artist’s point of view, and I will explain how these artists interpret the Christmas story. For example, how did they depict an angel when they’ve never seen an angel?” However, Kaskell noted she will be referencing the Bible. “The artists in the early years had to be accepted by the Church and often were inspired by the Gospels of Matthew and Luke,” she explained. The lecture will run under an hour. “I’ll run over, if allowed,” she laughed.

Kaskell will supplement her talk with informative PowerPoint images, discussing how various artists depicted the Christmas story in their paintings. “I tend to discuss the most interesting artists,” she said, noting she will be discussing or referencing about 20 artists who created works based on their interpretation of the Christmas story. “From Giotto, painting in the late Middle Ages, to Father John Giuliani, a gifted painter who spent his last years at Meadow Ridge,” she said. Giotto di Bondone painted *The Nativity*, a fresco located in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Italy, that has been recognized as one of the first representations of the birth of Christ. Father Giuliani is known for his unique indigenous iconography based on the cultural traditions of Native Americans throughout North, Central, and South America.

Kaskell enjoys speaking about art historical subjects and sharing her knowledge with others. “It’s what I love, did, and still do. I have a lot of curiosity. I’ve studied, lectured on, and taught art history for 50 years. I have little artistic talent myself, but it’s the connection of achieved artists to their subjects and to their contemporary history that is always fascinating,” she said. “Art, besides being its own creation, illustrates human thought and creativity.” ■

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Green Christmas, white Easter? / continued from page 1

those hoping for snowfall than ones that delighted them. The last truly snowy winter was 2017 to 2018, which remains the most significant above-average season in recent memory. Since then, winters have been mixed. 2019 was below average, 2020 to 2021 was okay, and everything after that has been near or below average. In fact, 2022 to 2023 recorded the lowest snowfall I’ve ever seen,” said Drake.

While recent snow seasons have been milder and with fewer storms, Drake noted that Connecticut occasionally will get a big two-foot snowfall, “which can make people think it was a bad winter, but in reality, it’s just an isolated event. For the most part, significant snow or prolonged cold has been rare.”

The lead-up to winter this year

has been a cold one, however. Temperatures have been below average since mid-November, and we haven’t seen a day above 70 degrees since October 9, which according to Drake is one of the earliest last 70-degree days on record.

“Typically, we might reach 70 degrees even in mid-October or early November, but not this year,” he pointed out.

Historically, when cold and snow arrive early, it’s a sign that winter will remain chilly and snowy through March, though March sometimes brings a temporary warm-up.

Local lore also offers interesting clues to what lies ahead.

“Old-timers say that ‘if the swamps freeze, it can snow,’” Drake said.

Meteorologists also look at global patterns like El Niño and La Niña. Right now, we’re in a weak La Niña, which historically has brought colder conditions, though that is not a guarantee every time.

“For the winter of 2025-26, *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* is forecasting slightly above normal temperatures and below normal snow for southwestern Connecticut,” said Perreault. “But it is winter after all, so residents should expect some exceptionally cold periods in early and mid-December and again in early and late January. Snowiest stretches for the region are predicted for late December into early January, and late February. Good news for the skiers.”

Perreault noted a weak La Niña plays a factor in drought

conditions, lending itself to a wetter winter in the northern United States.

“We love looking back at weather folklore for guidance, though of course we do not use it when making our forecasts, but one that may apply this year says, ‘Christmas in snow, Easter in mud,’” Perreault said. “However, that adage also works in reverse as folklore tells us, ‘A green Christmas, a white Easter.’”

The Old Farmer’s Almanac, published each September, predicts weather trends and events by comparing solar patterns and historical weather conditions with current solar activity. The publication uses three disciplines for its long-range predictions: Solar science, the study of sunspots and other solar

activity; climatology, the study of prevailing weather patterns; and meteorology, the study of the atmosphere.

“Like all forecasters, we have not yet gained sufficient insight into the mysteries of the universe to predict the weather with total accuracy, though our results are often very close to our traditional claim of 80 percent,” Perreault said.

Regardless of the inherent uncertainty in predicting the weather, a winter forecast still is good to have, and planning ahead is key to a safe and comfortable winter. Preparation such as good tires, up-to-date car maintenance, gas in the tank, food and cash on hand, and attention to approaching weather systems can make everything easier to manage. ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Marche Architecture: Shaping homes and shaping lives

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Marche Architecture

Growing up in Italy’s central Marche region, Clara Pierantozzi loved knowing that the house she lived in was built by her father. In preschool and kindergarten, she could see it from her classroom windows and would eagerly point it out to classmates.

“I was really proud of the house, and it left a mark on me that lay dormant when I was a kid,” said Pierantozzi, who now lives in Redding.

That early imprint ended up becoming a career calling.

Today, Pierantozzi is the owner of Marche Architecture, a boutique architecture studio for residential projects. She launched the business in mid-2024 after working for 15 years at world-renowned architecture firms in the United Kingdom

and the United States, including Foster + Partners, David Chipperfield Architects, and Roger Ferris + Partners.

“I spent 13 years in London,” she said, adding that she earned her degree from the Architectural Association, the oldest private architecture school in the U.K. “Many of the most influential architects in the world have come out of that school. Because it’s not publicly controlled, the creative freedom is extraordinary. But the pace is intense. You’re working around the clock.”

After graduating, she worked on high-profile projects, master plans, hotels, and museums. “It was demanding,” Pierantozzi recalled. “You had to be adaptable, ready to take on anything.”

As Pierantozzi gained more

experience in the field, she discovered her true passion.

“Landmark projects can be quite prestigious, and it’s beautiful to work on them,” she explained. “But there’s a disconnect. You lose that direct connection with the people you’re designing for.”

Eventually, Pierantozzi realized she was more interested in the intimacy of residential work. She wanted to bring the strong work ethic she developed in those demanding environments to projects that directly shaped people’s lives.

“I love solving real problems for real people,” Pierantozzi continued. “There’s something very meaningful about seeing someone’s face change when you’ve offered a solution to something that has frustrated them for years. Even a small

improvement can transform how someone lives.”

Pierantozzi believes that the way people feel in their own homes influences their well-being, and that a thoughtfully designed home can have a profoundly positive impact on everyday life.

“(Our clients) are often entering a new stage of life and want their home to reflect that, or they’ve purchased a house they love but need it to better support their lifestyle,” she said. “Sometimes the children have left, and they want spaces where everyone can gather comfortably. Other times, the house simply needs an office or a reimagined layout to feel complete.”

Pierantozzi’s work – “a twist on the traditional New England style” – is primarily inspired by traditional Italian and European architecture.

“Everything, for me, returns to a simple and elegant space,” she elaborated. “I avoid visual noise. A home should feel calm. It should give you room to be yourself. It should be a place that supports you, restores you, and offers a quiet backdrop for your life to unfold.”

Though she’s worked all over the world, Pierantozzi is currently focused on clients in Fairfield County.

“I am very conscious about sustainability,” she said. “Construction has such a significant environmental impact. As architects, we have a responsibility to lead with materials and methods that reduce that impact wherever possible.”

To this end, Pierantozzi sources materials locally, designs spaces so there’s no material waste, and chooses environmentally friendly insulations, paints, and other materials.

Pierantozzi moved to Redding from London with her husband, an architecture professor, nine years ago. “Landing in Redding by chance turned out to be a gift. The community is incredibly warm and supportive,” she said.

Today, the couple has a five-year-old son and a 3-year-old daughter, and their house looks as you might suspect a dwelling occupied by two architects would.

“We bought a fixer-upper before we had kids,” she said. “It had good bones, and we rolled up our sleeves and put a lot of work into it, testing design ideas and exploring building techniques. Our house might not be the most standard, but we have the flexibility to build things how we want them.”

Ultimately, Pierantozzi believes that thoughtful design can transform daily life.

“My work begins with understanding the root of the problem and shaping a solution that’s both elegant and practical,” she said. “When done well, architecture doesn’t just change a space – it brings ease, comfort, and the feeling that your home truly fits.” ■

For more information, visit marchearch.com

REAL ESTATE

November 2025 real estate report

A look at trends in the local housing market | By Bill Whitehead and John Talley

Eleven properties sold in November bringing the total number of homes sold in Redding through last month to 106, up 14 from 2024. The average price of houses sold in Redding is \$1,111,126 year-to-date, a 4% increase from one year ago. There are currently 14 houses for sale in Redding versus 19 at this time last year. The average price-per-square-foot of houses sold in Redding reached \$358 versus \$306 in 2024, a 17% increase. There are presently 14 properties under contract in Redding. ■

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

November 2025													
Town	Current Inventory	Homes Sold		Average Days on Market		Average List Price		Average Sale Price		Percent Sale Price >/< List Price		Average Price/SqFt *	
	As of Dec 3	November	2025	November	2025	November	2025	November	2025	November	2025	November	2025
Redding	14	11	106	90	98	\$920,818	\$1,111,126	\$942,227	\$1,108,244	2%	0%	\$361	\$358
Ridgefield	39	15	203	68	79	\$1,074,800	\$1,211,391	\$1,115,707	\$1,272,189	4%	5%	\$415	\$444
Weston	15	11	123	89	95	\$1,415,273	\$1,513,293	\$1,422,545	\$1,542,950	1%	2%	\$395	\$418
Wilton	15	14	197	107	80	\$1,303,286	\$1,381,303	\$1,336,821	\$1,453,641	3%	5%	\$431	\$440
Easton	10	4	85	65	88	\$1,056,500	\$1,067,992	\$1,071,250	\$1,079,156	1%	1%	\$353	\$344
Bethel	18	10	136	100	77	\$534,990	\$581,798	\$532,910	\$586,735	0%	1%	\$270	\$293
Newtown	67	31	287	89	80	\$724,690	\$723,169	\$705,903	\$725,879	-3%	0%	\$298	\$295
Average	25	14	162	87	85	\$1,004,337	\$1,084,296	\$1,018,195	\$1,109,828	1%	2%	\$360	\$370

REDDING SOLD - November	Sale Price	List Price	%/ List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
18 Great Meadow Rd	\$650,000	\$659,000	-1%	\$324	175
12 Granite Ridge Rd	\$725,000	\$749,000	-3%	\$240	160
45 Wayside Ln	\$767,000	\$779,000	-2%	\$259	87
1 Long Wall Rd	\$800,000	\$795,000	1%	\$281	93
29 Meeker Hill Rd	\$812,500	\$760,000	7%	\$431	63
3 Great Pond Ln	\$850,000	\$850,000	0%	\$362	79
94 Old Stagecoach Rd	\$915,000	\$879,000	4%	\$420	42
22 Peaceable St	\$950,000	\$869,000	9%	\$382	58
51 Farview Farm Rd	\$1,050,000	\$1,095,000	-4%	\$278	79
14 Guardhouse Dr	\$1,245,000	\$1,199,000	4%	\$310	55
35 Diamond Hill Rd	\$1,600,000	\$1,495,000	7%	\$685	97
Average	\$942,227	\$920,818	2%	\$361	90

REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market	REDDING CURRENTLY FOR SALE	List Price	Price/Sqft*	Days on Market
219 Redding Rd	\$554,000	\$449	175	34 Fox Run Rd	\$1,550,000	\$198	369
477 Newtown Tpke	\$589,000	\$364	43	56 Cross Hwy	\$1,625,000	\$464	232
41 Sullivan Dr	\$875,900	\$261	12	32 Beeholm Rd	\$1,799,000	\$734	196
283 Redding Rd	\$949,000	\$403	127	2 Longwood Dr	\$1,849,000	\$295	107
22 Ledgewood Rd	\$979,000	\$274	41	65 Umpawaug Rd	\$1,895,000	\$474	1213
90 Old Stagecoach Rd	\$985,000	\$320	55	229 Umpawaug Rd	\$7,495,000	\$1,116	205
28 Sunnyview Dr	\$1,195,000	\$325	148				
23 Goodsell Hill Rd	\$1,350,000	\$523	175	Average	\$1,692,136	\$443	221
Listings continue on right side of table				* Calculated using livable square footage			

BOOK REVIEW

100 Songs | By Bob Dylan

224 pages / Simon & Schuster / \$17.99

100 Songs by Bob Dylan was published in 2017, just after he won the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature. The Nobel award to a songwriter, controversial in some quarters, galvanized Dylan’s place as a world-class poet for modern times. But what does that mean? Awarding the Nobel Prize to a recording artist is a formal institutional acknowledgement that modern poetry is embedded in popular music. The award furthers the idea that the troubadour is not dead, but has been resurrected in the modern (recording) era. The Nobel committee was well aware of Bob Dylan and his work. He had been nominated since 1996. It was a soundly reasoned vote.

Poetry has always been the provenance of the citizen. Troubadours (southern France, 11th through the 13th centuries) sang songs of love and courtship. Dylan’s poetry stands out for its legible opacity. Poetry often uses words against their common intention, adroitly mixing metaphors. Dylan’s writing explores all possibilities.

Take, for example, “Chimes of Freedom,” astonishingly copyrighted in 1963, when Dylan was 22 years old. Do chimes flash? Bob Dylan says that they do, and shows us how, and is believed. “For between sundown’s finish and midnight’s broken toll / We ducked inside the doorway, thunder crashing / as majestic bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds / Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing.”

He then suggests that this flashing occasions moments of insight. The bells are “Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake / Tolling for the luckless, the abandoned and forsaken.” Dylan stays ungrammatical to include ‘everyman’ (and, incidentally, for strong poetic effect).

Throughout his career, Dylan has tried to keep trappings of success at bay, and his consistency is well-served by his vigilance against the corrupting influences of fame. And no cultural entity is immune from a poet’s eye.

The first verse of “Highway 61 Revisited” takes on a Biblical story. “Oh, God said to Abraham, Kill me a son” / Abe said, ‘Man, you must be puttin’ me on / God say, ‘No.”

Abe say, ‘What?’ / God say, ‘you can do what you want, Abe, but / The next time you see me comin’ you better run’ / Well, Abe says, ‘Where do you want this killin’ done?’ / God says, ‘Out on Highway 61.’

There is a lot to unpack in this verse. It is a Biblical story of God performing a vicious (and God-defining) test of loyalty. Dylan doesn’t openly condemn the story as evil, but satirizes it, overtly as a Biblical reference, and subtly, using idiomatic grammar. This identification invites everyman to think about the meaning of the whole.

Most recently, Bob Dylan’s early years in New York City are portrayed in the film, *A Complete Unknown* (2024). We see a young, modern troubadour, arriving in New York as a stranger with his guitar and harmonica, writing and performing early songs. He is almost immediately discovered, recorded, and sold. As consequences of success came, he felt they were forced on him, which he adamantly (and creatively) resisted. Famously walking off *The Ed Sullivan Show*, he also stopped touring entirely after a motorcycle accident in 1966, creating *The Basement Tapes* in Woodstock with The Band instead.

Eccentric? Yes, yet he prevailed. His talent for writing and performing his own songs is proven, unique, and revered. The musical world has been stimulated by changes and possibilities he fomented. His first manager, Albert Grossman, also represented Peter, Paul and Mary (Mary Travers, until her death, a Redding resident). Creating synergy, at his urging they recorded Dylan’s early hit, “Blowin’ in the Wind.” Musicians have experienced a dominating reverence for Dylan that they express as atmospheric. This unusual recognition and support expanded to the formal recognition of the Nobel committee in awarding Bob Dylan the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature. *100 Songs* was published to show why. ■

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

LIBRARY CORNER

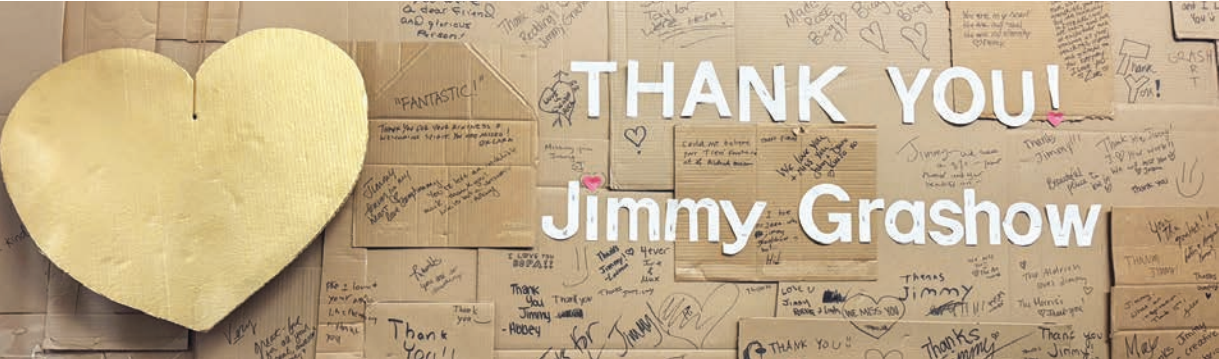
An artful celebration | By Erin Shea Dummeyer

As I write this column, I am hearing a festive cacophony of hammering outside my office door. What would make the sound of hammers festive, you ask? It means volunteers are hard at work preparing for the 53rd annual Mark Twain Library Art Show! The show, which runs December 6 - 14, features the work of hundreds of local artists. While I probably say this every year, the art is truly outstanding for this 2025 show... perhaps the best one yet.

I always think of the Art Show as the unofficial start to the holiday season in Redding, to be followed by things like the tree lighting, artisan market, menorah lighting, and live Nativity. This fundraiser, which raises much needed funds for our operating budget, is a wonderful way to support local artists and Mark Twain Library at the same time. Plus, artwork makes a unique and really special gift. I hope folks who are reading this will consider stopping by the Library this week (it closes on December 14!), if anything just to enjoy the space and bask in the beauty of these distinctive pieces. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Art Show Preview brings crowds



Photos by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

Mark Twain Library was packed with guests on Friday, December 5 at the 53rd annual Art Show Preview Reception. This year’s show, which is a major fundraiser for the Library, features nearly 200 works of art and is dedicated to celebrated artist and Library supporter James Grashow, who passed away this fall. The Art Show is available to view during Library hours or online at mtlartshow.org through December 14.

OBITUARY

Frank Watkins Klinzman June 12, 1928 – December 1, 2025



Forty-four-year Redding resident Frank Klinzman passed away peacefully on December 1 in Vero Beach, FL.

In the long arc of a life well-lived, there are people whose brilliance shines quietly, illuminating not through spectacle but through steadiness, curiosity, and an unassuming grace. Frank Klinzman – father, grandfather, great-grandfather, veteran, mathematician, music lover, devoted partner, and friend – was one of those rare lights. He passed from this world leaving behind not only those who loved him, but a legacy stitched into the lives he touched and the communities he strengthened.

Born in Iowa in 1928, Frank grew up with three siblings, and the Midwestern sky stretched endlessly above him – working on his Uncle

Roy’s farm, visiting Clear Lake in the summers, and continuously learning as he grew. His mind was a marvel: nimble, searching, tireless. He earned his BA and then his master’s degree in mathematics from the University of Iowa, where he was a varsity wrestler and taught as a graduate assistant – he remembered, even a half century later, the names of the students he helped usher into the world of numbers. His memory was the kind found in stories more than statistics – astonishing, precise, and rooted in care.

After serving his country during the Korean War at White Sands Proving Grounds, Frank followed opportunity eastward, driving solo from Iowa to Connecticut. He arrived with a suitcase, a brilliant mind, and the quiet confidence of a young man ready to begin a life. He spent his first nights at the YMCA and built everything from there – his career, his friendships, his home, and eventually the large, loving family that would become his greatest pride.

In Connecticut, Frank became a founding member of the Society of Actuaries and built a career as a distinguished actuary whose deep passion for mathematics shaped not only his profession, but his worldview. Numbers, to him, were

not just instruments of logic; they were symphonies of patterns. That same sense of harmony extended to the rest of his life. He met the love of his life, Shirley, in Connecticut; they married and shared more than 55 years together until her passing in 2011 – years marked by growth, devotion, and the family they both cherished.

Frank lived fully within his community. He was a founding member of the Redding Country Club, where he played golf and tennis and gamely took on any new athletic challenge presented to him. He served as a longtime Deacon at the First Congregational Church of Redding, grounding his faith in service rather than sermon. He raised four children – Sharon, Sandy (Marty), Sally (Dick), and Frank (Kelly) – and later welcomed four grandchildren – Molly, Jessica, Michael, and Charlie – and two great-grandchildren, Maddie and Noah, all of whom he adored and championed.

A lifelong lover of music, especially jazz and big band, Frank sought out live performances wherever he could find them. Louis Armstrong was the pinnacle for him, the night he heard Satchmo live etched in his memory forever. And in the eternal debate of crooners, he was unapologetically

loyal to Bobby Darin over Frank Sinatra – a preference stated with the same cheerful conviction he applied to all his opinions.

Frank carried a deep and abiding love for his alma mater. The University of Iowa Hawkeyes were not just a team but a tapestry of stories he followed with reverence. He didn’t merely know the roster – he knew where each player grew up, what they studied, and how they fared academically. His passion for education endured throughout his life, and he encouraged everyone around him to pursue knowledge, to stay in school, to believe in the transformative power of a classroom.

After Shirley’s passing, Frank reinvented his life with a courage and openness uncommon at any age, let alone in his eighties. Moving to Florida, he entered a second act filled with joy. At 83 he met Judy Wexler, who became his partner in every sense – his confidante, his companion, and most memorably, his dancing partner. Together, they moved across ballroom floors several nights a week, stepping into their nineties with the exuberance of people who understand that time, however limited, can still be expansive when shared with the right person.

Frank loved deeply, thought

deeply, and cared deeply – about fairness, about community, about the world his children and grandchildren would inherit. He was socially and emotionally ahead of his time, a man whose quiet progressivism came not from ideology but from a simple, steadfast belief in decency.

Born of his mother Mamie’s immense talent for baking, his love for sweets was unmatched – desserts were not guilty pleasures but joyful ones, savored with childlike delight.

The family extends profound gratitude to his care team – Gabby, Kim, Trevon, Michelle, Jenny, and Lucy – whose compassion and steady presence shaped a happy final chapter of his life. Their devotion made the impossible possible, and we remain eternally grateful for the tenderness they brought to his days.

His life was a gift – one that brightened rooms, expanded possibilities, and left all who knew him better for the privilege. His memory will continue to live in the stories told around dinner tables, in the strains of a trumpet solo drifting from a speaker, in the thrill of a Hawkeyes touchdown, and in the hearts of those who loved him.

See you on the other side, Big K. We love you. ■

Notes from a neighbor

What’s for lunch?

By Carter Wiseman

The turning of the year has always seemed like a good time to clean out the closets, the garage – and the computer. I used to laboriously unsubscribe from the masses of backed-up e-mails, but recently I have schooled myself to mark each of them as “spam” the instant it appears. Which set me to thinking about why junk email became synonymous with a food that helped win World War II.

What many of today’s computer users may not know about spam is that it emerged as SPAM in 1937, a canned combination of pork and ham manufactured originally by the Hormel Foods Corporation in Austin, Minnesota. The origin of the name remains unclear; company sources say it is a secret still held in the company vaults. In any case, the timing was fortuitous, because when the United States went to war in 1941, it needed a durable source of food for troops overseas. SPAM became such a staple of the military diet that it was known as “ham that didn’t pass its physical,” and “meatloaf without basic training.”

When American forces arrived in England in advance of the D-Day invasion, they brought SPAM with

them. The locals, strapped by food rationing, quickly adopted the Yankee import, and it has remained a part of British lore ever since. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher referred to SPAM as a “wartime delicacy.” The delicacy was not just for eating. The grease left from a used tin was often recycled to lubricate guns.

When I first heard about SPAM, I associated it with what was called “mystery meat” in my college dining hall. It seemed like a relative of scrapple, the gray mixture beloved of Pennsylvanians who found a way to make unpalatable animal parts acceptable for breakfast. But SPAM was far more than an American recycling of unpopular body parts. In his memoirs, the former leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, confessed that, “Without SPAM, we wouldn’t have been able to feed our army.”

Although SPAM originated in the American Midwest, and flourished in the UK, and eventually in Russia, it had another life in Hawaii. As in Europe, SPAM arrived as a staple of American servicemen, but it took off under the palms.

Indeed, even today, Hawaii has the highest consumption of SPAM in the country. A local favorite is SPAM *musubi*, a combination of the classic canned product and rice, sometimes referred to as the “Hawaiian Steak.”

After the war, SPAM became associated with folks who couldn’t afford real meat. Its reputation was hit especially hard in England with a sketch by the Monty Python comedy troupe mocking it as a go-to food for the lower classes. The actors’ relentless repetition of the name led people in the emerging digital age to connect SPAM with all the things you don’t want to eat if you can do better.

Fair enough. But I haven’t seen any Harvard Medical School studies linking SPAM to cancer, Alzheimer’s, strokes, heart attacks, or even measles. So, I am wondering if the pre-war product needs re-branding. Liberation Loaf? Go-To-Meat? The Vegan’s Retreat?

I am not a survivalist, but with the price of a burger hitting record levels, I have committed to memory the locations of the SPAM shelves at both Caraluzzi’s and Stop ‘n’ Shop. You can’t be too prepared. ■

On the holiday menu with...

Vanessa Young of Thirsty Radish

By Pamela Brown



Popular carols sing of marshmallows for toasting, a request for figgy pudding, and indulging in homemade pumpkin pie – but you can count on chocolate to make this year’s holiday season sweeter.

“Chocolate is a well-loved ingredient, and we can serve it in festive ways, such as including it in my shortbread cookies or a ganache tart with seasonal garnishes,” said Vanessa Young, Founder of Thirsty Radish. “A holiday touch gives chocolate desserts a celebratory feel. One of my favorite pairings for this time of year is chocolate and cranberry.”

On December 18 at 7:30 p.m. Young will be presenting Holiday Chocolate Recipes, a festive virtual chocolate-themed demonstration for Mark Twain Library. Attendees will learn how to make a variety of chocolate recipes, from cookies to homemade candies. Young will also share the best way to make the tastiest hot chocolate for cold winter nights.

“Chocolate lends a luxurious yet cozy feel to the holidays, and it has such a richly nuanced flavor. It’s the perfect way to cap off a holiday party or dinner,” said Young, a cooking instructor, wellness coach, and mindfulness meditation teacher, who has offered programs at Mark Twain Library for nearly three years. She takes an artful approach to food with a focus on seasonal meals. “I love Christmas dishes both savory and sweet, but I enjoy ending a meal with a beautiful dessert. It extends the

celebration, and everyone’s eyes light up when you bring it to the table,” she said, admitting it’s okay for people to indulge, at least a little, during the holidays. “The key is to truly savor what you’re enjoying. Slow down when you take a bite, enjoy the flavors, and appreciate that treat you love.”

For the class, Young will demonstrate recipes for Chocolate Crinkle Cookies, chocolate granola, and others. “Even breakfast or a snack can have a little chocolate around the holidays! The granola also makes a thoughtful gift,” said Young. “These chocolate recipes can be made for the holidays, but they’re also perfect for everyday enjoyment.”

For Young, the holiday spirit is a time of joy, compassion, and thoughtfulness. “They’re part of my teaching approach throughout the year. Having a chance to share my love of the holidays with others only amplifies that, and I look forward to spending time with everyone at our event,” she said. “My personal passion is to help others live joyfully in the present. We can do this through creating seasonal food, slowing down, and experiencing gratitude, and many other ways. When we appreciate the creativity involved in cooking, feel gratitude for ingredients, and think ahead to moments of connection with loved ones at the table, we can find so much joy in food experiences. I look forward to connecting with everyone over this philosophy in class.”

Young shared a recipe for Cranberry Chocolate Shortbread Cookies. “Shortbread is a classic, and the dried cranberries and chocolate make it more delicious. It’s reliable and enjoyable to make. Since holiday baking can be stressful, we need some recipes we know will turn out delicious,” said Young, who described the cookies as having a tender, almost melt-in-your-mouth texture without being overly sweet. “Plus, the cranberry and chocolate flavors are divine together. I’ve had many people share that they now include it in their annual cookie boxes and gift it to friends. You’ll definitely find it on my table throughout the holiday season.” ■

2 WEEKS TO STOCK UP & SAVE! DECEMBER 1 - 14

Caraluzzi's

Holiday Seafood Sale



The lowest prices on lobster, shrimp, crab & more!

caraluzzis.com

Frosty tree lighting kicks off holidays



Photos by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

On December 6, the Park and Recreation Department partnered with Scout Troop 306 and the Georgetown Lions Club for its annual Tree Lighting, providing a memorable afternoon for visitors in the holiday spirit. The JBHS Chamber Singers directed by Gwynne Wittmann and the John Read Middle School Chamber Choir provided festive music, and visitors warmed up with hot chocolate and cozy photos with Frosty and Rudolph. This year’s holiday tree lighting was a poignant one, as it is the last year that Redding’s 60-foot Colorado Blue Spruce will be lit. The tree has battled disease, and its near five-decade life is drawing to a close.

Cranberry Chocolate Shortbread Cookies



Ingredients:
½ cup unsalted butter, softened
⅓ cup confectioners’ sugar
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, sifted
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup finely chopped, dried cranberries
⅓ cup finely chopped, dark chocolate
Topping: raw sugar and salt flakes such as Maldon
Yields about two dozen, 2-inch cookies

Replace/substitute any ingredients based on food allergies and preferences.

Directions:
Cream the butter using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or a hand mixer, then add confectioners’ sugar and beat until combined.

Add vanilla extract and mix until combined.

Combine flour and salt in a separate bowl. Add flour mixture to butter mixture in increments, mixing on low, until dough comes together. Stir in dried cranberries and chopped chocolate.

Shape dough into a cohesive disk on a piece of plastic wrap, then wrap completely and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. In the meantime, preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Roll dough between two lightly floured pieces of parchment to a thickness of between ¼-inch and ½-inch. Return dough to refrigerator or briefly to freezer if it has softened.

Cut shapes using a cookie cutter and transfer to a parchment-lined baking tray. (Remaining dough can be gathered, refrigerated, then re-rolled.) Cookies will not spread but allow at least 1 inch of space around each on the baking sheet.

Sprinkle the top of each cookie with raw sugar and a touch of the salt flakes.

Bake for about 12 minutes on the middle oven rack, or until cookies are lightly golden around the bottom edge. The cookies will remain light. Let cookies remain on the baking sheet out of the oven for a couple of minutes or until sturdy enough to transfer to a wire cooling rack. Cool completely before enjoying.

Holiday Events 2025

December 11-17

<p>Friday, December 12</p> <p>Music on the Hill presents <i>Sounds of the Season</i> 7:30 p.m. Handbell Ensembles with flute and double bass present festive music of the season 10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport musiconthehillct.org/events \$</p> <p>Friday, December 12 – Sunday, December 14</p> <p><i>A Christmas Carol Read & Sing-Along</i> 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Sunday Family friendly, BYO food and drink Ridgefield Theater Barn 37 Halpin Lane Ridgefield ridgefieldtheaterbarn.org \$, R</p> <p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>Breakfast with Santa and Buddy the Elf 9:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Register for a 45-minute timeslot Riverbrook Regional YMCA 404 Danbury Road Wilton wiltonymca.org \$, R</p> <p>Saturday, December 13 – Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Dharma Shop and Yak and Play’s Holiday Shop 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Browse range of Himalayan and Tibetan handicrafts DNKL Tibetan Buddhist Center 30 Putnam Park Road dnkldharma.org/events</p> <p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>Redding Artisan Holiday Market 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Shop locally-crafted wares John Read Middle School 486 Redding Road facebook.com/reddingartisanmarket</p>	<p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>SantaCon Sip & Sleigh Contest 11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Santa outfit and festive apparel contest with live music, wine, and food truck Aquila’s Nest Winery 56 Pole Bridge Road Sandy Hook eventbrite.com/o/aquilas-nest-vineyards-31836257671 R</p> <p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>Gingerbread Snow Globes 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Family program with all materials provided New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R</p> <p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>Broadway Inspirational Voices Christmas Concert 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Doors open at 1:00 p.m. Grace Farms 365 Lukes Road New Canaan gracefarms.org \$, R</p> <p>Saturday, December 13</p> <p>Live Nativity 5:00 p.m. Live animals, scripture readings, and Christmas hymns Outdoors at First Church of Christ, Congregational 25 Cross Highway firstchurchredding.org</p> <p>Saturday, December 13 – Sunday, December 14</p> <p>CT Dance School presents <i>The Nutcracker</i> 6:00 p.m. on Saturday 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Sunday Fairfield University Quick Center for the Art 200 Barlow Road Fairfield ctdanceschool.org/the-nutcracker \$</p>	<p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Gaudete Christmas Market 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Handmade gifts and baked goods The Georgetown Oratory 30 Church Street E-mail office@gtownoratory.org with questions</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Nod Hill Brewery Holiday Market 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Nod Hill Brewery 137 Ethan Allen Highway Ridgefield nodhillbrewery.com/live-music-and-events</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Holiday Market 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Hosted by STEMS + CO, Wild Blueberry, Casa Rosetti Shop local, enjoy festive cocktails by Milestone, hot cocoa bar, and pajama portraits by Tory Williams 2 Main Street stemsandco.com</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Holiday Pool Party 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Enjoy inflatables, free swim, and holiday cheer Riverbrook Regional YMCA 404 Danbury Road Wilton wiltonymca.org/inflatable-pool-party-3-8 \$, R</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Santa at The Roadhouse 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Visit and photo with Santa with refreshments for children and adults following The Redding Roadhouse 406 Redding Road thereddingroadhouse.com \$, R</p>	<p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Redding Town Menorah Lighting 5:00 p.m. Celebrate first night of Chanukah with lighting the menorah, songs, latkes, and sufganiyot Town Green 100 Hill Road reddingct.gov</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Wilton Town Menorah Lighting 4:30 p.m. Wilton Town Green 101 Old Ridgefield Road Wilton schneersoncenter.org</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Notre Dame of Easton Christmas Pageant 5:00 p.m. Tree lighting and Christmas pageant Notre Dame of Easton 655 Morehouse Road Easton notredameofeaston.com</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>Cookie Decorating Workshop – “Cozy at the Owl” 5:00 p.m. Hosted by Little Birdie Cookies and The Georgetown Owl The Georgetown Owl Market & Saloon 19 Main Street littlebirdiecookies.com \$, R</p> <p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>I Heard the Bells – Christmas Musical 6:00 p.m. Featuring adult choir and soloists with refreshments following Calvary Independent Baptist Church 711 Redding Road cibcredding.org</p>	<p>Sunday, December 14</p> <p>1 Year Anniversary and Holiday Party 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Live music, refreshments, and good company Yoga Station 9 Brookside Road yogastationct.com/workshops-events R</p> <p>Tuesday, December 16</p> <p>Royal Ballet: The Nutcracker 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Enjoy a screening of the 2017 production, bubbly drinks, and sweet and savory snacks Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road RSVP to mstillman@reddingct.gov or (203) 938-9725 R</p> <p>Tuesday, December 16</p> <p>Westport Menorah Lighting 6:00 p.m. Trader Joe’s 400 Post Road East Westport</p> <p>Wednesday, December 17</p> <p>Silly Solstice Sweater Celebration (all ages) All day Wear fun holiday attire and stop in for treats and book browsing Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org</p> <p>Wednesday, December 17</p> <p>Community Messiah Sing - Hosted by Music on the Hill 7:00 p.m. The audience is the chorus! With soloists and string quartet United Church of Rowayton – Livingston Hall 210 Rowayton Avenue Norwalk musiconthehillct.org/events</p>
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December 18-24

<p>Thursday, December 18</p> <p>The Collective @ MTL Community Pop-Up Market 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Browse unique gifts from local vendors Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org</p> <p>Thursday, December 18</p> <p>JBHS Student Council Winter Wonderland 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Cookies, crafts, hot cocoa and free photos with Santa Joel Barlow High School / Cafeteria 100 Black Rock Turnpike er9.org</p> <p>Thursday, December 18</p> <p>Celebrate the Season – Holiday Recipes with the Thirsty Radish 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Chocolate recipes from cookies to homemade candies Virtual Mark Twain Library marktwainlibrary.org R</p>	<p>Thursday, December 18</p> <p>Bethel Pride’s Holiday Party 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Open mic and holiday celebrations Molten Java 213 Greenwood Avenue Bethel bethelctpride.com</p> <p>Friday, December 19</p> <p>Floral Workshop Holiday Centerpieces 11:00 a.m. Materials provided Heritage Center 37 Lonetown Road RSVP to mstillman@reddingct.gov or (203) 938-9725 \$, R</p> <p>Saturday, December 20</p> <p>Holiday Event: Beyond Yoga 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Morning of movement, refreshments, shopping, and live music Yoga Station 9 Brookside Road yogastationct.com/workshops-events \$, R</p>	<p>Saturday, December 20</p> <p>Procrastinators’ Market 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Local vendors, find the perfect last-minute gift Redding Grange #15 399 Newtown Turnpike reddinggrange.org/events-and-activities</p> <p>Saturday, December 20</p> <p>Jingle All the Way! 2:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Sing-along with Holiday Handbells and Children’s Chorus Wilton Historical Society 224 Danbury Road Wilton musiconthehillct.org</p> <p>Saturday, December 20</p> <p>Holiday Caroling 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Caroling by Joel Barlow High School Chamber singers The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org/events</p> <p>Sunday, December 21</p> <p>Georgetown Holiday Festival 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Parade on Main Street followed by photos with Santa and festivities indoors The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org</p>	<p>Monday, December 22</p> <p>Community Carol Sing 6:00 p.m. Join the Joel Barlow music groups for an evening of holiday music Joel Barlow High School 100 Black Rock Turnpike jbhs.er9.org</p>	<p>Tuesday, December 23</p> <p>Christmas Carol Sing-along 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Family friendly, hosted by Tracy Carlucci Nod Hill Brewery 137 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield nodhillbrewery.com/live-music-and-events \$, R</p>
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Music on the Hill presents <i>Sounds of the Season</i> Friday, December 12 7:30 p.m. Handbell Ensembles with flute and double bass present festive music of the season 10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport musiconthehillct.org/events \$	Redding Town Menorah Lighting Sunday, December 14 5:00 p.m. Celebrate first night of Chanukah with lighting the menorah, songs, latkes, and sufganiyot Town Green 100 Hill Road reddingct.gov	Community <i>Messiah</i> Sing - Hosted by Music on the Hill Wednesday, December 17 7:00 p.m. The audience is the chorus! With soloists and string quartet United Church of Rowayton – Livingston Hall 210 Rowayton Avenue Norwalk musiconthehillct.org/events	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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ARTS

Saturday, November 22 – Saturday, January 3 Platform Presents Tiny Acts Saturdays 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Group art exhibition of works with intimate scale G-Town Arts 5 Main Street gtownarts.org	Friday, November 28 – Saturday, January 3 101 Teapots by Frank Kara and Infused Group Exhibition Saturdays 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. G-Town Arts 5 Main Street gtownarts.org	Saturday, December 6 – Sunday, December 14 Mark Twain Library Art Show Open during Library hours Exhibition of art for sale with special programming Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road mtlartshow.org	Thursday, December 11 Opening Reception: Flash 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Group exhibition of small works under \$500 - exhibit runs through December 20 Anonymous Society 268 Simpaug Turnpike anonymoussocietygallery.com	Friday, December 12 Interior Design Chat – Art and Design 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Learn how the right piece of art can transform a space Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Friday, December 12 Redding Neighbors & Newcomers Evening at G-Town Arts 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Conversation, community, and a closer look at works on view G-Town Arts 5 Main Street gtownarts.org	Sunday, December 21 Afternoon Tea 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closer look at shaping exhibitions on view G-Town Arts 5 Main Street gtownarts.com
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CHILDREN | TEENS

Saturday, December 13 Winter Stories by the Fire 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Drop-off program for ages 3-5 New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R	Monday, December 15 Pizza, Hot Chocolate and Mini Movies (Grades 1-4) 3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Bus service from RES available Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R	Saturday, December 20 Connecticut Invention Convention – Innovation Expedition 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. For ages 8-11 years old, work in teams to solve a challenge and present solutions Norwalk Housing Authority EnVision Center 30 Day Street Norwalk wiltonymca.org/invention-convention \$, R	Sunday, December 21 STEM Sundays (Grades K-4) 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Hands-on experiments and creative problem-solving New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R	Friday, January 9 Register Now: Kids Night Out 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Hosted by Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton and Mark Twain Library Dinner, games, fun Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R
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HEALTH | WELLNESS

Wednesday, December 17 Mass Energy Healing with Aggregata 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Sacred morning of energetic renewal The Granite 5 North Main Street thegranitechurch.org \$, R

Thursday, December 18

The Art of Calm: Meditation with Ancient Wisdom for Modern Lifestyles
12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Virtual program
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

NATURE

Sunday, December 14 Greiser’s Annual Meteor Night 6:00 p.m. Engaging discussion with Frank Pagliaro on the 1807 meteor that landed in what is now Easton Greiser's 299 Center Road Easton greisers.com/gatherings \$, R	Monday December 15 Lunch Break Hike and Hang 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Meet at trailhead kiosk along main driveway Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org R	Saturday, December 20 Winter Tracking and Tree Identification 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. In partnership with Ridgefield Conservation Commission Woodcock Nature Center 56 Deer Run Road Wilton woodcocknaturecenter.org R	Thursday, January 1 Save the Date: New Year’s Hike 10:00 a.m. Hike with Redding Land Trust to ring in 2026 Location TBD reddinglandtrust.org
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SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Monday, January 5 Save the Date: Barlow Program of Studies Orientation 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Presentation on Joel Barlow High School course offerings, graduation requirements, and course selection Joel Barlow High School / Auditorium 100 Black Rock Turnpike er9.org

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Sundays at 10:00 a.m. 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemplutheranct.org	Calvary Independent Baptist Church Adult and Child Sunday School at 10:00 a.m. / Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m. Nursery provided for all services. 711 Redding Road cibcredning.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, December 12 Shabbat at Meadow Ridge 5:00 p.m. 100 Redding Road templebnaichaim.org
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MEETINGS

Thursday, December 11 Long Range Financial Planning Committee Special Meeting 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Town Hall / Conference Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	Thursday, December 11 Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room and Virtual 100 Hill Road and Zoom	Thursday, December 11 Fire District #2 Commissioners Meeting 7:00 p.m. West Redding Firehouse 306 Umpawaug Road	Monday, December 15 Board of Selectmen 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Wednesday, December 16 Region 9 Board of Education Finance & Operations 5:30 p.m. Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons 100 Black Rock Turnpike	Wednesday, December 16 Region 9 Board of Education 7:00 p.m. Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons 100 Black Rock Turnpike	Wednesday, December 16 Conservation Commission 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, December 17 Water Pollution Control Commission 7:30 p.m. Virtual	Thursday, December 18 Historic Review Committee 6:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Thursday, December 18 Democratic Town Committee 7:00 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Monday, December 22 Board of Finance 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Monday, January 5 Park and Recreation Commission 7:00 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road	Monday, January 5 Republican Town Committee 7:30 p.m. Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road	Tuesday, January 6 Georgetown Fire District 5:00 p.m. Georgetown Firehouse 61 Redding Road	**Town offices will close at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24 and will be closed Thursday, December 25 for Christmas.	*Sign-up to receive meeting agendas and notifications at reddingct.gov/subscribe
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