

REDDING SENTINEL

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Gilbert & Bennett site assessment reveals findings, makes recommendations

By Rocco Valluzzo

A Stage One environmental site assessment of the former Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill property in Georgetown revealed areas of concern, underground storage tanks as well as recommendations for the future of the property.

The results of the assessment, conducted by the Middletown-based environmental engineering firm of Tighe & Bond, were reviewed at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen on July 18.

The study was made possible by a \$200,000 Brownfield assessment grant the town received in July 2021. This was the first step the town has taken to prepare the property for redevelopment, according to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton.

"The town of Redding has long recognized the importance of its redevelopment to our long-term economic vitality," said Pemberton. "The Wire Mill represents our best opportunity to grow and diversify Redding's tax base beyond residential, to create a pedestrian-friendly downtown, to diversify our housing stock and to create public spaces along the Norwalk River."

Founded in 1818, Gilbert & Bennett ceased operations on the 55-acre property in 1989. Since then, private efforts to redevelop the property, mostly between 2002 and 2012, have been unsuccessful.

When development failed it left behind millions of dollars in private and public debt and deteriorating historic buildings. In 2015 the Board of Selectmen began foreclosure proceedings and took ownership of 44 acres in 2020.

"At present, the town owns the property and there's some complex financial involvement," said Pemberton. "There is still private debt. The property cannot be transferred to a developer without the debt being resolved in some way."

The \$20 million in debt sits in the tax district, not the land, so the bond owners cannot foreclose. The tax district pays the tax on the land and the bonds are tied to the tax revenue. As soon as the property becomes taxable, the private developer will be obligated to pay back the debt.

A study in three parts

According to James Olsen, a licensed environmental engineer with Tighe & Bond, a Stage One study consists of three main elements: a records review, an online

Continued on page 4



Photo by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

Cross Highway, shown here in full summer, is a designated Scenic Road. Not just scenic, the road is historic. It marked the original northern boundary of land bought by Roger Ludlow in the mid-17th century to create Fairfield. If you have a photo you'd like us to feature here, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

Annual Mark Twain Library Book Fair takes place this weekend

By Lisa Goldstein

The 61st Annual Mark Twain Library Book Fair is taking place at the Redding Community Center over Labor Day Weekend. Free admission (with a \$20 fee from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. on Friday for those wanting an early start.) Highlights this year include: a significant array of vintage science fiction books; thousands of CDs in all music categories; a considerable selection of cookbooks, with many from "America's Test Kitchen;" a number of books from the estate of former Wilton First Selectman Bob Russell; many classic children's books; a variety of sheet music; and, an extensive Civil War section.

There are also some spectacular rare treasures in this year's Collector's Corner – particularly Flora of Haarlem by A.C. Van Eeden, a large book bound with Moroccan leather and marbled

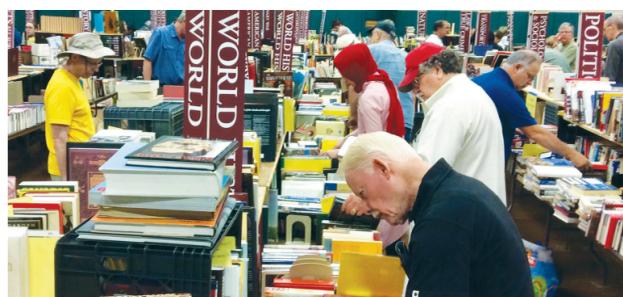


Photo by Lisa Goldstein

paper sides that is rarely found intact.

There will be food on site including a pizza truck on Friday and a taco truck on Saturday and Sunday. Free parking. Credit cards accepted.

The Book Fair is one of the library's most celebrated fundraisers. ■

Days & Hours:

Friday: 9:00 – 6:00
prices as marked

Saturday: 10:00–4:00
prices as marked

Sunday: 10:00 – 4:00
half-price day

Monday: 9:00 – 4:00
\$10 for a box full of books

REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

The Colonel Alfred P. McCormack Conservation Preserve

By Jeanne Ammermuller

If you're looking for varied terrain, with streams and a large pond, McCormack Preserve might fit the bill. With ample parking at the corner of Picketts Ridge Road and George Hull Hill Road, this beautiful 238-acre-preserve was donated to the Redding Land Trust by the McCormack family in 2019.

When to visit: From February 15 to September 30 only. The preserve is closed during the winter months until 2024.

Gordon Loery, trail tender and co-president of the Redding Land Trust was the perfect guide for a walk around the 238-acre McCormack preserve on a hot summer morning. Volunteer trail tenders like Gordon maintain town and Land Trust trails throughout Redding and are essential to



Photo by Richard Jarvis

maintaining the beautiful spaces around town.

"We are so grateful to the McCormack family for donating this property to the Land Trust," said Gordon. "It is a large area, with a lot of potential, and it connects nicely with our Poliak preserve and Lottie Fields." Most of the preserve is in Redding, but about one third of it lies in Danbury.

Trail tenders and other volunteers are already working to realize some of that potential, having created two, two-mile loop trails. The white trail takes walkers along the Saugatuck River and to a lovely pond where beavers and heron can be seen. This trail is a bit hilly, but not too difficult. The blue trail winds through the woods and old access roads, where hikers can immerse themselves in the quiet. The two trails connect to form a continuous 3.8-mile path.

The preserve has already become a popular destination, especially for neighbors who take advantage of the quiet for early morning

walks. "My favorite season to hike is in the mid-fall," says Richard Jarvis, a lifelong Redding resident. "The leaves are changing, and a lot of the bugs die during the cold nights. Unfortunately, McCormack closes on Oct 1st. I typically go back there on Feb 15th to catch the opening day for the year, which also happens to be my birthday."

Under an arrangement with the McCormack Family, the Redding Land Trust agreed to allow the Stamford Fish and Game Sportsmen's Association to access the property in the winters for five years following the donation. The club had used the property with the family's permission for decades, and all agreed a transition period would work for all parties.

"We are looking forward to February 2024, when the site is available to visitors year-round," says Gordon. "In the meantime, it is essential that no one but gun club members visit the property between October 1 and February 14." ■

PURA motion halts plan, tree conservancy wants Eversource alternatives to cutting; tree warden appointed

By Donna Christopher

A temporary reprieve came Aug. 23 after a summer-long effort by the new Redding Tree Conservancy to convince Eversource to seek alternatives to tree removals on the town's scenic roads as part of its vegetation management program.

The Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority issued a cease and desist order to Eversource, preventing the company from moving forward with its program in 13 towns including Redding, calling on the company to "cease and desist for notice violations." The utility must respond by Sept. 6.

The motion was made by attorney Mary-Michelle U. Hirschhoff, identified in the motion as a Spokesperson on Trees and Power, on behalf of the Garden Club of New Haven.

The request is that PURA suspends Eversource's programs in these towns. It asserts that Eversource failed to notify the authority or the municipalities of the programs according to general statutes of Connecticut and that PURA has not had a chance to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of these projects.

Among contentions, the motion says "it has not been determined whether the new programs provide meaningful resilience benefits. The garden club also states that "existing tall trees provide myriad benefits to the environment and economy that have not been considered by Eversource." It asks PURA to "halt the projects until the Authority has reviewed the projects in this proceeding."

Laurie Heiss of Cross Highway, one of three roads in town included in the vegetation project, is also one of the founders of the RTC. She said the news "is not a victory" but hearing of it "was a happy day" nonetheless.

"Nothing about the cease and desist changed our mission." The RTC has assembled multiple times the past few weeks to rally support from local residents, calling upon Eversource to come up with alternatives in its programs from the removal of trees except for ones diseased or dead.

Heiss called the information a "stumbling block" for the utility. "It's relatively technical and narrow and says (Eversource) did a couple of things incorrectly. They have to respond by Sept. 6 which of course they will, if not earlier. We don't entirely know

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EDITORIAL

Bury the lines

By Susan Clark

Redding residents endure power outages that last from a few minutes to several days almost every year. To improve the resilience of its electricity distribution infrastructure, our local utility company Eversource proposes to include Redding in a new vegetation management program that it wants to implement in thirteen Connecticut towns.

According to Eversource, in the past five years 2,600 Redding customers have suffered through 4.9 million minutes without power due to outages on the 3.7 mile stretch of road in Redding that is the target of the new program. That works out to about 6.5 powerless hours a year per customer.

As described in the article on the front page of this issue of the Sentinel, the planned vegetation management program involves removing most tall trees along a lengthy stretch of Cross Highway and Hill Road. Eversource would like to remove all dead, diseased or dying trees as well as any growing within a “drop zone” that could be a danger to power lines. The drop zone is defined variously as 50 – 75 feet on either side of the power lines.

There are many old trees along Cross Highway and they contribute mightily to its designation as a Scenic Road. While few would argue against removing dead trees, very few residents appear to support the felling of healthy trees just because they are tall. Eversource’s plan, if implemented, would change the affected roads and adjacent properties immediately and for the long term. We can envision lack of shade cover during a time of global warming, soil erosion and water run-off, and a drop in property values. All with no guarantee that power outages will cease.

There is a better way. Bury the lines.

Eversource’s plan is focused on improving resilience. Undergrounding of utility lines is the most effective way to improve resilience. The resilience value of burying the lines is clear. What is not clear is the cost / benefit analysis over the long term. Cross Highway’s trees took hundreds of years to get to their size. Surely we can look out decades to value the investment in undergrounding utility lines. Especially when the resilience value of buried lines is so clear.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends burying power lines when there is a need to improve resilience. FEMA even makes funds available to bury lines through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program after a presidential declaration of a disaster. Let’s hope we never get there, but the program underscores that undergrounding is the way to go.

In Redding, as in most towns, new subdivisions are required to bury utility lines.

Our research has found not one instance of municipalities deciding to “unbury” their utility lines because burying the lines didn’t prove its worth.

Without doubt, burying power lines requires a greater upfront investment than cutting down trees. We haven’t seen the calculations or cost analysis to support extreme vegetation management over undergrounding lines.

As our utility company, it is Eversource’s responsibility to figure out a cost-effective way to deliver the most resilient infrastructure to Redding, and that is by burying the lines. ■

ICYMI

In case you missed it...

By Susan Clark

Democratic and Republican primaries were held on August 9 to decide candidates for the mid-term elections taking place on November 8.

In Connecticut – and Redding – Republican candidates vied for the right to challenge incumbent U. S. Senator Blumenthal (D) in the general election. Leora Levy, endorsed by former president Trump, prevailed with 50.6% of the Republican vote statewide and 51.7% of the vote in Redding. Themis Klarides was runner up with 40.0% of the statewide vote and 38.5% in Redding.

To represent District #4 in the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Jayme Stevenson prevailed over Michael Goldstein 60.3% to 39.7% in the statewide vote. In Redding, the results were closer but Stevenson at 52.7% still prevailed over Goldstein at 44.9%. Stevenson will seek to unseat Democratic incumbent Jim Himes

Both parties fielded candidates for the Secretary of State race. The winner in November will succeed Denise Merrill, who is retiring from politics.

Republican Dominic Rapini with 58.2% of the statewide vote beat Terrie Wood who garnered 41.8%. The results were similar in Redding, Rapini at 55.74% and Wood at 41.89.

The Democratic race for Secretary of State candidates saw Stephanie Thomas overwhelmingly prevail over Maritza Bond statewide, 75.8% to 24.2%. In Redding, Thomas’ margin was even greater, 89.4% to 9.8%.

Finally, the Democratic race for Treasurer was won by Erik Russell with 57.5% of the statewide vote and 60% in Redding. Dita Bhargava was a distant runner-up with 22.8% statewide and 28.9% in Redding. Republican Harry Arora advances to the general having run unopposed. Democratic incumbent Shawn Wooden decided not to seek re-election.

The general election takes place on November 8. Be sure to register to vote! ■

New Economic Development Committee appointed

By Susan Clark

First Selectman Julia Pemberton has appointed seven Redding residents to a new Economic Development Committee tasked with advising the Board of Selectmen, and other boards, on economic trends and opportunities for the town.

Members of the Committee Wes Higgins (Redding town Treasurer), Chris Hocker, Kate Perry, Claudio Rodrigo, Rich Wenning and this writer attended the kick-off meeting with Julia Pemberton on August 24. Member Ed Miller was unable to attend.

There was a wide-ranging discussion about short and long-term priorities and opportunities for economic development in Redding. There was general agreement that the Committee’s focus should include the redevelopment of Georgetown – but not be limited to it.

The Committee will meet again in about two weeks to choose a chair, refine its charter, and decide priorities.

All meetings will be noticed and open to the public. ■

Corrections to the June issue

The Joel Barlow High baseball article that appeared on page 4 in the June issue of The Redding Sentinel incorrectly referred to Jason Gaudio as Matt Gaudio. We regret this error.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome letters to the Editor. Please be clear, civil and concise. Publication preference will be given to letters that suggest solutions to challenges identified.

To the Editor,

Just the threat of a storm, puts my stomach in knots. I fill up the tubs to have water on hand, check the flashlight batteries, count the protein bars in the pantry. And of course, I pray to all the gods that the power will stay on, and everyone will be safe and sound. But the thought of living on a road without trees—just because they may fall onto utility lines—is even more disturbing. That’s why Eversource’s extreme tree removal plan is a serious concern.

As you probably know, Eversource has a “Resiliency Project” targeted to Cross Highway, Hill Road, and a section of Redding Road. Thankfully, First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton has promised no healthy trees will be cut down on Town Property. But Eversource doesn’t answer to Pemberton when it comes to private land. The company is already visiting residents to obtain consent to cut down trees on personal acreage. The plus: You get free tree removal. The minus: Eversource wants to chop healthy, beautiful, landmark trees. To find out exactly what Eversource would recommend, we allowed their arborist, Sam Berg, to tour our property on Cross Highway.

Sam was low-key, affable, and informative. He first pointed out a huge maple, shook his head and pointed to a collar on the trunk indicating a limb had fallen off (or was pruned). That side of the tree had fewer branches, so Sam felt it was unbalanced. Although the maple had a good leaf canopy, healthy bark, and twigs had sprouted around the collar, Sam said it should go. Why? It was so tall it might fall onto Eversource lines across the road.

Next up. Six sugar maples and a gorgeous linden. Too tall he said. They might topple during a storm. The entire lineup should be removed. (We’re talking at least 75 feet of frontage here—space that would be left open to invasive weeds). Sam repeated that the fall zone was at risk. He shrugged off questions about how such a dramatic removal would impact soil erosion, animal habitat, or our 270-year-old stone wall.

There were a few spindly pines he would take down – understandable we thought, but how would that affect storm water drainage and surrounding vegetation? As he continued to talk about height, not health, we were becoming more dubious. His overriding concern was Eversource’s fall zone. When asked how he could know a tree would fall, not to mention which way it would go, he explained he had 30 years of experience. That said, Sam is not TRAQ-certified, a distinction applying to arborists with Tree Risk Assessment Qualification.

I won’t bore you with more tree-by-tree details, but by the time we finished, Sam had suggested 15 tree removals. To be fair, he explained that if we said no, Eversource couldn’t do anything

Following Sam’s visit, we invited two independent arborists – both with TRAQ certification – to survey our property on different occasions. Each agreed only one tree should be removed because it tilts noticeably and touches the cable lines. But that’s the only instance where these independents agreed with Sam. In fact, they were both horrified at Sam’s suggestions. “Destroying so many trees on one piece of property would be a disaster,” commented one. The other said, “It’s ludicrous.”

Now we’re more worried than ever. Why can’t Eversource work with residents to come up with a solution that saves healthy trees? (We’ve asked; they’ve refused.) Why won’t they consider burying the lines – a plan Julia Pemberton advocates? (The distance on the affected roads is only 3.7 miles.) Why can’t they continue their traditional maintenance plan? (Redding has experienced fewer outages and quicker restoration times in the last few years.)

Connecticut pays the highest electricity rates in the continental United States. We deserve our power...and our trees. ■

Barbara Winkler and Janice Rotchstein, Cross Highway

To the Editor,

There are two current questionable Eversource projects: the clearcutting of a corridor and replacement/modification of parts of the high voltage lines. I seem to be involved with both. The latter one has not disclosed detailed plans, and may escape state agency review. News on the former, I think, is the strength of public opposition. To me, as a technical sort, the proposal is simply wrong, if the objective is system reliability. ■

Richard Stein, Whortleberry Road

To the Editor,

Eversource’s tree-cutting program might seem like an abstract administrative nicety, with countervailing arguments to be made about tree stewardship vs. resiliency of the power grid -- but it is not this.

Eversource has stated what they intend to do; they will be denuding the “fall zone” (100 feet or more wide) of all trees on some of our most scenic roads. This will change the town forever, along with reducing property values and causing new, unanticipated environmental problems. The goal seems to be to get a few more years of service out of the already-failing mess of bent and leaning telephone poles that are struggling to hold up growing masses of black cables.

The town needs to be fully organized to meet this challenge and obtain a rational outcome. This will require the full engagement of elected officials, the hiring of a permanent Tree Warden (yes, we can afford and are required to have one), and the mobilizing of town-wide public opinion.

If the trees along our scenic roads are decimated, once the deed is done there will be no undoing it. People will suddenly awaken but by then it will be too late. This is no time to beat around the bush. ■

Rob Dean, Black Rock Turnpike

Announcing another way to read the Sentinel, and more

Thank you for reading this first issue of the fall, the first issue of our annual subscriptions.

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Let us know what you think of it. In this issue you’ll also find two new columns that will become regular features.

Music Note — as the name implies — will cover music and musicians in and around Redding. We have a vibrant music scene in town and look forward to sharing stories about groups, bands, ensembles, soloists and all things musical with you.

Animals and pets is a column looking for a name. (At the end of the column we invite you to submit ideas.)

The first story is about shelters and pet rehoming. Future ones will cover wildlife in Redding as well as more about pets and resources.

We hope you enjoy them both. ■

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

Summertime Fun at Meadow Ridge | *By Pamela Brown*

Meadow Ridge always bustles with activity and this summer was no different. The award-winning senior living community featured a variety of interesting events and fun activities.

The annual **Resident Art Show** was attended by over 100 residents and invited guests. The community's atrium was adorned with artwork from more than forty talented residents who appreciated the opportunity to share their creativity and stunning pieces. Joan Kaskell, a resident and former Metropolitan Museum of Art lecturer, presented a lecture and slide presentation discussing how lakes, rivers, and oceans are painted. "I am so thrilled to be able to continue to lecture and share my love of art composition with my neighbors and friends at Meadow Ridge," says Kaskell. The lecture was followed by a cocktail party and a viewing of the art exhibit amidst soothing jazz music. Appetizers and beverages were served while attendees and resident artists mingled.

Carol Morgan, a resident at Meadow Ridge, says the show continues to be a great surprise because it reveals the sheer variety and extensive talent at the community. "The show captures the variety of perspectives of our Redding community. Surprising to view the poetic images of Edythe Woodruff, who has a science background, and businessman Bill Balch's images from his world travels," says Morgan whose dream-like oil paintings of trees were included in the show, highlighting her love of nature.

Meadow Ridge also hosted a performance by the **Connecticut Ballet**. Professional classical and contemporary dancers performed their popular series, Ballet Under the Stars, in the community's spacious auditorium. Guests were introduced to Brett Raphael,



Photos by Carol Morgan / Artist: Bill Morris

Some of the beautiful artwork from the Art Show at Meadow Ridge

founder and artistic director, as well as the dancers. "Seeing the ballet dancers in motion was energizing, transporting. It gave me an inspiring lift to our exercise classes the following day. The music performances have a similar impact — and keeps our community vibrant," says Morgan.

To celebrate summer, the community held an **old-fashioned BBQ** with family and friends. It was a day to indulge in lobster rolls and refreshing beverages while listening to music provided by the BluesyLand Band.

The community offers a robust schedule of resident-related events and activities, both on and off campus, to keep residents active and engaged, elevate their life, and introduce them to new learning opportunities to connect them to arts, music, and culture. Residents have enjoyed guest speakers, musicians, opera, and even taken college-level courses. Morgan appreciates the extensive array of events. "I consider them 'helium for the spirit' — from stimulating

seminars to bocce, swimming and nature walks. When I arrived at Meadow Ridge during the first days of the pandemic shutdown in March 2020 I was gratified to find that I had found a vibrant and caring village that's life enhancing. It's a reminder that we have vital choices for our senior chapter ahead."

All of the campus activities and fitness programs are coordinated by JoAnn Brant, Resident Life Director, who appreciates meeting new residents and supporting their interests and hobbies. "I love collaborating with the residents and enjoy bringing them programming they love," says Brant. "Our residents continue to share their life experiences and continue to make Meadow Ridge as unique as they are." ■



Artist: Mary Madelyn Attanasio



Artist: Joyce Weiser



Artist: Bob Tortorella



Artist: Michele Pallai

Meadow Ridge Expands with New Assisted Living Neighborhood

By Pamela Brown



Photos by Christine Schiffer

The people in the photo are from left to right Chris Barstein, Executive Director, Enid Busch (holding the scissors), Robin Sharp, a community resident, and Paul Brown Resident Health Services Director

Enid Busch, the longest tenured resident of Meadow Ridge, Redding's senior living retirement community, became the first resident in its brand-new Assisted Living neighborhood. "I really appreciate all that Meadow Ridge has done for me!" says Busch, who had the honor of cutting the ribbon at its grand opening in June.

"There was a high level of excitement and anticipation amongst our residents and associates leading up to the ribbon cutting," says Christopher Barstein, Executive Director. "Establishing an entire new neighborhood is no small feat and it was very rewarding to celebrate our team's hard work and commitment to creating a truly wonderful atmosphere for our residents."

The new Assisted Living community is connected to the same building as the previous neighborhood. Residents can easily access the Independent Living neighborhood through a passageway that leads to the main atrium. The new neighborhood offers expanded amenities and offers a balance of independence and assistance for its residents. The space the previous Assisted Living neighborhood occupied will become the new Mind & Memory Care neighborhood, slated for a winter opening.

The new Assisted Living neighborhood of 20 apartment-style homes has rooms that are bright and cheerful with a contemporary, yet comfortable design. "The expanded offerings were designed to empower our residents to remain as active and independent as possible, allowing them to lead full and active lives," says Barstein. "Residents will benefit from the availability of personalized care and a team of dedicated associates who ensure they receive individual assistance as well as the highest level of amenities and services. We are about 40% occupied and anticipate that number to grow quickly."

The Mind & Memory Care facility, with programming geared toward residents with dementia, is currently being renovated. "From the neighborhood's layout to lighting, dining and activities, each element is modeled to function with these residents' unique needs in mind," says Barstein noting the apartments are studio-styled so residents have everything they need. "This is a safe and secure neighborhood, so our resident's family members can have peace of mind along with the person-centered care designed to meet the needs of their loved one."

Barstein notes staff will be trained in behavioral expression so they can best understand and fulfill the needs of every resident.



Photos by Christine Schiffer

Christa Wilson, Assisted Living Program Coordinator and Paul Brown, MS, MBA Resident Health Services Director in the new Assisted Living community

"We wanted to have two distinct neighborhoods so we can provide personalized care to the residents of Assisted Living and those with cognitive deficits in the Mind and Memory Care neighborhood. The separate neighborhoods allow us to enhance the overall quality of life of residents and tailor the best-suited activities to each distinct neighborhood," says Barstein.

"As a continuing care retirement community, we provide a full continuum of care for those who need it, when they need it. Our goal is to provide a worry-free lifestyle so our residents can engage, grow and enjoy life."

For more information, call (203) 544-7777 or visit MeadowRidge.com ■





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SPORTS

Barlow hopes for success, gain experience

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

With a large, experienced senior class, the Joel Barlow High School varsity football team should be well prepared for the 2022 fall season.

But at the same time, the Falcons are also looking ahead to the future. They hope to provide some of their younger players the chance to gain some varsity time this fall as well.

“A lot of guys have varsity experience, which bodes well for this year, but after this year it’s going to be a little bit of a reloading,” said third-year head coach T.J. Cavaliere, whose team started practice on Aug. 15. “One of the things we hope for is maybe we can get some blowout wins and get some younger guys experience this year to kind of get them ready

for next year.”

Numbers have remained consistent for Barlow in recent years, averaging in the mid-50s for the program. It will keep about 35 or so at the varsity level.

Many are back from last season’s squad, which finished with a 7-3 record. The Falcons also graduated a few key players as well.

“We have a lot of returning starters,” said Cavaliere. “In that sense, this year we’re hoping to utilize that and play well.”

One is Carter Janki. An All-South-West Conference selection as a defensive back, he was also Barlow’s quarterback.

Offensive lineman/defensive back Zach Herman (All-SWC second team) has graduated, as have running back/defensive back Jack Wehrheim and wide receiver/defensive back Jack Campano, both All-SWC honorable mentions.

“We definitely lost a little bit, but we do have a lot of experienced guys who played varsity last

year coming back this year,” said Cavaliere.

Barlow will have plenty of experience on offense. Starting at quarterback will be senior Danny Shaban (All-SWC), who will run the Falcons’ triple option offense.

The offensive line will have five seniors. Tristian Counter (All-SWC) will be at right tackle.

Kyler Cartmel is a guard and Aidan Skidmore will be at center. Andrew Zaia (All-SWC second team) will see time at guard or tackle, as will classmate Colin Furrer.

Also back is senior Cooper Zuccerella, who will kick field goals and extra points.

“In high school that is a big weapon,” said Cavaliere. “He was pretty consistent last year.”

Barlow is looking for junior Cole Peterson to step up as a fullback and is in the mix to be a middle linebacker, according to Cavaliere. Dylan Taylor is one of the running backs and a strong safety. “I think our offensive line is the strength,” said Cavaliere. “I

think we may be a little bit thin at linebacker, and in the secondary. “We have players that we think are going to be there. It is just going to be a matter of them kind of growing and stepping up their game a little bit.”

Besides building on last year’s record, the Falcons also hope to qualify for the state playoffs and go far in the tournament. Such a goal is within reach with there being no powerhouses in Class SS this season according to Cavaliere.

A couple of scrimmages will give them the opportunity to see how it stacks up against the competition. They start the season on Sept. 9 at home against New London.

“Hopefully, we can get through those two fairly unscathed and get into the season pretty healthy,” said Cavaliere. “One or two injuries could make an 8-2 season into 2-8 really fast. As of right now we’re healthy.” ■

School districts appoint four new administrators

By Rocco Valluzzo



Jennifer Desmarais

A new principal and three assistant principals have been hired in the Redding and Region 9 school districts for the 2022-23 academic year.

Jennifer Desmarais was unanimously appointed as principal of John Read Middle School by the Redding Board of Education on July 7. Ms. Desmarais started her career at John Read Middle School as a social studies teacher in 1989. She remained in that position until 1999 when she accepted a position as social studies teacher at Joel Barlow High School.

“I’m very happy to be back,” she said. “This has been a dream for a long time.”

During her career at Barlow, she became humanities department chair in 2011 and then assistant principal in 2016. Her appointment at John Read Middle School brings stability and familiarity at a time when both senior administrative positions were open, according to



Kyla Dunn

Superintendent Jason McKinnon. “It was a special place when I was here,” said Desmarais. “I’m getting the feeling it’s still a special place.”

John Read Assistant Principal Kyla Dunn, who officially started on Aug. 24, previously worked in the technology industry before teaching in the Boston, MA school system and the Washington, D.C. area and also worked for the Maryland State Department of Education. She was later head of a charter middle school in Bridgeport. Most recently, Ms. Dunn worked at a private educational company, doing high data analysis for superintendents.

“I knew I wanted to get back into a school,” she said. “I just wanted it to be the right school, the right fit. It (John Read) was just a really great fit, everything somebody could want.”

This fall Ms Dunn especially looks forward to getting students



Jason (J.T.) Schemm

to collaborate, work together and socialize again following the pandemic.

“That’s really what they need to know to be successful,” said Dunn. “That’s what I’m excited about.”

On June 13, the Region 9 Board of Education unanimously appointed Jason (J.T.) Schemm as assistant principal at Barlow effective July 1. Mr. Schemm has been employed at Barlow High since 2012 as a science teacher and became the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and business department chair in 2016. From February until June of the most recent school year, he filled in as interim assistant principal.

Originally from Brookfield, Mr. Schemm taught a variety of science courses at New Milford High for 12 years before coming to Barlow.

“It is an excellent school with passionate teachers, eager students,



Dameon Kellogg

and a supportive community,” he said. “I am looking forward to working with the leadership team to continue to promote academic excellence and a warm, welcoming community of learners.”

Dameon Kellogg was unanimously appointed assistant principal at Barlow by the Region 9 Board of Education on July 12, filling the vacancy created by Ms. Desmarais’ move to John Read. He officially started July 18.

“When researching the school, I felt as though there were a lot of similarities to Amity, where I really enjoyed teaching and leading, and I could bring my skills and experiences to Barlow,” he said. “In the short time I have been here, everyone I have met has been very welcoming and excited about the upcoming school year.”

Mr. Kellogg started his teaching career at Lyman Memorial High in Wallingford before spending the past seven years at Amity Regional

High School in Woodbridge as the mathematics department chair.

He served on the District’s science, technology, engineering art and mathematics (STEAM) committee as co-chair and on the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) committee.

“Mr. Kellogg is certified in mathematics and social studies which makes him uniquely qualified to collaborate and lead across departments,” said McKinnon. He displayed strong leadership qualities from the school setting and his experience in the United States Air Force and National Guard. The appointment of Mr. Kellogg tonight was an important piece to fall into place for our leadership team. Our teachers in ER9 are of the highest caliber and our school leadership reflects this quality.”

He joins the high school leadership team under assistant superintendent and head of school Mario Almeida.

“The new leadership team at Barlow is looking forward to beginning the important work over the summer to prepare our school and programs for Barlow students in the fall,” said Dr. Almeida. “At the same time, we wish Ms. Desmarais well in her new position.” ■

Barlow Beat

By Griffin Ellis

Students returned to Joel Barlow High School on August 31, officially marking the beginning of a new school year. The Barlow community would like to welcome the freshman class.

To all freshmen who are looking to become more immersed in the Barlow community, I highly recommend joining a club; between robotics, debate, the school play, numerous athletics teams, and much more, there is surely a club or activity suitable

for everyone here! And if for whatever reason a student does not find the club they are looking for, they can always start their own! For example, a few students recently started a new club called “Snacks and Paperbacks” and are looking for new people to join. Joining or starting your own club is the easiest way for students to make friends and have fun outside of the classroom.

Aside from the new freshman class, the Barlow community

would also like to welcome Dameon Kellogg as our new Assistant Principal. Mr. Kellogg previously taught at Amity Regional High School and served as the math department chair there for the past seven years. He looks forward to meeting the students this semester. We would also like to congratulate Jason Schemm, who was also appointed as an Assistant Principal after serving as an interim for the position last year.

A new schedule is being implemented this year at Barlow. Previously students had a split schedule — meeting with four of their classes one day and the other four the next — but they now have a two-class-drop schedule. This means that students have six classes a day (“dropping” the other two), an increase in daily classes compared to last year. Students will now meet with teachers more often in classes that are shorter in duration, one of the reasons

Barlow switched to this schedule.

To hear more about how this schedule works as well as other new implementations at Barlow, make sure to tune into the Nest (Barlow’s news show) which Jackson Bennett and I run. It’s the best way to understand what’s going on both in and outside of Barlow’s walls. (@thenest.jbhs) ■

Gilbert & Bennett site assessment reveals findings, makes recommendations / Continued from page 1

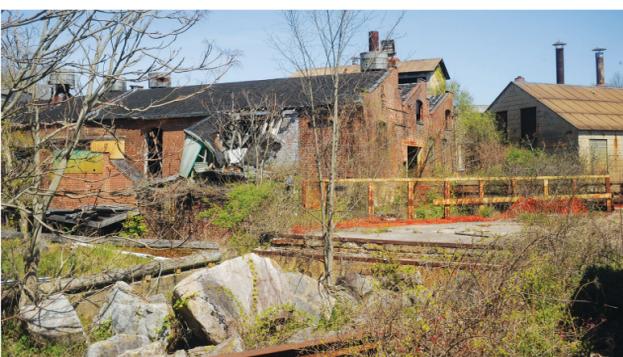


Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

database search and interviews with anybody knowledgeable about the site. The basic conclusion of a Stage One is to determine whether there has been any spillage or dumping of chemicals into an area of concern that must be remediated.

From that historic work review, twenty-five areas of concern were identified. Those were areas where there was a spill or dumping or where a release occurred that may need clean up, generally in soil or groundwater or sediments.

The assessment also found sev-

en solid waste management areas where wastes were deposited, as well as thirteen underground storage tanks. Previous investigations of the property found cadmium, copper, lead and zinc in surface soils and ground water sediment.

The southern part of the site, which lies between North Main Street and Route 107, was where a lot of manufacturing took place in particular. During development those and other areas will need to be remediated, either cleaned up and taken off site or capped in place.

Recommendations

At the conclusion of the assessment, Tighe & Bond came up with six main recommendations: a data gap analysis to make sure the site has been investigated to current standards; a hazardous building materials review to see what studies have been done; a structural evaluation of the buildings to determine which can be saved and which have to be demolished; an ecological evaluation of the discharge in the Norwalk River; a remedial approach reevaluation; and a revision of the remediation cost

Continued on page 5

MUSIC NOTE

More than a little bit country, North County band a hit

By Linda Meyer Mitchell



Photo by Allyson Florkowski

Country music is alive and well and thriving in Redding. North County Band, started by Redding's own Scott Smith, is an increasingly popular band and one to watch. The group plays covers as well as original songs and will release its first album in October. In addition to Smith on acoustic guitar and vocals, band members include Texas native Cat Lines on fiddle and vocals, Peter Hill on drums, Bradley Clark on bass guitar, Jimmy Johnston on guitar, pedal steel and vocals, and Jona Ziac on dobro and lap steel. The six are all from the north part of Fairfield County, giving inspiration to the name.

North County Band was started by Smith in August of 2020 during a covid lull. Smith had played in other bands previously, but always wanted a country band as he is captivated by the storytelling aspect of it. He found band members who share a love of the harmonies, rhythms and stories of country music. For Cat it is a way to reconnect with her Texas roots. Smith recruited fellow Reddingite Peter Hill, found the rest of the band members through Bandmix, and the result is a group of highly talented musicians and amazing singers whose performances exude a great deal of energy. They said they never play a song the exact same way twice, with different members taking solos or finding new ways to keep the music fresh and the performances fun for both the musicians and the audience. It is a group that clearly enjoys performing together, with their friendship a bonus to playing

in the band. They are quickly developing a loyal following that travels the state to hear them play.

North County Band serves as an Artist Ambassador to the Spread Music Now Program, a not-for-profit group that supports music education and opportunities for underserved youth. Spread Music Now is sponsoring the October 28th launch party at the Bijou theatre in Bridgeport for the band's debut album "Connecticut". Tickets can be purchased at bijoutheatre.net with the proceeds going to support a great cause. The band is a socially conscious group with each of its members helping support various community organizations.

North County Band began as a local group but has become a regional band with engagements throughout New England. They even attracted the attention of the Connecticut governor, who recently highlighted their original song "Connecticut" on Twitter. The band is very versatile and can be booked to play as a 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 member group for corporate, municipal and private functions. For more information on the musicians, bookings, and a schedule of upcoming places to see them play visit their website at northcountyband.com ■

The First Church of Christ Congregational celebrates 40th year Artisan Fair

By Pamela Brown

If you're looking for a fun way to welcome the fall season, stop by The First Church of Christ Congregational's 40th Annual Artisan Fair. On September 24th from 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., the church grounds will be bustling with music, tag sales, children's games, crafts, and food for the entire family.

"Our Fair started with a pretty humble beginning and has grown to be a cherished event for our church members and community," says Kathie Cyr, fair manager. "We're so happy to be continuing the tradition and celebrating 40 years! What a milestone!"

Since 1981, the fair has served Redding and surrounding communities. All profits allow the church to continue its fellowship and outreach. "From ongoing hands-on efforts at local food banks and shelters, to financial support of important and diverse agencies, to face-to-face encounters in partnership with support agencies, we strive to make things a little better for those in need," says Cyr.

Over 40 local artisans will display a wide range of items, including fine art, handcrafted jewelry, pottery, and ceramics, one-of-a-kind clothing, locally-crafted home decor, handmade furniture and toys, and locally-roasted coffees.

Redding residents Pam Elkow and Jackie Dinowitz are two featured artists. Elkow, of Funky Tulip Glassworks, will showcase fused glass jewelry, ornaments, art, and home goods, such as bowls, platters, and spoon rests. "I have some new jewelry I'm really happy with, and since it's fall, I'll have ornaments for the holidays," says Elkow. "Everyone likes to support Redding artisans, so I get to see a lot of friends and repeat customers."



Dinowitz, of Jacqueline Dinowitz Accessories, designs and creates modern jewelry and accessories made of chunky freshwater pearls, semi-precious gemstones, and precious metals incorporating vintage and estate elements from her curated collection. "The fair offers something for everyone, at every age. The visitors are friendly and very supportive of the crafters," says Dinowitz.

Local bands will provide live entertainment. Performers include The Red Hots, a retro-stylized cover band, North County Band known for country covers and originals, and The Hooligans, a high-energy group that plays popular hits from the 70's through contemporary pop music. There will also be games for the children. Pumpkins, mums, and cornstalks will be available for purchase.

To satisfy your appetite, there will be grilled burgers, hot dogs, sausage and peppers, fries, veggie burgers, pulled pork, and Congregational soup along with cold beverages. Top it off with fresh-baked apple pie and home-baked desserts.

Step into the Fellowship Hall to browse one of the area's largest tag sales showcasing housewares, home decor, holiday items, and a huge selection of toys, games, and puzzles. "Shoppers love to comb through the hundreds of items to find their perfect buried treasure!" says Cyr. The redesigned Jewelry Boutique offers vintage, estate, designer, gold and silver pieces and a collection of scarves, hats, and purses. For housewares, the Studio will showcase a selection of fine artwork, furniture, antiques, and high-quality rugs.

"The Artisan Fair is something we plan for most of the year and look forward to," says Cyr. "It's a community favorite event that brings out most of Redding to the heart of the town."

For more information, visit: firstchurchredding.org. Tag Sale is open 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; early birds may enter at 9:00 a.m. for a \$5.00 fee. Parking for the Fair is available at the Redding Elementary School at 33 Lonetown Road. A free 2-minute shuttle bus ride will bring you to the Church grounds. The event is free and held rain or shine. ■



Photo by Linda Meyer Mitchell

Last Gig for Project Five
The final performance of Project Five at the Redding RoadHouse on August 18th. The Barlow students have played at numerous events in Fairfield County, but all six graduated in June and are headed off to various parts of the world to study this fall. Band members from left to right: Connor Williams drums, Arsh Patalia guitar, Amelia Rodrigues vocals, Keith Cabot bass, Piper Gilbert vocals, Philip Coffey keyboard

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Gilbert & Bennett site assessment reveals findings, makes recommendations / Continued from page 4

estimates.

Future activities include abatement and demolition estimates, program and permitting evaluation, river wall evaluation and funding evaluation.

"One big thing is the river wall evaluation," said Olsen. "Those walls are holding back impacted soils and we don't want those things to deteriorate or the soil will fall into the river."

To date, there has been very little cleanup of the property. Tighe & Bond will study a number of scenarios and what those would cost. Olsen said that there will

probably be some soil removed, taken off site and disposed of, while some materials can remain in place and be capped.

"What we're going to do is try to look at some more creative ways of leaving stuff here and that would reduce the remediation cost," he said. "The river has some contaminated sediments. There will probably be some dredging of the river in some spots."

He added that under the remediation standard regulations there are residential cleanup criteria and commercial cleanup criteria. Tighe & Bond will recommend to the

town that it looks at different use scenarios and what would have to be cleaned up and what that would cost.

Pemberton said the town has options when it comes to fixing the buildings. The first is to do the structural evaluation that Tighe & Bond recommended. That can determine what the cost will be to keep the water out to hinder further deterioration while we find out what needs to be done for the longer term. The other option is to make use of grants from the Department of Economic Development.

"The problem is by state standards we are a wealthy town," she said. "These competitive grants are prioritized to distressed municipalities."

"Whether or not we receive a competitive grant to basically seal the buildings is a question mark but we are certainly looking at every grant opportunity and Tighe & Bond has put together several meetings with national funders and various agencies," she continued. "We will be working with professionals to seek that money out and to do the grant applications."

In May Tighe & Bond met

with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Department of Economic Development and the Environmental Protection Agency to talk about planning for the future of the property as well as funding resources. There is currently a historic amount of federal funding available.

"There are hundreds of millions of dollars coming into Connecticut over the next five years for sites like this," said Olsen. "It's a really great time for Brownfield sites." ■

Redding's new finance director

By Keara Champagne



Photo by Susan Clark

Zach Smith, Accounting Assistant / IT Coordinator, Jim Sanders, Finance Director, Krista Gramer, Accounting / Benefits Coordinator

Early in August, the town welcomed a new Finance Director, Jim Sanders, following the retirement of Steve Gniadek. Prior to assuming his new role with the town, Sanders spent 30 years with IBM, a challenging and fast-paced work environment.

After retirement Sanders felt he had time that could be filled with volunteer and recreational activities, but he wanted more of a challenge. Since he was a well-informed Redding resident of 30 years, he saw Finance Director as a great fit. "It was something I knew, it was something I was passionate about, and it gave me a way of taking my skills and using them in a different purpose," Sanders says. He specialized in finance and risk management as the CFO of one of IBM's Americas Business Units. This gave him a great deal of experience and knowledge with taking financial resources, allocating them and generating profit and revenue returns. When applying these skills to town

government, many things cross over.

"You have limited financial resources, the tax base from the local residents, and what you're trying to do is use those as responsibly as you can and generate a return for your town residents." When asked about what needs to change or be fixed in terms of Redding's Finance department, Sanders responded with, "I don't see a fix." A month into the job, his intent is to become more familiar with the operations of the town and its opportunities.

Since the Finance department is the center of financial expertise for the town, it provides opportunities to work more collaboratively across the different town

departments. "It takes us out of just being a controlling function to also being an advisory role and helping other departments sort through their problems, figure out how to manage them financially" Sanders states, explaining how the Finance department works with other departments "not just approving or disapproving what they can do, but really working with them to find the best answer."

When asked about changes Sanders hopes to make in the near future, he talked about starting into the budget process and working with department heads as well as the Board of Finance to develop and approve the upcoming town budget. He is also working on long-range capital planning for the

town for a couple years out as well as completing a set of projects prioritized by the ARPA working group and Board of Selectmen with the assistance of the Board of Finance.

Jim Sanders wants you to know that he is very open to feedback from residents. He respects First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton's transparent leadership style and wishes to extend it to the Finance department. Sanders thinks this is "a real privilege. I look at this as the next chapter in my career and I just feel very fortunate to be a resident of a town like Redding."

District One fire commissioners discuss tear-down funding of new firehouse

By Donna Christopher



Proposed Redding Ridge Firehouse

In June, calls to the tax collector asking about large increases in their Fire District One bills prompted a response from the district's three commissioners in a letter posted on the town's and Redding Fire & EMS Company No. 1 websites and sent to local media. But the project has been in discussion at every Redding Fire District One monthly meeting since 2015 and covered by local newspapers.

Commissioners Bennett Pardee, Phyllis Magnussen, and Dave

Hermenze sat down with the Sentinel to talk about the current state of plans to tear down the existing structure, build a new firehouse, and the funding needed for the project.

"Most people's only point of contact is with our tax collector. She has received many calls, not about the firehouse per se, as she just got a question, 'Why are the taxes going up?'" Magnussen began our conversation in July.

There is a plan underway for the building on Black Rock Turn-

pike to be torn down, the property expanded and a new home for the volunteer firefighters built. The multi-phase project includes expanding the parking lot and installing a new septic system. The architect's plan includes building a retaining wall to allow stormwater to filter into the wetlands. The cost is around \$7.7 million.

The Redding Ridge fire station at 186 Black Rock Turnpike was built in 1927 and has become run-down over time. Only two major renovations have been done to the existing building and deteriorating is a better description than "run-down," said Magnussen during a walk around the property. "To fix it at this time would cost more than to tear it down and replace it."

Foundation repairs, new air conditioning and heating system, updating the engine bay's doors to accommodate modern apparatus and air quality regulation requirements, and making more room for storage and training are just some of the list of needed improvements.

Among needs for a future building is a dedicated area where volunteers can spend the night if necessary. Currently, there is no furniture or place to sleep in the building. Functions at the firehouse are held in an upstairs room accessed by the original staircase - the new building will have an elevator, among modern elements planned.

"We asked for a design that would complement the surrounding buildings on this stretch of Black Rock Turnpike, which has a mix of colonial, craftsman, and Victorian styles, and we are

pleased the architect was able to do just that," Magnussen said of the new building's design.

Space in the new structure will be "utilized efficiently" with a second floor over the engine bays and a basement under the north and south sides of the building to be used as storage and workout space for volunteers. "The design incorporates important safety measures for our members, dedicated training areas so more than one type of training can be done at the same time, and sleeping areas should they be needed," Magnussen said.

When plans were set to seek funding from district taxpayers to build a new firehouse, the first step was to obtain permission from various town boards to do so. Site plans were submitted in March of 2021, board members attended meetings, and ultimately got approval from the Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals for variances, and the Zoning Board for site approval. These meetings were held on Zoom and announced to the public on the Town's website.

To fund the project the board submitted a May 2022 budget of an additional line item of \$300,000 for a capital reserve fund earmarked for the firehouse project.

There will be a similar increase in May of 2023. "We plan no further increases specific to the firehouse capital reserve, but do plan to maintain that level of funding of the firehouse capital reserve (and taxation) for the following five years (2024-28)."

At some point the district will seek bonding for the project but

is limited by state statutes to how much debt it can incur, said Magnussen. State statute limits the debt to 2.25% of collected revenue for the prior fiscal year.

"Right now, that would be \$1,386,706. This current budget changes that limit to \$2,125,000. The estimated cost of the project we received in October of 2021 was \$7.7 million. We will need to have at least \$4,000,000 in our Capital Reserve Fund before we can take the project to the district taxpayers and request bonding for the balance. Obviously, we have a way to go before we reach that point."

"The final decision will be made by the taxpayers of Fire District one," Pardee said.

"...So we're looking ahead to see how we can get to that \$7 million. We decided to approach it incrementally. This is going to be a step-by-step process. The taxpayers have to continue to approve more to raise money. We don't plan a substantial budget increase beyond that."

"This will build our dedicated capital reserve, and increase the annual tax receipts of the District, which increases the District's borrowing ability. We believe that the District will then be in a financial position to commit to the actual construction of the new firehouse," said the letter.

An open house with an information session is planned for October. Watch for information in the Sentinel, and on townofreddingct.org and reddingfire1.org. ■

First Church of Christ Congregational wraps up work on sprinkler system

By Justin Reynolds

Talk to anyone in fire safety and they'll tell you the same thing: Alarms save lives; sprinklers save buildings.

Now, thanks to a successful fundraising drive honoring the life of Bill North, a longtime pillar of the church who passed away last year, Redding's First Church of Christ Congregational has secured its physical presence for generations to come.

In July, the church broke proverbial ground on a sprinkler project that, once completed, will significantly increase the chances its marquee entirely wooden sanctuary, located at 25 Cross Highway, would withstand a fire.

According to Ashley Bishop, chair of the church's stewardship committee who's co-managing the sprinkler project with Chris Nolan and Ben Pardee, the work — which is being done by local contractors — should be wrapped up by Labor Day.

"We've wanted to do the project forever, but we never had the money or the moment," Bishop said.

Before North died in 2021, he told his wife that he wanted any remembrance for him to be donated to a sprinkler system for the church. With some help from North's friends and family, the church community rallied and raised roughly \$200,000 to cover the bulk of the project's costs.

"We all loved Bill so much," Bishop said. "People opened their wallets in a huge way."

First Church of Christ Congregational traces its roots back to 1733. The beautiful white structure in Redding Center we all

recognize today was built in 1837. Ultimately, Methodists gifted the property to the congregational church in 1961.

Each year, a small number of similarly structured churches burn to the ground, Bishop said. Though the church has had fire alarms for many years, those alarms wouldn't do much good for an old wooden building between the time a fire was detected and when firefighters showed up on site.

"The fire threat to our church is much bigger than the loss of the building," Bishop explained. "You don't get new members when you don't have a church. Sadly, if you lose the building, you're probably going to lose the whole organization. Even if the church is fully insured, it can take three to four years before it can be rebuilt. The congregation tends to drift away."

Churches collectively had a tough time surviving during the pandemic. For Bishop, this fundraising effort proves that the church community is thriving and as strong as ever.

"To see such energy and love outpour in the wake of this awful pandemic has been heartwarming," Bishop said.

Looking ahead, the church is poised to welcome members of the community back for its 40th annual artisan fair, scheduled to take place Sept. 24. The event will feature food, live music, crafts, artisan vendors, a jewelry boutique, and a tag sale, among other things.

For more information on the church and its upcoming events, visit <https://firstchurchredding.org/> ■

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OBITUARY

Jeffrey Warren McDougal July 14, 1953 - July 3, 2022

By Allyson McDougal



Photo by Kevin Hammonds

Jeff, a passionate sailor, pilot, and racing enthusiast lived his life full throttle. He passed away peacefully at his home in Redding at the age of 68. He touched the lives of many with his generosity, compassion, and kindness.

All who knew Jeff, knew he could fix anything. This talent was quite evident when, at the age of seven, he dismantled the family's valuable antique grandfather clock that had stopped working. His mother arrived home, aghast to find him sitting on the living room floor surrounded by gears, springs, wood, and the clock face. He spent several days, but succeeded in reassembling the clock to perfect working order. This unique ability translated to every engine, appliance, car, and broken object that needed repair. His analytical and mechanical skills were renowned.

His storytelling was legendary and began when he was a toddler telling epic "Shaggy Dog Stories." He continued this tradition throughout his life entertaining everyone with stories of his adventures living in Israel, traveling in North Africa, and sailing the Penobscot Bay off the coast of Islesboro Island, Maine.

He graduated from Weston High School in Weston, Connecticut in 1971 and continued his education

in agricultural studies at the Kibbutz Shoval in Israel.

His career included co-managing an SCCA Atlantic racing team, and culminated with owning his own surveying company, William W. Seymour & Associates in Darien, Connecticut. He was the NSPS Connecticut Director and on the CALS Board of Directors.

Jeff was a member of the Royal Order of Raccoons since 1986 and had a near perfect attendance record of 440 monthly meetings. He will be sorely missed by his Lodge brothers.

Jeff was bigger than life and lived every moment with an enviable energy and enthusiasm. He is survived by his two sons, Benjamin and Cedric (Deanna), his five brothers and sisters: David, Marilyn (Steven), Bruce (Sue), Allyson (Tim), Paula and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins. And Ophelia, the cat.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Connecticut Association of Land Surveyors Memorial Scholarship fund: www.ctsurveyors.org

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. ■

Hugh Karraker dies at 74

By Naneen Karraker and Sherry Karraker

Hugh Lenox Karraker, an actor and the entrepreneur behind the L. H. Baekeland Project honoring his great grandfather, "the father of modern plastic," died in hospice on August 17, 2022, in Danbury. He was 74.

His wife of 44 years, Sherry Arell Karraker, said the cause of death was Acute Respiratory Failure.

In 2006, Hugh started researching how Baekeland became one of America's foremost inventors as the 100th anniversary of his most famous invention, Bakelite, approached. Baekeland also invented one of the first photographic papers. "I wanted to celebrate the huge impact Baekeland's inventions had on our lives," Hugh said. The award-winning film "All Things Bakelite: The Age of Plastic" has been shown on public television stations around the U.S. and at scientific symposia across the globe.

Hugh's other artistic creations — rustic fences, gates, and benches — can be seen around Redding.

Hugh was born in New York City on May 16, 1948 to Céline Baekeland Roll Karraker—Leo Baekeland's granddaughter— and Charles William (Bill) Karraker, an early Pan Am pilot. Both parents were active Redding residents for many years.

Hugh attended Redding schools through ninth grade and then Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs. There, he became involved in theater, with a starring role in the musical "The Fantasticks." He majored in theater at the University of Connecticut and studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. After graduating in the early 1970s, he cofounded Magic Circle Theater in Chicago.

Returning to New York, he appeared in many plays and



Hugh Karraker, pictured here by an early piece of equipment used for making Bakelite.

showcases. He met his wife Sherry, a fellow actor, doing summer stock in Vermont. They were married in 1978. Hugh's acting career included roles in theater, films, television, and commercials.

After his mother died in 2006, Hugh and Sherry returned to Redding, living first in his childhood home on Cross Highway and eventually a house on Poverty Hollow Road. Active in Redding politics, he served on the town Zoning Board and Water Pollution Control Board. He also served as a volunteer firefighter, which included joining the search for 9-11 attack survivors in 2001.

In 2004, he was successfully treated for tongue cancer, but valiantly battled the treatment's side effects for the rest of his life.

With an airline pilot father, Hugh became well-traveled even as a child. Family trips gave him an appetite for international adventure. In later life, in addition to attending scientific conventions across the globe, he and Sherry traveled extensively. His last trip abroad was to Spain in 2019.

Hugh is survived by his wife, Sherry; his sister Naneen Karraker;

nephews Ben Schooler, Nick Schooler, and Simon Shea and their families; and many cousins. Another sister, Nell, died in 1997.

In early August, Hugh visited Baekeland Camp, his beloved family camp in the Adirondacks. There, he was able to say goodbye to many family members and old friends. ■

Donations may be made to the:

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Mark Twain Library
Redding Grange #15
Nature Conservancy
WNET (public television),
WPKN radio out of Bridgeport

Christine Ann Krause, long-time Redding resident, passes away at 83

By Carmon Funeral Home



Photo by Krause Family

Christine Ann Krause of Vernon Rockville, CT, and longtime former resident of Westport and Redding, passed away on August 16, 2022 at the age of 83. Born in Norwalk, CT on July 10, 1939, Christine was the daughter of Janet Isabel Wynne Vaast and Jules William Vaast, formerly of Westport, CT.

Christine is survived by four siblings, her brother Arthur Wynne Vaast of Redding; sister Patricia Workman and her husband, Jim, of Milford; brother Michael Vaast and his wife, Virginia, of Punta Gorda, FL; and brother Paul Vaast of Ormond Beach, FL. Christine is also survived by her son, Dennis

Peters and his wife, Robyn, of Ridgefield and stepdaughter Heather Reed and her husband, Peter, of Wilton, CT. She was known as Grams and Grammy by her four grandchildren, Jack and Spencer Peters and Katherine and Phillip Reed.

Christine is also survived by her niece Alison daSilva and her husband, Mark, of Shelton; niece Aimee Cashman and her husband, Mike, of Westborough, MA; nephew James Workman and his wife, Daniela, of Milford; nephew Jonathan Vaast and his wife, Francesca, of Southington; niece Jenifer Vaast and fiancé, Steven Hillan, of Jacksonville,

FL; niece Melissa Vaast of Boca Raton, FL; niece Kristin Vaast of St. Augustine, FL; and additional extended family members that she loved dearly and with whom she enjoyed spending time.

Christine was predeceased by her son, George Peters III and her beloved husband of 24 years, Herbert E. Krause.

Christine loved the beach, was an avid walker throughout her life, and enjoyed playing numerous card games with family and friends. Christine had a passion for reading, and enjoyed exchanging mystery novels, thrillers and other books with neighbors and friends. Christine and her family

were grateful to the nursing staff, especially Bri, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford who brought her laughter, comfort, and peace in her final days.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that charitable donations be made in Christine's memory to a school literacy program, local library or book program for children or seniors. Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home in Vernon has care of the arrangements. To leave a condolence, please visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com ■

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**REDDING GRANGE HONORS
HUGH KARRAKER**

**WHO LEFT OUR TOWN AND THE WORLD
A BETTER PLACE THAN HE FOUND IT**

1948 - 2022

BOOK REVIEW

The Rub of Time

By *Martin Amis*

392 pp. *Vintage International* / \$16.95

The art of the essay here remains strong. Martin Amis has capable hands for difficult subjects probed with fresh insights. The literary essay has particular challenges and unique satisfactions. The best guides for these expeditions are writers whose understanding is driven by passion and artful perspective. Joan Didion is one such notable author. Martin Amis is another.

The Rub of Time is a collection of essays published from 1994–2017, subtitled “Bellow, Nabokov, Hitchens, Travolta, Trump — Essays and Reportage.” Treated to the Amis range, lucidity, and linguistic precision, the reader is taken on a guided tour, as it were, and there is great pleasure in his company. His wry analysis of noteworthy novelists, poets, public persons and cultural phenomena is often stunning. Addressing an elephantine cognitive inconsistency, he describes one politician as “‘a pro-life libertarian’ — which means that he favors minimal state intervention except when it comes to pregnant women.”

A novelist of acknowledged talent, Martin Amis brings an educated imagination to his subjects. His love of language sustains him. We are invited to see with his clear eyes, confidence, concision and style. We experience “Rambo, that lethal trapezium of organ meat,”

and hear with sharpened language life brought forth from other writers: “A melancholy lesson of advancing years is the realization that you can’t make old friends” (Christopher Hitchens), or, in the mathematical prognostications of J.G. Ballard, “The future equals six times technology squared.”

The pleasures of essays from a literary sensibility are profound because insights are often delivered on the sly. Recall Joan Didion describing a Las Vegas wedding chapel by its motto:

“Sincere and dignified since 1954.” Martin Amis is similar in his allusions. He writes: “Very broadly, we read fiction to have a good time...we reflect that whereas instruction doesn’t always delight, delight always instructs.”

The Rub of Time delights and instructs. It does this by means of exposing the reader to main influences in our time, in our experience. When Amis describes a major figure as “scowling out from under an omelet of makeup” it is a true statement and we get his gist. We want to read him because, clever, articulate, insightful and penetrating in his understanding, he speaks with the authority of an artist, and we know that is special. ■

*Review by Tom Casey
Tom is the author of **Human Error and Strangers’ Gate***

The Hamburger Principle

By *Lisa Tancredi*

Have you ever really wanted a hamburger? Or maybe you have a sweet tooth and can’t wait for your next donut. Or maybe you really really can’t wait for your next stalk of celery. (Well, no one has that problem, but sure. Why not. For the sake of argument. That way we include the 4 people in the world who get cravings for crazy-healthy food and probably aren’t reading this...Not that I’m jealous or anything...)

So here you are, hankerin’ for a burger or a donut (or celery — sure) and yet you aren’t thinking that there’s something wrong with what you have now. You’re just calm. And loving the idea of having your hamburger at some time in the future. You’re focused solely on the enjoyment you will have, the beautiful feelings you will experience, when you do finally sit down for your treat. In doing this, you have tripped into the process that brings you your heart’s desire in life.

Often, when we think about something we want but don’t yet have, we tend to run through some version of this: “I need it and it’s not here! I better panic! Because I need it and it’s not here! How can I get it?! Think. Think. Think.” And the more you think, the more you notice how much you don’t have it. And the more you notice you don’t have it, the farther away it gets. It’s as if you’re chasing it away by telling it how much it’s not there. But what you focus on multiplies. What you think about, you create. So, focusing on lack - even saying to yourself, “I don’t have a burger right now” — multiplies the state of non-burger-having-ness.

Now, somehow, with a hamburger, there’s usually no panic. There’s no fear that there may not be enough hamburgers

in the world (or donuts or celery — you see where I’m going). And you have every confidence that this burger-donut-celery will be coming one day. You trust the universe will be able to get its act together enough to deliver your treat to you in due time.

With this calm certainty, you relax. You’re free to imagine all the beautiful details of eating this item with full pleasure and gentle patience. You know it’s coming. You can feel it. And you savor it as if it’s there. In fact, science tells us that your brain doesn’t know the difference between reality and a well-imagined thought. So, to your brain, this is actually happening now. (Super-neat-o trick.)

This process you’ve stumbled upon is how it works. This is how you draw to yourself what you truly want: Start by creating a beautiful image of the thing you truly want. Allow this beautiful image to generate good feelings. As you deepen and expand those good feelings, as if this beautiful image was yours right now (which it is), you radiate the energy that can usher more of this good feeling into your life — whether it be through more hamburgers or more friends or a turn of fortune.

Using this practice, you can guide yourself in a direction you want to go while at the same time NOT focusing on the fact that you’re not there yet. With not a hint of worry. Not a thought of lack. Just a clear focus on how good it would feel to be there now. That is enough to create the energy in you that starts the ball rolling and ends with you receiving a delightful energetic match.

In other words, it’s just like dreaming of a hamburger. ■

LIBRARY CORNER

By *George Avidon*

In autumn we are reminded of the beauty of our surroundings as much as how the Redding environment affects our very existence, culture, identity and intellectual prowess. Fall is a busy season at the Mark Twain Library. While adults and children begin their return to normalcy, the staff and volunteers at the Library are busy preparing for the Book Fair, Pudd’nhead Festival, and the Art Show — annual fundraisers that allow our library to continue to bring you in-depth and exciting programs throughout the year.

Continuing a Redding tradition, the team behind the 61st Annual MTL Book Fair has once again brought to life one of the most extensive and well-organized extravaganzas and it is sure to please! Over 200 volunteers, led by a group of longtime organizers, will roll up their sleeves as swarms of book lovers envelop the Redding Community during Labor Day weekend. With nearly 65,000 items, there is something for everyone, with particularly extensive selections in vintage science fiction books, classic children’s books, Civil War history, operatic vocal scores, CDs in all music categories and books

focusing on American history. The Collectors Corner offers special and rare books, including Avedon’s Evidence 1944-1994 and Williams’ Appleton’s United States Travellers Guide, to name just two. If you’re looking to level up your personal library, this event does not disappoint!

Believe it or not, preparations for the 50th Annual Art Show, which takes place in early December, are also underway. Volunteers and staff are assembling and planning this silver anniversary event. Redding is not only picturesque but also home to incredibly talented artists. Our town’s physical location has allowed us to be a part of artistic movements since the birth of this nation. The beauty and natural surroundings of Redding, Fairfield Country and Connecticut have inspired the American impressionists J. Alden Weir, Childe Hassam, J. H. Twachman, and William Merritt Chase. The tradition continues and evolves with new masters highlighting our local beauty and beyond with Redding’s own Babette Bloch, Kathy Anderson, Pam Reese, Robert Mars, Jimmy Grashow, Marc Mellon, Peter Bergeron and so many others. It’s

an event not to be missed, so look for announcements in the coming weeks.

Programming at the Library continues with gusto as Adults, Childrens, and Teen Programming coordinators deliver cultural and intellectual stimulation to the community. Starting in September our Adult Programming will present local historians, book clubs, financial sense, Redding Roundups, music circles and of course the award-winning Conversations series. Teen programming will feature origami, music circles and an enhanced and hands-on robotics learning series. And Fall StoryTimes will be back to enlighten and amaze all the children in town.

We look forward to seeing all the smiling sun-kissed faces return from summer hiatus and will resume our Sunday hours after Labor Day. And, don’t forget as we head back into school and work that we have a plethora of services from online tutoring to research databases for your use. ■

*George Avidon is acting
Library Director
Erin Shea Dummeyer
is on maternity leave*

Good books for good readers

By *Margi Esten*

Hidden Gems...Here are some of my favorite ‘under the radar’ reads:

The All of It by Jeannette Haien – Modern day Ireland. This debut novella is a simple story, three characters (a man, a woman and a priest), a story within a story and beautifully crafted picturesque language tackling life lessons of redemption and forgiveness.

Mothering Sunday by Graham Swift – England 1924. An incredibly moving tale that begins with a secret love affair and then

unfolds to reveal the whole of a woman’s remarkable life.

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion – takes place the year following the death of Joan Didion’s husband, writer John Gregory Dunne, and her attempts to make sense of her grief. Sigmund Freud coined the phrase magical thinking. This is Joan Didion’s account of the fallibility of memory and the persistence of love through death.

Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness by William Styron

– best known for books such as Sophie’s Choice and The Confessions of Nat Turner, this renowned author writes about his descent into depression and the triumph of recovery.

Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man by Bill Clegg – wildly successful literary agent Bill Clegg describes how he lost it all. His remarkably descriptive prose juxtaposes this grim tale of a life almost irretrievably gone. ■

WHY REDDING?

Finding a forever home

By *Regan B. Purcell*

When my husband and I moved to Redding from New York City in 2020, it wasn’t because of COVID-19. As we scrolled through Zillow and discussed where we wanted to start a family, I happened upon the perfect house. When we first talked about moving, we drew a circle around an area that would allow us to commute into the city when we needed to, and Redding was in the zone. We were living in NYC dreaming about the future, when I looked at the house online and clicked through virtual photos. A front yard big enough for kids to play soccer and enough room for both of us to have a home office! I began imagining what life outside the city could be.

Shortly afterwards, we visited my husband’s family in Ridgefield and went to the open house in Redding to see how my dream home from Zillow would stack up in real life. Once we turned onto the meandering driveway, my eyes followed a stone wall that bordered the property up and around a corner. The house waited for us at the bottom of a small hill and the large maples in the front yard seemed to wave hello as we pulled up. I instantly fell in love with the property and knew in that moment that I was home.

To understand how much I love and appreciate Redding, you must understand where I

came from. I was born and raised in Mt. Pleasant, a small suburb of Charleston, South Carolina. Shortly after I left, the Charleston area began to experience a period of unprecedented growth. Each year I returned I saw more changes. Wider roads, big box stores, and new housing developments overtook flora and fauna. The local charm slowly eroded like sand on the beaches. My hometown has changed and when I visit, I see a place that is so different. Now home to reality shows and designer boutiques, even the pimento cheese sandwiches cost \$20 and the place I grew up in has disappeared along with its quiet two-lane roads. I had this dramatic transition in mind when thinking about where I could find my forever home.

When searching for our first home together, my husband and I agreed that we wanted to move to an area that had a welcoming community but still offered privacy in the form of open space. Redding is one of Fairfield County’s least densely populated towns with most of the houses on lots that are two acres or larger.

While we enjoy the solitude that country living offers, we appreciate the many cultural activities available to us too. Redding hosts Summer Concerts on the Green for locals to enjoy live music with their friends and families. Instead

of a shopping mall or a multiplex, the Mark Twain Library offers the town an artistic and educational hub. I’m grateful that almost 40% of Redding is protected and won’t be developed. Trees and sky are framed in every window of my house like beautiful works of art. I look forward to sharing our passion for nature and wildlife conservation with our children someday.

Just last month I came across Long Ridge Library and discovered another local gem. The library celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019 and Barbara Fulton, Head Librarian, is always quick to point me towards a great book.

My sister who stills lives in Charleston recently visited me, and she told me that waking up to birds chirping instead of the noise of commercial construction was a welcome reprieve. I feel like I won the lottery when I found our house and I look forward to raising my children in such an incredible community. I am comforted by the fact that after they grow up and if they move away, when they come home to visit, Redding will most likely remain the same. A place full of natural treasures and cultural landmarks that are preserved for current and future generations. Sometimes...you can go home again. ■

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\$1.5M in ARPA Funds to Go Before Voters This Month | Rob Sample

The namesake pond and wetlands at New Pond Farm may get a new lease on life, thanks to an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant that goes before Redding voters later this month.

This New Pond Farm grant proposal is one of nine to be presented to voters at a special town meeting later this month. If approved, the \$200,000 grant will restore the pond's original banks and help to create an adjacent marsh and restore a level of biodiversity that suffered after Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

The Town of Redding has received a total grant of \$2.7M in ARPA funds. Town Treasurer Wes Higgins heads the eight-person ARPA working group that performs the initial evaluation of proposals for portions of that grant money. The proposals have come from a host of non-profits, school organizations and government departments in the town, as well as several private enterprises.

In the next few weeks, the Board of Selectmen will set a date for the special town meeting. It is expected to take place before the month's end.

"The Working Group has completed 18 meetings so far in 2022, 26 proposals have been received and 19 have been reviewed," noted Higgins. "Of those, 17 grant proposals have been recommended to the Board of Selectmen."

In turn, the selectmen have conducted hearings and approved 15 proposals to date, he pointed out. "Six have already received voter endorsement at two special

town meetings and a special meeting is under consideration for September to vote on the nine projects recently approved by the Board of Selectmen."

Besides New Pond Farm's grant proposal, the other projects approved by the Board of Selectmen, in descending order by size, are:

- \$500,000 for recreational enhancements at Joel Barlow High School's outdoor ballfield and stadium
- \$200,000 for outdoor public space construction at the Mark Twain Library
- \$140,000 for infrastructure improvements at the Redding Boys and Girls Club
- \$122,280 for infrastructure improvements at the Redding Grange
- \$107,689 for construction of pickleball courts
- \$39,922 for a heating/ventilation/air-conditioning tower for Region 9 schools
- \$60,000 for wall modifications at the Heritage Center
- \$15,000 for improvements at Georgetown Village.

Higgins pointed out that the six projects that were approved by voters earlier this year – and have now been funded by ARPA grant monies – chiefly concerned recreation, town infrastructure and social services. Nothing in the current mix is expected to elicit opposition, he said.

"At a special town meeting,

people vote on what their town representatives have already recommended," Higgins said.

The six projects approved to date by town voters represent \$463,000 in grant funding, while the nine scheduled for September's vote would total another \$1,045,689. "Taken together these 15 projects would represent \$1,508,689 – or 56 percent of the town's total ARPA grant," said Higgins.

The largest share of ARPA grant money is expected to go to the non-profit sector. This is key to the financial rescue that is at the heart of ARPA. Besides being unable to bring in revenue via user fees because their programs were cancelled during Covid shutdowns, non-profits' fundraising efforts were largely mothballed.

"There are five grants to non-profits [in the projects approved by the Board of Selectmen]," said Higgins. "They total \$560,000, or about 21 percent of the town's overall grant," Higgins pointed out. "The schools are next with \$408,000, or 15 percent. The Town total is \$361,256, or 13 percent. The Fire Departments have one proposal totaling \$180,000, or seven percent."

'A Dream Come True'

New Pond Farm, a 102-acre property on Marchant Road in West Redding, is a private organization that works with the Redding Land Trust, which holds a conservation easement on the property. The erosion of the manmade pond there was exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy, and the evergreens that shaded the adjacent wildlife marsh

were felled.

The \$200,000 ARPA grant will enable the Farm to undertake a long-awaited remediation program. "This grant is a dream come true for New Pond Farm," noted Ann Taylor, the executive director of New Pond Farm. Besides shoring up the pond's banks, the new marsh on the pond's western shore will benefit from shadier conditions, which will foster biodiversity.

"These wetland habitats are so important to our educational programs," noted Taylor, who said New Pond Farm hosts some 5,000 school-age kids each year.

This will ultimately translate into more robust programs for the students who visit. It will also enable the Farm to broaden its reach to the high-school and college levels, and better subsidize students who cannot pay.

If all approvals and permits stay on track, the Farm will begin working on the refurbishment project in the fall of 2023. "This has been a long time coming, but we're excited about our future," said Taylor.

The project at New Pond Farm is by no means the biggest ARPA funding application: That distinction belongs to a proposal for upgrades to outdoor sports facilities at Joel Barlow High School. That grant proposal is for \$500,000.

A sporting opportunity

"When the facilities were first built at Barlow there were no bathroom facilities constructed, so people who attend events must

use port-a-potties," said Higgins. "What's more, there are no locker rooms. Kids who take part in sports events must change in a shed-like structure."

To add to the mix, the stadium and sports complex needs to be made compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A snack bar with a working kitchen is also on the wish list.

"Other towns come to play our own teams here, and we don't have good facilities," said Higgins. "With the ARPA grant, we may not be able to get everything done... but we will at least be able to get it started."

The ARPA working group will spend the balance of 2022 evaluating the remainder of the 26 grant proposals it has received. Later this month, the group will begin focusing on proposals related to infrastructure at the schools and at the water treatment plant in Georgetown.

"We still have some wood to chop," Higgins noted. "But I can't say enough good things about the seven volunteers I serve with on the working group."

(Editor's note: The Redding Sentinel submitted a proposal for a \$75,000 grant to help defray three years of a full-time reporter's salary. While this proposal is still in the pending column, non-profits, schools and government departments have been given higher priority.) ■

Joel Barlow High School Class of 2022

By mid-September, most of the class of 2022 will be off and on their way to college. See where some of this year's graduating seniors are headed | *By Keara Champagne*

Sarah Allen	Syracuse University	NY	Cameron Lakin	Arizona State University	AZ
Isabella Alvarez	Central Connecticut State University	CT	Anna Laske	Fordham College	NY
Sofia Araman	Franklin & Marshall College	PA	Courtney Leonard	Franklin Pierce University	NH
Chaya Rose Benton	Western New England University	MA	Ethan Levin	Skidmore College	NY
Claire Bernard	York College of Pennsylvania	PA	Keeley LiCastrì	Norwalk Community College	CT
Olivia Besancon	Miami University	OH	Elianna Longo	UMass Amherst	MA
Amber Borofsky	Oberlin College	OH	Madeline Longo	Eastern Connecticut State University	CT
Keiran Bricker	University of Cincinnati	OH	Avery Lynch	Providence College	RI
Keith Cabot	University of Colorado Boulder	CO	Brendan Madden	Marist College	NY
Jack Campano	Arizona State University	AZ	Peter Martinich	Marist College	NY
Ava Cascella	Fordham University	NY	Aaron Matsuoka	Pitzer College	CA
Ciaran Casey	Providence College	RI	Russel McDonough	Elon University	NC
Benjamin Castonguay	Bucknell University	PA	Nicholas Meceli	West Virginia University	WV
Benjamin Cerbin	Pomona College	CA	Nicole Meschi	Ithaca College	NY
Keara Champagne	Lafayette College	PA	Claudia Miljkovic	New York University	NY
Victoria Chomik	Pennsylvania State University	PA	Stella Mirwald	Ithaca College	NY
Charles Coccoli	Eastern Connecticut State University	CT	Valeria Morineau	Marist College	NY
Jake Colangelo	Fordham University	NY	Emily Mulhern	Long Island University	NY
Reed Cooper	Carnegie Mellon University	PA	Tyson Nichols	Michigan State University	MI
Joseph Cordani	Lynn University	FL	Samantha Nilsen	Sacred Heart University	CT
Alexander Czerkawski	University of Pittsburgh	PA	Alexis Ogrinz	Purdue University	IN
Thomas D'Amaro	Merrimack College	MA	Aidan Ordway	University of Arizona	AZ
Elizabeth Darmofal	Pennsylvania State University	PA	Ian O'Reilly	Hamilton College	NY
Thomas Davis	University of South Carolina	SC	Kiyoshi Perretz	University of Connecticut	CT
Noelle DeEsso	Sacred Heart University	CT	Isabel Petron	Dartmouth University	NH
Isabella DiPreta	Trinity College	CT	Margot Pitchenik	University of Vermont	VT
Ilena Dizenzo	University of Rhode Island	RI	Amelia Rodrigues	Loyola Marymount University	CA
Isabel Doremus	University of Delaware	DE	Olivia Rodrigues	University of Pittsburgh	PA
Kirina Duenwald	University of Massachusetts Amherst	MA	Ashley Salvatore	University of Connecticut	CT
Emilie Dumas	Emerson College	MA	Jillian Santangeli	Delaware Valley University	DE
Claire Dunsby	Santa Clara University	CA	John Santangeli	University of Tampa	FL
Aidan Emanuelson	University of Hartford	CT	Abigail Savo	Salem State University	MA
Sasha Feliciano	Western Connecticut State University	CT	Marissa Schrade	Villanova University	PA
Paul Flaherty	University of Scranton	PA	Allison Scholdt	Elon University	NC
Kathleen Fletcher	University of Tennessee	TN	Megan Schultz	Colorado State University	CO
Benjamin Fligelmen	Haverford College	PA	Leighton Schur	George Washington University	DC
Meagan Florkowski	Temple University	PA	Chloe Schwarz	George Washington University	DC
Brian Forde	Norwalk Community College	CT	Mariella Schweitzer	Dartmouth University	NH
Abigail Francoletti	Case Western Reserve University	OH	Matthew Scott	Stanford University	CA
Jason Gaudio	Trinity College	CT	Anneleise Siedmen	Washington University STL	MO
Jenna Geaney	Elon University	NC	Ashton Silich	Louisiana State University	LA
Gia Giorgianni	Western Connecticut State University	CT	Ava Slavinsky	Nichols College	MA
Milo Goldstein	Tufts University	MA	Jack Slavinsky	Central Connecticut State University	CT
Anya Gorder	University of Utah	UT	Katherine Slavinsky	University of Rhode Island	RI
Chloe Gordon	University of Connecticut (Stamford)	CT	Eva Smith	University of New England	ME
Charles Guidera	Western Connecticut State University	CT	Jackson Spurgeon	University of Mississippi	MS
Hannah Halloran	University of Miami	FL	Katherine St Jean	University of Texas Austin	TX
Tyler Harris	Duke University	NC	Ashley Starrett	University of Rhode Island	RI
Madison Hawks	Colorado State University	CO	Harold Stewart	University of Dayton	OH
Breanne Hayes	University of Connecticut	CT	Maye Stitcher	Dickinson College	PA
Jazmine Helman	University of Colorado Boulder	CO	Abigail Stites	University of Tennessee	TN
Zachary Herman	Plymouth State University	NH	Hannah Stroud-Tertis'	University of Connecticut	CT
Louise Hill	Skidmore College	NY	Shawn Stryker	Housatonic Community College	CT
Rachel Horowitz	University of Delaware	DE	Patrick Sutton	Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets	VA
Leo Houser	Roanoke College	VA	Daniel Tencic	Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges	NY
Liam Hudson	Marist College	NY	Emilie Tenor	Loyola University Maryland	MD
Ava Izzi	Fordham University	NY	Max Toher	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	FL
Carter Janki	University of Pennsylvania	PA	Matthew Tortorelli	Arizona State University	AZ
Jalen Johnson	Princeton University	NJ	Raquel Tranchina	Sacred Heart University	CT
Bianca Jortner	University of Pennsylvania	PA	Sophia Tranchina	Sacred Heart University	CT
Syrine Karm	Florida Gulf Coast University	FL	Devin Triano	Boston University	MA
Weston Keenan	Vassar College	NY	Luke Vechiarelli	Sacred Heart University	CT
Vaughn Keeney	Sarah Lawrence College	PA	Jason Viani	Rhodes College	TN
Gabriella Knob	University of Rhode Island	RI	Melina Viani	Wake Forest University	NC
Morgan Knoop	University of Richmond	VA	William Villhauer	Indiana University	IN
Victoria Koltchine	University of Rochester	NY	Jack Wehrheim	University of Rhode Island	RI
Amelia Kontarovich	Sacred Heart University	CT	Tallulah Whaley	Trinity College Dublin	Ireland
Alison Kopec	Clark University	MA	Connor Williams	Sacred Heart University	CT
Rayan Kouider	Eastern Connecticut State University	CT	Makena Winter	University of San Diego	CA
Jason Kowalski	Loyola University Maryland	MD	John Wojenski	University of Connecticut	CT
Sofia Krzewicki	Villanova University	PA	Julianna Wojenski	University of Rhode Island	RI
Mason Kulikowski	University of Delaware	DE	Ashley Young	Lehigh University	PA
Renee Kwok	University of CT School of Business	CT	Calvin Young	Central Connecticut State University	CT

A brief history of newspapers in Redding

By Keara Champagne

Having an outlet for news in a town keeps the community well-informed about local and current events. News is, has, and will always be vital to our lives as individuals and as members of a community.

Connecticut's first printed newspaper appeared before the American Revolution. On April 12, 1755, the Connecticut Gazette began in New Haven. Back then, physically creating a newspaper was difficult and time-consuming. Before the paper mill was introduced to Connecticut in 1766, paper had to be shipped to the colonies from England or made piece by piece. The process of making paper was demanding and laborious.

The content of these early papers relied heavily on local legislatures, on reader contributions and

letters, and on articles from other newspapers in surrounding towns. The idea of sharing articles with neighboring towns was an important development for the news in Redding.

On April 2nd, 1909, the first traceable article about Redding was published in a weekly newspaper called the Republican Farmer. The article discusses Mark Twain's property, trouble with local telephone service, and a reopening of "The Ridge Store" under its new owner. The article was titled "Redding News of General Interest to Our Readers" and was printed on the fifth page.

Republican Farmer's daily counterpart The Bridgeport Times started publishing in January 1918, beginning its Redding column on the 25th of January that same year. The last identifiable Redding

column from The Bridgeport Times was in late 1921 and the newspaper ceased publishing with its 243rd issue in October 1924. And Redding was without a source of news again.

More than 30 years later, the town of Redding got its very own newspaper, The Redding Times. Beginning on October 27th, 1955 The Redding Times published more than 100 issues in the 6 years it ran. The paper was "published fortnightly" at 10 cents an issue. The paper reported on the local Girl Scout Troop and the opening of the new Joel Barlow High School in 1959.

The final issue, volume six issue seven, was published February 9, 1961, with a letter from the publisher, Len S. Pinover, and the editor, Charles B. Crisman. "We regretfully announce that

publication of the Times will be suspended with this issue until further notice" reads the letter, followed by thanks addressed to the staff and supporters of the Times.

Redding went another five years without a paper, until local news was once again available to the community with the launch of the Redding Pilot in 1966.

The Redding Pilot began publishing weekly in October of that year, reporting on burglaries, town population and a Redding resident's request to purchase a swamp. In December, the Pilot announced that in 1967, "the paper will cost \$5 a year by mail subscriptions, or 10 cents per copy on newsstands.", pricing their paper similarly to The Redding Times. The Pilot also covered Redding's 200th anniversary in

August of 1967.

The Redding Pilot continued to publish weekly issues until 2018, running for 52 years total.

Much has changed since the first newspapers began circulating in Redding and much has changed since our last newspaper, the Pilot, ceased publication. Digital resources such as Hello, Redding and social media have filled some of the gap, helping to report on news of interest to our community.

Now, with the Redding Sentinel, Redding has an independent newspaper again. With the support of the community, we hope to be around for a while. ■

Keara Champagne was the Sentinel's summer intern this year

Closing the equity gap drives foundation in Fairfield County

By Donna Christopher

Imagine having to rent a home for your family in Redding or one of its bordering towns with a substantially lower budget than \$98,000, the median household income in Connecticut according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

About 12% of people in Danbury live in poverty. The percentage is much greater in Bridgeport, nearly 21%.

This equity gap across Fairfield County drives the work of a community foundation that helps non-profits raise their needed funding.

Despite the wealth in many parts of the county, the needs are still great, said Elaine Mintz, the COO of Fairfield County Community Foundation (FCCF). "Connecticut has wonderful assets but there's a huge opportunity gap in our state, particularly in Fairfield County. A child born in Bridgeport does not have the same opportunity as a child born in Easton or Trumbull."

She noted that when "being inclusive" of individuals, profitable and non-profitable organizations, and government all working together, "There's the opportunity to thrive... It undergirds our vision when everybody has the opportunity. It's going to benefit everyone," she said in an interview.

This year on Feb. 24 the FCCF annual Giving Day raised \$2.1 million for 403 nonprofits countywide. The donor event raises as much money as possible for non-profit organizations in 24 hours through online donations. Bank of America was the sponsor.

Mintz lives in Redding, where organizations in town were granted over \$100,000. She started her job at FCCF a year ago. In the timeframe, Redding organizations collectively raised \$35,000.

She talked recently about the FCCF mission, its pandemic response, and current goals.

The foundation promotes philanthropy with a focus on innovative and collaborative

solutions to critical issues impacting the community, individuals, families, and corporations, and organizations can establish charitable funds for contributions to existing funds.

When the pandemic started in 2020 the FCCF started a COVID-19 resiliency fund for donors which raised over \$2.7 million. "We've given out \$2.6 million to support over 200 non-profits," Mintz said.

Recently the FCCF added new board members, The Rev. Anthony L. Bennett and Charles Presbury, and new board chair Edwin L. Ford was elected, the foundation announced in August.

The foundation is working on a new strategic plan as it prepares for the retirement of President and CEO Juanita T. James.

There are 17 community foundations in Connecticut that support donors, non-profits, and the community.

These public charities help improve the lives of residents and bolster the impact of non-profits, with emphasis on particular geographic regions.

The FCCF covers 23 towns and focuses on "closing the opportunity gap and addressing equity," Mintz said. The donors are from around the state though mostly in Fairfield County.

Organizations can set up charitable funds with the foundation. "We have over 600 funds, about \$264 million. We help the donors that have funds with us to enable their philanthropy in terms of how they want to give."

"We're a public charity, the third largest community foundation. Our mission is to tackle critical issues in the community so we provide service to our donors. We can enable donors to do their philanthropy and we're focused on what are the critical issues, addressing income equity, health, housing, and education," she related.

Visit fccfoundation.org for more information. ■

New Pond Farm: connecting families & students with nature for nearly 40 years

By Justin Reynolds

Interested in learning about the environment, agriculture, science, astronomy, and local history? Take a trip to one of the facilities that makes Redding, well, Redding: New Pond Farm.

Located at 101 Marchant Road, New Pond Farm — a magnificent 102-acre property in West Redding — first opened its doors to the public in 1985. The property was owned by actress Carmen Mathews, a committed environmental activist, who initially ran a small summer camp for inner-city children on the farm before forming a non-profit and ultimately giving the Redding Land Trust a 100-acre conservation easement in 1995.

Ann Taylor, New Pond's executive director, joined the non-profit — which she describes as "an amazing environmental education center with a working farm" — in 1987.

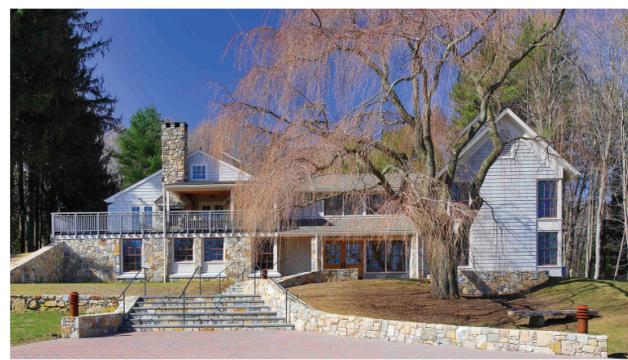
"I have loved it since the very beginning and was lucky to work with Carmen for eight years," Taylor said. "It's been very exciting. When I first got here, all we had was a chicken coop. We've come a long way since then thanks to our wonderful staff, our talented, enthusiastic volunteers, and our very active board of directors."

As an education center and working farm, New Pond — which got its name when Mathews turned a swamp on the property into a pond in the 1970s — is home to all sorts of animals, including sheep, chickens, and pigs. There's also a herd of dairy cows.

"The working farm is a wonderful component of New Pond," Taylor explained. "We sell fresh pasteurized milk and yogurt."

Additionally, New Pond has hiking trails, a weather station, an astronomy observatory, and a Native American encampment among other attractions.

Throughout most of the year, the property is open only to members. New Pond offers all sorts of levels of membership, including \$75 for a yearlong family pass.



"It takes a lot to keep this beautiful property and our buildings in good shape," Taylor said. "Membership revenue is very important, and we're always encouraging people to come by."

Currently, New Pond counts more than 700 families as members.

"We see them here all the time," Taylor continued. "Sometimes, people bring their kids in pajamas to say goodnight to the cows."

While many organizations were forced to shut down during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, New Pond was an exception.

"We did very well during COVID; loads of people joined to use our property," Taylor said. "Our staff members were very creative at coming up with activities for small groups. We were very safe and very active."

Earlier this year, operations at the farm started to resemble something closer to normal. In the spring, some 2,300 kids visited New Pond on school field trips, and Taylor anticipates another busy fall season.

"It's wonderful — the money we raise during the year enables children from Title 1 schools to come to us without costs," Taylor said, adding that the schools are responsible for providing transportation and lunches. "Our founder was keenly interested in sharing this property with children and families who couldn't afford

it. This is part of our tradition."

Looking ahead, there's no shortage of projects on New Pond's plate. Currently, the farm is working with the Redding Land Trust and Connecticut Audubon Society to improve woodlands and develop a forestry management plan to improve the habitat for wildlife diversity. The non-profit, which has never received funding from the town, recently applied for a grant through the American Rescue Plan to help finance some of these initiatives.

According to Taylor, New Pond is planning a busy fall season — including the return of the farm's Harvest Festival, which was put on hold for two years due to the pandemic. The event, currently slated for Oct. 15, is open to the public. The festival will feature a broommaker, a blacksmith, a ropemaker, a sheep shearer, astronomers, horse-drawn hayrides, and pumpkin decorating, among other things. Thanks to the support of Meadow Ridge, there will also be a falconer there, with falcons, hawks, and owls.

"It's such a fun day," Taylor said. "We love sharing the farm with the community."

For more information on New Pond Farm, including how to become a member and upcoming events, visit <https://newpondfarm.org> ■



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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Old Mill Market & Cafe: *One of Georgetown's Hidden Gems* | By Justin Reynolds

Tucked away on the corner of Old Mill Road in the Georgetown village sits one of Redding's hidden gems: Old Mill Market & Cafe.

Since opening its doors in March 2019, the market — which sells coffee, sandwiches, baked goods, kombucha, and all sorts of specialty snacks and beverages — rebranded to survive the pandemic, becoming more of a market with an online ecommerce shop that sells custom cakes, baked treats, health and beauty products, and other odds and ends.

"This has been quite an interesting time to be running a small business," said Christina Mattinson, who owns the market. "It has not been easy by any means but it has definitely been a

challenge worth rising to."

As we slowly put the pandemic in the rear-view mirror, Mattinson is anticipating a busy end of the year for the market.

"We're looking forward to seeing people returning from vacation to visit us for their favorite sandwiches and treats," Mattinson said. "We're also hoping for a nice busy fall and holiday season filled with lots of catering and holiday orders."

While Mattinson admits that the market's location has "been tricky" since day one due to a lack of visibility, it's also a "huge part" of the market's charm.

"Once people find us, they often express that they feel like they've been transported to another place," Mattinson said. "Away from the

general go-go-go of this area and into a chilled-out space that reminds them of a place in another part of the U.S. or a cafe they once visited in Europe."

Thanks to trees and plants that shield the market's patio from Georgetown Road, many hurried drivers blink and miss the spot, Mattinson said.

"But when you find us, those same trees and plants lend to a cozy, bohemian atmosphere for our patio during the warmer parts of the year," she said.

On the inside, the space isn't large. But it is intimate and inviting — "almost like walking into the home of an old friend," Mattinson said.

"There are cool products on the shelves and interesting art on

the walls," she said. "Our staff is made up of creative types, artists, musicians, and unique thinkers with great potential. They help shape OMM and have all contributed to the growth of the business."

Prior to opening the market, Mattinson — who grew up in the Georgetown part of Weston — worked in the restaurant industry for many years before moving back to Georgetown to raise her son.

"After years of running other people's kitchens and businesses, I had an opportunity to create something of my own, so I quit my job and took the plunge," she said. In 2014, she rented a commercial space in Norwalk but outgrew it in a few years. After looking at spots across Fairfield County and not quite finding the perfect fit, she looked at one last place.

"It was down the road from where I live, tucked back from the road and easy to miss," she said. "But the minute I walked in, I knew it was a special place. I've always loved this area and I have been excited to be able to create a place in my own neighborhood that provides casual but well-made

food and adds something special and unique to the community."

The market offers something for everyone, with vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free foods as well as baked goods they create in-house all week long. They also have an extensive catering menu with both sweet and savory options.

"From intimate dinners to larger gatherings, small birthday cakes to large wedding cakes, we love making food that brings people together," Mattinson said. Additionally, the market sells a selection of items from other local small businesses.

Looking ahead, Mattinson plans to obtain a liquor license. In the meantime, she encourages those of legal drinking age to bring and enjoy their own adult beverages on her patio.

"I love being part of the Georgetown community," Mattinson said. "This area and the people here are so cool and interesting. It's definitely a special and beautiful place."

For more information on Old Mill Market & Cafe, visit <https://theoldmillmarket.com/> or stop by the space at 4 Old Mill Road. ■



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The Hichwas: Celebrating 60 years of Love and Redding

By Jeanne Ammermuller



Photo by Jeanne Ammermuller

Reddingites of a certain age are sure to remember a lanky Phys Ed teacher who started class by greeting his “tigers” and “tigerettes.” What you may not know is that John Hichwa first arrived in Redding as a newly minted teacher in 1960, where he began a 35-year teaching career at Redding Elementary School and later John Read Middle School. He and his bride Marion moved into town right after their wedding in 1962 and have called Redding home ever since.

In June, the couple celebrated 60 years of marriage, and 60 years of living in Redding, where they raised their three children on Beauilles Lane, a quiet corner where Marion has nurtured gardens and

welcomed wildlife from birds to foxes.

Why stay in the same place for so long? “I loved my teaching job, loved our home, the land, the schools – It’s a special place,” said John. “I love that we have such an active library, New Pond Farm, the Land Trust. It was a great place to bring up kids.

Their three children, Michael, Diane, and Jill attended all the Redding Schools and are now grown and have scattered to Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Portugal. Their five grandchildren are in high school and college. “We are so proud of them,” says Marion. “They’ve pursued their dreams and traveled the world. But Redding

was a great place for them to start.”

And Redding was a great place for the elder Hichwas to start as well.

They met at Springfield College in Massachusetts, during Marion’s freshman orientation. John was an upper classman on campus getting ready for football season, where he was a manager.

“I just asked her out,” says John. And they’ve been together ever since. Asked what makes a relationship last so long, Marion replied, “Pick the right person.” That strategy appears successful, as they swap stories of their life together over their kitchen table 60 years later.

Landing in Redding was somewhat random as well. John was in the college career office looking at the 3x5 cards posted to the jobs board when he saw one for an elementary school in Connecticut. He applied and was invited for an interview. “But when I got there during the summer, the principal, Mr. Goodfield, was away. “So I interviewed with Earl Sanford, the custodian at the time,” explains John. “He asked me all the right questions and must have liked what he heard, because Mr. Goodfield offered me the job.”

In addition to their three children, John and Marion also had a hand in raising the thousands of children (including this writer) who passed through the doors of John Read, Redding Elementary School, Joel Barlow High School and Christ Church Nursery school, where Marion was a teacher and director for some 20 years.

One of the many bonds they share is their obvious respect for children and for the role of educators in nurturing their talents and accepting their differences. “They taught me a lot – even the out of the box kids,” says John. “They made me think about ‘how can I reach a child,’ it’s a puzzle. Sometimes you fall flat on your face, make mistakes, and you learn. Kids will tell you.”

“Kids don’t act out because

they’re ‘bad,’” adds Marion. “It’s usually something else. Instead of yelling or punishing, you figure out the reason. That’s what keeps teaching fresh. It’s never the same from student to student.” “What I find amazing is that the kids remember so much,” adds John.

And for many John Read students, those memories involve Project Adventure, a pioneering experiential learning program that John started in 1982, involving ropes courses and climbing walls. He first saw Project Adventure in action at a school in New Jersey while he was doing graduate work. “The kids were so engaged and focused. I’d never seen anything like it. I came back and convinced the principal to give it a try,” explains John. Project Adventure is still a part of the curriculum today.

That creative approach to education, the willingness to try new things to engage students who don’t always connect with school or phys ed was likely a key contributor to John’s being named National Physical Education Teacher of

the Year in 1993. He embarked on a post-retirement career as a consultant, speaker and author of “Right Fielders are People Too,” which provided guidance to PE teachers on inclusivity for all types of athletes and learners.

When she wasn’t traveling alongside her husband, Marion was – and is -- continuously given back to the community as a volunteer for the Redding Garden Club and New Pond Farm, where she has applied her photography talents for years. She is the inspiration and the perspiration behind an impressive yard, with stunning perennial gardens and stone walls she has built from the ample supply of rocks she excavated as she expanded her garden beds.

Throughout their careers and retirement, the couple has found a comfortable home base in Redding, where they’ve seen little change over the years. “Well one change is that we used to know everyone at the Concert on the Green. Now we hardly recognize anyone,” says John. ■



Photo by John and Marion Hichwa, June 16th, 1962

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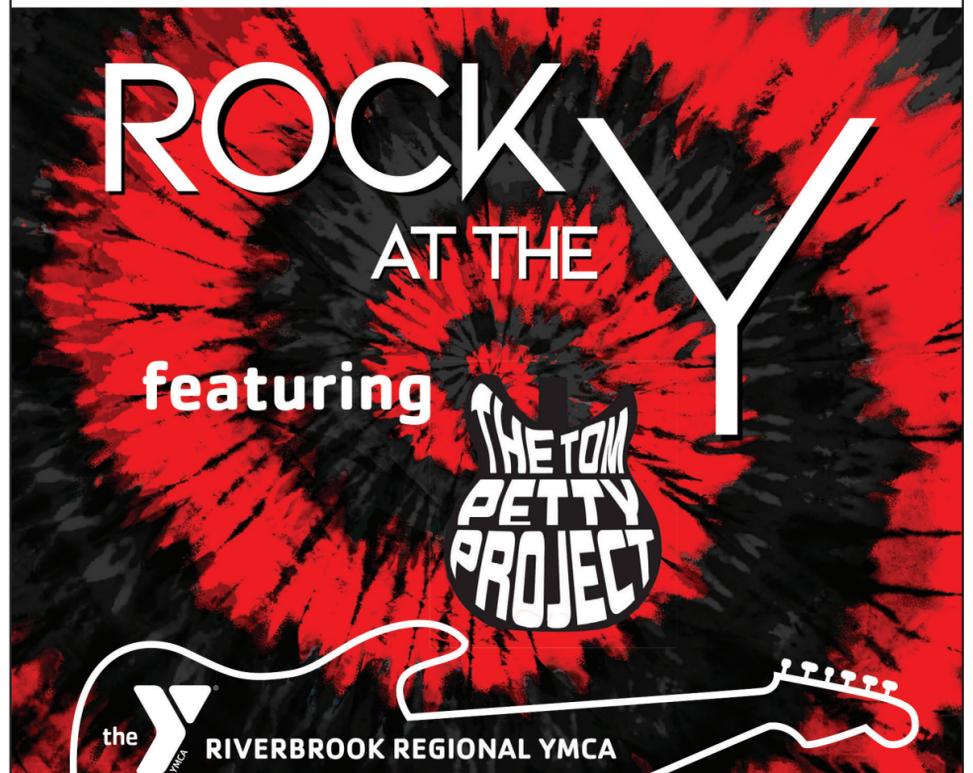
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THE NATURAL WORLD

Managing Common Invasive Plants in Your Yard

By Jeanne Ammermuller



Oriental Bittersweet



Autumn Olive

Redding homeowners benefit from some of the most beautiful landscapes in New England. Native plants and abundant trees make our spaces beautiful and promote biodiversity across the landscape. “But along with the plants we love, come plants that just want to take over,” says Highstead Executive Director Geordie Elkins.

Invasive plants have made their way into yards and open spaces, causing frustration and sometimes overtaking the native plants and ornamentals we would rather see.

“Complete eradication is unlikely,” adds Elkins “There are steps you can take to bring them under control; however it requires persistence and commitment.” While invasive plants are typically not native to our region, they can thrive in our climate, and have few creatures adapted to eating them.

Oriental Bittersweet

Have you ever seen bright reddish-orange berries on vines wrapped around trees? Once a favorite for autumn wreaths, Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) has found its way into backyard compost piles and has become a persistent challenge to Redding homeowners.

How to spot it:

- Woody, twining vine that typically wraps around trees, but will grow up anything.
- Finely toothed alternating leaves are glossy and spiral evenly around the stem.
- Berries appear in the fall and have a conspicuous yellow casing that opens to reveal a bright red fleshy interior
- Roots are bright orange and can be the size of filament or thick as rope

Beware that you’re not hosting American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), a native that is declining in the region. It should be preserved where possible as it is not as aggressive. The major difference is that the fruit of American Bittersweet is clustered at the tips of the branches, instead of along the length of the branch.

How to remove it:

Pull small plants, including the entire root system. Cut larger vines close to the ground every couple of weeks to prevent resprouting and to deplete the root system. It is also a good idea to mark where the plants are in the spring and summer and then weed whack the plants in the winter.

Autumn Olive

A surging invasive throughout the area, autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) is a woody shrub that has pale green leaves and can grow 15-20 feet tall as it also spreads horizontally.

How to spot it:

- Leaves are alternate, oval and dark gray or green in color with silvery scales underneath.
- Silver-brown stems are covered with numerous brown lenticels (pores or bumps) and light gray bark.
- Flowers appear in April or May, are creamy to light yellow and fragrant
- Fruit color is brown and then turns dark red with silver dots

How to remove it:

Small diameter plants can be removed with a small weed wrench when the soils are moist. In some cases, larger trees can be removed using a tractor/chain or “root brute.” The remaining exposed roots should be cut off below ground level and buried.

Note that Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) is also an issue in our area, is similarly aggressive and can be removed in the same way. The leaves are slightly narrower and lighter than those of Autumn Olive.

Research for this article was conducted by Yale Conservation Fellow Beau Martinez, who interned at Highstead during the summer of 2022. ■

Jeanne Ammermuller
is Communications Director
at Highstead

ANIMALS AND PETS

Homeward Bound | By Elizabeth Jensen

It was the early 1980’s. Jordache jeans ran snug, and feathered hair was large. My brother would perch me on his bike handlebars, and we would zoom around the neighborhood without the foggiest notion that one day helmet laws would come. After school, my mother would drive me seatbeltless in her Chevy Caprice station wagon, replete with laminated wood on the sides, and drop me off at the local animal shelter where I would volunteer. I was 10.

Between scooping litter boxes and walking beagles, I learned that there were many animal-loving people in the world. But I also learned that shelters were buildings, and buildings had limits. And when certain buildings reached certain limits, hard decisions were made.

Fast forward through the decades, and I find myself working for a national animal welfare organization, helping to change the things I could not change as a child. There has been exponential progress for pets since the 1980’s, when an estimated 17 million homeless dogs and cats lost their lives each year in America’s shelters. No longer simply serving as population control, many of today’s animal welfare organizations are resource centers for their communities, striving to keep people and pets together. Indeed, approximately 52% of our nation’s 4,000+ shelters saved over 90% of the pets that entered their doors in 2021. Those 17

million avoidable deaths per year have been winnowed down to about 350,000.

But progress has been hard-won, and many animal shelters are struggling against a tide of consequences that Covid-19 brought to their door. Staffing issues and sluggish adoptions have crashed into the high intake months of summer and early fall. Local shelters like the Danbury Animal Welfare Society and other groups in our area could use our help.

Here are a few ideas if you have the time and resources:

1. Adopt, volunteer, and/or foster. The perennial requests of most shelters and rescue groups still hold great value. The goal is to have more noses heading out the door than heading in.

2. Donate. Donations are needed now more than ever, as many historical fundraisers were disrupted by Covid. Consider linking to your chosen organization through Amazon Smiles, for passive donating when you purchase on Amazon. Many organizations will also have Amazon.com Wish Lists for specific things their shelters need.

3. Keep noses out of the shelter by helping someone address short-term housing needs. 911fosterpets.com is a platform that allows you to sign up for peer-to-peer fostering, opening your home temporarily to help someone avoid permanently relinquishing their pet to a shelter.

And, be kind. If you poke through our various Redding social media platforms, you will occasionally see messages about someone needing to rehome a pet. For fellow animal lovers, these posts can be stressful to read. “Can’t they just take the dog with them?” you find yourself wondering, with a tad of judgment. But the truth is that no matter how much people love pets, with a whopping 70% of the country owning a dog or cat, things inevitably happen. Try to be helpful if you can. Nothing is as effective at securing positive placement for a pet than an invested individual working to find another good home. If you are the one looking to place your own pet, check established resources like Petfinder.com for guidance on how to do so safely and effectively.

■ **This is the first article in a new column about animals – wildlife and pets both. We invite you to submit names for the column. The winner will be recognized in a future issue. The name must be short, please, see Library Corner, Music Note, Natural World. We look forward to your creative ideas. Thank you.**

The Redding Garden Club

Invites the public to September meeting

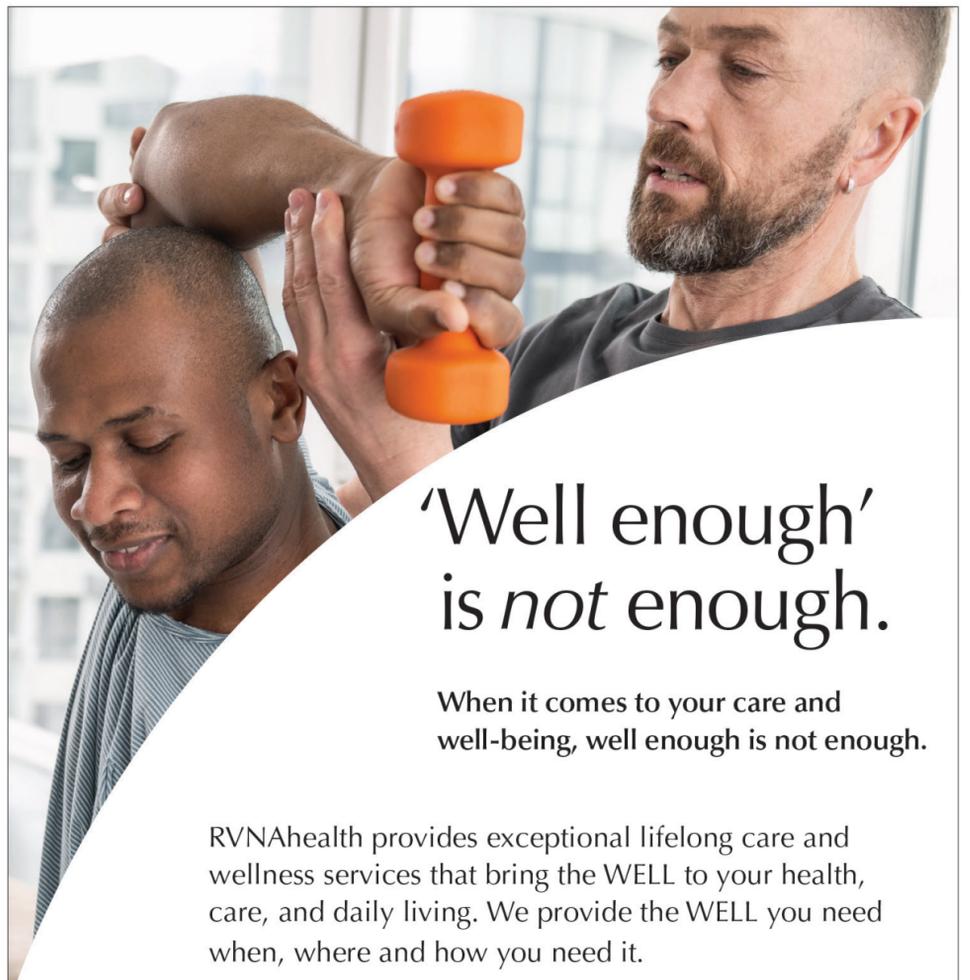
By Karen De Friesse



The Redding Garden Club will be holding its first meeting of the season on Monday, September 19 at 11:30 a.m. at the Redding Community Center. A light lunch will be served and guest fees will be

waived for this meeting. A business discussion will begin with a program speaker to follow at 1:00. Peter Russell will present “Know Your Weeds,” a timely discussion on garden maintenance and inva-

sives. Come meet the gardeners and join us in helping Redding grow! ■



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New tree conservancy wants alternatives to Eversource cutting; tree warden appointed

Continued from page 1

what it means. We think that it is a stumbling block for them temporarily, and they will be back in force Sept. 6.”

“What we do know is they (Eversource tree officials) failed to meet with the owners on their scheduled appointments without any communication Monday,” Heiss added.

An e-mailed statement Aug. 25 from Eversource Connecticut Media Relations Mitch Gross said “We have paused the tree work and will be submitting information as soon as possible to demonstrate that we have worked with our communities and complied with the law. Drought, invasive insects, and overall age are continuing to take a toll on Connecticut’s trees and we look forward to working with all interested stakeholders so we can address any concerns and resume this important work. Our reliability data shows how and where trees are impacting electric service to our customers and we want to resolve those issues before they could cause power outages. We continue to collaborate with our communities and customers to inform them about the risks that trees pose to the electric system and the tree work that can have a positive impact on day-to-day reliability.”

The Redding Tree Conservancy started in May with a handful of residents concerned the town’s scenic roads will be negatively affected by tree cutting as part of the Eversource vegetation plan and grew by July to about 50 people.

Members want Eversource to come up with alternatives to tree-cutting to preserve the forest and protect its power lines.

Among these is to bury the lines where overhead ones are affected by fallen limbs and branches, particularly on a section of Cross Highway where signs have been put up by RTC participants that carry this message and alert passersby of what’s to come.

The pushback came days after company officials announced its plans in a public meeting on May 25 to bring the System Resiliency

Program here. It includes tree trimming—clearing electric lines of limbs and branches—and removing weak, dead, or diseased trees that can bring down wires if they fall.

Using reliability data and storm outage history over the past 10 years, Eversource has identified 15 segments of the electric system in 13 communities, including Redding, with a total segment length of 20 miles. The work involves tree removals within a targeted “fall zone” on over 700 properties to help protect critical electric infrastructure for more than 8,200 customers and critical facilities such as fire and police stations and community storm shelters, according to Eversource.

The proposed work in Redding involves removing hundreds of trees, healthy ones included, along a 3.7-mile section surrounding targeted power lines in Redding.

The company will work with individual property owners on opportunities to retain and plant new “wire-friendly” trees and pollinator plants in appropriate locations.

The new Redding Tree Conservancy met several times over the summer, including at First Selectman Monday lunches, to discuss ways to prevent tree removal.

“Say no to Eversource” and “Bury the lines” were messages on signs carried by RTC members at a public event on July 20 alerting residents to the program they believe will have a negative impact on their environment. The press was invited and the Sentinel reviewed the activities at <http://www.redding79.org/video.html>. There was a walking tour of Cross Highway with arborist of Rhode Island, Matthew “Twig” Largess. He talked about the detrimental impact tree cutting there would have on not just the beauty of the town-designated Scenic Road but the climate and environment at the location.

An RTC founder, a Cross Highway resident and field biologist Laurie Heiss spoke. She said, “This will not only destroy the bucolic feeling of historic Redding, it will accelerate climate change and destroy the natural habitat while increasing soil

erosion. Without those trees on the hill this area would be inundated with water. In fact, before those trees reached their density and heights, this farmland experienced serious flooding.”

Largess was asked by RTC to help with their effort. He travels around New England to “save trees and forest,” he said. “I was shocked to see the quality of the trees along the scenic highway and it has a great sugar maple content component. It’s one of the rarest trees (that) people come around the world to see.”

Several town residents mentioned to the Sentinel seeing the value of the area’s sugar maple forest and its 100-year-old trees among pivotal concerns in their preservation mission.

“We are here in Redding to not say no to cutting trees for power lines. There are some that have to go. I’m here to compromise now,” Largess said. He talked about trees being the “carbon sinks” or “lungs of the world” that give off oxygen, provide shade, prevent soil erosion and stormwater flooding, and how it could negatively impact the natural and animal habitats.

RTC members are emphatic they want Eversource to save as many trees as possible while removing any dead, dying, and hazardous trees. “The movement is growing,” Heiss said in early August. “We’ve contacted every house on the different roads.” One resident she noted was told they may have to take down 15 trees on their property.

Heiss encourages everyone who lives in town to learn more about what RTC is doing to prevent trees that are not diseased or dead from being removed from properties.

The RTC is drafting a tree ordinance for the Town, asked by Pemberton to do so. An existing tree ordinance was “old and inadequate,” according to Heiss.

“Tree experts around the state have been consulted, and the RTC is networking with similar organizations and individuals in Connecticut that are calling for Eversource to preserve its power grid but also trees,” Heiss said.

The tree conservancy wants Eversource to address why it is necessary to have what they consider an “extreme tree

removal” program “when over the past five years Redding has experienced fewer outages,” said Janice Rotchstein, a RTC founder and resident of Cross Highway.

“There have been outages in the past five years affecting 2,600 customers in the 3.7 mile Cross Highway area and that translates to 4.9 million minutes without power,” Mitch Gross, Eversource Connecticut Media Relations, said in an e-mail.

In an e-mail, Redding Land Trust Co-Presidents Silvia Erskine and Gordon Loery stated their position on the proposed tree work.

“As stewards of over 1,900 acres in Redding, the Redding Land Trust is committed to preserving as many healthy trees as possible. Large, healthy trees provide countless ecological benefits, including improved air quality, carbon sequestration, natural cooling and biodiversity. They are also an essential part of the scenic beauty we treasure in our town.”

“We do not object to the removal of dead or diseased trees that threaten the service lines and will coordinate closely with Eversource on our properties along the designated work areas to protect viable trees,” they said.

Eversource staff have begun visiting the homes of property owners on the affected roads to discuss trees Eversource would consider for removal. The System Resiliency Program includes tree trimming - clearing electric lines of limbs and branches - and removing weak, dead, or diseased trees that can bring down wires if they fall. They emphasized as stated previously to the public that property owners would have to agree to the utility removing trees on private property.

RTC wants Eversource to provide a cost/benefit analysis of installing underground utility lines versus keeping overhead wires on the targeted roads, including maintenance costs over a 10-year period.

“Our regular maintenance includes both trimming and tree cutting normally. This effort we are doing in Redding along the segment is a different approach concentrating the (tree) removals

to specific areas that have outages and storm-related issues,” Eversource’s Sean Redding said in the July 30 conversation.

The company uses five years of everyday outage data and 10 years of major events in evaluating its plan, he said.

“The segment was impacted by Irene and Sandy (2011, 2012) and the 2018 microburst. In all these major storms there were outages and downed wires, and blocked roads.” He was referring to a May 15, 2018 fast-moving storm with 100 m.p.h. winds and tornadoes that caused widespread damage across Connecticut.

Speaking about ongoing visits to property owners by the company’s arborist, Redding said, “We heard their concerns. We are in the process of completing evaluation and cost estimates on some alternatives and those alternatives include undergrounding this segment. It would be an underground bypass of this line. There would still be overhead lines on the property owner’s property. It’s one of the options. It’s called an express underground line.”

Redding said the plan as originally laid out in May is to “remove all tall growing trees and branches within 10 feet of the lines.”

A third option is a reroute to go down different roads than Cross Highway without the backbone, Redding said. “There would still be lines on Cross Highway but this backbone line that serves 2,200 customers would be rerouted on other town roads,” he explained.

“We are talking to each property owner and reviewing their trees with them. When they’re on private property ultimately it is the homeowner’s decision whether the tree is removed or not,” Redding said.

“For the trees in the roadway, it is more complex, we need to document notification of the property owner the tree is in front of, as well as the planning commission to oversee; and consult with the tree warden. We cannot proceed until they do.”

“Our purpose is not to clearcut,” Mitch Gross said. “We want to work with the customers to make sure there will never be these

Continue on page 15

**NORTH
COUNTY
- BAND -**

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CONCERT SERIES**

Connecticut Album Release Party

Friday, October 28

Doors open at 7:00 PM

Show at 8:00 PM

Tickets: \$20 | All Ages

Bijou Theatre

275 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06605



Toe-tapping Connecticut Country!

North County Band embodies country music from Connecticut. Performing a mix of originals and covers from Allman to Grateful, Waylon to Dwight, Wilco to Skynyrd, they are sure to get any wallflower dancing.

This event celebrates the release of their debut album “Connecticut” and supports Redding-based SpreadMusicNow. The title track is a love song to a woman, inviting her back to our great state of Connecticut. Anyone from the area will appreciate the references to the Huskies, the shoreline, and local greats like Mark Twain and Helen Keller.

100% of your ticket purchase supports music education for Connecticut students. Music Empowers!

GET TICKETS



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BOOKS

Fri. Sept. 2 - Mon. Sep. 5

61st Annual Mark Twain Library Book Fair
Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sun. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
Redding
marktwainlibrary.org

Thursday, Sept. 8

Author Talk with Frankie Ann Marcille – “Yes: The Story of a Dreamer” – All Ages Invited
5:00 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
Redding
marktwainlibrary.org

Fri. Sept. 9 - Sat. Sept. 10

StoryFest 2022
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Westport Library
20 Jesup Road
Westport
westportlibrary.org

Tuesday, Sept. 13

Kids Raving About Books Grades 4, 5, 6
4:00 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
Redding
marktwainlibrary.org

ARTS

Saturday, Sept. 3

Body and Land gallery tour A Feminist Milestone
1:00 p.m.
Aldrich Museum
258 Main Street
Ridgefield
thealdrich.org

Sunday, Sept. 4

Bethel Holiday Weekend Craft Festival
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Bethel Town Hall
1 School Street
Bethel

Saturday, Sept. 10

On View: Follow the Brush Phil Demise Smith Artist's Talk
2:00 p.m.
Opening Reception
3:00 p.m.
Ridgefield Library
472 Main Street
ridgefieldlibrary.org

Fri. Sept. 16 - Sun. Sept. 18

Newtown Arts Festival
Fairfield Hills
Newtown
Hours vary
Newtownartsfeativel.com

Saturday, Sept. 17

1-Day Impressionist Painting Workshop
10:00 a.m.
Weir Farm National Historical Park
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton
203-834-1896 ext. 28.

Saturday, Sept. 17

45th Annual Juried Exhibition
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Ridgefield Guild of Artists
34 Halpin Lane
Ridgefield
rgoa.org

Saturday, Sept. 24

Artisan Fair
10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
First Church of Christ
Congregational
25 Cross Highway
Redding
firstchurchredding.org

FOOD

Sun. Sept. 4, 11, 18, 25

Georgetown Farmers Market
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
4 Old Mill Road
Info at geremiagardens@yahoo.com

Saturday, Sept. 10

Sunset Market at Open Farmhouse
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
11 John Read Road
Redding
openfarmhouse.com

EVENTS

Monday, Sept. 5

Newtown Labor Day Parade
10:00 a.m.
Main Street
Newtown
newtownclabordayparade.org

Thursday, Sept. 22

Flamenco & Paella, a live dance performance
12:30 p.m.
Heritage Center
37 Lonetown Road
Redding
For information call 203.938.9725 or e-mail mstillman@townofreddingct.org

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Friday, Sept. 9

Honey Bee Program
9:00 a.m.
Lachat Town Farm
106 Godfrey Road West
Weston
Lachattownfarm.org

Friday, Sept. 9

4:30 p.m. Redding Round Up
A Community Open House
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
Redding
Marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, Sept. 10

In Gatsby's Shoes Walking Tour
9:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Westport Museum
25 Avery Place
Westport
westporhistory.org

Thursday, Sept. 15

Native Americans & Early Settlers
7:30 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
Redding
Marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, Sept. 17

Hidden History, Women's Coalition Walking Tour
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Westport Museum
25 Avery Place
Westport
westporhistory.org

Saturday, Sept. 17

Fall Astronomy Program
7:30 p.m.
New Pond Farm
101 Marchant Road
West Redding
newpondfarm.org

Sunday, Sept. 25

Annual Mushroom Walk
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Joe and Cathy Brandt
CT/Westchester
Mycological Association
New Pond Farm
101 Marchant Road
West Redding
newpondfarm.org

Wednesday, Sept. 28

Innovations in Protecting our Global Environment and Communities Panel discussion
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Grace Farms
365 Luke's Wood Road
New Canaan
gracefarms.org

Thursday, Sept. 29

The Future of Education Panel Discussion
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Grace Farms
365 Luke's Wood Road
New Canaan
gracefarms.org

Friday, Sept. 30

Fall Fair 2022
5:00 - 9:00 p.m.
New Canaan Nature Center
144 Oenoke Ridge
New Canaan
newcanaannature.org

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Wed. Sept. 7 - Mon. Sept. 12

Danbury San Gennaro Italian Festival
1 Ives Street
Danbury
facebook.com/danburysangennaro

Fri. Sept. 9 - Sun. Sept. 11

44th Annual Norwalk Oyster Festival
Fri. 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Sat. 11:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Sun. 11:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Norwalk Seaport Association
213 Liberty Square
Norwalk
Seaport.org

Saturday, Sept. 10

Monroe Apple Festival 2022
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Monroe Green
Monroe
https://www.facebook.com/Apple-FestivalMonroe

Sunday, Sept. 18

Honey Harvest Festival
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens
151 Brookdale Road
Stamford
bartlettarboretum.org

FUNDRAISERS

Friday, Sept. 9

Shorefest
6:00 p.m.
Sherwood Island State Park
Pavilion
Westport
friendsofsherwoodisland.org/
event/shorefest-2022

Saturday, Sept. 17

Rock at the Y Outdoor Concert fundraiser for Riverbrook Regional YMCA
5:30 - 11:00 p.m.
404 Danbury Road, Wilton
Riverbrookymca.org

Thursday, Sept. 22

Blueprints & Blue Jeans Housatonic Habitat for Humanity
6:30 p.m.
Lounsbury House
316 Main Street
Ridgefield
housatonicshabitat.org

MUSIC

Monday, Sept. 12

Music Circle Teens and adults
6:00 p.m.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
Redding
Marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, Sept. 17

Swingin' 1940s Show with Vince Giordano and the Mini Hawks 7
2:00 p.m.
Weston Historical Society
104 Weston Road
Weston
westonhistoricalsociety.org

Sunday, Sept. 18

Danbury Concert Association Pianist Maxim Lando
3:00 p.m.
Visual & Performing Arts Center
Western Connecticut State
University
Westside Campus
43 Lake Ave. Ext.
Danbury
danburymusic.org

Saturday, Sept. 24 - Sun. Sept. 25

Sound on Sound Fest
7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Seaside Park, 1 Barnum Dyke
Bridgeport
soundonsoundct.com

CHILDREN / FAMILIES

Wednesday, Sept. 17

Family day: activities, crafts, lunch, salsa music
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Grace Farms
365 Luke's Wood Road
New Canaan
gracefarms.org

PURA motion halts plan, tree conservancy wants alternatives to Eversource cutting; tree warden appointed | *Continued from page 14*

issues again.”

“That’s why we have our arborist out there to talk with the customers, to identify which trees are compatible. Like dogwoods and ornamental cherries that we won’t need to do anything on. It is more of what we want to have installed, put in, and working with each property owner,” Redding said.

Sean McNamara has been appointed Redding’s new tree warden. He served in this volunteer role previously. First

Selectman Julia Pemberton spoke about it in an Aug. 11 narration in which she stated her position on the Eversource Resilience Program while driving the proposed 3.7-mile route.

She emphasized that no tree on town property may be removed without the permission of the tree warden and that each tree must be posted (for removal) for 10 days by Eversource. “Any resident can call for a hearing on that tree. This is a long process. There is no rush to remove trees from town property.”

“To the left and the right, removing any tree that could foreseeably fall on a power line, you can imagine that this road would be irreparably changed

in terms of its scenic character,” Pemberton said in the recording.

She acknowledged power outages but thinks Eversource manages fine in its routine tree maintenance.

“The regular tree trimming has been very effective at reducing outages. We also have many more members of the community that have generators. During a power outage, I am working with teams on the ground to communicate with residents to have power restored as quickly as possible and to apply pressure to Eversource.”

Pemberton noted at Sanfordtown and Lonetown Roads the area is registered as a National Historic District. She said she

wants Eversource to provide a cost-benefit analysis that led to the decision that the Resilience Program was appropriate. “They haven’t given us 10 years of fully loaded data so that we can assess how much it will cost Eversource to clean up in Redding after storms.”

“There’s a good call for putting the powerlines underground and Eversource has said it’s about a million dollars a mile. They’ve also said the reason they chose Cross Highway is that it is a major circuit. And when lines go down on Cross Highway, other neighborhoods are affected. And certainly, we don’t want that. However, a true cost-benefit analysis just might

conclude that undergrounding the lines specifically on this circuit to harden the major circuit would be economically beneficial for Eversource.

“My position with regard to this project is that no healthy tree in the town right of way should be removed. The dead and dying trees should be removed. Period.

Pemberton encourages residents to contact her with questions and comments. ■

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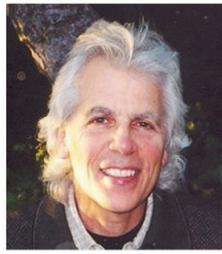
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