

REDDING SENTINEL

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Assessment appeals now complete

Half of the properties receive reductions

By Jessie Wright

A busy month of assessment appeal hearings has resulted in approximately half of appeal applicants receiving a reduction in their assessed property values. The appeals process follows a property revaluation conducted last fall by the Town of Redding and Vision Government Solutions, which saw residential property values in town increase by an average of 28-percent.

The Board of Assessment Appeals received 88 total appeal applications this year – 85 residential properties, 1 commercial property, and 2 motor vehicles. Nine of these applications were not reviewed, due to either the applicant withdrawing the application or not attending their assigned hearing time.

Of the 77 properties reviewed during the formal appeals process, 38 received a reduction (49%), 36 remained unchanged (46%), and three are undecided, pending a requested field inspection (4%). The two appeal applications for motor vehicles received no reduction.

Reductions ranged from 2-33%, with the average reduction coming in at 9% of the initially assessed value (the average overall change, including those properties which received no reduction, was 5%).

The largest change, a reduction of 33%, was made to the value of a residential property on Gallows Hill Road after the Board agreed to adjust the grade of the property from B+ to C- and the condition from average to poor after reviewing evidence supplied by the applicant.

While the Board received a greater number of appeal applications this year than last year, the number of changes was in keeping, or less, than what the Assessor's office expected.

"It's actually less than what I got back in 2007," said John Ford, Assessor for the Town of Redding, referencing another year when assessment values had increased considerably due to real estate market conditions.

The Grand List will now be updated with the changes coming out of the appeals process, which will factor into the Board of Finance's calculation of the new mil rate following the budget Referendum this May.

Property owners who are still not satisfied with their property's assessed value can pursue additional action through the Superior Court in Danbury. ■



Photo by Debora DeCarlo Rosa

Twilight falls on the iconic Mark Twain bronze bench situated outside the Mark Twain Library, given as a gift by the late Grady Jensen in honor of his wife, Maggie. If you have a photo you'd like us to feature here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

Fire District No. 1 proposes 18.32% tax revenue increase

By Jessie Wright

Fire District No. 1 has shared its proposed budget numbers for the 2023-24 fiscal year, which represent a 16.91% increase in expenses and 18.32% in tax revenue over the current fiscal year.

Fire District No. 1 owns and operates the firehouses in Redding Ridge (located on Black Rock Turnpike) and Redding Center (located on Hill Road), and the budget will finance the district's daytime paid EMS ambulance service, the maintenance of the two firehouses, the maintenance and operation of the district's ambulance and five fire trucks, equipment required for operations, and the district's insurance and administrative expenses. According to communications from the district, the budget also includes capital fund set-asides for scheduled emergency vehicle replacement, other capital projects, and future construction of a new Ridge Firehouse.

The line item representing the largest proposed increase is the capital reserve fund for the Ridge

Firehouse replacement project. Taxpayers saw a significant increase last year with the addition of this new line item at \$300,000 to start the fund – the proposed number for 2023-24 is an increase of 50%, at \$450,000.

This won't be the last increase to taxpayers in this area, according to the district. "For the 2024-2025 budget, we plan a further increase of \$150,000 to the Ridge Firehouse Replacement Project (for a total of \$600,000 per year dedicated to the Ridge Firehouse Replacement Project), and then plan to maintain that level of taxation for the following five years (2025-29)," reads a letter from the district to taxpayers, which was posted on the Town of Redding website late last week. "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," the letter continues. The district estimated

the cost of the Ridge Firehouse Project last summer at \$7,711,000.

Redding Fire District No. 1 is a special taxing district established in 1927 by state statute, which levies taxes on the residents of the district for the purposes of supporting the operations of Redding Fire & EMS Company No. 1., which is an all-volunteer fire and EMS company established in 1915 serving the residents of Redding Fire District No. 1. The district and the company are separate entities.

Public comment was invited at the district's monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m., after which the district's commissioners will finalize the budget to be voted upon in May, along with the corresponding mil rate. ■

To read the district's letter to taxpayers in its entirety and review the drafted budget, visit townofredding.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FD1-Letter-to-Taxpayers-2023.pdf

REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

Warrups Rock | By Scott MacMillan



Photo by Scott MacMillan

Warrups Rock, found in the Mary Evelyn Scott Nature Preserve.

Poor Tom Warrups. For centuries, he's been the court jester of Redding history. Now all he has is

a big old rock. A bit of background: In the Revolutionary War-era history

of Redding, Tom Warrups stands out as a Falstaff-like figure. Like Shakespeare's drunken anti-hero, he is loved and loathed, both the source and the butt of jokes – although in fairness, Falstaff was a coward on the battlefield, whereas Tom Warrups was known for his bravery and a favorite of General Israel Putnam.

According to Charles Burr Todd, Tom Warrups was of Mohawk descent and the grandson of the pre-colonial Redding chief, Chickens Warrups. In Todd's account, Tom is, predictably, the stereotypical local Indian from Central Casting. He has "weakness for

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Mild winter fills the coffers

By Rob Sample

The mild winter of 2022-23 – and the minimal snowfall that resulted – was disappointing for local skiers and schoolkids. But the benign conditions were positive in one key area: Redding's finances.

The lack of snowfall meant Redding spent less on snow removal this year. "The Town Highway Department's chief concern during winter months is plowing the roads and ensuring they remain safe during inclement weather," said Redding Finance Director Jim Sanders. "During spring and summer, their attention turns to maintenance of the roads, repairing potholes, and attending to any visibility issues," he continued.

Sanders noted Redding allocates funds each year for snow removal, which can vary significantly from year to year. Such costs include overtime for crews that work long days during winter storms. Those costs also include materials such as road salt, which is used to melt snow and ice, and sand to provide drivers with additional traction.

Even during winters that experience little measurable snowfall, the Highway Department must continue to treat Town roads, as road icing can be every bit as hazardous as snow – and sometimes, even more so.

"As an individual homeowner, if there is a snowfall of, say, three inches, I can choose whether to have my driveway plowed or just wait for it to melt," said Sanders. "Our highway crews can't do that, because melting snow often turns to ice."

"When it comes to the weather, we're always on a fine line," he added. "Is a winter storm going to bring sleet, a mix, or lots of snow? Plus, if it's raining heavily, are the temperatures going to drop below freezing? So, at the Town level, we have to treat the roads ahead of the weather."

Redding typically budgets \$150,000 each year for salt. So far this year, the Town has only spent \$94,000. "That compares to \$146,000 at the same time a year ago, which represents a cost savings of \$52,000," said Sanders.

Similarly, Redding budgets \$70,000 each fiscal year to cover the overtime costs associated with snow removal. "We came in at 59-percent of budget this year," Sanders said. "In comparison, last year's expenditure was 124-percent of our budget. From a fiscal standpoint, we were very fortunate this year."

In years when the budgets are exceeded, the Town can opt to apply for State assistance. That money comes from Connecticut's Town Aid Roads fund, which assists towns in making up any shortfalls. The fund also helps municipalities pay for road repairs during summer months and tree work in the fall.

All road salt gets stored in a large Town-owned shed on Great

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EDITORIAL

At one point during the monthly brown bag lunch last Wednesday, the group who was gathered tried to identify two residents who had been involved on a town committee almost twenty years earlier. The conclusion was that these folks had likely already passed away, because, as one attendee said, “Most people don’t get involved with helping out in the first place until they are almost near retirement.”

This is a common sentiment heard around town – but does it really hold true? There have been several seats filled, both through elections and appointments, on Redding’s numerous boards, commissions, and committees in the last few years. Combing through the minutes of the Board of Selectmen meetings since 2020 and referencing Connecticut voter records, 64% of the people appointed to Town boards or commissions in the last three years by the Board of Selectmen (new appointments, not re-appointments) are under the age of 60. Perhaps even more notable, is that nearly 40% have been under the age of 50.

Different generations will have, in broad strokes, different things that are most important to them. Longevity of a resident’s time in Redding, life stage, neighborhood, and family size can also play a part in the perspectives new board and commission members bring to the process of governing. And it’s true, those enjoying retirement or those without full-time work commitments may be more likely to have the capacity to add community or municipal service to their agendas. But as research has shown time and time again, diversity of all kinds enhances a group’s ability to produce more creative outcomes. The people of Redding are better served when those of all ages come to the table.

There are 30 positions up for election this year, along with seats that often need to be filled unexpectedly in the years between elections due to members moving away, resigning, passing away, or other circumstances. If you have been thinking about getting involved – no matter what your birthdate is – now is the time to reach out to your party and see what you might be able to contribute. ■

Rid Litter Day Build Mt. Trashmore on Saturday, April 22

Help keep Redding green and clean in honor of Earth Day. Stop by the Town Green at 100 Hill Road starting at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 22 to pick up your gloves, vest, bag, and street assignment, before heading off to pick up roadside trash.

Bring your trash back to the Green before 3:45 p.m., receive a treat, and take a photo in front of “Mt. Trashmore”. At 4:00 p.m., all the trash gets loaded in a dumpster, which will be hauled back to our Recycling Center and Transfer Station to be weighed.

Before or after collecting litter, visit the “story walk” on the Parade Path along the Town Green to learn how to manage trash, compost, and recycle. Handouts and other materials will also be available for you to take with you. ■

For more information, visit townofreddingct.org or contact Alice Smith, Office of the First Selectwoman at 203-938-2002 (ext. 1) or asmith@townofreddingct.org

Save the date: Redding’s Memorial Day Parade Saturday, May 27

Redding will bring back an annual tradition this spring with the Memorial Day Parade on Saturday, May 27. The route will be the same as it has been for over 60 years, according to this year’s Memorial Day Parade Marshal, Henry Sanford, starting at the Redding Elementary School gymnasium parking lot and ending in Redding Center near First Church of Christ, Congregational.

All who would like to march

in the parade should gather at the Redding Elementary School gymnasium parking lot at 33 Lonetown Road by 11:30 a.m. on the morning of May 27. The parade will start sharply at 12:00 p.m. A short ceremony will be held following the parade honoring veterans both past and present and all current military personnel. There will be no political speeches allowed. The parade and ceremony should be over by 1:00 p.m. ■



Redding Sentinel Essay and Art Contest

The Sentinel is holding a contest in honor of our first anniversary on April 20.

Students are invited to submit a written piece (400 words or less), or a piece of art or photography inspired by:

“I love Redding because...”

Submissions will be published in our April 20 issue, which will be mailed to all households in Redding.

First place will be awarded to the top written piece and top art piece.

Send your essay or photographs / scans of your art submissions to editor@reddingsentinel.org by Friday, April 14

How much do we pay in taxes?

A broad view for Redding residents | By Susan Clark

With Tax Day (this year, April 18) soon upon us, and our Grand List reassessment in the rear-view mirror, we’re thinking a lot about taxes. How much do we pay? What do we get for our tax payments? This question should be considered from both the short and long term, because town, state, and federal spending is for strategic investments as well as operating expenses. There’s also the question of whether our tax assessments are “fair”. The answer to this last question depends on your personal situation and world view and won’t be part of this short article.

The Sentinel thought it would be enlightening to serve up some information about the taxes we in Redding collectively pay. Because information about Redding’s expenditures and tax collection

is readily available and regularly reported at Town meetings and referenda – in addition to the pages of the Sentinel – we focus here on state and federal taxes. The data, except where otherwise noted, is from the latest tax year available – 2020.

Redding residents paid \$159 million in taxes to the federal government in 2020, an average of \$40,500 per return filed. If these figures seem high, they reflect the fact that 28% of Redding residents have incomes above \$200,000. Those with incomes less than \$200,000 paid an average of \$10,500 in federal taxes.

In Redding, 3,937 state returns were filed, and just over \$38 million was paid in taxes (including Pass-through Entity credits). Redding ranks 15th of 169 towns in per capita tax

payments to Connecticut. The average state tax payment per return from Redding was \$9,673. For comparison, Easton filers paid an average of \$10,950, but because there were fewer returns filed, Easton’s total state tax paid was just under \$34 million.

What does this all add up to? In the aggregate, in 2020, Redding residents paid \$159 million in federal taxes and \$38 million in state taxes for a total of \$197 million. For comparison, total property tax payments to the Town of Redding in 2020 were \$45 million. Note, however, that some property tax payments to Redding will have been made by non-residents whose federal and state taxes may be filed in other jurisdictions, so these figures are not completely comparable. ■

LEGAL NOTICES

The Redding Zoning Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing for April 26, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. in person at the Town Hall Hearing Room 100 Hill Road Redding, CT. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the following applications.

Application #23-02Z – 280 Ethan Allen Highway (Assessor’s Map and Lot 35 – 93): Owner Arianit Krasniqi –

Agent Wade Roese. Request for Site Plan Amendment to construct warehouse.

Application #23 -03Z – 70 Turney Road (Assessor’s Map and Lot #32 - 7) – Joel Barlow High School. Mike D’Agostino, Chairman, Region 9 Board of Education (Applicant) – Request for Site Plan Amendment for conversion of an existing field to a turf-surfaced field, and for expansion of stadium parking lot.

All may attend the meeting and correspondence will also be accepted. The application may be viewed in the Zoning Office during regular business hours. Questions should be addressed to 203-938-8517. ■

Matt Lecher, Chairman, Redding Zoning Commission

LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to Sec 7-344 of the State of Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Redding provides below the FY2023-24 Budget Expenditures as approved on March 27, 2023 by the Board of Finance, to be voted on at a public referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. Anticipated Revenues for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024 as detailed below, will be reviewed and updated as necessary, when setting the Mill Rate.

Expenditure detail may be found on the Town website www.townofreddingct.org or the Town Clerk’s Office

| <u>EXPENDITURE SUMMARY</u> | <u>2021-22 ACTUAL</u> | <u>2022-23 BUDGET</u> | <u>2023-24 BUDGET</u> | <u>\$ Change</u> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Board of Selectmen | \$ 15,422,799 | \$ 15,911,657 | \$ 16,316,554 | \$ 404,897 |
| Board of Education | 22,719,022 | 23,811,158 | 24,569,528 | 758,370 |
| Region 9 | 12,673,768 | 12,038,609 | 11,554,654 | (483,955) |
| Total Expenditures | \$ 50,815,589 | \$ 51,761,424 | \$ 52,440,736 | \$ 679,312 |

| <u>REVENUE SUMMARY</u> | <u>2021-22 ACTUAL</u> | <u>2022-23 BUDGET</u> | <u>2023-24 BUDGET</u> | <u>\$ Change</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Taxes to be collected | \$ 51,467,640 | \$ 52,185,789 | \$ 52,946,657 | \$ 760,868 |
| Town Charges for Services | 1,088,140 | 1,147,200 | 1,233,973 | 86,773 |
| Licenses and Permits | 384,703 | 285,000 | 310,000 | 25,000 |
| State Aid | 341,448 | 321,381 | 433,294 | 111,913 |
| Prior Years Taxes, Interest and Liens | 959,605 | 683,195 | 570,000 | (113,195) |
| Supplemental Vehicle Tax | 489,324 | 396,978 | 420,000 | 23,022 |
| Investment Income | (44,936) | 200,000 | 410,000 | 210,000 |
| Rental Income | 71,519 | 77,880 | 57,734 | (20,146) |
| Less: Tax Refunds | (63,264) | (1,088,435) | (1,088,000) | 435 |
| Less: Fire/EMT Tax Credit | (93,201) | (100,000) | (132,000) | (32,000) |
| Less: Elderly Benefit | (1,966,272) | (2,115,000) | (2,250,000) | (135,000) |
| Less: WPCC Advance | (521,829) | (532,564) | (470,922) | 61,642 |
| Unassigned Fund Balance | 0 | 300,000 | 0 | (300,000) |
| Total Revenue | \$ 52,112,877 | \$ 51,761,424 | \$ 52,440,736 | \$ 679,312 |

The Town of Redding also provides estimated Capital Spending for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024 as approved by the Board of Finance on April 3, 2023, and to be voted on at a public referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023:

Sherman Turnpike road rehabilitation (\$332,000), John Read Middle School alarm panel replacement (\$65,000), Redding Elementary School Educational Spaces Modernization (\$304,000), Georgetown Sewer Plant membrane replacement (\$330,000). These projects will be financed from various funds as determined by the Board of Finance.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome Letters to the Editor, especially as the Sentinel celebrates its one-year anniversary next week. Please be clear, civil, and concise. E-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org with submissions. ■

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Redding Sentinel Ltd
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Publisher, Susan Clark
Managing Editor, Jessie Wright
Creative Director, Debora DeCarlo Rosa
Assistant Graphic Designer, Connor Feeney

Reporters: Justin Reynolds
Donna Christopher Pamela Brown
Rocco Valluzzo
Robert Sample

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203.938.3800

Contact us at:
editor@reddingsentinel.org
advertise@reddingsentinel.org
subscribe@reddingsentinel.org
publisher@reddingsentinel.org

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We pledge to donate all profits to local community organizations.

Yonkers steps down, Mazzucco new chair of Finance

By Rocco Valluzzo



Kimberly Yonkers



Ward Mazzucco

Citing increased demands at work, Kimberly Yonkers stepped down as the chair of the Redding Board of Finance at its Monday, April 3 meeting.

Yonkers, professor and chair of psychiatry at UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Health Care, was first elected to the Board of Finance in 2010. Succeeding her is former Vice Chair Ward Mazzucco, a partner in the law firm of Chipman Mazzucco Emerson LLC in Danbury.

“Ward has been a really helpful partner,” said Yonkers, a Democrat who served as chair since 2017. “I really view that we have jointly worked on many of the issues that this board has faced over the past few years, so it will make it a much easier transition for the board to have somebody who has been functioning as the vice chair to be chair of the board.”

Mazzucco, a Republican, was first elected in 2009 to a six-year term and was re-elected again in 2015 and in 2021, becoming vice chair in 2017. He also serves on the Town’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Working Group, the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Board and the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee.

He felt the best part of serving on the Board of Finance is working with his colleagues, who all come from different educational, professional, and political backgrounds. They often approach the Town’s problems in different ways.

“Nevertheless, we usually arrive at solutions that everyone on the board can embrace,” Mazzucco said. “And that is when the Town’s best interests are served. Perhaps that is why the vast majority of our votes are unanimous.”

Other partners in managing the Town’s finances are Redding Director of Finance Jim Sanders, and Town Treasurer Wes Higgins. Mazzucco also looks forward to working with new Vice Chair Karen Gifford.

Among other things, Mazzucco would like the board to keep the Town on secure financial footing, continue meetings on Zoom to make them more accessible, maintain a healthy unassigned fund balance (rainy day fund) to sustain Redding’s AAA credit rating and to protect against unexpected liabilities, and expand the discussion for each budget cycle, from a focus on the drivers that create the marginal increases, to a deeper understanding of the entire Town budget and the entire school budget.

“Redding is an absolutely wonderful place to live and raise a family, so I was looking for a way to give back to the community,” noting his desire to serve on the board. “Also, the Town was facing significant financial strain back in the Great Recession, and I was eager to see what I could do to help. The process of restoring the Town’s finances was well underway by the time I was even sworn in, but I never forgot the importance of avoiding another financial debacle.” ■

Kids flock to Old-Fashioned Easter Egg Hunt

New Pond Farm Education Center hosts annual tradition



Photo by Ann Taylor

On Saturday morning, under clear blue skies, New Pond Farm held its 30th-Annual Old-Fashioned Easter Egg Hunt. This iconic event set record numbers, registering 160 eager hunters ranging in age from 1 to 16 years (pictured above is Elly Taylor). In addition to the New Pond Farm staff, this event was made possible thanks to the efforts of the Redding and Ridgefield chapters of the National Charity League. Mother/daughter teams hard boiled and dyed a rainbow of 2,000 eggs and wrapped nature-related gifts for each of the participants.



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Uncle Leo’s to open third location in downtown Bethel

By Justin Reynolds



Uncle Leo’s Not Just Coffee & Donuts – a staple in Georgetown for nearly a decade – is planning to open a new location in downtown Bethel over the next six weeks.

“I gutted the whole building, cleaned it all out,” owner Leo Spinelli, Jr. said. “When we open that store, it’s going to be unique... you watch us bake and pull things out of the oven right in front of you.”

Spinelli owned Spinelli’s Bakery in Norwalk for 20 years before opening the flagship Uncle Leo’s in Georgetown in 2014 with his son, Leo Spinelli III.

“Uncle Leo’s is a mom-and-pop store from the good old days,” Spinelli said. “I do all my recipes the old way – without any of the junk they throw in everything nowadays.”

In 2018, Uncle Leo’s opened its second location in Wilton. The Bethel spot – in P.T. Barnum Square Plaza off Greenwood Avenue – will be the third Uncle Leo’s location, and Spinelli is eyeing additional locations as well.

Spinelli got into the food business shortly after high school. One of Spinelli’s best friends, Liz Sue, worked at a bagel shop back then. A few years later, the friends ended up buying that shop with the help of Spinelli’s uncle, Thomas Tarantino, affectionately known as Uncle Boo. You could

say bagels and donuts run in Spinelli’s blood; his cousins own Bagelman, which has locations in Danbury and Brookfield.

Uncle Leo’s is perhaps best known for its donuts – “my donuts are gigantic” – and also offers an assortment of other treats, including coffee, bagels, and breakfast and lunch sandwiches. The spot aims to be a friendly, welcoming “meeting ground.”

“People you haven’t seen in ten years, and they come back, pop in, and say hello,” Spinelli said. “Almost all people who come in, come again.”

To support the expansion, Spinelli brought in a new partner, Rosny Aguilar.

“I’m 70 years old,” Spinelli said. “I’m still trying to act like a kid, and it doesn’t work.”

Together, the two partners are expanding their menu with guacamole, fruit salads, macaroni salads, tossed salads, and other health food options.

Though he’s opening another location, Spinelli noted that current economic pressures have made smooth sailing a challenge for anyone in the food service industry.

“Business is tough,” he said. “All the prices are going through the ceiling. It’s unbelievable what we pay for stuff – double, triple. You go buy eggs that were \$90 a case, now they’re \$190. Look at electricity – what Eversource did. The prices are just ridiculous, and the small guy gets hurt the most.”

In fact, Spinelli believes the current economic climate is making business even more difficult than it was during the pandemic.

“This is worse than Covid – I could go out and deliver during Covid and get business

that way,” Spinelli said. “Right now, the railroad stations are practically empty. There aren’t any commuters, and they used to be a huge part of the business. People showing up at 5:30, 6 in the morning – you don’t have that anymore, unless you’re in Stamford.”

Despite these challenges, Spinelli remains optimistic about the future of Uncle Leo’s.

“I say, ‘If you can make it through this, you can make it through anything,’” he said.

In addition to feeding a crowd of loyal customers, Uncle Leo’s also gives back to the community.

“We delivered food to hospitals during Covid; people really enjoyed it,” Spinelli said. “I deliver every week to Daily Bread in Danbury and also Dorothy Day in Danbury. We also deliver to shelters in Norwalk, Bridgeport, and Stamford. You’d be surprised at how many people in this area don’t have food.”

If you’re the kind of person who enjoys mom-and-pop shops and local businesses, Spinelli has a simple ask.

“Support us,” Spinelli said. “We’re not making money; we’re just trying to pay our bills.” ■

Uncle Leo’s Not Just Coffee & Donuts is located at 19 Main Street in Georgetown. It’s open from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the weekend.

Financiers ponder how to pay for roads

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Jessie Wright

A portion of the parking lot by the pavilion at Redding Community Center.

Until a concrete plan is in place to fund road repair in Redding going forward, the Board of Finance opted to defer two capital projects proposed by the Board of Selectmen at its April 3 meeting.

The two projects, totaling \$1,206,838, involve the paving project at the Redding Community Center parking lot (\$529,240) and paving Umpawaug Road (\$677,598). The financiers approved approximately \$332,000 from the unassigned fund balance

for paving on Sherman Turnpike, subject to voter approval.

According to First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton, the Community Center parking lot is more than 20 years old. Although it has held up well, it is in need of repair.

“Can it wait? Yes,” she said. “The question is how bad does it need to be before you fix it.”

Pemberton added that the first half of Umpawaug Road was paved four years ago. Since it is a main through road, she did not want to have the project wait.

“When I look at Umpawaug Road, it’s getting pretty bad,” she said. “You run the risk of having something deteriorate so that you have to do more work.”

Road repair alternative funding strategies that Town Treasurer Wes Higgins has presented to the Board of Finance included several approaches – bonding/borrowing, using money from the budget surplus/unassigned fund balance, or a pay-as-you-go system (funding through the operating budget/taxes).

“It becomes a question of how do you fund that ongoing road work,” said Pemberton. “Options

to fund this kind of road work are borrowing or proposing to use a combination of items, surplus or unassigned fund balance to fund future road work.”

Based on advice from Higgins, Pemberton preferred not to borrow for road work, given the current lending environment. This would represent a major shift in how the Town would propose to fund roads.

“You want to minimize what you have to spend until you have a plan that tells you how you’re planning to pay for whatever you decide you need,” said Board of Finance member Karen Gifford. “That’s going to take time to work.”

“I agree that we need a long-term plan,” Board of Finance Chair Kimberly Yonkers (who stepped down as Chair at the April 3 meeting) said. “I want to encourage people who have advocated for that to go to the Long-Term Planning Committee meeting. They’ve been thoughtful about what needs to be added to the list of projects, and they have looked at the recommended time frame for doing that work.” ■



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SPORTS

Falcons rout Red Devils in home opener

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow High's Elyssa Kalamaras, left, contends with Stratford/Bunnell's Klaudia Bielski at a girls varsity lacrosse game on Thursday, April 6. Barlow won 16-0 in its home opener.

The first home game of the season soon turned into a scoring clinic for the Joe Barlow High girls varsity lacrosse team.

Taking on Stratford/Bunnell on Thursday, April 6, the Falcons went to work early on attack. Defensively, they also dominated in a 16-0 shutout.

"This is definitely a team we were looking to get some redemption on," said Barlow Head Coach Melissa Sportini, whose team lost 11-8 to the same opponent early last season. "Everything kind of went right today."

For the most part, the Falcons dominated possession right from the start, winning the majority of

draw controls. Allison Wick got things started on attack with a goal with 22 minutes 45 seconds left in the first half to put her team up for good.

One minute later, Julia Champagne went on a scoring run, netting three goals in the next five minutes. When Elyssa Kalamaras added one of her own with 11:75 left, the Red Devils called timeout to try to regroup.

It did little to stop the momentum, however, as Barlow continued to rack up the goals. Over the next three minutes, Kalamaras, Savannah Herrman, and Champagne all scored.

An obstruction call against the

Red Devils with 2:15 left in the half gave Barlow another scoring opportunity, and Kalamaras converted on the penalty shot. It seemed the Falcons would go into halftime with a nine-goal lead, but with no time left on the clock, Kalamaras came through again to make it 10-0 at the half.

With Barlow up by ten goals, the second half featured a running clock format. Although the Red Devils managed to get a shot on goal early in the action, they would not get another chance the rest of the way.

In the meantime, Barlow increased its lead with Champagne, Herrman, Emily Green, and Daniele Catterino all scoring within an 11-minute span to make it 14-0.

With 6:51 left in the game, Ogden scored, this time on a penalty shot, and Lena Zima completed the scoring with 5:15 remaining to seal the win.

Champagne led Barlow with five goals. Kalamaras scored four.

"They are both really executing," said Sportini. "They are taking what we learned in practice and really putting it into the games. I'm really happy with their play and where we're headed."

Herrman had two goals and an assist while Green, Catterino, Wick, Ogden, and Zima had one goal apiece. Marin Kalamaras had one assist.

Falcon goalie Drew Ann Williams had a quiet day, having to make only one save to preserve the shutout.

Barlow, now 2-0, hosts New Milford on Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m., visits Southington on Saturday, April 15 at 12:00 p.m. and is home against Masuk on Tuesday, April 18 at 7:00 p.m. ■

Cycling in Redding

Leveling up | By Matt Miller



By now, if you've put all you've learned into practice, you can ride comfortably anywhere in Redding. It's fun, right? This last part of this series will focus on some advanced techniques and information that may help you progress to the next level.

Air and wind

Even without any wind, when you ride, you are obviously pushing air. You can feel that pressure more and more as your speed increases. At lower speeds, the key factors that control or limit your speed are your fitness, your combined weight with the bike, and the amount of road resistance between your tires and the riding surface. As you get up past 12-14 miles-per-hour, the major added factor is the air you are pushing. Wind can obviously help or hinder you depending on the wind direction, and you'll feel the difference. The unfortunate part, however, is that unless you only have a tail wind, almost any wind will end up slowing you down – wind is only helpful if it's almost right behind you, between about 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock if you're riding towards 12 o'clock. Otherwise, it's holding you back. So be glad for calm days and long rides with a tail wind!

Steep climbs

I discussed climbing in the last part, noting that you want to downshift to a lower gear before you hit the hill and keep downshifting as necessary. Sometimes even your lowest gear will be hard to pedal and that's when riders stand up to get more power from their legs and upper bodies. The cadence will be slower, and you want to lean the bike slightly back and forth to maximize the power with each leg as you pull with the opposite hand. It's fatiguing, and you can't sustain it too long, but it can be good to alternate between sitting and standing, and some riders choose to do it just for that reason. If you just can't make it up that hill, make sure to unclip one pedal before it gets too hard so that you can stop. There's no shame if you have to walk a little.

Drafting

If you've ever watched a race car pull up close to the car in front of them and then accelerate past, you've seen drafting, where the car is taking advantage of the Bernoulli effect which basically pulls it towards that front car. The air coming past the car on both sides curves around the back and pushes in the opposite direction – it's basically the same principle as the air passing over an airplane

wing causing it to lift. You can do this on a bike if you ride right behind at least one other rider, about three to six inches from their rear wheel. It's pretty amazing and will reduce the work by 15-20% if you are going fast enough.

You only want to try this after you feel comfortable on the bike and when you trust the other rider. The lead rider must ride a consistent speed with no abrupt changes in speed or direction. All changes in speed are communicated verbally or with hand signals, just as upcoming road hazards are pointed out. To slow down, the lead rider might sit up taller or swing a leg out sideways to create a little air resistance rather than braking, so you, the rear rider, don't bump into their rear wheel. The rear rider "latches on" to the rear wheel, and can relax a little. It's best to be a little bit to one side or the other so you can swerve if you have to. If you have a riding partner you are comfortable with, this is a great way to share the work or to help a rider who isn't quite as strong. It's best to take turns every 30-60 seconds or so, with the front rider pulling out to the left, allowing the rear rider to lead. Remember not to speed up if it's your turn so the front rider can "latch on" to your wheel! Remember, they might be a bit tired!

If you have more than one rider doing this, it's called a paceline, which is even faster, because you reduce the overall work even more with less time at the front for each rider. When a larger group rides together in a pack, it's called a peloton, and the drafting effect is even more pronounced, like in big bike races such as the Tour de France.

Bike clubs and club rides

Joining a local bike club, if you're so inclined, can be great for riders of all abilities. There are a number of them around. You learn from other riders and can enjoy the camaraderie of other bike enthusiasts. Most clubs have levels of ride for all abilities and will teach you new routes to try.

Final notes

I hope these articles have inspired you to get back on a bike outdoors and have been of some help in pushing you along. If you practice everything in these articles, you can comfortably ride all the roads in Redding; but really, now you can ride ANYWHERE. There's nothing you can't handle now, including city traffic, if you're so inclined. Just keep one thing in mind: go outside and play! ■

Barlow rebounds against East Catholic

By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Tyler Ramirez, left, scored five goals for the Joel Barlow High boys lacrosse team in its game against East Catholic of Manchester on Saturday, April 8. Barlow won 12-6 for its first victory of the season.

Following a tough season-opening loss, the Joel Barlow High boys varsity lacrosse team was in better form when it took on East Catholic of Manchester on Saturday, April 8.

The Falcons, who lost to Notre Dame of West Haven on Thursday, April 6, were more in control when they took to the field two days

later. With five different players scoring, they kept their opponent guessing in a 12-6 win.

It was also the first win for Barlow first-year Head Coach Taylor Leahy.

"It was a good test for us out of conference," said Leahy. "Our scoring was pretty diverse."

Barlow, which never trailed, got the jump on the competition with two quick goals by Danny Shaban and Tyler Ramirez in the first two minutes to put their team up 2-0. A slashing call against the Falcons later in the frame put them down a player, and the Eagles took advantage of the opportunity with a goal by Will Bergquist.

On two occasions, the Eagles came within a goal of catching the Falcons. After Ramirez netted his second tally with just under three minutes to go in the frame, the Eagles' Luke Veltri responded less than half a minute later. There was still enough time for the Falcons to score two more of their own, one courtesy of Griffin Ellis, and the other by Luke Bonanno, who picked up the rebound of a save by the Eagle's goalie for the score with ten seconds left to put the hosts up 5-2.

Back-to-back goals by Ramirez put the Falcons in even better shape in the second quarter, and

Ellis also tallied another. Although East Catholic tacked on a couple more, the Falcons led by a two-to-one margin (8-4) at the half.

Both sides exchanged goals in the third frame, with Ellis again scoring for Barlow. The Falcons defense stepped up especially in the fourth quarter, holding the Eagles to just one goal. At the other end of the field, Joey Bonanno, Ramirez, and Ellis helped the Falcons pull out of reach, each with a goal.

Ramirez led Barlow with five goals and one assist. Ellis netted four. Shaban (who also had two assists), Luke Bonanno, and Joey Bonanno each had one goal.

Ian Lent had three assists, with Andrew Zaia and Spencer Skiddell each getting one.

"I'm pretty happy about that," said Leahy noting the variety of scorers. "I'm pretty happy with how we move the ball to share."

On defense, Leahy also praised the play of Adam Goodacre, Andre Watson, and Zaia. Goalie Cole Bonanno made 12 saves.

For East Catholic, Veltri, Bergquist, and Colin Heslin scored.

The Falcons, now 1-1, visit New Milford on Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. and are at Masuk on Monday, April 17 at 6:00 p.m. ■

Pitching, defense propel Barlow

By Rocco Valluzzo

Scoring many runs wasn't necessary for the Joel Barlow High varsity baseball team to get the job done in the opening week of the season.

The Falcons only totaled six runs last week. They allowed just two from their opponents, however, posting a couple of victories.

"Our pitching and defense have been really strong so far, which is great to see in the early season," said Barlow Head Coach Matt Griffiths. "Our bats are still coming around, but once they do, we'll give our pitching a little bit of an easier time."

Opening the season at home against Ridgefield on Wednesday, April 5, the Falcons had a strong effort on the mound by Ian Nilsen, who gave up just two hits in a 3-0 shutout.

Offensively, the Falcons went to work in the bottom of the second inning. With two outs, Cameron Forte singled and stole second. After T.J. Baer singled, Charlie Basta also singled, bringing home two runs to put Barlow up 2-0.

The score remained the same for the next three-and-a-half innings. In the bottom of the sixth, Andrew Gutkowski walked. A sacrifice bunt by Carter Jarvis

moved pinch runner Braden Kurtz over to second, and he later scored on a sacrifice fly and an error.

Nilsen struck out eight and walked one in a complete game performance. Baer, Basta, and Forte each had a hit for the Falcons.

Things were a little closer for the Falcons on Saturday, April 8 at home against Lewis Mills of Burlington. A run in the sixth inning was enough to tip the scales in their favor for a 3-2 win.

Will Scott led off the bottom of the first with a walk, second, and went to third on a ground out. Baer then hit into a fielder's choice for an RBI to put his team up 1-0.

The Spartans, however, took the lead in the top of the third. After Matt Chirumbolo and Brett Harding walked, Tom O'Connell drove in the former with a hit and Harding scored on a passed ball before the inning ended, putting the Spartans up 2-1.

Barlow quickly tied things in its half of the inning when Nilsen's double drove in Baer, who had singled. Nilsen also doubled in the sixth and scored what turned out to be the winning run.

He finished with three hits and one RBI. Baer had one hit and also drove in a run.

Lachlan Ellis was the winning

pitcher for Barlow, going five innings with two runs on two hits while striking out six and walking three. Chris Nilsen came on in relief, allowing no runs on one hit with one walk for the save.

"We feel really good," said Griffiths. "We've got some really good starters, and they're going out every day and executing. That's all we can ask."

Barlow, now 2-0, hosts Immaculate on Monday, April 17 and is at Brookfield on Wednesday, April 19. Both games are at 4:15 p.m. ■

Homeschooled students score big at Science Olympiad

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of Iris Hotakov

A team of homeschooled students from Redding won medals in four categories in the 2023 Connecticut Science Olympiad competition.

Scientific discovery can be both challenging and fun, and for eight Redding-based homeschooled students, their keen intellect and appreciation of the subject led them to the 2023 Connecticut Science Olympiad (CTSO) where they competed as a team and won four medals and a trophy.

"It was an amazing experience for both kids and parents. None of them had ever participated in the Science Olympiad before," said Iris Hotakov, whose son Christian, 13, participated. "We were shocked and thrilled when the team's name was announced for medals."

"I was a little stressed but happy to get a medal," added Christian.

CTSO is a non-profit organization devoted to improving the quality of science education, increasing student interest in science, and providing recognition to both students and teachers for outstanding achievement in science education.

Despite only nine weeks to prepare, the team won medals in four of 23 categories: Roller Coaster, (1st place), Rocks and Minerals (1st place), Bridge (2nd place), and Anatomy and Physiology (3rd place). Along with Christian, the team included Noah Lo, 11; Kip Mayfield, 11; Holt Mayfield, 12; Alexander Anikeev,

10; Euan Peterson, 13; Dalia S., 11; and another student. Some of the students' parents served as group coaches.

The team competed in tests, hands-on projects, and lab experiments. "They worked beautifully together, bouncing ideas off each other and pooling their knowledge. This event was an excellent way to teach the kids about how to work as a team on a shared project," said Hotakov, adding that the team was motivated. "They wanted to do their best. As a parent, I watched in awe as they came together and collaborated, sometimes on the fly, to do whatever was needed."

Timika Mayfield, mother of Kip and Holt, enjoyed seeing the students flourish. "Each brings their own unique perspective to the team," said Mayfield. "These competitions are an excellent opportunity for our kids to showcase their incredible intelligence and ingenuity, while also providing them an opportunity to form cooperative partnerships with their peers. From a homeschooling perspective, I really loved seeing our kids prove that we can thrive and achieve great things, even without the backing of public institutions."

Both Holt and Kip studied

diligently for the competition. "I prepared by helping my partner work on and play our musical instrument for Sound of Music (a competition category), reading books, and attending classes with my coaches. My partner, Noah and I got sixth place for Sound of Music which was so exciting," said Holt. Kip was equally dedicated. "I prepared by getting together with my teammates to improve our build designs, as well as taking classes with my coaches every week to improve my knowledge and skills. My partner and I came in fourth for Wheeled Vehicle, and we were so proud of ourselves."

Nadezhda Anikeev, Alexander's parent, feels competitions like these are beneficial. "They know what they're studying for, they see a goal, which gives them a reason to study, adds excitement and motivation, and when there are positive emotions involved, kids learn better and retain more information," she said. "The children also participate in many team meetings, and get to listen to adults discussing the organization of the team. I feel they can learn a lot through that in addition to studying for the actual events."

Alexander liked building a roller coaster and bridge. "It was a lot of fun to test our bridges - lots of tense, yet exciting moments. I enjoyed the day of the competition. Competing with other people is fun!" he said, adding, he felt "accomplished, happy, and excited."

Learning and competing together strengthened the students' bond. "It was incredible seeing them compete, whether they won awards or not. I was impressed with their energy, positive attitudes, and teamwork. These kids are so dedicated and bright," said Mayfield. Hotakov agrees. "They really got to know each other and had a fun experience. They also spend time together socially which helps cement that sense of camaraderie," she said. "They're not just teammates, they're also friends." ■

News from abroad

Barlow Spanish students explore Spain

By Ian Gaudio



Photo by Ian Gaudio
Plaza Mayor in Madrid

Then, we made our way to a sword and jewelry factory to learn how they are made. From there, we spent a lot of time strolling through the backstreets of Toledo and its charming neighborhoods and plazas.

Our next stop was an 800-year-old Gothic-style cathedral, also called Catedral Santa María. We also stopped in a small museum to view the famous painting, The Burial of the Count of Orgaz, by El Greco. Then, we had time to explore the plazas in Toledo and make our way to fun shops and restaurants.

After lunch, our time in Toledo ended and we returned to Madrid, where we finished the day at a restaurant that had authentic Spanish Flamenco dancing. Between Toledo and Madrid, our learning of Spain diversified as we experienced the clash of ancient and modern in this exquisite country.

Day 3 - Sunday, April 9

Our morning began with a leisurely walk from our hotel to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, a museum of modern art that houses several masterpieces by Pablo Picasso. After touring this historic museum, we had a little bit of time to enjoy lunch before taking the metro to the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu. At this prestigious football stadium, we took a behind-the-scenes tour to learn about the history and success of El Real Madrid Club de Fútbol.

From the stadium, we enjoyed a casual stop at one of the several boutique ice cream shops in Madrid on our way to a cooking class. At the cooking class, we prepared traditional dishes of Spain, such as paella, tortilla Española (which is made of egg and potato), and tarta de Santiago, a simple yet sweet cake. After enjoying our delicious creations, it was time to head back on the metro and return to the heart of Madrid, closer to where our hotel is.

To close out the night, our group had some time to explore the beautiful Parque El Retiro. We saw magnificent trees, flowers, and sculptures and were able to take in the peaceful sunset. This amazing day concluded our time in Madrid, as tomorrow we will take the train to Málaga, a city on the Southern coast of Spain. As we say "adios" to Madrid, there is so much to take away from our action-packed time in this wonderful city. Around every corner is a several-hundred-year-old building that leaves us starstruck, even if it might just be the post office. And the buildings that are even more grand with unique architecture house centuries of history that still influence life today. All in all, Madrid is *maravilloso* and a city well worth the trip - there is never-ending entertainment or excitement wherever you explore.

Ian Gaudio is a junior at Joel Barlow High School

Day 1 - Friday, April 7

After a long journey that began the day before, the twenty students and four chaperones in our group landed in Madrid, Spain around 6:00 a.m. on Friday. As soon as we landed, we were on the move, heading from the airport to the bus to our hotel to drop off our luggage - and then off we went to have an action-packed day of experiencing and exploring España!

We set out on foot to a small, back-alley café to enjoy a churro con chocolate breakfast, having to put our Spanish skills right to use by ordering our breakfast in Spanish. After taking in the beautiful Spanish architecture around us and breakfast delicacies, we made our way to the Royal Palace of Madrid, where we took a tour of the palace and learned about the enormous history of the royal family that used to reside there. From there, we meandered our way through the distinct streets of Madrid, heading towards La Plaza Mayor (the main square), which is also the biggest square in all of Madrid. Here, we were given some free time to explore the magnificent markets and restaurants at our own pace and have some lunch.

After lunch, everyone regrouped and headed out on a walk that lasted a few hours and highlighted some historical sites, including the Catedral de Santa María la Real de la Almudena, ancient ruins of the city that date back to when the Romans and Arabs occupied Madrid, and numerous parks and squares. We ended our day eating out, enjoying a delightful five-course meal. With just one day behind us, we have already learned a great deal about the fascinating city of Madrid, with more learning to come, along with nothing but anticipation to continue our adventure.

Day 2 - Saturday, April 8

Our first full day in Spain was spent in Toledo, an old city about an hour outside of Madrid. Before walking the cobblestone streets of the former capital of Spain, we took in the breathtaking view of the city from a lookout point.

Can you find a golden egg?

The Golden Egg Hunt - "eggcellent" fun for all

By Linda Meyer Mitchell



Easter egg hunts have all finished up, but there is one more exciting egg hunt afoot in Redding! In anticipation of The Great Egg Weekend to be held from April 21-23 at Redding Grange #15, there are six golden eggs currently hidden around town for residents to find.

Search your favorite outdoor spots and see if you are one of the lucky ones who can find one of the four-inch-long golden eggs. Anyone who finds an egg can bring it to the Grange at 399 Newtown Turnpike on Family Fun Day on Sunday, April 23 from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. and exchange it for a prize.

Family Fun Day will feature a variety of family activities and games to enjoy; kids will have the opportunity to visit with live chicks and ducks, see a display of eggs and nests from different species, and learn all about how eggs hatch. Fun games include egg relays, an egg toss, chicken and egg bingo, egg memory game, egg blowing, and egg art. Family friendly music will be provided by Leif Smith. ■

NEW POND FARM EDUCATION CENTER'S

20TH ANNIVERSARY

GOLF OUTING

AT REDDING COUNTRY CLUB

TUESDAY, MAY 16TH

New Pond Farm Education Center

Please Join Us For Our 20th Annual GOLF OUTING

You are invited to join us on **May 16th** for a terrific day on the beautiful greens of **Redding Country Club!**

All proceeds will support the environmental and agricultural programs that **New Pond Farm Education Center** shares with schools, children, families, and adults throughout Fairfield County.

We hope to see you there!

To register: visit the Events section of newpondfarm.org or scan this QR code.

Shop local at spring craft events

By Pamela Brown



Photo courtesy of the Mark Twain Library

Birthdays, baby showers, Mother's Day, Father's Day – spring is here, and local craft fairs are setting up shop to kick off the season. Shopping local is a great way to support small businesses and to find unique, handcrafted items.

The Collective at the Mark Twain Library is presenting **A Community Pop-Up Market** on Thursday, April 20, from 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The in-person event will be held upstairs at the Library in the Mark Twain Room. No registration is required, and light refreshments will be served.

"It's an opportunity to meet and shop small, independent vendors from our community in the intimate setting of the Library," said Elaine Sanders, Adult Program Coordinator. "Given that Redding doesn't have a Main Street with shops, we don't realize the number of vendors we have hiding in the woods, making it hard to support them. The Pop-Up Market allows our community to come face-to-face with local vendors, get to know them and their wares, and support them. There's nothing better than finding that special gift, meeting its creator, and learning the story behind the gift."

Most vendors at the Pop-Up Market are from Redding, with

some from surrounding towns. The event will feature a range of items, including boutique and handcrafted jewelry, one-of-a-kind home décor items, art made from recycled material, nature photo products, homemade dog treats, personalized gifts, skincare items, gourmet treats, unique clothing, accessories and more. Some of the vendors include Bead Free Forever, Heart Inspired Art; The Rescued Earth; Stella & Dot/Every Avery Reece Designs; and Wolf Gang Pups Bakery.

Sanders pointed out that the event supports the Library's mission to be a center for social and cultural enrichment. "The market allows our community to gather with friends and neighbors and meet and interact with local vendors and artisans. The atmosphere of our markets is friendly and intimate, and they are as much a social event as they are a shopping experience," said Sanders. "This time of year, it's the perfect place to find that special something for Mother's Day and graduation or find a treat for yourself."

Mark Twain Library,
439 Redding Road. For
more information, visit
marktwainlibrary.org
or call 203-938-2545

Now in its 20th year, the **Newtown Spring Craft Festival** will take place on Sunday, April 30 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Edmond Town Hall in Newtown.

"Crafters often introduce new items at the beginning of the season, giving shoppers the opportunity to see what's new," said Virgil Signore, Director of Artisan's Alliance. "Craft shows are important to local vendors because it gives them an opportunity to showcase their work with other crafters which will increase shopper interest."

Presented by Artisans Alliance, the Festival will feature 30 to 40 vendors showcasing a variety of items, including resin art, jewelry, embroidery, sewing, crochet, sea glass/beach creations, art, home-made crafts, mixed media, floral arrangements/centerpieces, children's books, and more.

Artisans Alliance is a craft show promotion business whose mission is to present and promote indoor and outdoor craft shows at outstanding locations, giving the artisans an opportunity to successfully market their products.

Signore is happy to offer these entrepreneurs a place to showcase their work. "I believe buying local and supporting small business in particular is important," he said. "Small business is a major factor in not only the local economy, but the country's economy as a whole." ■

Edmond Town Hall, 45 Main
Street (Route 25), Newtown.
For more information, visit
ctcraftshows.com

Local yoga instructor to host fundraiser for girl fighting Leukemia

By Pamela Brown



Photo by Tiffany Monteith
Faith, age 2, is undergoing treatment for Acute Lympho-blastic Leukemia.

When Tiffany Monteith's two-year-old daughter, Faith, was diagnosed in November with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, an aggressive blood cancer, she was devastated. But family and friends have come together to help her navigate Faith's treatment. One of those friends is Redding resident Laurie Mayper, who is organizing an in-person and virtual afternoon of beginner-friendly yoga on Saturday, April 22 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. at Danbury Dynamic Dance & Fitness (DDF). The event is suitable for ages 8 to adult, with a minimum \$26 donation to support the Monteith family. Advance registration is required.

"I got the idea to donate my time by holding a fundraiser. In the past, I've attended both yoga and Zumba fundraisers for various causes. Since I teach yoga, that was the natural choice for me," explained Mayper, a certified yoga instructor who teaches at the Redding Community Center and Yogaspace in Bethel. "The times Faith has been admitted to Yale (Hospital), her parents took turns staying with her, so there were daily round trip drives to Yale New Haven Hospital. Although they have health insurance, there are co-pays, deductibles, and travel expenses to doctor visits and hospital stays."

Monteith is grateful to Mayper for her generosity. "Our family is truly blessed to be surrounded by such a supportive community. It made me feel hopeful, loved, and thought of. We've managed through the amazing support of family, friends, support groups and organizations, understanding

co-workers, team members, dance family, and of course, God," said Monteith, who is also the owner of DDF.

At the event, Mayper will offer warm-up stretches and slowly flow from one pose to another for safe alignment, incorporating a blend of hatha yoga styles, including Iyengar-inspired and Kripalu. "My goal is that everyone is safe, and feels their best, most-vibrant self during and after class, with a smooth easy breath and calm, relaxed mind," said Mayper, who came to know Monteith through attending her adult tap classes. "Tiffany has dedicated her whole adult life to the art of teaching dance. I can tell she really enjoys teaching and cares about her students."

With Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia having a 90% survival cure rate in children, Monteith remains hopeful that Faith will overcome this illness, despite additional health challenges. "When I was 12 weeks pregnant with Faith, she was diagnosed with Turner Syndrome, a very rare genetic disorder in girls with a 1-2% survival rate to birth. If she could overcome that, she can overcome anything!"

Today, Monteith is thrilled to report that after four months of treatment, Faith has reached remission. "This doesn't mean the road is over. Faith will undergo two more years of treatment to ensure the cancer is gone and prevent it from returning," she explained. "During the two years, there are several different phases of treatment that include a variety of chemotherapy drugs. Currently, she's scheduled for three to four hospital stays every two weeks and she also takes an oral chemotherapy daily. Despite all of this, Faith amazes us! Little by little, she has been returning to her playful, toddler self."

Mayper encourages everyone to attend the fundraiser, both for themselves and to help support Faith's ongoing treatment. "Come to this event for a good 'intro to yoga' one-time class, with no long-term commitment," she said. "This should be a fun and enjoyable event for all for a good cause." ■

To register and for
more information, visit
danburyDDF.org

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Meet Simon Bilyk, your neighborhood violin bow rehairer

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of Simon's Bows

Is the bow to your favorite stringed instrument torn and frayed? You may want to pay Simon Bilyk a visit.

Bilyk is the owner of Simon's Bows, a bow rehair and repair business that he launched in August 2018 and runs out of his home workshop at 29 Old Mill Road in Georgetown.

"My main service is replacing the horsehair on violin, viola, cello, and bass bows, but I also repair and restore them." Bilyk

said. "My solo focus is on bows, which are surprisingly complex. They don't have as many parts and pieces as a violin or cello, but this simplicity means every detail matters that much more."

Bilyk studied violin at Oberlin Conservatory. There, he did a semester of piano tuning and spent a winter term working in a violin shop.

"Fast-forward several years: When I finished grad school and moved out of New York City, I

suddenly had a little mental space to think about pursuing a craft," he said. "By chance, I heard of the University of New Hampshire's Violin Craftsmanship Institute, and it just clicked that that was something I wanted to do."

For Bilyk – who is a professional violinist by day, performing with the New Haven Symphony, Hartford Symphony, and several other professional groups – Simon's Bows is something of a dream job.

"I love working with tools and wood, and I've always dreamt of making a living with my hands," he said. "I couldn't be more happy with this choice of craft."

What's it like being a professional violinist, anyway?

"It's a constant hustle," Bilyk said. "There's the practicing, the networking, the auditions and preparing for auditions, and lots of driving."

However, for Bilyk, all that hustle is worth it.

"Being appreciated for doing a good job is one of the things I like the most," he said. "Making music with wonderful colleagues – all being on the same page through the twists and turns of a Beethoven symphony – is an incredible rush. I'm fortunate to have a few steady orchestra jobs, and I love the summer when I get to play weddings every weekend."

Simon and his partner, Caroline, moved to Redding in July 2021.

"Our first drive through Redding

was jaw-dropping; to get to the first home we viewed, we drove on Cross Highway over to Poverty Hollow and past the Tonka Truck Tree," Bilyk said. "Fields, hills, streams, brooks, and everything so green! There was a moment on that drive when we looked at each other and said, 'We have to live here.' There are many hikes that remind me of Maine, where I was born and raised."

Most of the rehairing and repairing work Bilyk gets comes from his symphony colleagues.

"I'll take their bow home with me after rehearsal one day and bring it back freshly rehaired the next day," he said. "This is a bit unusual, since most instrument repairs require a couple trips to a shop."

While Bilyk does get some business the more traditional way, with customers finding him online and heading to his home workshop, meeting musicians at rehearsals is incredibly convenient for both parties.

"Most of my business comes from word of mouth," Bilyk said. "A musician will only trust their instrument to someone who is trusted by others."

For the most part, Bilyk spends time in his workshop putting fresh hair on a bow, something that needs to be done every six to eight months for professionals.

"The hair wears out and gets tired," he explained. "A bow with old hair will sound weaker and be

more difficult to play."

When he's not playing violin or rehairing bows, Bilyk can sometimes be found refereeing soccer games in Westchester, something he hopes he can do more locally at some point in the future.

"Playing soccer in high school is some of the best memories of my life," he said. "The drama and importance of those games was intoxicating at the time. The opportunity to be involved again is a privilege that I can't recommend highly enough to anyone with an interest in a sport. There's a real shortage of refs, so it's a great time to get into it. It's very different from being a musician but fills an important niche in my life." ■



For more information
on Simon's Bows or
to hire Bilyk for a
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HOUSES THAT MAKE REDDING SPECIAL

Over the river and through the woods | *By Margi Esten*



There is a lovely antique colonial that sits at 297 Poverty Hollow Road. Well, sort of. The extraordinary 1763 Lt. Elisha Root House was originally built in Southington, Connecticut. In the mid-1980s, it was completely disassembled into its component parts and relocated to Redding, with necessary repairs being

made and missing parts replaced exactly using the original woods. For instance, the old wooden pegs were reused while the house was reassembled, and the nail holes were lined up so that all parts were replaced exactly where they had been. After a few years and multiple expert craftsmen, this home is truly a museum-quality restoration.

The house's original location at 393 Queen Street in Southington was on a river, and the property was later named Riverview Farm. The new location at 297 Poverty Hollow Road is much like the original one, as the site is beautifully wooded except for the gentle knoll holding the house and barn. A stretch of the property (702 feet) abuts the Aspetuck River, the clear trout stream that feeds the Aspetuck Reservoir. A dam creates a waterfall that can be heard faintly from the house.

The rare front entrance is one of only three like it in all of New England; architecturally termed a segmental pedimented doorway, it presents fluted pilasters with carved capitals and a keystone; and three carved Tudor roses, their stems, and leaves. The double front doors have fielded panels of tombstone at the top and St. Andrew's crosses at the bottom; they hang from handwrought iron hinges.

The main floor has a parlor,

formal dining room, burning room, buttery, and keeping room (including its own chimney stack with a large cooking fireplace and beehive oven of handmade water-struck brick in lime mortar), along with an updated kitchen, bedrooms, and baths. Every room contains multiple interesting architectural finishes. There is also a 37-foot x 29-foot barn, and its beautiful hand-hewn post-and-beam frame is exposed on the interior. With its second-floor loft, large barn doors, and handwrought iron hardware, the barn is truly a significant structure in its own right.

The historic architectural features of the house are now paired with a 1980s oversized basement, insulation, underground 200-amp electrical service, all new copper plumbing, and new oversized septic system.

Marianne Crew, the home's current owner, purchased the house in 1989. She knew this was the home for her the moment she

stepped through the door; and while she has continued to update where necessary, she has been determined to keep the integrity of the home and the property intact. The house still has the original gray painted hardwood floors and original interior colors (apart from one room she recently, reluctantly, painted white instead of the rich historic red). She enjoys the absolute "best of both worlds" living with the charm of an antique home rich with history but with the modern amenities like new plumbing and a large, dry basement. The private and tranquil property – quintessential Redding – with woods, stream, waterfall, and adjoining open space with hiking trails is magical. In fact, her grandchildren would often sing "over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go..." "What better storybook home and setting could there be?" ■

Redding awarded grant for cemetery upkeep | *By Donna Christopher*

Lonetown Cemetery, also known as Isaac Hamilton Cemetery, will receive much-needed maintenance thanks to a recent State grant award. The funds will be used to clear a fallen tree and broken limbs on the site and replace a broken gate with a fence.

Redding is among 41 cities and towns that were recently awarded grants, which total \$5,000 each, under the State's Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program administered by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. The program is funded by revenue collected by the Connecticut Department of Public Health from the issuance of death certificates.

Grants can be used by the municipalities to support basic maintenance of cemeteries, including the clearing of weeds, briars, and bushes; mowing of the ground's lawn areas; repairing the ground's fences or walls;

and straightening, repairing, and restoring memorial stones.

In an announcement of the grants, State Representative Anne Hughes lauded the Easton Cemetery Committee and Redding Historic Cemetery Committee (RHCC) "for their due diligence in stewardship of our historic cemeteries and working with the Governor's team to secure funding to help protect and restore these resting grounds."

The grant funds will be utilized for the planned work, though the costs may exceed the grant amount, so donations are welcome, said Louise Wagner, member of the RHCC and the author of the grant application.

This preservation work is essential to honoring the people buried in these cemeteries, including American patriots interred in the locations. Safeguarding the Town's historic places in this way is something

that Wagner said is, "in my heart." According to Wagner, two Revolutionary War patriots are buried at the Isaac Hamilton (Lonetown) Cemetery: Calvin Jenkins, who served in Captain Catlin's Company, and Isaac Bartram, who served in Captain Horton's Company. Charles Thomas, a soldier of color, fought in the Civil War with the Connecticut 29th Colored Infantry and is also buried there, along with several of his family members.

"We are very pleased to receive this grant," added RHCC member Janice Simon.

The RHCC was formed last year through the First Selectman's Office to oversee seven historic cemeteries. Its officers were selected at a meeting on October 27, 2022.

The mission of the group is "to establish a formal organizational paradigm for the maintenance, operations, protection, preserv-

ation, restoration, and perpetual care of the historic cemeteries in the Town of Redding. The RHCC's further mission is to research grave identification of those interred and grave marker identification, repair, and recovery. To provide administrative assistance and advice to the Office of the Selectman as to laws and regulations pertaining to Town historic cemeteries."

The historic cemeteries under the RHCC's purview are Redding Center, Gould, Limekiln, Lonetown, Old Cemetery, Sanford, and Ferry Cemetery.

The committee is an important way to preserve Redding's history, RHCC Co-Chair Joe Bonomo said in a November e-mail exchange with the Sentinel.

Among matters of importance at the cemeteries are to preserve the locations as places "for respectful visiting, ancestral or historic research, and to build appreciation

for those who came before and their efforts in building the country and for appreciating Redding as one of the strategic keystone locations in the Revolutionary War," Bonomo said in that conversation.

Along with cemetery cleanup – regular maintenance is handled by the Town – the committee is working to inform the public on how to properly preserve graves, stones, and cemetery property. To that end, the RHCC worked last year with the Drum Hill Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Christ Church Parish Preservation, and the Redding Historical Society to bring a hands-on grave cleaning program to Redding Ridge Cemetery. This spring, someone from the State of Connecticut will come to Redding with a ground-penetrating radar to help the RHCC identify unmarked graves, according to Wagner. ■

Mild winter fills the coffers / continued from page 1

Oak Lane, which is open on both ends to permit trucks to be loaded. Redding begins winter with a full shed, but usually must refill it at least once each season.

This year's winter ended with a depleted salt supply, Sanders said, but the Town also didn't have to refill the shed at all this season. Because Redding had a large surplus in unspent funds, it opted to make a \$50,000 purchase of additional salt.

"Now, the shed is fully stocked for next winter's snow season," said Sanders. "With the uncertainty

that comes with planning for each year's needs, it's very important to try to provision your supplies. This way, we're prepared in case next winter is very challenging."

At the same time the Town saved money, it faced a larger bill for one significant human-resources expenditure: Redding's contribution to the Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS). The cost savings from lower overtime costs in the Highway Department helped to partially offset that larger sum, said Sanders. ■

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Get organized with Marnie Goodfriend *Pretty Tidy Organize brings a “sense of calm” to your space*

By Justin Reynolds



Photo courtesy of Marnie Goodfriend

Growing up, Marnie Goodfriend was the type of kid who rearranged her bedroom furniture every few weeks. While this behavior drove her parents nuts, she didn't stop there.

"I'd call my friends' parents to ask if I could organize their daughters' closets," Goodfriend said. "They were surprised, but they always invited me over."

Organizing and styling have always brought Goodfriend peace and joy. After years of photo styling, staging, and organizing people's homes and offices, she launched her own business that does the same, Pretty Tidy Organize, in 2022.

"Pretty Tidy Organize is a personal organizing and styling design firm," Goodfriend said. "I specialize in helping people move through life transitions – whether it be a move, working from home, or a personal resolution – by minimizing clutter, letting go of what no longer serves them, and creating a space that inspires creativity and growth."

After graduating from NYU's

Tisch School of the Arts, Goodfriend moved to Los Angeles, where she lived for more than a decade. There, she worked in PR and marketing, taking on the occasional photo styling or organization job for fun.

"I'm still a publicist," Goodfriend said. "But, like many during the pandemic, I craved real-time connection with others. When I moved from Santa Monica to Connecticut last October, I decided to do a major purge before I left. The freedom I felt driving across the country after letting go of boxes of stuff that no longer served me was the impetus for Pretty Tidy Organize. I felt 100 pounds lighter and wanted others to have that same experience – whether they've lived in the same house for three months or 30 years."

Goodfriend, who now lives in Bethel, mostly serves clients in Fairfield, Westchester, and Dutchess Counties; the Hudson Valley; and New York City. She also offers remote organizing services.

"Most people find me through word of mouth," Goodfriend said. "I'll have my socials (social media accounts) up and running soon, so people can find me when searching online, and I can offer organizing and styling tips and hacks."

When clients consider hiring Pretty Tidy Organize, the engagement starts with a free 30-minute consultation where Goodfriend asks questions to understand the individual's needs, inspiration, and vision for the end result. After the consultation, Goodfriend writes up a scope of work, which includes estimated hours, costs of materials, and any recommended services. Should the client decide to move forward, Goodfriend requires a deposit to get started.

"The next step is creating a mood board of your future 'after' space, so we are on the same page with the finished goal," she said. "Then we schedule a date and time, and I show up ready to get my hands dirty."

Why should you consider organizing your home or office?

"On a practical level, having organized spaces frees up space in your home or office to feel a sense of calm," Goodfriend said. "It also fosters productivity and creativity."

Additionally, Pretty Tidy Organize gives clients the "gift of time".

"I give back all those hours you spend looking for cell phone chargers or save you from buying the same black sweater you already own five of," she said. "Instead, spend those hours with family and friends, on your self-care, and activities that enrich your life."

Worried that you'll have a hard time getting rid of sentimental items? Goodfriend can help there, too.

"I also offer one-on-one sessions with clients who have difficulty letting go," she said. "We do this through mindful conversations, writing, and gentle action lists." ■

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Upcoming events to aid spring cleaning | By Jessie Wright

Cleaning out closets, purging old files, or finally tackling your cluttered garage or garden shed? Several municipal and community events this spring can help you declutter and start fresh.

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronic Waste Drop-Off Saturday, April 15
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Danbury Public Works
53 Newtown Road, Danbury

Residents of Redding can safely dispose of hazardous household and electronic waste at this free event. Load items in the trunk or back of your vehicle and be ready to show identification with your local address. You will drive through the drop-off site, remaining in your vehicle, as workers remove the items.

There are certain items the drop-off will NOT accept. Visit HRRRA.org for a complete list of acceptable materials.

New Fairfield/Sherman Animal Welfare Shred-It Fundraiser Saturday, April 15
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
New Fairfield Senior Center
Parking Lot – 33 Route 37, New Fairfield

The New Fairfield/Sherman Animal Welfare Society (NFSAW) is holding its annual Shred-It fundraiser. The event is free, but monetary donations to NFSAW are appreciated. Boxed or bagged documents will be shredded on site. There is a limit of four boxes of material per visit.

NFSAW, founded in 1977, is a non-profit organization that shelters and finds homes for abused, neglected, and abandoned cats and dogs.

Redding Shredding and E-Waste Event / Saturday, April 22
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Redding Recycling Center & Transfer Station
84 Hopewell Woods Road

Residents of Redding can bring up to five boxes of materials for secure shredding – please note: staples and paper clips don't need to be removed) and e-waste (computers, monitors, tablets, printers, modems, stereo equipment, telephones, fax machines, microwaves, and other small household electronics). Load the items in the back of your vehicle and bring identification or other proof of Redding residency.

The drop-off will NOT accept x-rays, CDs, or materials with binder clips or file hangers. Visit townofreddingct.org/events for complete information.

Clothing and Household Goods Donations Weekly, various times
See below for some of the closest local spots for dropping off gently used clothing and furniture.

- Save A Suit – 137 Greenwood Avenue, Bethel. Drop-off Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Save A Suit is a non-profit providing veterans and transitioning service members with professional attire to help achieve job security.

- Harmony House Shelter – Partnering with Once Upon a Child at 67 Newtown Road, Danbury. Drop-off gently used children's clothing or toys at Once Upon a Child and tell the staff they are to support Family & Children's Aid. Harmony House Shelter provides temporary round-the-clock housing for up to 16 homeless mothers and their children.

- Housatonic Habitat for Humanity ReStore – 51 Austin Street, Danbury. Drop-off donations can be made at 51 Austin Street Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. You can also schedule a pick-up by visiting housatonicshabitat.org/restore. The ReStore recommends calling ahead at 203-744-1340 to ensure they will accept the item you would like to donate. ■

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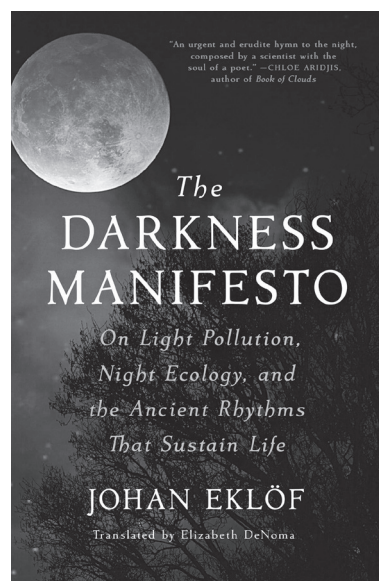
PRE-K THROUGH 8TH GRADE

BOOK REVIEW

The Darkness Manifesto

By Johan Eklöf, translated from the Swedish by Dr. Elizabeth DeNoma

272 pages / Scribner / \$23.49



The thesis of this short but powerful book by a Swedish biologist is that our over-use of artificial light at night has had a devastating effect on life – and our individual lives – on this planet.

Insect populations – those same insects that pollinate our food crops and feed birds – have been decimated. And not just insects. The lifecycles of mammals, fish, birds, and pretty much every living thing are being changed by the unnatural prevalence of light at night.

There are several reasons for the deleterious effect of night light. One-half of insects on earth are nocturnal. With artificial light at night, these insects, confused, get sucked into a light vortex and perish either into the mouths of predators or from exhaustion. Bat populations, dependent on insects, have declined by one-third.

Two-thirds of migratory birds make their journeys at night, guided by moon and starlight.

They are confused by the lights of cities and, especially, skyscrapers.

Sea turtles know to turn toward the sea after hatching by the shimmering light of the moon and the sun dropping below the horizon – but just beyond the beach where they emerge from their eggs may lie a strip of luxury hotels clad in bright artificial light, so the just-hatched sea turtles head for that instead.

This well-researched book provides example after example of living populations that are hurt because of our overuse of artificial light at night – and humans are among those on the losing end. When we have fewer insects, fewer plants are pollinated, and food crop production declines, for example. Our sleep patterns are also disrupted, to the detriment of our health and happiness.

Species by species, Eklöf presents a compelling case that we'd all be better off through a more thoughtful use of artificial light. More than that, he advocates for embracing the night – *carpe noctem*. His descriptions of how one's eyes adjust to the darkness will have you heading out into the dark, no flashlight, once it's a bit warmer.

He points out that other global challenges can seem overwhelming, but helping the night be the night is not all that hard. Turn lights out. If you need lights, put them on motion sensors and on the yellow spectrum, not blue. Angle them downwards, with shields on top. *Carpe Noctem*. ■

Review by
Susan Clark

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

About two decades ago, Mark Twain Library Trustee Norman Tanen established the Wit & Wisdom Award, a \$1,000 prize given to a junior or senior at Joel Barlow High School to help defray the cost of higher education. In honor of Mark Twain, the prize acknowledges a work of poetry, film, fiction, comedy, or something else that exhibits our founder's trademark wit and humor. English teacher Mr. Giordano has been a great partner to the Library

in spreading the word to students who may be interested in applying. Each spring a giant cardboard cut-out of Mark Twain makes a field trip to Joel Barlow to generate interest with students.

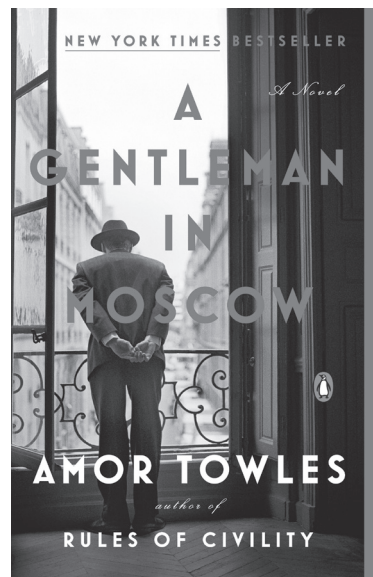
Past submissions to the prize have included a graphic novel, a monologue, a satirical letter... just about anything. The submissions are reviewed with enthusiasm by a committee of representatives from the Library and the community. Winners are announced during

Joel Barlow's awards ceremony in May and the winners' names are inscribed on a plaque in the Library.

For more information or to submit, please either make your interest known to Mr. Giordano or visit marktwainlibrary.org/about-us/wit-and-wisdom. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is
Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers | By Margi Esten



I use an audio book platform called Libro FM (more on that later), and because I needed to be driving this week for a few hours, I decided to listen to *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. I have of course already read this book, as Amor Towles is one of my favorite authors of all time, and I rush to read everything he writes as soon as it is available. But listening to

this book – particularly in light of the fact that it will soon be a motion picture starring Ewan McGregor – is an experience on another level.

For those of you familiar with audio books, you know the skill and cadence of the narrator is most important. And this narrator, Nicholas Guy Smith, is spot-on for this story. Published in 2016, this novel follows the life of Count Alexander Ilyich Rostov, a Russian aristocrat who is condemned by the Bolshevik government to spend the rest of his life confined in the Metropol, Moscow's most glamorous hotel (in lieu of being stood against the wall and shot). In addition to a plethora of fascinating and quirky characters who make up the hotel staff, the Count also makes the unexpected acquaintance of Nina, the 9-year-old daughter of a Ukrainian bureaucrat who is wise beyond her years and Anna Urbanova, a famous actress who provides a comfortable (adult) relationship with him whenever she stays at

the hotel. Time marches on, with the book beginning in 1918 and continuing through the 1950s. The ending is a most-welcome shocker.

Note: Libro FM is an alternative to Audible, and you can select the independent bookstore of your choice to receive credit for your membership. (Full disclosure: my son and daughter-in-law own an independent bookstore/wine bar in the East Village in NYC, called Bookclub Bar. It is so worth a visit or learn more about it at bookclubbar.com) ■

Futterneid

The myth of the wrong decision | By Lisa Tancredi

As much as I may not want to admit it, sometimes my husband is right. If I'm being truthful, I have to give him credit. And one of things I must accept is that German, his first language, has some really great words. Words like *Handschuh* (which means glove, but literally translates as hand-shoe) or *Kopfkino* (which describes the images in your head – both positive and negative – that you use to play out all kinds of scenarios; literally it translates as head-cinema). And then there's one of my favorites: *Futterneid* (Futter means feed, as in the food you give an animal, and Neid means envy. So, "feed-envy").

Futterneid describes that feeling when you're at a restaurant and the food comes, and you wish you had ordered the dish that someone else got. Your food looks okay. Theirs looks delicious.

As in food, so in life.

We all have probably experienced moments of thinking, or at least wondering, if perhaps we made a wrong turn, went the wrong way, made the wrong decision. Wrong job. Wrong partner. Wrong town. Wrong education. Wrong family. Wrong friends. Wrong wrong wrong.

We see others who didn't have

our life and we think they did it better, they are better, and this is why we're miserable. Because they didn't make the wrong turn. And we did.

But here's the problem with that thinking: it's just wrong.

There is no way to make a wrong decision.

Let that sink in for a moment. You never made, and never will make, a wrong decision. Yes, every decision has consequences, and perhaps you didn't like the consequences you received. But then, that decision provided you with a very important learning experience: You now know what to do in the future, if you want to avoid that particular outcome in a similar situation. You understand the consequences and have the awareness of your own power in this situation. You can make another decision next time. And this understanding is priceless. Without it, you would not know the path of joy.

Since you can't make any wrong decisions, you are always on your path. You are never NOT on your path. But you do have a choice of whether you take the path of joy or the path of misery.

The joy path is the path you take when you listen to your own

inner guidance, follow what feels right to you inside. On this path, doors open that you didn't even see. Time relaxes. What you need presents itself to you. The path opens up in front of you and you just step forward.

The misery path is what you choose when you listen to anyone other than your inner self for guidance. This is the path of choosing against what your inner wisdom says. This is the path of listening to the outer noise: cultural norms, family, friends, the voice of obligation. This is the path of becoming an accountant when you really want to be a dancer. Or vice versa.

Whichever path you choose, the Universe will support you. It is always supporting you. But the support may not look like what you think support should look like, depending on which path you are on.

If you choose against yourself, against what brings you joy and inspiration, it's going to be a bumpy ride. If you're choosing the path of accounting when your inspiration is in dance, the Universe may have to take all sorts of extreme measures to help you become more honest with yourself, more attuned to your own joy and

more open to following your inner guidance. This may present itself as doors of opportunity shutting, feeling lost, taking on too much work, struggling, not allowing yourself to rest, believing that thinking will solve your problems.

Choosing the joy path doesn't mean it will always work out exactly how you wanted or predicted. You will still have challenges to help you clarify, focus, and master yourself. But the joy path significantly increases the possibility of things working out better, easier, and more relaxed than you could imagine.

In the end, though, even this doesn't matter. Because either way, you are only going to one destination: back to your joyful self. Back to your path of joy and inspiration. The Universe uses every moment and every situation to help you come back to your joyful self. If it needs to set up guard rails, it will make things difficult. But it's only difficult so that you realize what you're doing to yourself – the misery you're putting yourself in – and decide you're done with it. In this way, all outcomes are perfect outcomes, leading you to a better, more joyful, simple, easy, orderly, beautiful version of yourself.

Let go of trying to be something different from who you are, trying to be someone other than who you are, or thinking that you made any mistakes in your life. When you think like that, you're missing all the wonderful opportunities in front of you to be yourself and follow your own inspiration, right now. You are in the exact right place to do that right now. Now. Now. Now. Even now. Or...Now.

The Universe is playing the long game. It has all of infinity to wait. Even if you choose against yourself for decades and lifetimes, you will eventually get tired of that misery and come back to the path of joy and inspiration. And it will have been perfect. When all other options have been exhausted, and there's nowhere else to turn, you will finally, consciously, choose joy.

So, take your time. Be miserable. Enjoy it.

Hate others for what they have. No problem.

Just keep in mind that when you're ready to realign yourself with joy, you will get a meal more delicious than you even knew was possible. ■

Redding's Big Outdoors: Warrups Rock / continued from page 1

liquor" and "except in war he was a worthless, shiftless fellow."

Todd's *History of Redding* is our chief source of information on Tom Warrups, and therein lies the problem. Todd writes that "numberless anecdotes are remembered and told about him to this day" (remember that phrase, "to this day") and goes on to share several.

In one, during Putnam's winter encampment of 1778 and 1779, fellow soldiers, fed up with Tom Warrups's constant drunkenness, subject him to the humiliating custom of riding a rail – that is, making him straddle a wooden beam, then hoisting him up and parading him around.

Along comes the general. "Ar-

en't you ashamed?" Old Put asks Tom.

Charles Burr Todd, writing as if he were there, quotes Tom's broken English: "Yes, Tom is ashamed, vera mooch ashamed, to see poor Indian ride and the Giner-al he go afoot."

Cymbal crash. Thing is, Todd wrote that in 1880, more than 100 years after the fact. The story, like others, is more of an oral legend with a punchline, subject to the distortions of generations of anti-native prejudice.

Tom Warrups's namesake on the Redding trails is Warrups Rock, a 75-foot-high cliff in the woods above Peaceable Street, part of the Mary Evelyn Scott Na-

ture Preserve. To reach this, park in the gravel lot on the right heading toward Route 7, just past the power station. Head into the woods and fork right at the Munro Trail.

Keep an eye on the blazes, for it's not hard to wander off the trail. When the Munro Trail crosses the power lines, for instance, it will be tempting to follow a mossy path through a fairy-tale natural tunnel of mountain laurel. Don't do this, for you'll just end up on a gravel utility road. You'll also end up going back the way you came.

When you reach the top of Warrups Rock, however, you should, in fact, leave the trail. Scramble around the cliff face to reach the bottom, where there's an overhang

just large enough to sleep under. Tom Warrups often took shelter here – again, if Charles Burr Todd is to be believed – when he was "absent from his hut for weeks at a time, sleeping in barns or in the forest." Unless somebody's moved it, you'll find an old tin pail.

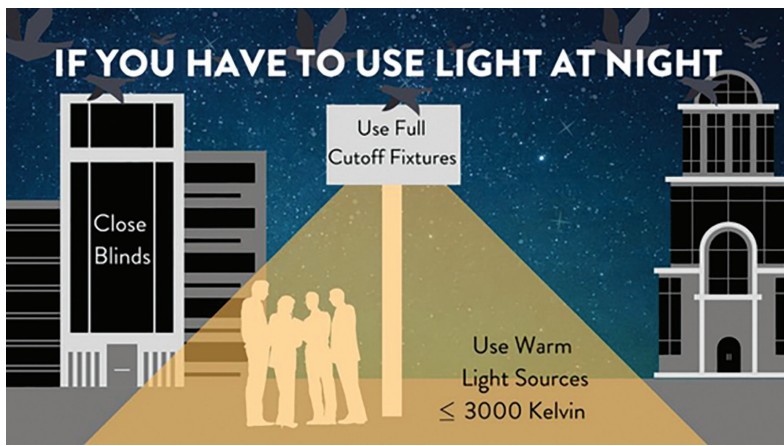
Did Tom Warrups really sleep here? Probably. Maybe. Who knows. He may have been a shiftless fellow, a hero, or neither. In any case, the rock is a more dignified memorial to a Patriot soldier than the stories long told about him – and more solid than centuries-old punchlines. ■

Scott MacMillan is the author of *Hope Over Fate: Fazle Hasan Abed and the Science of Ending Global Poverty*, which is available at the Mark Twain Library, Byrd's Books in Bethel, and Books on the Common in Ridgefield.

THE NATURAL WORLD

Protecting birds with the flip of a switch

How going “Lights Out” helps migrating species | By Jessie Wright



From BirdCast resources at birdcast.info/science-to-action/lights-out



Photo by Emily Holcomb/
Great Backyard Bird Count, Audubon Field Guide

A White-throated Sparrow, one of the many bird species that migrates at night in Connecticut.

When is peak migration season for Connecticut? What parts of the year does going Lights Out make the biggest impact?

Light pollution is an issue that affects the environment, wildlife, and human health year-round, so optimally people should be minimizing non-essential light at night all year.

We’ve discovered that in the overall migration seasons, about 10% of nights per season account for more than 50% of migratory movements, so going Lights Out during these particular peak migration nights will likely make the biggest impact in reducing light pollution hazards for birds.

In Connecticut, peak spring migration is approximately May 2 – May 22, and peak fall migration approximately September 18 – October 31, though this may vary a bit year to year.

Are there any bird species that are particularly at risk in our part of New England or species that are of great importance to protect?

In general, species that produce flight calls at night have greater risk of collision mortality, which comes from a *Winger et al.* paper examining Chicago and Cleveland data. Typical flight callers that have elevated risk would then include most warblers and sparrows, among a diversity of

feeling some people have about artificial light at night. I think awareness of how excess blue light can damage even human health is only really becoming part of the public consciousness recently.

How does BirdCast work with other organizations and nationwide initiatives to encourage communities to go Lights Out?

BirdCast forecasts when and where birds will be moving, which allows us to inform people when the majority of birds are passing over their areas, and thus when it is most important for bird safety to go Lights Out. We provide migration alerts on our website that allow you to easily see whether it’s a peak night in your area, as well as other tools to help you better understand what’s going on above you at night, including migration forecasts and live migration data for the continental U.S.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdCast launched the Lights Out Texas campaign in partnership with Texas conservation organizations in spring 2020 to pilot the first state-wide Lights Out effort. It was also the first Lights Out effort that integrated science that predicts nights of heavy migration, when more birds are at greater risks of collision with buildings. We’ve supported other campaigns across the country by providing that sort of scientific foundation for lights out action, with data about peak migration as well as other research.

At the heart of it - BirdCast provides scientific guidance for the efficacy of Lights Out action, as well as research and tools to know when it is most critical to go lights out for bird safety due to heavy migration. ■

Learn more about lighting guidelines and resources at birdcast.info/science-to-action/lights-out

You’ve planted pollinator-friendly flowers in your garden, stopped using dangerous pesticides, and dotted your property with spots for thirsty bees and birds to drink. You’ve rolled out the red carpet – but don’t forget the black one, too.

Billions of birds migrate north in the spring, with most of them flying at night, using the night sky as their guide, according to the National Audubon Society. However, as they pass over urban areas and other residential and commercial zones, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows.

“While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion,” The National Audubon Society explains on their website. “The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats.”

Several national and local organizations have coordinated to participate in the “Lights Out” initiative, a nationwide effort to educate citizens on the importance of turning out their lights, advocate for property and business owners to adopt nighttime light minimizing policies, and call for elected officials and governments to facilitate local Lights Out programs.

While Redding is certainly not host to any skyscrapers, ambient

glow from both our interior and exterior lights still present challenges to migratory species, particularly at spring and fall times of peak migration. The Sentinel spoke with Julia Wang, Project Leader for BirdCast at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, about what residents can do to do their part in protecting migrating birds this spring. (Note: the conversation has been edited for length and clarity.)

What can individuals do to participate in Lights Out? Is there anything we as citizens should encourage our town government to consider?

Turn off, dim, or set on a motion-sensor your own non-essential lighting at night, especially during critical migration periods! Turning off lights dramatically reduces hazards from attraction to and disorientation by light, allowing birds to proceed with their migratory journeys more safely.

We as citizens should all encourage our local governments to adopt dark sky practices - to review lighting practices, and to implement and enforce outdoor lighting ordinances that promote responsible lighting on municipal buildings and streets. This not only benefits migrating birds, but also other wildlife, as well as human health, which can also be adversely impacted by light pollution. Additionally, cutting down on over-lighting reduces energy costs and returns the ability to see planets and stars at night in our skies – it’s really a win-win.

Tree ordinance review paused as regulations reviewed

By Donna Christopher

While the Board of Selectmen had requested review of a drafted tree ordinance by the Planning and Conservation Commissions last November, additional historical details and nuances of existing regulations have paused the process. The draft of the ordinance under review, which was being considered by Planning and Conservation, was developed by the Redding Tree Conservancy with input from members of the Board of Selectmen, examples of neighboring town tree ordinances, and the Town’s legal team.

“The impetus for looking at a tree ordinance prompted an interest in further protecting our trees to ensure we weren’t having

deforestation that wasn’t in keeping for the town,” explained First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton at the March 28 meeting of the Planning Commission.

Since the creation of that draft, however, Pemberton found historical record of an earlier tree ordinance draft in Town minutes dating back to 1999. She also noted that though an ordinance was never adopted, on June 19, 2001, the Board of Selectmen adopted “tree regulations.”

“So, we currently have regulations, and it’s just a matter of following our regulations and enforcing our regulations,” she said.

Planning Commission member Toby Welles said he was curious “in what form” the existing regulations exist and how the public would know of them.

“People don’t know about it,” Pemberton responded. “You would not know unless you had institutional knowledge... But there are regulations according to state statutes that have been adopted.”

In light of the newly-surfaced 1999 ordinance notes and the ongoing questions over the existing regulations, the Board of Selectmen plans to invite the Town’s attorney to attend their April meeting to provide legal insight into what is currently “on

the books” as regulation, and the difference between regulations and ordinances.

Janice Rotchstein, a founder of the Redding Tree Conservancy and one of the authors of the tree ordinance draft that was under review, expressed concern that new details from so long ago are now surfacing. “I think we’re all open to listening to it and hearing it. When we wrote the ordinance, we were intent on being very aware of what is current, what is facing us in trees, climate change, the environment...What did we know about climate change in the ‘90s? We all put a great deal of work into this.”

Planning Commission Chair Dan Barrett asked to have the conversation continue after the Town’s attorney meets with the Selectmen.

“We will discuss the new draft at that point,” said Barrett.

The April meeting of the Board of Selectmen is currently scheduled at Town Hall for Monday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m., though Pemberton noted she hopes to reschedule it for later that week. Visit townofreddingct.org/events for up-to-date meeting information. ■



New Pond Farm Education Center

INVITES YOU TO DISCOVER ITS PROGRAMS

We look forward to sharing news of our programs, summer camp, special events, membership, and more with our Redding neighbors!

Please keep your eyes on the Sentinel for updated information and join us this spring as we explore our 102-acres of woodlands, wetlands, pastures, meadows, barnyard, and the night sky!



101 Marchant Road
West Redding, CT 06896
203-938-2117
newpondfarm.org

Recent thefts at Redding trailheads

By Donna Christopher

Two vehicles were burglarized at trailheads in Redding on Sunday, April 2 between 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

One was located at Centennial Watershed State Forest and the other was at Collis P. Huntington State Park, according to the State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Conservation Police.

Both vehicles were locked at the time, and upon the return of the owners, both vehicles were found with their rear passenger compartment windows broken, according to a press release provided to the Sentinel.

In both incidents, a purse was reported stolen from inside the vehicle, police said.

It remains unclear if the incidents were related, according to the report. No suspect has been identified as of April 7, but the CT DEEP Conservation Police are investigating.

If anyone has any information related to these incidents, they are asked to contact CT EnCon Police Dispatch Center at 860-424-3333.

The police advise locking your vehicles and keeping valuable items with you or out of plain sight while parked at state parks and forests. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies
R = registration required

ARTS

Saturday, Apr. 15

All Ages Discovery Tour
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Guided group tour of the museum's current collections. The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
258 Main Street
Ridgefield
thealdrich.org
R

Sunday, Apr. 23

MTL Open Mic: A Literary Event for Teens and Adults
3:00 p.m.
All literary genres welcome, readings limited to five minutes each.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

CHILDREN, TEENS

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Creating a Compelling College Application (for High School juniors and parents)
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Zoom
Easton Public Library
eastonlibrary.org
R

Sunday, Apr. 22

RES PTA Science Fair
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Kindergarten – 4th Graders will present their science projects and inventions to kick off the S.T.E.A.M. Festival
Festival is 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Redding Elementary School
33 Lonetown Road
facebook.com/RESPTA
R

Saturday, Apr. 29

16th Annual Co-Op Touch A Truck
9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Kids of all ages can get up close and climb on vehicles of all shapes and sizes and enjoy food trucks, live music, games, and more.
Hosted by Westport Weston Cooperative Nursery School
50 Imperial Avenue
Westport
westportwestoncoop.org

CRAFTS

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Modern Makers @ MTL presents Meaningful Magnets Workshop
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Create unique personalized magnets with crafter Deb Owen.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Thursday, Apr. 20

The Collective @ MTL: A Community Pop-Up Market
3:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Shop small, independent vendors for unique gifts and treats.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org

Sunday, Apr. 30

Newtown Spring Craft Fair
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Edmond Town Hall
45 Main Street
Newtown
ctcraftfairconnection.com

NATURE

Friday, Apr. 14 or Friday, May 5

Spring Migration: Birding with Joe Bear
7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
New Pond Farm Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
R

Monday, Apr. 17

A Therapist's Garden
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Redding Garden Club presents guest speaker Erik Keller, Master Gardener and Horticultural Therapist at Ann's Place. Light lunch and meeting to follow.
Redding Community Center
37 Lonetown Road
reddinggardenclub.org
\$, R

Friday, Apr. 21 – Sunday, Apr. 23

The Great Egg Weekend at Redding Grange
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
(Friday) – Friends of a Feather Potluck Dinner
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
(Saturday) – Expert panel and Q&A on hen keeping
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
(Sunday) – Family fun day
All activities are free, with suggested \$3 donation per event
Registrations encouraged, walk-ins welcome
Redding Grange
399 Newtown Turnpike
reddinggrange.org

Saturday, Apr. 22

Rid Litter Day/Build Mt. Trashmore!
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Redding's annual litter pick-up day. Pick up gloves/bags/vest and road assignment outside Town Hall and bring back trash by 3:45 p.m. Participants can also do a "story walk" along the Parade Path on managing trash, composting, and recycling.
Town Hall and Town-wide
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Apr. 25

Wildflower Ramble & Brown Bag Lunch
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Raindate: April 26
New Pond Farm
Education Center
101 Marchant Road
newpondfarm.org
\$, R

Saturday, Apr. 29

Frothy Forage
Rain date: Sunday, Apr. 30
2-hour time slots beginning at 12:00 p.m.
A hiking and beer tasting experience with activities for the whole family.
Woodcock Nature Center
56 Deer Run Road
Wilton
woodcocknaturecenter.org
\$, R

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom)
44 Portland Avenue
bethlehemplutheranct.org

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

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

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

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

Sacred Heart / St. Patrick Parish

Saturday Vigil: 4:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart) and 5:30 p.m. (St. Patrick)
Sundays: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (St. Patrick); 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (Sacred Heart); 12:00 p.m. (Sacred Heart - Latin)
Weekdays: 8:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays (St. Patrick); 8:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays (Sacred Heart); 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays (Sacred Heart - Latin)
Eucharistic Adoration: 7:00 p.m. on Mondays (Sacred Heart); 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays (St. Patrick)
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
30 Church Street
St. Patrick Catholic Church
169 Black Rock Turnpike
sacredheart-stpat.org

Temple B'nai Chaim
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.
82 Portland Avenue
Wilton
templebnaichaim.org

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Thursday, Apr. 13

Racial Justice Film Series: Home from School: The Children of Carlisle
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Easton Public Library
691 Morehouse Road
Easton
eastonlibrary.org
R

Saturday, Apr. 15

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronic Waste Drop-Off
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Danbury Public Works Garage
53 Newtown Road
Danbury
HRRRA.org

Tuesday, Apr. 18

Documentary Screening: A Georgetown Story
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
This program was created through a partnership with Georgetown Village Restoration Inc., Meadow Ridge, The Redding Historical Society, and the Mark Twain Library.
Run time: 52 minutes, refreshments will be served
Meadow Ridge
100 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Saturday, Apr. 22

Redding Shredding and E-Waste Event
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Recycling Center and Transfer Station
84 Hopewell Woods Road
townofreddingct.org

Saturday, Apr. 22

Yoga Fundraiser
2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Take a class with Redding yoga instructor Laurie Mayper and raise money to help a local child fight Leukemia.
Danbury Dynamic Dance
93 Mill Plain Road
Danbury
danburyddf.org
\$, R

Tuesday, Apr. 25

CT Author Talk: Living with a Grieving Heart
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
In-person
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Thursday, Apr. 27

Deluge: The Flood of '55
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Part of MTL's History Close to Home Series, Brent Colley (Co-Historian for the Town of Redding) will present a historical look at the causes and impacts of the great flood in Connecticut in 1955.
Mark Twain Library or Zoom
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

Friday, Apr. 28

Alien Abduction: The Betty and Barney Hill Story
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Paranormal investigator Barry Pirro explores the most investigated case of alien abduction of all time. Recommended for ages 18 and up.
Mark Twain Library
439 Redding Road
marktwinlibrary.org
R

MEETINGS

Thursday, Apr. 13

Redding Historic Cemetery Committee
2:00 p.m.
Town Hall
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Apr. 13

Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
Subject to change to hybrid or virtual
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Apr. 13

West Redding Fire District Commissioners Meeting
7:00 p.m.
West Redding Firehouse
306 Umpawaug Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 17

Board of Selectmen
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
Subject to change to hybrid or virtual
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Apr. 18

Zoning Board of Appeals
7:00 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, Apr. 18

Conservation Commission
7:30 p.m.
Old Town House
23 Cross Highway
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Annual Town Budget Meeting
1:00 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, Apr. 19

Water Pollution Control Commission
7:30 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Apr. 20

Historic Review Committee
6:30 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Thursday, Apr. 20

Democratic Town Committee
7:30 p.m.
Town Hall / Hearing Room
100 Hill Road
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 24

OPEB Trust Board
6:00 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Monday, Apr. 24

Board of Finance
7:30 p.m.
Zoom
townofreddingct.org

Refer to townofreddingct.org for up-to-date location and meeting information.

Want to feature an upcoming event?

E-mail us at advertise@reddingsentinel.org for more info.

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Jodi Langford
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Marge Lanzara
 203.994.5301



Heather Lindgren
 646.932.4075



Carissa McMahon
 203.442.4159



Heather Payne
 203.470.7069



Anne Schmiedel
 203.470.9159



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Joseph Porricelli Branch Vice President

203.515.6310

joe.poricelli@cbrealty.com

Ridgefield Office 398 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 | 203.438.9000

Redding Office 16 Old Mill Road, Redding, CT 06896 | 203.544.9591



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