

The future of farming in Redding

By Jessie Wright

A recent report by the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) has shed light on the current state of agriculture in Western Connecticut and examines the future viability of farming in the region. The report, which draws on a review of local regulations and interviews with over 30 farmers and food system stakeholders, describes farming as a “deeply rooted, ecologically diverse, and integral part of Western Connecticut’s historical identity” and makes recommendations on how municipalities and state agencies might reduce barriers – financial and logistical – to encourage the practice.

Notably, the report identifies Redding as one of the more farm-friendly towns in the region. Redding’s Zoning Regulations classify farming as “by right” in all zoning districts, meaning it is generally permitted without needing special approval. The Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development also includes strong language

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Photo by Ed Magilton

A pair of pileated woodpeckers work on a tree stump off Gallows Hill Road. If you have a photo you’d like to see featured here, please e-mail it to editor@reddingsentinel.org.

Frog Frolic jumps into town this weekend

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Mark Twain Library

Mark Twain Library’s Frog Frolic Family Festival returns this weekend, with new offerings for all ages. Celebrating its 28th year, Mark Twain Library’s annual fundraiser is adding new features this year, including a classic car show.

“It feels wonderful to continue

to bring that small town festival to life with new exciting changes and additions each year to raise money for our association library and throw a really fun festival for our community,” said Meghan Huszagh, Frog Frolic Chairperson and Mark Twain Library Trustee. “As we watched the Frolic evolve, we wanted to make sure residents knew it wasn’t just for kids. This event is designed for everyone. Although the games and the crafts are a huge part of the day, the food trucks, the beer tent, and the music are also here to enjoy. The car show is something for the parents to marvel at and appreciate.”

The event takes place on Saturday, May 3 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Redding Community Center at 37 Lonetown Road. The

free outdoor event is held rain or shine. The organizers noted if there’s heavy rain, the event will move indoors.

“The Frolic really represents the start of spring for Redding. Even with the addition of these new elements, we’ve stayed true to what the event is – a hometown festival – and we’re proud of that. After a long winter, it gives residents a chance to reconnect, be outside at the Community Center, and enjoy a day that truly is crafted for people of all ages,” said Huszagh.

The family-friendly event kicks off with its annual martial arts demonstration by Sensei June’s Kempo Karate students followed by live music all day provided by

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REDDING’S BIG OUTDOORS

Redding included in three-year black bear monitoring project

By Anne Young Albanese



Photo courtesy of CT DEEP / Paul J. Fusco

The Mianus River Gorge, a nature preserve in Bedford, NY, is conducting a three-year study to help determine the number of black bears in five areas in Fairfield, Westchester, and Putnam Counties. Redding is one of the areas the study is monitoring. The Black Bear Monitoring Project places nine cameras with bear bait throughout each of the five areas to track the number of distinct bears

that appear on camera. In the 2024 data, the Redding area recorded the most bears, counting nine in total. The Limekiln Natural Area was the busiest site within the Redding area, registering three.

The other four areas in the study include “Fahnstock”, close to Fahnstock State Park; “Teatown”, an area surrounding the Teatown Lake Reservation; “Mianus”, which is found in the Mianus River Gorge

area; and “Great Hollow”, near the Great Hollow Nature Preserve & Ecological Research Center. Great Hollow was the site with the most frequent bear sightings before the Redding cluster overtook it in 2024.

This study is expected to run from 2024 through 2026. The cameras are put in place at the end of April and collected in the middle of July. After the 2026 period, three years of data will be available to compare with the same study that took place from 2016 through 2019. “We have noticed an increase in bear sightings over the last several years, and we decided to repeat the study to see what has changed,” said Jean-Luc Plante, Preserve Steward at Mianus River Gorge.

The Black Bear Monitoring Project is looking for volunteers to cover some of the monitoring sites in Redding. Volunteering would require hiking out to the camera locations (which can be muddy and are often off-trail), refreshing the scent-lures, and checking the cameras roughly every two weeks from May to mid-July. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Plante by e-mail at jplante@mianus.org ■

Selectmen discuss design and funding for four destroyed bridges

By Rocco Valluzzo

Tighe & Bond, the Town’s engineering firm, has suggested several designs for four bridges that were destroyed by flooding during the August 18, 2024 rainstorm.

The storm dropped over eight inches of rain in Redding and caused over \$19 million of damages. Bridges on Brookside Road, Greenbush Road, Long Wall Road, and Sport Hill Road were deemed total losses and have since been closed to through traffic.

Redding will be reimbursed 75 cents-per-dollar of damages by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Town is also seeking reimbursement from Connecticut’s State and Local Bridge Program (SLBP), which would pay 50% of the cost to replace each bridge.

According to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, none of these bridges qualified for the SLBP before the flood because they were in good condition. The Town has since engaged Tighe & Bond to conduct the necessary inspections and submit applications to get these bridges to qualify.

Jonathan Ives, a senior project manager with Tighe & Bond, noted it will take the State about a month to go through all the applications it has received. Designing the bridges, obtaining permits, getting approvals from the State, and putting the projects out to bid can be done in less than a year. He added it is realistic to have construction done by 2026.

“We’re hoping that we get approved for funding for at least Sport Hill in this round and one more,” said Pemberton at a Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, April 21. “Maybe we’ll get lucky and get more than that.”

To replace the existing stone slab bridge on Sport Hill Road, Ives has proposed a twin cell box culvert design at a cost of \$2.26 million. He also recommended replacing the existing corrugated galvanized pipe arch on Long Wall Road with a twin cell box culvert at a cost of \$2.5 million.

“That’s a structure type that’s really easy to maintain,” said Ives. “It’s the least expensive to construct. It doesn’t need to be inspected frequently.”

Brookside Road, which had a concrete slab bridge, would receive a single cell box culvert at a cost of \$1.9 million. The steel multi-girder bridge on Greenbush Road would be replaced with one of the same design for between \$3.5 and \$4 million.

Several residents voiced their preference to not replace the bridge on Greenbush Road, which has only a handful of houses and is bisected by Huckleberry Road. Greenbush Road resident Aimee Pardee cited that the intersection of Greenbush Road and Newtown Turnpike is a dangerous intersection with low visibility.

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EDITORIAL

Planting time has come

We look forward to what we have dubbed “the garden issue” each year, when the *Sentinel* includes special content throughout the paper about gardening and spending time outdoors. It is a time of year full of promise – the first seeds are going into the ground, our signature forests and roadside trees are filling in with green, and weeds and pests have not yet arrived to frustrate our efforts.

As we invest our springtime energy into the land in the hopes of a bountiful harvest, we have the opportunity to do the same with our own community. The 2025-26 Budget Referendum will be held next Tuesday, May 6 from 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m at the Redding Community Center. The budget has been thoughtfully put together by municipal and school administrators, volunteer board and commission members, and with feedback from many residents. It represents our investments for the next year in the infrastructure, services, events, and people helping to make Redding a wonderful place to live.

Our town – much like our gardens – requires our time and attention to cultivate it and help it thrive. We hope you vote next Tuesday and find your own ways this year to get your hands dirty, help things grow, and enjoy the fruits of your labor. ■



Photo by Vin Rosa

The people who bring the *Sentinel* to you gathered to celebrate our third anniversary. We thank them, as we do our advertisers and readers, for their support.

LEGAL NOTICES

Redding Fire District No. 2
306 Umpawaug Road, Redding, Connecticut
Annual Meeting Notice

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers in Redding Fire District No. 2 that the Annual Meeting will take place on May 15, 2025, at 7:00pm at the West Redding Firehouse at 306 Umpawaug Road in West Redding, Connecticut. The following issues will be discussed and/or voted on:

1. To consider and take action upon the reports of the District Officers.
2. To consider and take action upon the recommendations of the Commissioner’s that the sum of \$594,152.00 be appropriated for the annual budget of Redding Fire District No. 2 for the fiscal year of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.
3. To establish a Mill Rate of .001015 based on the grand list of \$585,581,940.00.
4. To elect District Officer, Tax Collector for a 3-yr term and to elect one District Commissioner for a 3-yr term. Positions commencing on July 1, 2025.
5. To do all legal and necessary matters to accomplish the above-listed items and take action that may legally and properly come before the meeting.
6. Questions and comments from the public be limited to a five-minute discussion. ■

West Redding, Connecticut
Scott Romano, Charles Wells, Ryan Beaudry / Commissioners
Dated April 25th, 2025, Alisha Durgin, Secretary

The Redding Zoning Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing for May 14, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in person at the Town Hall Hearing Room, 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the following application.

Application #25-03Z – 3 Dan Beard Lane (Accessor’s Map and

Lot #29-10) Owner Adam and Shannon Fischer. In accordance with Redding Zoning Regulations Section 5.1.2 request for a Special Use Permit for accessory residential apartment. ■

Matt Lecher, Chairman
Redding Zoning Commission

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

To the Editor,

A cultural treasure in Wilton is no more. The G & B Cultural Center, formerly located at 49 New Street in the 1915 Gilbert & Bennett school building (part of the Georgetown historic district at the junction of Wilton, Redding, Weston, and Ridgefield and owned by the Town of Wilton since 1974), served artists and art lovers since 2008. The mission of the Center was to provide a full range of cultural experiences for people of all ages and abilities in the community by offering a venue for instructional classes, performances, visual arts exhibitions, and cultural events. Over the years, it did just that. Local artists used the former classrooms as studios, different creative workshops were open to members of the public, and interesting and unique events for adults and children were pursued through collaborations among artists, arts supporters, and various organizations.

As reported in the Wilton Bulletin (“Cultural center a gem in Georgetown,” May 7, 2018), “Walk through the front door, and you realize you are in the local version of art heaven. Original paintings and sculptures line the walls and floor of the exhibition space.” Yes! Many visitors were in art heaven too when they passed through the orange doorway of this former schoolhouse and unique cultural oasis. Walking into the Center that first time for us was a breathtaking experience, being surrounded by so much inspiration and creativity. The artworks were too numerous to count and included every conceivable form, style, and genre.

Though it was not functioning quite like a gallery in the usual sense, the Center was awarded the title of Best Art Gallery in the county by *CT Insider* for 2024, having been nominated and selected before the sad developments of its demise. That’s how much visitors loved to come and browse the vast collection of varied art pieces on display. This font of creativity garnered the attention of art lovers throughout the region.

But, sadly, it had not garnered more attention by Wilton decision makers. The Town-owned landmarked building was allowed to deteriorate, rendering it unsafe for occupancy. This cultural treasure was lost in September 2024, owing to Town priorities.

It still lives on in the memories of so many regional artists and art lovers who revered it for its value to the community and uniqueness as a gathering place for those seeking inspiration. We are so glad to have known it. The Cultural Center may be gone, but it is not too late for Wilton to save this precious architectural gem in its possession.

Thank you, Pat Hegnauer, for serving as Director of the G & B Cultural Center for so many years and supporting the regional artist community with dedication and kindness. ■

Ray Bigelis, Newtown / Elisa Marmer Milkes, Ridgefield

To the Editor,

250 years ago, Paul Revere rode to alert residents about a looming threat – the British soldiers were coming. It was a pivotal time in our nation’s history. Today, we once again live in another pivotal time. Many of Redding’s residents, concerned about our democracy, are alerting residents that their futures will be impacted by what is happening nationally. Yet the *Sentinel* is silent. As wonderful as Redding is, we are not shut off from the world around us. Coverage of the efforts of our citizens who are working to assure our democracy would be appreciated. ■

Celeste Cobb, Tunxis Trail / Kathy Brandt, Mountain Road / Jean Rexford, Redding Road

Water gun game ends in arrest

By Anne Young Albanese and Donna Christopher

A teenager with a water gun outside Redding Elementary School was charged with second-degree breach of peace on Thursday, April 24.

Redding Police received a 911 call from “multiple concerned parents” at Redding Elementary School at 3:54 p.m., according to the police report. A witness originally reported a teenage male wearing black with a black water gun in the school parking lot hiding behind vehicles.

Police noted in their report that the senior class at Joel Barlow High School participates in a tradition of playing water gun tag towards the end of the school year. The report said this game is not sanctioned or conducted by the school but is operated and hosted by the seniors outside of school. Chief Mark O’Donnell confirmed to the *Sentinel* that the police are notified and aware each year when the game is going on. He also confirmed that the School Safety Officer at the elementary school was not present, as his posting ends at 3:00 p.m.

One of the 911 callers stated the teenager was leaving Redding Elementary School in a white Honda sedan with white lettering in the car window. Officer Brandon Lopiano was dispatched and first checked

the area surrounding the school before heading to Joel Barlow High School where he observed a vehicle matching that description in the senior parking lot.

After confirming the identity of the driver and that he had just been at Redding Elementary School, Officer Lopiano asked if the teenager had a water gun with him and if the officer could see it. It was described as “constructed like a 1911 pistol with a drum style magazine inserted”.

Though the caller to 911 had described it as black, the water gun was described in the police report as dark blue in color with a white lower frame, and an orange tip, trigger, slide release, and backstrap.

“Due to the construction and nomenclature of the water gun, I could see why someone would initially be alarmed by it,” noted Officer Lopiano.

After one of the witnesses notified police that they wished to make a complaint about the incident, the teenager was cited with a misdemeanor summons for breach of peace. The witness gave a written statement and described his fear seeing a male dressed in black “running in the parking lot of an elementary school” with what looked like a gun.

“[The teenager] was very under-

standing and apologetic about the incident,” noted Officer Lopiano in the police report. “[He] stated that he and his classmates were just playing a game and they did not think anything threatening by it.”

Police notified Joel Barlow High School officials. According to a letter sent to parents after the incident by Dr. Mario Almeida, Head of School and Assistant Superintendent for Joel Barlow High School, the game is one where students sign up and target each other using water guns. Participating students are safe from the water guns if they wear “swim-themed” safety items.

“[It] is NOT a school sponsored event, and it brings concerns for students’ safety and privacy,” said Almeida in the letter. “The administration is adamant that there should be no gameplay during school hours, not during athletic practices, not at away contests/games, or any other school-sponsored activity.”

Almeida also included a list of topics for parents to discuss with their senior students, including violations of school rules and disruptions; safety, legal, and privacy risks; mental and emotional distress; and ethical and social concerns.

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Redding Sentinel Ltd
News and Views of Redding, Connecticut
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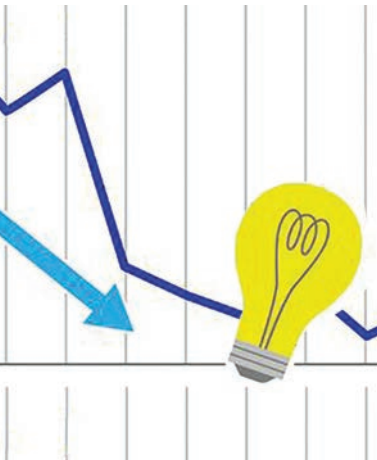
Printed by The Republican, Springfield, MA
Telecommunications by CCI Voice
www.reddingsentinel.org
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PURA approves slight reduction in electricity rates starting May 1 | *By John Moritz*



State regulators on Wednesday last week approved a slight decrease in Connecticut electricity rates over the next year, driven largely by more favorable conditions surrounding the purchase of power from New England’s two nuclear power stations.

All three Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) commissioners voted unanimously to approve rate adjustments for both Eversource and United Illuminating customers.

According to PURA, the adjustment will result in approximately a \$13 decrease for an average Eversource customer’s monthly bill and a \$3 decrease for the typical United Illuminating customer. The exact amount of savings will vary depending on a customers’ usage and rate class.

The new rates will take effect on May 1 and may last for up to a year or until September, should PURA decide to make another adjustment then.

The reduction was the result of PURA’s annual rate adjustment proceedings, in which regulators review and approve new rates associated with the transmission and public benefits portions of customers’ bills.

The supply and distribution rates, which make up the bulk of electric bills, remain mostly unchanged by Wednesday’s decision.

Claire Coleman, Head of the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC), released a statement on Wednesday casting the regulators’ decision as prudent given the large fluctuations in the cost of energy over the last year. Coleman’s office represents ratepayers before PURA.

“This decision reflects OCC’s advocacy to consider both affordability as well as protecting customers from the impacts of market volatility, and arrives at the best possible outcome,” Coleman said.

“It is also clear that market fluctuations will impact the cost of electricity for the foreseeable future, and my team and I will continue to do everything we can to promote rate stabilization in the face of volatility,” she added.

The biggest part of Wednesday’s adjustments was the result of changes in the cost of power purchase agreements with two nuclear power plants, New Hampshire’s Seabrook Station and the Millstone Nuclear Power Station in Waterford. Under those agreements, utilities are required to buy power from both plants, and the associated costs are passed onto customers through the public benefits charge.

The Millstone agreement, in particular, was widely blamed for a spike in electric bills last summer that coincided with a period of intense heat and rising demand for electricity.

When the price of wholesale electricity in New England rises above the set prices in those contracts, however, the utilities can sell the energy back into the grid at a profit that gets passed along to customers. That’s essentially what happened over the first few months of the year, according to drafts of PURA’s decision, allowing for a reduction in the public benefits charge.

In its filings with PURA earlier this year, Eversource requested a return of \$275 million to its customers as a result of the power purchase agreements. PURA initially proposed a more modest \$45 million return, before ultimately settling on \$142 million in Wednesday’s decision.

“Today’s decision from the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority relied on our evidence to revise its draft decision and increase the credit going back to customers through state-mandated power purchase agreements, including the Millstone and Seabrook nuclear power plant contracts,” Eversource spokeswoman Jamie Ratliff said in a statement. “This adjustment to Public Benefits will provide additional relief to customers at a time when energy bills typically go up significantly due to increased electric usage in the summer months.”

PURA released an explanation of its decision Wednesday, which said that Eversource’s initial request was based on rosy predictions on the cost of wholesale energy related to the Millstone and Seabrook agreements. If those predictions did not pan out, the authority said, ratepayers would be at risk of having to make up those costs in future bills.

“Setting rates now that assume a \$275 million ‘credit’ based on pure speculation, as suggested by Eversource, sharply increases the risk of substantial under-recovery, which would result in significant carrying charges and rate shock borne exclusively by customers,”

the statement read. “This would necessitate a potentially large rate increase next May, imposing unnecessary financial burdens on customers.”

But, according to PURA, if those contracts with the power plants continue to produce dividends, rates could fall even more in September.

PURA also rejected Eversource’s request to charge customers \$75 million to replenish the utility’s storm reserve accounts, after regulators questioned the utility’s rationale that it would save customers in the long run.

In a statement on Wednesday, United Illuminating said the adjustment will decrease the utilities’ overall revenues by \$10.3 million.

“With the conclusion of the initial phase of the 2025 Rate Adjustment Mechanism (RAM) process today, PURA has set the Public Benefits Charge for UI customers, which pays for policymakers’ priority programs and which UI does not control or profit from,” UI spokeswoman Sarah Wall Fliotics said in a statement. “We encourage our customers to contact their elected officials with any questions or concerns regarding this portion of their energy charges.”

The decision came at a time of immense scrutiny for PURA and its chairwoman, Marissa Gillett. Lawmakers approved the appointments of both Gillett and the authority’s newest commissioner, David Arconti, last week following a months-long confirmation process.

Lawmakers have also debated how to find relief for Connecticut residents, who are paying some of the highest rates for electricity in the nation. Much of that debate has focused on the public benefits charge, a collection of programs mandated by state and federal policy but paid for out of utility bills.

Republicans in the legislature have lobbied to take all those costs off customers’ bills and pay for them with taxpayer dollars in the State’s general fund. More recently, an alternative idea put forward by State Senator John Fonfara, D-Hartford, would borrow up to \$2.4 billion over the next three years to cover the public benefits charge.

Fonfara’s legislation, Senate Bill 1560, was advanced out of the legislature’s Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee Wednesday on a bipartisan vote. It next heads to the Energy and Technology Committee for further discussions.

This article originally appeared in CT Mirror

Region 9 selects architectural firm for new STEM space

By Anne Young Albanese

The Region 9 Board of Education has voted to accept a bid to design new science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) educational spaces at Joel Barlow High School. Silver Petrucelli + Associates’ bid of \$20,080 to design the STEM educational spaces was accepted. The design project is expected to take 55 days.

The funds for designing the new spaces were included as part of the school district’s 2024-25 operating budget. Mike D’Agostino, ER9’s Director of Facilities and Operations, developed the request for proposal. Nine firms attended the site walkthrough, and five qualified firms submitted bids.

According to the request for proposal, the project aims to “reimagine and modernize the existing space to create an innovative, flexible environment that fosters collaboration, creativity, and hands-on learning in STEM fields.” The request was sent to architectural firms throughout Connecticut with experience in educational settings. The submitted bids were publicly opened on April 22, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., in time for the Region 9 Board of Education meeting that evening.

“The design firm will engage with key stakeholders – students, staff, and community members – to gather input and develop conceptual designs that reflect the district’s STEM educational vision and priorities,” said D’Agostino. The firm will also create a timeline for completion of the project, develop conceptual drawings, and provide cost projections for design and construction.

“The firm has a well-established reputation in educational design, with recent projects including the STEAM Education Center in Glastonbury and Career and Technical Education spaces at

Foran and Jonathan Law High Schools in Milford. We are excited to work with Silver Petrucelli + Associates to design a space that enhances student learning and provides a dedicated environment for hands-on, inquiry-based learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics,” said ER9 Superintendent Jason McKinnon.

“Silver Petrucelli + Associates impressed us with their strategic vision, expertise in STEM-focused design, and competitive pricing,” said Todd Johnston, Chair of the Region 9 Board of Education. “We look forward to working with them and the Joel Barlow community to create learning spaces that will prepare our students for a rapidly evolving world where innovation, analytical skills, and creative problem-solving are essential for success.”

Currently, a small wing at Joel Barlow High School is dedicated to business classrooms, robotics, and a combination technology/manufacturing classroom. The Region 9 Board of Education is looking to improve the facilities, as the number of STEM jobs in the workforce has been growing since the start of tracking them in 2011. This is another step in preparing Joel Barlow students for the future.

Silver Petrucelli + Associates is a multidisciplinary firm offering architecture, engineering, and interior design services. They have a diverse portfolio, including educational facilities, and are committed to sustainable design practices.

“We’re confident that their design will support the Board’s vision of creating innovative, student-centered learning spaces that inspire critical thinking and collaboration,” added D’Agostino.

■

POLICE BLOTTER

Police activity from April 15 – 20 | *By Donna Christopher*

Officers assisted in six medical and three fire emergencies and assisted the Easton Police Department with a call for an out-of-control juvenile. They assisted one operator of a disabled motor vehicle, investigated a noise complaint disturbance at a residence, and a loud music complaint at another residence. One firearms permit was processed.

Fraud

A resident on Lamppost Drive reported on April 16 someone filing for unemployment benefits using his name. The investigation remains open.

Also on April 16, police received a complaint from someone on Topstone Road who said his e-mail had been hacked, with hackers posing as a paving company and requesting money for services that were not performed. The investigation remains open.

Suspicious vehicle

On April 19, officers investigated a report of a suspicious vehicle on Old Hattertown Road. The area was checked but police were unable to locate the vehicle.

Theft

A bench and chair from the end of a driveway on Redding Road (Route 53) were reported stolen on

April 16. The investigation remains open.

Traffic

There were 24 motor vehicle stops, with multiple on Poverty Hollow Road (four) and Umpawaug Road (five). Police provided no additional information.

An accident on Stepney Road on April 18 caused property damage. A vehicle was rear-ended by a second vehicle, after which the driver of the second vehicle pulled around the first vehicle and drove away. A responding officer was able to locate the teen driver at her parents’ residence on Cross Highway and issued her a misdemeanor summons for evading responsibility for following too close. There were no injuries.

Someone crashed into a stone wall on April 19 on Diamond Hill Road, causing damage and driving away. Unidentified pieces of a vehicle were found in the stone wall and roadway. The investigation is open.

Trespass

Residents on Gallows Hill Road Extension reported on April 15 that an unidentified teen male has been occasionally knocking on their front door. The incidents have been captured on their Google camera. The investigation remains open. ■



SPORTS

Brookfield holds off Barlow threat

Girls lacrosse | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Joel Barlow High’s Maggie Valenti, left, pressures Brookfield’s Jenna Mix during a girls varsity lacrosse game on Thursday, April 24.

Gaining the upper hand proved to be just out of the reach of the Joel Barlow High girls varsity lacrosse team in its game at Brookfield last week.

While never actually leading, the Falcons battled back to tie the game on several occasions on Thursday, April 24. They then had no answer for a late surge by the Bobcats as the visitors fell 8-12.

“Brookfield had the lead, and we were always tying it back up,” said Barlow Head Coach Melissa Sportini. “We were trying to dig ourselves out of holes.”

Despite trailing the hosts, the Falcons managed to stay within a goal or two of their opponents for much of the time. Down 3-5 in the second quarter, they netted back-to-back goals by Ruby Ludwig in less than a minute to tie it.

But with 2:22 remaining in the

half, the Bobcats retook the lead, this time on a goal by Juliet Ponte. Barlow came close to netting the equalizer, only to have Caroline Lippoth’s shot saved by Brookfield goalie Emily Bray at the buzzer.

Barlow’s last tie came early in the third quarter on a goal by Allie Ogden at the 10:40 mark, making it 6-6. A short while later, the Bobcats went on the attack, scoring four unanswered goals in the next six minutes, leaving the Bobcats in charge at 6-10.

Down but not out, the Falcons drew closer in the time remaining. Consecutive goals by Ludwig and Ogden brought them to within two with just over eight minutes left to play, but the Bobcats gained the upper hand in draw controls and later scored on a free play to make it 8-11.

As time grew short, the Falcons pulled goalie Bella Sgretta in favor of an extra field player, but Brookfield withstood the pressure. It also squeezed in one more goal with 20 seconds left to finalize the score.

“Throughout the game we were more dominant in the draw circle,” said Sportini. “Then, towards the end I think they ended up getting some of the possessions that we really needed.”

Ludwig led Barlow with five goals. Ogden netted two and Lippoth had one.

“Kudos to Brookfield,” said Sportini. “They took care of it when they needed to win and scored when they needed to.”

Barlow, now 4-4, visits Southington on Saturday, May 3 at 10:00 a.m. and is at Newtown on Monday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m. ■

Newtown wins in five Boys volleyball | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Joel Barlow High’s James Pereira goes up for a kill during a boys varsity volleyball match at Newtown on Thursday, April 24.

It was a battle right from the start between the Joel Barlow High boys varsity volleyball team and Newtown.

The Falcons had their strong moments as well as some inconsistent ones last Thursday, April 24. Host Newtown had the better of play toward the end to win 3-2 (23-25, 25-23, 25-22, 22-25, 15-9).

“They’re a good program with a lot of good players,” said Barlow Head Coach Kevin Marino. “We are still a little inexperienced. We were up and down today, and it wasn’t good enough.”

Taking a 0-3 lead in the first set on the serve of James Pereira, the Falcons led much of the time until their opponent eventually tied it at 15-15 before pulling ahead. A kill by the Nighthawks’ Warner Bacon put them in good position, but the Falcons battled back, cutting it to 23-21. Helped in part by strong net play by Alex Stinson, Erik Schmid, and Mark Meschi, Barlow secured the next four points for the win.

With an early 1-5 lead in the second set, Barlow was off to a

seemingly good start again. But a few errors on the Falcons’ part helped Newtown claw its way back to force an 8-8 tie and later the hosts led by three (15-12) on an ace by A.J. Zatulskis. After winning back the serve, the Falcons reeled off five straight points on Khyle Sobelman’s serve and seemed to have the momentum. However, after some errors by Barlow and with kills by Zatulskis, Bacon, and Nate Twitchell, Newtown came from behind for the win.

Numerous ties highlighted much of the third set, the last one coming at 9-9. Twitchell’s kill put Newtown back on top, and although the Falcons remained within striking distance, they failed to take the lead in the remainder of the set.

The fourth set was also back and forth, with neither side having a clear-cut advantage. The Falcons tied it at 15-15 on Sky Fiuczynski’s serve and then made use of kills by Meschi and Pereira to take the set and tie the match.

Despite forcing a fifth set, the Falcons trailed nearly the entire time, again hampered by hitting and passing errors. Led by Bacon and Twitchell at the net, the Nighthawks took the set and the win.

“Newtown played really well,” said Marino. “In the fifth set, we just didn’t make them earn points the way we needed to. We gave them a lot, but we can’t take away anything from them. They played better than we did.”

Barlow, now 6-4, hosts New Milford on May 2 is at Masuk on May 5 and faces Newtown again at home on May 7. All matches are at 6:00 p.m. ■

Lacrosse is a family affair for the Bonanno brothers | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
The four Bonanno brothers form an integral part of the 2025 Joel Barlow High boys varsity lacrosse team. (From left to right): Triplets Joey, Cole, Luke, and younger brother Chase.

For several seasons, triplets Joey, Luke, and Cole and younger brother Chase Bonanno have been familiar faces in boys lacrosse in Redding.

All got their start in the sport through the Redding-Easton Lacrosse (RELAX) youth program. Together, they are now starting players on the boys varsity lacrosse team at Joel Barlow High School, playing a big part in the team’s success this season.

Joey (midfield), Luke (attack), and Cole (goalie) are senior captains. Junior Chase is a midfielder.

“It’s a little bit surreal, them being 17-18 years old,” said Barlow Head Coach Taylor Leahy, who previously coached the brothers in RELAX. “I remember them being 10-11 years old. They’re great kids.”

Getting introduced to the sport in third and fourth grade, they recalled seeing a neighbor playing

lacrosse and credited him with getting them interested in the sport.

Attracted to its fast pace and constant running, they decided to give it a try.

Between the four of them, they were able to practice on their own. With a goal set up in their yard, they sharpened their skills.

After coming up through RELAX, Joey, Luke, and Cole moved up to Barlow three years ago. Their freshman season marked Barlow’s final year under John Distler, the original Head Coach of the program. A year later, Chase had moved up and all four were reunited with their former RELAX coach.

“It helps for a fun, family dynamic on and off the field,” said Leahy. “They’re a pleasure to coach.”

The high point of their time at Barlow to date, came near the end of last season in the South-West Conference championship.

Falcons answer Spartans in time Baseball | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Joel Barlow High’s Gavin Maryott fields a ball at shortstop during a varsity baseball game. The Falcons came from behind to beat Lewis Mills of Burlington on Thursday, April 24.

A late rally would do the trick for the Joel Barlow High varsity baseball team when it visited Lewis Mills last week.

The Falcons were one out away from defeat last Thursday, April 24. Several walks and some timely hitting proved to be enough as they battled back for a 10-9 win in Burlington.

Both teams relied on their bats, combining for 23 hits in all. Things started well enough for the Falcons in the top of the first inning. On the second pitch of the game, T.J. Baer

homered to left field to quickly put the visitors up 1-0.

Although the Spartans were retired in order in their first turn, they plated five runners in the bottom of the second. Two walks and a single loaded the bases with one out before another walk forced in a run to tie it.

Barlow was one out away from getting out of the inning without any additional damage, but a bases-clearing double brought in three more runs, and the Spartans scored another on a single to make it 1-5 after two frames.

The Falcons got one run back in the top of the third when Ken Esposito doubled and then scored on a single by Will Gregor. Drew Gutowski also singled to put two runners on with two out, but they were left stranded.

Relief pitcher Ken Esposito sent the Spartans down in order in the bottom of the third inning. Barlow then chipped away at the lead in the top of the fourth when Connor Thomas led off with a double to center field, advanced to third on a wild pitch, and then scored on a ground out. It was then a 4-5 game when Baer singled and stole three bases.

Gavin Maryott’s lead-off homer in the top of the fifth tied it at 5-5. It did not last long, however, as the Spartans made use of a pair of walks and two singles in the bottom

of the inning to retake the lead.

Barlow rallied in the top of the sixth, thanks to a two-run single by Billy Bardani to make it 7-7, but with a double and a single in the bottom of the inning, Lewis Mills was back on top.

Down to their last turn, the Falcons had the bases loaded with two out in the top of the seventh when Gregor walked to force in a run. Maryott’s two-run single put the visitors ahead 10-8.

A two-out single in the bottom of the seventh cut the lead to one run and the Spartans had the bases loaded with two outs when closer Gregor struck out the final batter to preserve the win.

Esposito had three hits for Barlow, including a double, and scored two runs. Maryott had two hits, including a homerun, with three RBI and two runs scored.

Baer had two hits (one home run) with an RBI and scored three runs. Bardani also had two hits with an RBI and a run.

Baer threw six innings with four runs, four hits, three strikeouts, and two walks for the win. Gregor relieved him in the seventh for the save with no runs on three hits and one strikeout.

Barlow, now 7-1 overall, hosts New Milford on Friday, May 2 is at Masuk on Monday, May 5, and goes to Weston on Wednesday, May 7. All games are at 4:15 p.m. ■

Water gun game ends in arrest / continued from page 2

“Teenagers, especially teenage boys, are impulsive,” noted Elizabeth Driscoll Jorgensen, CAD/C, a Redding resident and Director of Insight Counseling in Ridgefield. “Don’t shame a teenager for age-appropriate behavior.” Driscoll Jorgensen has worked with teenagers for more than 35 years and

is a nationally recognized expert in counseling.

Chief O’Donnell, however, noted that in the current national context of gun-related violence, even games can hold serious consequences.

“We are in an era of extreme sensitivity to this type of activity,

especially at a school,” O’Donnell said. “What if the School Safety Officer had engaged him in the parking lot?”

The case is now closed. The teenager was released from the scene on a promise to appear at Danbury Superior Court on Tuesday, May 6. ■

Pulling back the curtain on social media's tricks

***Renowned speaker to visit John Read Middle School
and host parent Q&A*** | *By Anne Young Albanese*

By Anne Young Albanese



Max Stossel

On Monday, May 5, Max Stossel, an award-winning poet, filmmaker, and speaker, will visit John Read Middle School to share his presentation, “We’ve Been Sneaking into Your Brain,” with sixth through eighth-grade students. That evening, there will also be a Zoom question-and-answer meeting for parents.

The program is a partnership between the John Read Middle School PTA and the school's administration. Stossel, who *Forbes* magazine named "one of the best storytellers of the year," illustrates some of the specific ways technology is designed to be addictive and distracting. He will provide the students with methods to help combat the tools that social media platforms use to promote

addiction to their services. He will also create a safe space where students can speak freely about the impact of phones and social media on their lives.

Stossel advocates “Away for the Day,” a policy preventing students from accessing their phones during the school day. John Read Middle School follows this policy. Students are not allowed to have phones or smart watches on their person during the day. If a student is found with a smart device during the school day, the student must surrender it to a staff member. The staff member will take the device to the office. A parent or guardian must arrange to pick up the student’s device.

The JRMS PTA is excited to partner with our school administrators to bring Max Stossel in to speak with both our students and our parents,” said Beatrix Eriksen, JRMS PTA President. “Max’s unique background allows him to be able to reach students on a level that produces positive action and awareness. At a time when kids are being told they will inevitably become addicted and dependent on their devices, Max flips the conversation by explaining the manipulation created behind the scenes while showing kids how they, themselves, can maintain control and stand against these tactics.”

A video posted on YouTube provides a sample of Stossel's

social media presentation for teenagers. He develops a two-way conversation to help attendees recognize that social media interactions are not true friendships, although students may view them that way. Parents and others may view Stosel's video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdvNpsigFk>

Stossel gives specific examples during his presentations. When speaking about Snap Map, a feature of Snapchat that allows people to see where users are, he said, “You can now see when your friends don’t invite you somewhere. Obviously, it’s no fun to physically see we are being left out that way.”

Stossel is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Social Awakening, an organization that helps young people survive and thrive in the modern world. Before founding Social Awakening, he was a media strategist with an extensive background in social media. He ran social media for multi-national brands and later worked for a social media company where he designed notifications to distract people. For the past seven years, he has spoken with more than 100,000 students, parents, and educators worldwide about social media's impact on people's lives and creating resources to help manage that impact. ■

Learn more at [jrmspta.org/
social-media-w-max-stossel](http://jrmspta.org/social-media-w-max-stossel)

Barlow Beat

By Juliana Qiu

As May arrives, Barlow students are entering one of the most dynamic stretches of the school year. With major academic milestones and long-anticipated celebrations, the month promises a meaningful and memorable finish to the spring season. Here is what lies ahead.

From Monday, May 5 through Friday, May 16, juniors and seniors who are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses will sit for their annual exams. This year marks a significant shift, as the College Board begins rolling out digital testing formats for several AP subjects. Of the 28 exams transitioning in 2025, 16 will be fully digital – such as AP Computer Science Principles and AP English Language and Composition – while 12 will follow a hybrid format, including AP Statistics and AP Physics. In the hybrid model, students complete multiple-choice sections and view free-response questions digitally via the Bluebook app but write their responses in familiar paper booklets. The goal of this change is to improve test security and reflect the growing integration of technology in learning environments. Students and families can learn more about the digital exam rollout and specific subject formats by visiting apcentral.collegeboard.org.

Friday, May 16 will also feature a schoolwide early dismissal to allow time for students to prepare for one of the year's most anticipated events: the Junior and Senior Prom. The evening of celebration will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Ethan Allen Inn.

in Danbury. Students are reminded that Prom tickets are still available for purchase during both lunch waves at the table outside the cafeteria. Be sure not to wait too long – ticket sales will close soon, and all attendees must have their tickets in advance!

Later in the month, local community members from Easton and Redding are invited to come together for the annual Barlow Palooza, taking place on Thursday, May 22 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This event is a vibrant celebration of student learning and creativity, serving as a showcase of work across a huge variety of disciplines. Visitors can explore everything from science research and independent study presentations – primarily through Passages projects – to musical performances and art exhibitions. Barlow Palooza offers a meaningful look at what students have explored and achieved throughout the year and is a proud display of the many ways learning comes to life at Joel Barlow High School.

May brings a sense of forward motion at Barlow. Students are rounding out their coursework while looking ahead to what comes next. Between upcoming events and the energy that fills the school this time of year, it is clear that the final stretch holds plenty of moments worth remembering. For additional details regarding any of the information above, please visit the school's official website at jpbs.er9.org ■

*Juliana Qiu is a senior at
Joel Barlow High School*



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Yellow is the color of spring | By Terry Karpen



Photos by Terry Karpen

Daffodil, Narcissus spp / Wood Poppy, Stylophorum diphyllum / Oak tree catkins

“How wonderful yellow is. It stands for the sun.” – Vincent Van Gogh

Yellow is the color of happiness, optimism, enlightenment, and sunshine, and the quintessential color of spring. Have you ever wondered why so many spring flowers are yellow?

Spring flowers are commonly yellow due to what pollinates them: diverse groups of early pollinators, which include over-wintering bees, early butterflies, beetles, flies, and gnats. Yellow is easily visible to them, especially in the dimmer light of early spring. Since yellow flowers reflect the greatest amount of light, they attract the early pollinators that are seeking food in the form of nectar and pollen from flowers.

The plant kingdom has immense diversity in flower colors. This abundance of color evolved mostly because their coloration aids flowers in attracting pollinators, and as a result, enhances the plants’ reproductive success. This process, known as coevolution, involves plants and their pollinators reciprocally affecting each other’s evolution. Flowers act as billboards for pollinators, advertising visual signs like color to attract them for rewards of nectar and pollen. Plants evolved flower colors that match the specific visual systems of different pollinators.

For a flower, color comes from pigments, molecules that absorb and reflect light. The color of each flower is due to the pigments in

their petals. Pigments make things appear to be certain colors because they absorb and reflect different wavelengths of light. Yellow comes from a group of pigments called carotenoids and is seen as a bright color because it reflects a lot of light. Carotenoids produce a range of colors across a spectrum. The same chemical, carotenoid, that produces pigment in tomatoes and carrots, also produces yellow, red, or orange color in flowers. Carotenoids play an important role in photosynthesis. The production of carotenoids is a relatively easy and energy-efficient process for plants, which may explain why yellow flowers are more common than other colors.

Any garden and landscape provides happiness from the many shades of yellows found in the flowers of spring bulbs, perennial herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees.

A selection of spring blooming plants with yellow flowers:
(Note: The scientific abbreviation “spp.” refers to multiple species within a given genus.)

Bulbs
Daffodil, *Narcissus* spp.
Tulip, *Tulipa* spp.
Trout Lily, *Erythronium americanum*
Yellow Crocus, *Crocus flavus*
Winter Aconite, *Eranthis Hyemalis*

Perennials
Buttercup, *Ranunculus* spp.
Barrenwort, *Epimedium* hybrids

Wood Poppy, *Stylophorum diphyllum*
Yellow Wakerobin Trillium, *Trillium luteum*
Bellwort, *Uvularia grandiflora*
Marsh Marigold, *Caltha palustris*
Barren Strawberry, *Waldsteinia fragarioides*
Hellebore hybrids
Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*

Shrubs
Hybrid Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis x intermedia*
Japanese Kerria, *Kerria japonica*
Forsythia, *Forsythia* spp.
Rhododendrons and Azaleas spp.
Spice bush, *Lindera benzoin*
Spike Winterhazel, *Corylopsis spicata*
Buttercup Winterhazel, *Corylopsis pauciflora*

Trees
Magnolia, *Magnolia* spp.
Tuliptree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*
Japanese Cornel Dogwood, *Cornus mas*
Yellow Buckeye, *Aesculus flava*
Ohio Buckeye, *Aesculus glabra*

Trees with yellow catkins
Yellow Birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*
White Birch, *Betula papyrifera*
Hazel, *Corylus avellana*
American Hophornbeam, *Ostrya virginiana*
Beech, *Fagus* spp.
Alder, *Alnus* spp. ■

Terry Karpen is proprietor of Queen Of Spades Gardens & Landscapes in Redding



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Community Garden hopes to grow with new fence

By Donna Christopher



Photo by Jessie Wright

If voters approve capital expenditures as part of the 2025-26 Budget Referendum on May 6, funds will be available for a new fence at the Community Garden, allowing gardeners on the long waitlist to have a chance at a plot.

The Community Garden was established before 1997 and is located on Lonetown Road behind the Zalmon Read Barn, site of many Redding Historical Society programs. It is managed by the Park and Recreation Department. The Community Garden has had 23 plots for many years; recent subdivisions of three plots have increased that number to 27 to allow for more users, but the waitlist still currently has eight gardeners on it.

“The (full) plots take a lot of work. So, we thought maybe people might want a smaller plot, and then we can get more people in,” Rob Blick, Park and Recreation Director explained.

Demand for plots soared during the Covid-19 pandemic, filling the Community Garden roster with few spots opening since. A new fence, which would be eight feet high and made of wooden posts and metal mesh, would enlarge the garden area and allow for nine additional plots, said Blick. It also would provide a much-needed upgrade to the fence that is in place now, which Blick described as in “horrible shape.”

The Community Garden is in a sunny spot with a spigot nearby for watering. Gardeners grow a great variety of flowers and produce, including tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, peppers, and sunflowers.

The Board of Selectmen’s capital plan of \$1,180,000 was approved unanimously by the Board of Finance. Of this total, \$36,000 is earmarked for the new Community Garden fence. If voters approve the capital expenditures, they will be funded by the Unassigned Fund balance or other sources at the discretion of the Board of Finance.

The Community Garden illustrates “the vibrant spirit of our town’s connection to the outdoors,” said Angela Caes, Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission.

“This open public space serves as a resource for our residents, and the Park and Recreation Department is proud to support its flourishing through annual maintenance, streamlined gardener registration, and support of an independent monitoring structure,” Caes said. “Responding to increased interest from residents in recent years, we took steps to optimize plot utilization by subdividing some existing spaces. Looking ahead, we recognize the need to replace the fencing structure to allow effective gardening. While we deeply appreciate the Highway Department’s past efforts in maintaining the current fence, we’ve reached a point where a full replacement is necessary to ensure the Garden’s continued functionality and security.”

Caes pointed out that residents’ efforts at the Community Garden reach beyond their own plots and dinner tables.

“It’s also important to acknowledge the remarkable generosity of many community gardeners who regularly donate their surplus produce to local organizations, further strengthening the bonds within our town and contributing to the well-being of our neighbors,” said Caes. “We believe these improvements will not only enhance the community garden itself but also amplify its positive impact on Redding as a whole.” ■

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Mother's Day is May 11!



Plant sales popping up this May

By Jessie Wright

Didn't get around to starting seeds this winter? Need a thoughtful gift for Mother's Day? Itching to try something new in the garden? No problem. May is bursting with activity in and around Redding, with plant sales offering all you need to get the growing season off on the right foot.

Ballard Park Plant Sale
Friday, May 9 – Saturday, May 10
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
21 Gilbert Street, Ridgefield
The Ridgefield and Caudatowa Garden Clubs team up each year to host the Ballard Park Plant Sale at Ballard Greenhouse. A tradition now for over 70 years, garden club members begin their growing in early March to offer vegetables, tomatoes, herbs, perennials, annuals, gift baskets, and more to community shoppers.
Learn more at ridgefieldgardenclub.org/plant-sale.html

Redding Garden Club Plant Sale
Saturday, May 10
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
43 Lonetown Road
A community staple each spring, the Redding Garden Club Plant Sale offers annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, and a showcase of local non-profits just in time for Mother's Day. Master gardeners will attend to help answer questions and visitors can also look through a garden-themed tag sale.

Information tables from Redding Neighbors & Newcomers, Highstead, Redding Land Trust, and others will be there to visit while browsing.
Learn more at reddinggardenclub.org/plant-sale

Easton Garden Club's Garden Mart Plant Sale
Saturday, May 10
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
1 Center Road, Easton
A cash-and-carry event, the Garden Mart Plant Sale features perennials, annuals, and herbs grown by Easton Garden Club members. There will be conservation and Master Gardener booths on site offering advice and other vendors to enjoy.
Learn more at eastongardenclubofct.org/events

Homefront Farmers Plant Sale
Sunday, May 18
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Pre-orders due May 11
137 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield
Homefront Farmers specializes in helping people enjoy organic gardens at their own homes and businesses. They will be bringing this expertise to their annual Plant Sale held at the Nod Hill Brewery Biergarten which will feature certified-organic seedlings. Pre-orders must be placed by May 11, and all

orders must be picked up during the sale on May 18.
Learn more and pre-order at homefrontfarmers.com/plant-sale

Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company Plant Sale and Swap
Sunday, May 18
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Pre-orders due May 11
5 North Main Street
Held at The Granite this year, the 4th Annual Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company Plant Sale and Swap will feature vegetables, herbs, and annuals from Long Ridge Greenhouse. Hanging baskets will also be available, but those must be pre-ordered (and all pre-orders are due by May 11). Proceeds from the event support the Fire Company and Georgetown community.
Learn more and pre-order at thegranitechurch.org/events

Open Farmhouse Plant Sale & Cafe
Saturday, May 24 – Monday, May 26 from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
11 John Read Road
Add this event to your Memorial Day Weekend plans, as the farmers at Open Farmhouse offer heirloom and organic seeds and plants grown without the use of fossil fuels or pesticides. Alongside the plant offerings will be a pop-up café with seasonal treats and beverages.
Learn more at openfarmhouse.com/farm-live-create/events ■

Monthly plant swap encourages gardening trial and error

By Pamela Brown

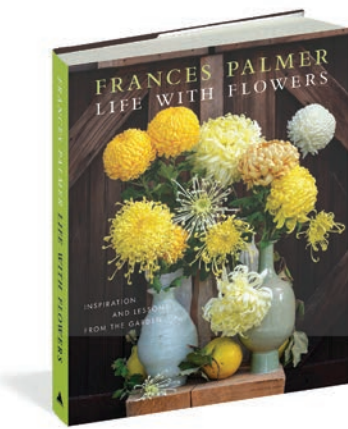
Rainy Day Paperback Exchange in Bethel is hosting its annual Plant Swap every second Saturday of the month now through October.
Stop by the store at 81 Greenwood Avenue from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on each second Saturday and bring a plant to swap or take some plants home at no cost. "Bring a plant and take a plant. It's always an assortment of stuff," said Honora O'Neill, owner of the Paperback Exchange who organized the first swap in 2019. "You don't have to swap one-for-one. If you have too many plants, you can leave them here and know they'll go home with someone, or you can take some. Families will stop by and each of the kids will pick up a plant to try out," she said.
Under a canopy on the sidewalk near the shop, browsers will find three tables of small plants and one palette of larger items, including whole trees and seedlings. "The selection varies, but there will always be spider plants, pothos, coleus, flowers of some sort, daylily, Autumn joy sedum, basic starter vegetables, and easy-to-propagate things," said O'Neill, who will have a selection of her own propagated plants, including tiny dragon fruit cactus and native beech willow trees. "They're good for anywhere you have a wet spot or a

stream bank. They're about 30-feet tall maximum and it will help stabilize the ground," she explained.
In addition, the swap will feature plants from the Frank A. Berry Elementary School's student perennial pollinator garden, including sage, lamb's ear, coneflower, and yarrow. Invasive species will not be accepted as part of the monthly swap, and items must be small enough to fit in a car.
"It's always a surprise. It's always fun," said O'Neill. "Some people I see every month who are plant people – they come with a million different plants they've propagated, or they got too enthusiastic with their plants, so they're always bringing in plants. They'll bring in 20 and take home one! And other people are like, 'Cool, I never tried this, but I want to try out stuff.'"
People can also bring seed packets and pick some up, or join O'Neill's free mail order Seed Program. Contact O'Neill at rainyday-paperback@yahoo.com to select the seeds you want and receive them in the mail for free. ■
Berry Elementary School is looking for volunteers to help with the pollinator garden during summer – at the swap, ask O'Neill for more info

Frances Palmer and the two halves of her "earthly paradise"

Life with Flowers: Inspiration and Lessons from the Garden

By Pamela Brown



No need to attend a master class in gardening. Frances Palmer, renowned potter, master gardener, and author takes you into nature's classroom with her new book, *Life with Flowers: Inspiration and Lessons from the Garden* to offer a thorough, practical, and visual guide for growing, arranging, and cooking with flowers.
"The premise of the book is to describe the flowers that I grow in relationship to my ceramics, why I chose specific types to include in my garden, a brief history of their origin and name, and how to grow and harvest them," said Palmer, who lives, works, and gardens in Weston. "I began growing flowers when we moved to this house over 30 years ago. Until then, although I purchased flowers, I did not have the space to grow them."

Palmer, known for raising the most extraordinary flowers, especially dahlias, introduces readers to her life amongst her gardens and her artistic process. In the 287-page book, she explains the lessons she's learned from gardening, details the best practices for planting and arranging flowers, and shares her insight on flowers, seasons, beauty, form, and the land, and how her gardens nourish her. *Life with Flowers: Inspiration and Lessons from the Garden* also includes Palmer's own stunning photography of her flowers beautifully arranged within her pottery, illuminating how the two work together in a symbiotic relationship.
"They seem to me very parallel," she said. "Both require understanding the material and process and then being receptive to how they evolve on their own terms. I consider the pottery and the flowers as the two halves of my earthly paradise. I try to show photographs of how the pottery and flowers integrate and enhance each other."
The book is divided into six specific growing periods according to a botanical calendar, each including profiles on her favorite varieties, with flower-specific gardening how-tos, and arranging techniques. She also provides suggestions for do-it-yourself projects, helpful tips,

meditations on patience, and flowers in art. Incorporated within each section are flower-forward recipes such as Quince Jelly with Rose Petals, Risotto with Fresh Flowers, and Lentil Salad with Nasturtiums.
Palmer began a career as an art historian at Columbia University and for the past 38 years has focused on handmade ceramics. "In that time, growing and arranging flowers has served as a parallel practice to my work in the studio. Together, the unyielding clay and the flowering plants, each fragile and temperamental, form a bond that is central to both endeavors," said Palmer. Her work is represented in leading craft and contemporary art collections around the world and has been exhibited and sold internationally including at the Garden Museum, Fotografiska, Neue Galerie, Object & Thing, and Wave Hill. Palmer has been featured in publications such as *House & Garden*, *New York Times Style Magazine*, *Elle Décor*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Vogue*, and the *World of Interiors*.
Gardeners in Fairfield County can experiment with all the flowers featured in *Life with Flowers*.
"I grow all the flowers covered in the book, so any of these are worth a try. Anyone can grow or arrange flowers, as long as they are open

Continued on page 8

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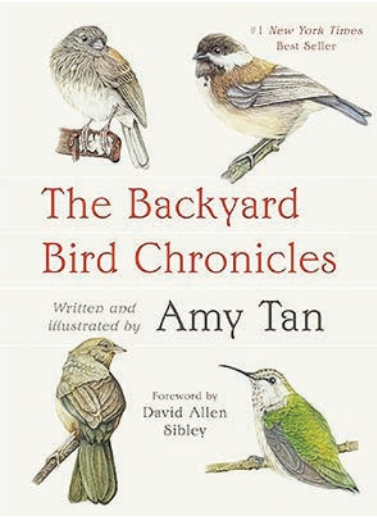
Photo by Pam Caraluzzi

Matt Caraluzzi returns to the daffodil field on Cross Highway with his daughter, Chloe. When Matt was in third grade, he had Florence McQuade as a teacher. That spring, Florence's husband, Bud, asked Matt if he would help plant daffodils on his property – this began the start of the beautiful daffodil field that Bud expanded each year in honor of Florence. The property's new owners still allow visitors to walk on paths through the field to enjoy the springtime blooms.

BOOK REVIEW

The Backyard Bird Chronicles

By Amy Tan
Alfred A. Knopf / 288 pages / \$35



Amy Tan, best known for her novels *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, shares her development as an obsessive birder in this latest book. *The Backyard Bird Chronicles* shows the progression of Tan’s skills as a bird-sketcher as well as a bird-watcher, and the combination of words and pictures is delightful.

Tan starts small, with just a few feeders in her backyard in California. She works hard at her developing passion, taking classes, accumulating a network of like-minded people, and learning how to feed, water, and observe the birds who visit her backyard.

A mentor suggests she speak her observations out loud to fix them in her mind: “*Neon yellow and black head, beak is warbler style, body as small as a chickadee, black mask, dull olive back, some yellow on body. On the verandah*

suet feeder. Jabbing action...” She follows the advice. Her early sketches are rough. By the end of the book, the birds are individuals with personalities, portrayed in fine detail.

Tan may have started small but within a few years – including those encompassing Covid lockdowns – she has feeders to appeal to various types of birds surrounding her house and throughout her backyard. She has a complicated feeding regimen involving live mealworms, Nyjer seed, sunflower and safflower seeds, suet, and more. There are many birdbaths of different sizes to accommodate different birds. She admits to approaching birding the way she approaches everything in life, with a deep dive.

With an artist’s eye and a writer’s way with words, Tan draws the reader into her exploration of bird behavior. Her imagination runs wild as she tries to figure out not just what each bird is doing but why. Are they eating so much because they are unwell? Do they need her help? Are there fledglings in the nest waiting to be fed? Or, are they perhaps fattening up for a long migratory flight?

As she makes the journey from interested bird novice to recognized expert, we can only admire the approach Tan takes to life: dive in and do the work. ■

Review by Susan Clark



Selectmen discuss design and funding for four destroyed bridges / continued from page 1



Photo courtesy of Tighe & Bond
Jonathan Ives, a senior project manager at Tighe & Bond, inspects damage to the bridge on Sport Hill Road that was caused by last August’s storm.

“Now that the bridge is washed out and there’s no more access from Newtown Turnpike, it’s all stopped,” Pardee said. “It’s quiet. Our piece of the road has become really a wonderful place for neighbors and pedestrians.”

Pemberton said that if there were to be a discussion of not replacing the bridge, it would be a very lengthy one. It would also involve the Planning Commission, possibly the Zoning Commission, and certainly the Board of Selectmen. ■

LIBRARY CORNER

The loggia’s time to shine | By Erin Shea Dummeyer

Last November, we opened our new “loggia” with a festive ribbon-cutting ceremony with Mark Twain himself in attendance. We used it for a week or two during an unseasonably warm autumn. And then, alas, the wind picked up, the leaves browned and crinkled, and the sky turned a harsh gray. Our loggia went into hibernation, with only the occasional curious visitor

making footprints on the snow-covered granite.

Well, I am here to tell you that spring is *here*, and as the peeper frogs peep their jovial tune and the Diamond Hill waterfall gushes forth, the loggia is ready to welcome and entertain visitors of all ages. Next time you set foot in Mark Twain Library, please direct your attention to the polished

outdoor space located right off of our periodicals reading room. With the seating arranged, it can house small meetings, tutoring sessions, a picnic lunch, or simply a bestseller in the sunshine. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Nod to the pod
The Dropout: “Myth-Making” | By Amy Maloof

A one-episode recommendation from a podcast you might love.

Nobody (sane) likes getting their blood taken, but I especially loathe it. I stall and squirm and, like a kindergartener, ask for juice. So, I very clearly remember, in 2014, the first time I read about Elizabeth Holmes and her biotech company Theranos, which claimed it could run hundreds of lab tests using just a drop of blood. I felt a rush as I scanned the profile, photos of the young entrepreneur dressed like Steve Jobs, standing confidently with hands in her pockets. I imagined a world free from painful blood draws and cranberry juice in small plastic cups. I believed what I read – I had no reason not to – even if it seemed too good to be true. And it was.

The first in a six-episode miniseries, this episode highlights Holmes’s origin story. What in her childhood and young adolescence led her on this path? How were so many people taken in by her lies (including a completely put-on deep voice)? We hear from her former Stanford professor who saw through Holmes from the beginning, and from some of Theranos’s first employees, many poached from Apple. Though from the inside it was very clear from the very beginning that her technology didn’t work – never worked – Holmes bulldozed through the naysayers. At its peak, Theranos had partnered with Walgreens and was valued at over \$9 billion.

I don’t typically follow cases

like these – I could never stomach anything Bernie Madoff-related – but something about it just grabbed me. Maybe it was remembering that initial thrill, falling for the Theranos story as a young mom, trying to finish the article while my kids climbed over me. Or maybe it’s just how outrageous the whole thing was, from start to finish. How on earth did this happen? A world so seduced by Theranos’s promise that it ignored a sea of red flags for over a decade. Listening a second time, knowing that Holmes is now serving an 11-year prison sentence for fraud, definitely hits differently and brings some assurance. People like Holmes may dupe the world temporarily, but, eventually, the truth will out. ■

The Frog Frolic jumps into town this weekend / continued from page 1

Charlotte Roth, On The Trail Bluegrass Band, and Symphonic Bodega, with Hitch & the Giddyup and Vintage Cover Band closing out the event.

An array of food comes from several food trucks, including Redding’s own, Paella Party, along with the return of Colossal Kielbasa, Belgium Waffles, and 900 Degrees Pizza. New this year is Chamo, a Venezuelan arepas food truck, and Los Poblanos, a Mexican food truck. Concessions include cotton candy and snow cones, a snack shack for the kids, and a bake sale by Redding Neighbors & Newcomers. Beverages include a beer tent serving beer, wine, and hard seltzers, and a coffee tent run by Quartertone Coffee Roasters.

A highlight of the event is the new Concours d’Grenouille (Competition of the Frog), a car show curated by Frank Taylor. It will feature cool cars and showstoppers, with Skip Barber, founder of the Skip Barber Racing School and recent inductee to the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America serving as Grand Marshall.

Kids of all ages can take part in numerous activities. “The games are awesome this year,” Huszagh noted. There are classic fair games with some newer games, such as

Let ‘Er Fly, a basketball hoops competition; Tadpole in a Hole that tests putt-putt golf skills; Leapin’ Lily, where players launch a frog onto a floating lilypad; and the newly-designed F1 Racetrack for the Frolic Freeway. Toddlers will keep busy with toys and a sand table for sensory play within the Bubble Garden with bubble pools galore and story-time throughout the day. “Our craft volunteers have created special crafts this year, everything from Lego sunglasses to design-your-own buttons and adorable secret garden rocks to creating your own comic books that will appeal to all ages, and much more.” The book tent will highlight fun children’s books and summer novels and New Pond Farm Education Center will show off some of their resident reptiles and amphibians.

The Frog Frolic was initially inspired and named after Mark Twain’s beloved short story, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” that introduced the world to his witty voice and unique storytelling. The first Frog Frolic began as a way to raise funds for art supplies for children’s story times. Over time, it grew into an event that helped to increase the revenue

for the Library. “Not only does the Frog Frolic Family Festival raise much-needed funds for the Library, it is also a ‘can’t miss’ experience for folks new to town and provides volunteer opportunities for local middle schoolers. I look forward to this all-ages event every spring,” said Erin Dummeyer, Director of Mark Twain Library.

Huszagh invites everyone to experience one of Redding’s most famous family events.

“The Library strives to be the cultural crossroads of Redding. At the heart of that mission is community. This event is put together by a large group of dedicated volunteers to help engage and gather the residents of Redding and surrounding towns – to bring music of all genres, food from all cultures, fair games and crafts created by volunteers – all with the focus of fun,” said Huszagh. “We hope people come and spend the day with friends and get to know their neighbors. I hope this is a spring awakening for Redding that is full of laughter and joy, just as our founder would have envisioned.” ■

For more information, visit mtfrogfrolic.org

Frances Palmer and the two halves of her “earthly paradise” / continued from page 7

to learning over a number of seasons. Rome was not built in a day. Flowers bring joy and peace, things we all need in these crazy days,” she said, noting flowers are powerful teachers. “They are incredibly beautiful and moving. I learn

so much about patience, mistakes, perseverance, sharing, and friendship from having a garden. I don’t believe in failure or perfection, but learning is key. Having a garden is a journey, and one should be open to growing all sorts of flowers.” ■

Palmer will be holding talks and book signings on May 24 at 10:00 a.m. at Oliver Nurseries, 1159 Bronson Road, Fairfield, and June 6, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at The Flat, 15 Myrtle Avenue, Westport

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Farming brings a family home again

On The Way Farm | By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of On the Way Farm

When Jill Anderson moved back to her hometown of Bethel in 2013, she and her late husband Mike Deems – both horticulturists by trade – dug into what they knew best and started a farm.

“Mike and I worked in the horticulture field in some capacity for over 20 years,” Anderson said, adding that she worked as a gardener at the Culinary Institute of America and the farmer for Rosemary’s restaurant in New York City. “All of the jobs involved maintaining vegetable gardens and we both enjoyed it so much. We liked to grow, cook, and preserve our own food, getting to know where it came from.”

Located at 65 Plumtrees Road, On The Way Farm is a three-acre property that grows organic vegetables and sells a variety of food items made on-premises.

“We utilize sustainable, low-input growing practices, such as making our own compost, and we’re proud to offer delicious seasonal produce to our community,” Anderson said. “We’re known for our field-grown heirloom tomatoes, and we also grow a variety of other things such as cucumbers, squash, beets, and carrots. We make jellies, jams, pickles, hot sauce, and breads

from the vegetables and fruits that are in season on the farm, and we also have eggs from our free-range chickens.”

On The Way Farm also has classes for kids, including a recent “Kids in the Kitchen” series, which taught elementary school students where their food comes from, and it offers a farm camp in August.

“We have farm-related craft projects, nature walks, and garden talks,” Anderson explained. “Kids also learn how to do farm-related skills and chores, like sowing seeds or composting, making canned products to take home, fabric dyeing, and more.”

After Deems’s death in 2021, Anderson has been running the farm herself with the help of an occasional high school student and volunteers.

In 2022, On The Way Farm launched a non-profit, M&J On The Way Farm, Inc., a 501(c) (3) organization.

“My husband and I both wanted to have a place that was welcoming to everyone,” she said. “A quiet, not commercial-looking or perfectly maintained farm – to have a place for kids, especially, to see, smell, and hear things in nature. To

pick flowers if they wanted to or draw on the pavement with the never-ending bucket of sidewalk chalk. It was always a dream of mine and my husband’s, and after he passed away, I focused on making it happen.”

The non-profit’s focus is on promoting and providing educational programs, classes, and workshops about sustainable local organic farming, farm-related skills, and food-related cultivation and preparation for the benefit of all community members. It also awards a scholarship each year for Bethel High School graduates majoring in agriculture or environmental science. To date, it has awarded two \$1,000 scholarships.

Each summer, the farm hosts Tomatopalooza, its main fundraiser, a summertime celebration and farm-to-table dinner, with many ingredients harvested right on the farm.

“Most dishes incorporate heirloom tomatoes as a nod to Mike, who was the best tomato-grower,” she said. “We are truly grateful for the private donations from residents and small businesses from Bethel and surrounding towns to make this event happen.”

Anderson is thrilled to be back in the area; she calls the community “amazing.”

“I was fortunate enough to grow up here in town and we even purchased my childhood home and property from my family,” she said. “With so much of the landscape changing, and new buildings going up in the area, it’s nice to know people come to the farm because it looks the same as it did 50 years ago. Maintaining old relationships and seeing familiar faces has been great, and by word of mouth we’ve gotten the support of newer folks in the area as well.” ■

For more information, visit onthewayfarm.com

Work-life balance was just a franchise away

Top Rail Fence | By Anne Young Albanese



Photo courtesy of Kristin Abraham

A cedar privacy fence installed in Westport by the Top Rail Fence crew.

After years commuting and working in separate industries, Redding residents Kristin and Al Abraham were looking for a way to go into business together and spend more time with their children. The solution came in the form of opening a business franchise earlier this year; the Abrahams now run Top Rail Fence Danbury, a fencing installation company serving Redding and the greater Danbury area.

The Abrahams moved to Redding in 2018. Al worked around the area, while Kristin’s office at World Wrestling Entertainment was in Stamford. Her job required extensive travel, keeping her away from home every week. While Kristin grew up in Norwalk, the Abrahams were unfamiliar with Redding. They were thrilled to discover a town with such a small-town, rural feel that would still allow Kristin to commute to Stamford.

Once they welcomed their first child, Kristin said that her schedule was causing her to miss out on many of motherhood’s experiences. She and Al wanted a business that would allow her to be more present at home and spend time with their daughters while also having a fulfilling career.

Once they decided to open their own business, the Abrahams researched extensively to find something they could run together. Kristin brought considerable business experience, while Al brought construction and installation experience. They ultimately identified Top Rail Fence as a business that would benefit from each of their distinct contributions.

Along with Kristin and Al, Top Rail Fence Danbury has an installation crew with more than 15 years of experience installing various fence types. Top Rail Fence offers wood fencing, vinyl fencing, metal fencing, chain link fencing, gates, entry fencing, and railings. Al meets with prospective clients to determine the client’s needs and provide a quote.

“As Redding residents, we understand the charm and beauty of our town. With a new fence, whether the purpose is security, privacy, or style, we intend to provide high-quality craftsmanship and products to our local community,” said Kristin.

Top Rail Fence Danbury has been open for one month and has completed six installations. Kristin now enjoys getting her older daughter onto the bus, dropping off her younger daughter at preschool, and taking her daughters to various activities. ■

Learn more at toprailfences.com

The future of farming in Redding / continued from page 1

supporting the preservation of agriculture.

“We should be supporting local farms and farmers,” confirmed First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton. “I think we can see now more than ever, and even before this latest kerfuffle with tariffs, how important it is to have farms that produce food close to where you live.”

The WestCOG report identified five active commercial farms currently in Redding. There are also smaller operations that have classified property as farmland through Connecticut’s Public Act 490, which assesses land based on current use value, rather than fair market value. According to Town Assessor John Ford, there are currently 339.5 acres on 48 properties in Redding classified as farmland this way.

Several Redding farmers the *Sentinel* spoke with noted the Town’s welcoming attitude towards farming. However, many are grappling with how to make the practice a financially viable way of life.

“You can make a lot more money doing almost anything else,” said Bill Hill, whose land at Warrup’s Farm has been farmed in some way or another by his family for seven generations. Hill and his wife, Laura Selleck, have been farming there since the late 1970s. He noted that approximately 90% of farmers nationwide have some sort of alternative income stream.

Smaller, new operations have also cropped up throughout town in recent years. Allie Sayre, who runs Empress Farm with business partner Dana Tufariello, began working the land at her parents’ property on Giles Hill Road about three years ago. Turning parts of the residential property into farmable land took time, developing the soil and



Map courtesy of WestCOG

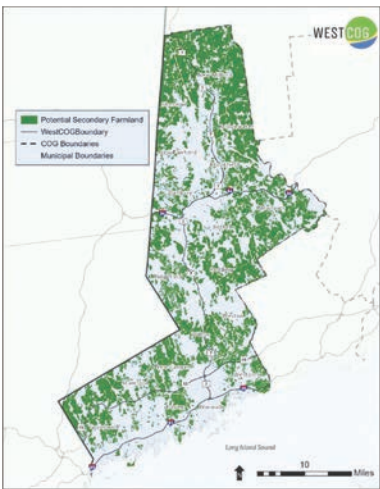
Current active commercial farmland in Western Connecticut

constructing physical infrastructure like fencing and trellises. Empress Farm primarily grows tomatoes and strawberries, and Sayre said most of their success has come from offering the farm’s products at a roadside farmstand just over the Bethel town line.

“Being a one-person operation, it’s kind of hard to guarantee myself that I’ll have enough to do a farmstand at a certain time... And not all farmers markets let you buy a one-off table,” Sayre explained.

Resources from organizations like Redding Grange #15, which hosts local growers’ markets and the annual Agricultural Fair, have also helped connect Empress Farm with others trying to make farming a sustainable way of life.

“Supporting local farming is not only part of our Grange’s history and legacy, but one of the smartest things a community can do,” said Grange President Elizabeth Jensen. “Local food production aids in food security, promotes community health, and addresses several environmental concerns. It is honestly a



Map courtesy of WestCOG

Potential secondary farmland in Western Connecticut

no-brainer.”

Sayre and Tufariello have connected with Hill at Warrup’s Farm, benefiting from his decades of experience.

“These older generation farmers are just so happy to give advice and feedback and also lend a hand when you need it,” said Tufariello.

Warrup’s Farm itself now mainly focuses on growing different kinds of produce. Hill noted that this type of farming is more difficult to scale than a row crop farm; the largest cost and constraining factor is labor.

What he and his family hope might be part of the answer to this challenge is something the WestCOG report identified as the fastest-growing sector of agriculture in the region: agritourism. Hill and Selleck’s son Lincoln and his partner Cody Jacobs operate Open Farmhouse at the property, which holds seasonal events and opportunities for people to experience farm life.

“That’s why people move to Redding – they want to be in the



Photo by Jessie Wright

A community farmer’s market hosted by the Grange last year that showcased several Redding-based farms and hobby growers.

woods, and they want to be in a natural environment that supports growing things,” said Jacobs.

“The high density of wealthy consumers provides many opportunities for agritourism, including seasonal events, farm-to-table dinners, and larger events such as festivals and weddings,” the WestCOG report outlines. “These on-farm events not only provide economically competitive opportunities for farmers, but also offer residents the chance to connect with where their food comes from. Given the limited quantity of large, contiguous, farmable parcels in Western Connecticut, agritourism represents one of the more viable ways for farmers to remain in operation.”

The report found that requirements to obtain permits and pay fees for every single event related to agriculture are felt as a burden by farmers. Minimum parking requirements can also prohibit smaller operations from bringing customers on site. WestCOG makes a strong recommendation that municipalities, including Redding, define and

allow agritourism in their Zoning Regulations. Currently, Redding’s farming definition has no consideration for agritourism.

“The Zoning Regulations are only as good as who’s updated them recently,” said Hill. “They often reflect an antiquated view of how things work nowadays.”

Updating the regulations might also allow Redding to access some of its untapped agricultural potential. One of the most striking components in the report is a section that maps active commercial farmland in the region and identifies potential new commercial farmland and hobby or “secondary” farmland. While Redding has very little land available for new large, commercial farms, the amount of land eligible for secondary farming was significant.

“The maps really say it all,” said Hill.

Read the full report at westcog.org/2025/01/regional-agriculture-farm-viability-study-2

Notes from a neighbor

My critter conflict

By Carter Wiseman

Having been born on the island of Manhattan, I was happy to move to Connecticut many years ago and put some signature local critters behind me: No more cockroaches scurrying around the stove when I turned on the light! No more rats on the Times Square Shuttle on my way to work!

So, I was hardly intimidated by the mice that left their calling cards in our country kitchen. My wife put me in charge of the problem, and although she preferred not to view the results, my swift deployment of traps took care of the matter – for a while.

The next problem was that I began to find traps with the cheese missing and no corpses. Did this reflect the high educational level in Fairfield County? Had these rodents analyzed the threat and figured out a work-around?

Just as I was trying to outsmart the brainy Mickeys, we noticed a growing number of chipmunks cavorting on our brick terrace. They scattered when spotted, but that’s when the real trouble began. We noticed that many of the bricks on the terrace were sinking. Clearly the critters were literally undermining my campaign by digging tunnels. Researching the problem, I found a home-hack that involved balancing a paint-stirrer on the rim of a pail of water and smearing peanut butter at the far end, tempting the chippers to tip themselves into the drink. They must have consulted their mice colleagues, because the peanut butter was there when I came by the next day, and no one was in the pool.

So, I turned to some pest-prevention catalogs and ordered a fearsome-looking plastic owl with a solar-powered head that rotated, no doubt intended to make the chipmunks think it was a live predator.

You think our *magna cum laude* rodents fell for that?

We eventually got a dog, but he is a Lhasa Apso, who earns his kibbles mainly as a companion to us and the UPS delivery man. Nevertheless, the message must have gone out in the greater critter community, because the groundhog who used to sun himself defiantly next to the garage retreated to his lair under the garbage bins and now never comes out in daylight. Our little dog’s legs are much too short to run down chipmunks, but they, too, backed off.

I thought that the war was won, or at least that we had achieved some level of detente. That was outside. Last month, my wife was sitting in the kitchen when she let out a yelp. When I got to the scene, she flashed a phone video to prove that a squirrel had appeared on the beam over the stove. We were used to hearing squirrels in the walls from time to time, but this flagrant display in the kitchen was nothing short of disrespectful.

I figured that this called for more than the weapons I had used in the past, and an animal-loving friend loaned us a Havahart trap. Google told me that the best bait was a slice of apple with, again, peanut butter. The next morning: trap empty, bait gone. And a few days later, there he was again on the beam.

Squirrels don’t smile, right? Nevertheless, I thought I caught a grin on his face. Triumphant? Cocky? Perhaps neighborly. In any case, he has done no harm. And at least he is not a skunk!

The squirrel has been gone for a couple of weeks now, no doubt because the warmer weather has lured him back to his natural habitat digging up all those acorns he buried last fall.

See you next year! ■

“Celebrating 40 years of Environmental Education”

NEW POND FARM EDUCATION CENTER’S

22ND GOLF OUTING

& 1ST PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

AT REDDING COUNTRY CLUB

TUESDAY, MAY 13TH



\$275 per golfer, \$1,100 per foursome, and \$150 per pickleball player.

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To register: visit our website newpondfarm.org or scan the QR code.





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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

This Week’s Featured Events

Town Annual Clean-Up Day Sunday, May 4 9:30 a.m. Stop by Town Green for garbage bags, gloves, and road assignment 100 Hill Road reddingct.gov/events	Town & Regional School District Budget Referendum Tuesday, May 6 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Town of Redding registered voters and citizens 18 and older owing taxes on the most recent Grand List can vote for the 2025-26 annual budget and capital expenditures Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road	Open Farmhouse Plant Sale & Cafe Saturday, May 24 – Monday, May 26 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Heirloom and organic plants and seedlings grown without the use of fossil fuels or pesticides and a pop-up cafe selling seasonal treats and beverages Open Farmhouse 11 John Read Road openfarmhouse.com	Want to feature an upcoming event? E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more information.
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ARTS

Saturday, April 5 – Saturday, May 10
Robert Mars: The Wonder Years
A mid-career retrospective on renowned Redding artist
Exhibition runs April 5 – May 10
Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center
5 Main Street
gtownarts.com

Thursday, April 3 – Sunday, May 11
“Rising Day” - A Group Exhibition
Thursdays & Fridays:
12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Exhibition of work from 11 women artists running
Thursday, April 3 – Sunday, May 11
Anonymous Society
268 Simpaug Turnpike
anonymoussocietygallery.com

Thursday, May 1 – Saturday, May 3
John Read Middle School presents *Frozen Jr.*
7:00 p.m. May 1 and 2
5:00 p.m. May 3
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike
jrms.booktix.com
\$

Saturday, May 3
Sacred Oath Concert
6:30 p.m. doors open
7:00 p.m. opening act
8:00 p.m. Sacred Oath
Greenwood Features
269 Greenwood Avenue
Bethel
greenwoodfeatures.com
\$

Thursday, May 15 – Sunday, May 18
RIFF 2025 – Ridgefield Independent Film Festival
Showtimes vary
Accessible film festival hosted at The Prospector Theater
The Prospector Theater
25 Prospect Street
Ridgefield
riffct.org
\$

Friday, May 16 – Saturday, May 17
Joanna Serenko & Tyler Dale
7:00 p.m. Doors open
8:00 p.m. Show
Musical duo seen on The Voice performing soulful vocals and masterful guitar work.
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org/events
\$, R

FUNDRAISERS

Saturday, May 3
Frog Frolic Family Festival
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Outdoor event with live music, classic car show, games, food, and fun to support Mark Twain Library
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, May 3
BSA Troop 15 Annual Spaghetti Dinner
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Family-friendly tradition with hearty Italian meal and fun
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road
reddingtroop15.org/fundraiser
\$

Tuesday, May 13
Golf Outing and Pickleball Tournament
10:00 a.m. – Golf begins
12:30 p.m. – Pickleball tournament begins
Support New Pond Farm’s education programs with a full day of golf, pickleball, lunch, and prizes
The Redding Country Club
109 Lonetown Road
newpondfarm.org/golfouting
\$, R

Saturday, May 17
The Eras Gala
7:30 p.m.
The Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra celebrates 60 years of world-class music with a performance, auctions, and a pre-concert cocktail party
Ridgefield Playhouse
80 East Ridge Road
Ridgefield
ridgefieldsymphony.org
\$, R

Saturday, May 18
JRMS PTA Color Run
8:30 a.m. 1-mile fun run
9:00 a.m. 5k
Run through a wooded course and get doused by colored powder to raise money for the JRMS PTA
Joel Barlow High School
100 Black Rock Turnpike
jrmspta.org/colorrn
\$, R

Monday, June 9
Putt Fore Paws – The Joyce Allen Memorial Golf Tournament
11:00 a.m.
Proceeds support Danbury Animal Welfare Society (DAWS)
The Redding Country Club
109 Lonetown Road
dawsgolf2025.givesmart.com
\$, R

NATURE

Tuesday, May 6
Spring Into Fishing: Angling 101
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Saturday, May 10
Redding Garden Club Plant Sale
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables and showcase of local non-profits
Redding Historical Society
43 Lonetown Road
reddinggardenclub.org/plant-sale

Sunday, May 18
Homefront Farmers Plant Sale
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Certified organic seedlings
Pre-orders must be received by May 11
Nod Hill Brewery Biergarten
137 Ethan Allen Highway
Ridgefield
homefrontfarmers.com/plant-sale

Sunday, May 18
Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company Plant Sale and Swap
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org/events

Saturday, May 24 – Monday, May 26
Open Farmhouse Plant Sale & Cafe
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Heirloom and organic plants and seedlings grown without the use of fossil fuels or pesticides and a pop-up cafe selling seasonal treats and beverages
Open Farmhouse
11 John Read Road
openfarmhouse.com

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Sunday, May 4
Town Annual Clean-Up Day
9:30 a.m.
Stop by Town Green for garbage bags, gloves, and road assignment
100 Hill Road
reddingct.gov/events

Sunday, May 4
Grand Opening at Shops at Auburn Landing
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Celebrate The Landing’s first six months in Georgetown
28 Main Street
Follow @shops.at.auburn.landing on Instagram for details

Thursday, May 8
A Black Soldier’s Revolutionary War Experience
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwainlibrary.org
R

Wednesday, May 14
Redding Prevention Council Meeting
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
All are welcome
The Granite
5 North Main Street
thegranitechurch.org/events

Thursday, May 15
Okay to Delay
6:30 p.m.
Information session on group advocating delayed introduction of smartphones to children
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road

Friday, May 16
Annual Community Tag Sale
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Limited vendor spots available, table fee of \$15
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
Contact mpilato@townofreddingct.org or (203) 938-9725

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
44 Portland Avenue
bethlehemlutheranct.org

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

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

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

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

Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish Sacred Heart Church:
Saturday Confessions: 10:00 a.m. at Pryor Hubbard Hall
Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.
Saturday Eucharistic Adoration: 6:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass:
9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
12:00 noon LATIN
Weekday Mass:
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.
Wednesday 6:00 p.m. LATIN
30 Church Street

St. Patrick Church:
Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 p.m.
Saturday Confessions: 4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Sunday Mass:
8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.
Weekday Mass:
Monday – Friday at 8:30 a.m.
Weekday Confessions:
Mondays and Thursdays: 7:30 p.m., before or after mass, or by appointment
Eucharistic Adoration:
Mondays and Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

Temple B’nai Chaim
Friday, May 2
Israel Shabbat
6:30 p.m.
82 Portland Avenue
templebnaichaim.org

MEETINGS

Thursday, May 1
Region 9 Finance & Operations Pension Committee
5:30 p.m.
Central Office Conference Room
654 Morehouse Road

Monday, May 5
Annual Region 9 District Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Joel Barlow High School / Library Learning Commons
100 Black Rock Turnpike

Monday, May 5
Park and Recreation Commission
7:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road

Monday, May 5
Republican Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, May 6
Town & Regional School District Budget Referendum
6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road

Tuesday, May 6
Redding Board of Education
7:00 p.m.
John Read Middle School / Community Room
486 Redding Road

Tuesday, May 6
Conservation Commission
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, May 6
Board of Finance
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, May 7
CT Tax Collector Association
9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, May 7
Ives Trail Task Force
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room
100 Hill Road

Wednesday, May 7
Brown Bag Lunch with First Selectwoman
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Town Hall
100 Hill Road

Thursday, May 8
Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee
6:00 p.m.
In-person and virtual
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road

Thursday, May 8
Fire District #2 Commissioners’ Meeting
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road

Monday, May 12
League of Women Voters
4:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Conference Room
100 Hill Road

Tuesday, May 13
Planning Commission
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road



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At Coldwell Banker Realty, we proudly support the diverse communities we serve and stand with those making a difference every day. Whether it's honoring heritage, raising awareness, or showing appreciation, we believe in uplifting voices, fostering inclusion, and supporting meaningful causes that strengthen our communities.



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