SENTINEL KEDDING

MAY 18, 2023

REDDING, CONNECTICUT

Volume 2 / Issue 5

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Public hearing for West Redding construction set for **June 28**

By Rocco Valluzzo

The Zoning Commission received an application to renovate and add to a historic two-story building at 3 Side Cut Road in West Redding at its Wednesday, May 10 meeting.

Owned by SC-3 LLC, the building will include four new one-bedroom residential units, first floor business use, and parking after the renovation project. The historic structure, which has fallen into significant disrepair, dates to the 1860s and has served several different purposes over the years, including a post office, general store, train depot, gas station, and restaurant. It sits on approximately 0.7 acres. The property was purchased by SC-3 LLC last year from the estate of Barry Finch and is being redeveloped by Greenwich Property Partners, Inc.

According to Joseph Cugno of Cugno Architecture PPC, the structure is an existing mixed-use building that previously housed residential as well as business units. The owners plan to renovate the building into a new version of what it currently is with some smaller additions.

"It's a derelict property," noted Cugno. It's been that way for many years."

He added that there are currently two residential units on the top floor. The creation of four residential units was granted through variances going back to 2015 when a different redevelopment project was planned for the site.

Although there will be some additions to the structure, Cugno said his clients have gone through the Redding Historic Review Committee and have gotten approval for an updated building that is in keeping with the character of the current structure.

The developer had initially planned to demolish the building and had received approval to do so but, because of limitations of the existing septic system and contamination of other areas of the site, is planning a renovation of the existing structure.

The parking area, which Cugno described as a "sea of asphalt" that is currently unmarked, will also be updated. New plantings and lighting will be added as well as part of the redevelopment.

The Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposal with opportunity for public comment on Wednesday, June 28 at Town Hall. Refer to townofreddingct.org for any updates on the time and location of the public hearing.

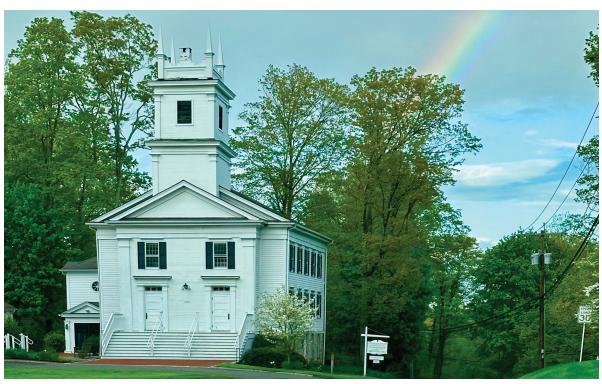


Photo by Silvia Erskine

Spring showers and sunshine brought a stunning rainbow over Redding Center, shown here above First Church of Christ, Congregational on Cross Highway. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, with credit of course, please e-mail editor@reddingsentinel.org

Short-term rentals subcommittee charge approved By Rocco Valluzzo

Taking the next step in the possible regulation of short-term rentals or Airbnbs in town, the Redding Board of Selectmen approved a draft of the charge of a new short-term rentals subcommittee at its meeting on Monday, May 15.

Redding does not currently regulate short-term rentals or Airbnbs, nor do many of its neighboring communities. Last September, in response to a recommendation by the Planning Commission, the Selectmen

unanimously agreed to establish a committee to research the relevant issues and draft a proposal regarding the regulation of shortterm rentals.

The charge, as drafted, states that the Redding Board of Selectmen establishes the short-term rentals subcommittee to conduct research on the regulation of short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods in rural and suburban communities in Connecticut. The subcommittee will be tasked in drafting a report on their findings to the Board of Selectmen and recommendations for further action. The report should be presented at a public meeting of the Board of Select-

The subcommittee shall strive to complete its charge within a six-month period. The committee shall include at minimum one representative each from the Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, and Economic Development Committee, who Continued on page 3

Redding's Big Outdoors

Blackman's Brook and Huckleberry Swamp | By Cole Tucker-Walton



Photo by Cole Tucker-Walton

I return from New Orleans on Wednesday night, and on Thursday morning, I park on Charlie Hill Road to explore Blackman's Brook Trail on a strip of land owned by Redding Land Trust. (This is the northernmost section of Westway, one of Redding's "long trails" connecting multiple preserves.) I hear water rushing over the dam that forms Blackman's Pond. The sun is shining, and the trailhead is shaded by dark birches, maples, and spruces.

Catbirds sing and hairy Sol-

omon's seal has grown its white bells. Below the dam, I cross a cheerful stream on creaky boards. The Book of Trails promised old oaks, and here they are, thicklimbed. One of them lies toppled and turning into food. Every several yards, the root beer river to my right catches the sun.

I hear the tk-tk-tock tock tock of a yellow-bellied sapsucker drilling in the canopy. Across the brook, I bend down to examine the stippled verdigris and copper canes of the notorious Japanese knotweed. Aside from a tight tunnel of multiflora rose, the trail is easy walking. Optimistic bunches of wild geranium and heartstamped persicaria dot the path; beside me, cinnamon ferns have begun to grow their spore-dotted

cinnamon sticks. Suddenly, I see a spray of small yolky flowers on long stems golden ragwort, a plant popular among native plant gardeners, but that I've never seen wild. There's another on a rock as I cross the brook again. Up the bank, golden ragwort is everywhere; I'd visit the trail for this alone.

I startle a catbird out of the

10

11

bushes. Dozens of tiny bees flit among wild strawberry leaves and meadow rue at my feet. I pluck a dog tick from my knee and admire its patterning. As I cross the brook a third time, bird poop splats on the rock in front of my shoe. No shortage of company in the woods.

Past a junction, the dominant trees are tall, straight maples, splotchy with moss, casting heavier shade. A sweet scent and the loony tune of a catbird follow me to Topstone Road, where a split and faded sign points west for Topstone Park.

Back at the junction, I turn onto Steichen's Westway Connector. I'm eager to see Huckleberry Swamp, an adjacent parcel described in The Book of Trails but not shown on the Hiking Project app. The Connector passes between fences. People are talking in their backyard, but I can't see them, and they can't see me, glowing chartreuse in the filtered light of a thicket. As at the top of Little River North, I feel like I just stepped through a curtain into some birdside world. A catbird mews softly as I watch him.

Continued on page 9

Early voting to debut in CT next year

By Rob Sample

On Thursday, May 4, the Connecticut House of Representatives passed – by a large margin – a bill that will ultimately bring early voting to the Nutmeg State.

The measure calls for a 14day early-voting period prior to Election Day each year, beginning in 2024. The full 14 days would only apply to the November general election: A seven-day period would apply for state and local primaries, with four days of early voting for special elections and presidential primaries.

Left undecided is the amount of funding the State will provide to Connecticut's 169 towns, which administer the voting process.

"We're now waiting for that part of the bill to be finalized," noted Redding Town Clerk Michele Grande. "The Town Clerks and the Registrars of Voters are all just waiting to see what the plan is going to be for us to successfully administer early voting. It will be up to the registrars in each town, including here in Redding, to provide staffing for the additional days of voting."

Grande noted that the Secretary of the State's Office is working on the logistics and funding for the municipalities. "There will definitely be a financial impact on municipalities as they will need to hire poll workers to staff the 14 days of early voting, and safes/lockboxes will be needed to safely secure the voted ballots until election day when they will be counted using the tabulators," Grande pointed out.

Grande explained that early voting will likely follow a process akin to voting with an absentee ballot. Under that system, a Redding resident would visit Town Hall and obtain an absentee ballot from Grande's office.

"After filling it out, the person would then hand the ballot back to me," she explained. The ballot doesn't get scanned until Election Day itself. This is the same type of scanner used when voting in person on Election Day, and it's important to election integrity that no ballots get read or tabulated in advance.

"This raises the question, where are we going to store the ballots?" Grande said, noting that if there are a lot of them, the State will need to provide funding for additional safes or lockboxes to keep them secure and confidential.

"The State has said it is going to pay for all this, but we won't really know until early voting happens just what will be needed," Grande added.

Connecticut voters approved a constitutional amendment last November that allows for the implementation of early voting. The state remains one of just four that does not permit it. Legislators have since been debating a range of early-voting periods, and Secretary of State Stephanie

Continued on page 10

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Editorial

Though National Gun Violence Awareness Day is in a few weeks on June 2, it is challenging not to have every day steeped in awareness of the toll that gun violence has had on families in this country.

We wrote in our December 1 editorial of the strict gun laws in Connecticut and the importance of pushing back against out-of-state gun rights groups' attempts to roll-back these protections in the wake of the *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen* decision. Even so, last year gun-related homicides reached a 25-year high in the state.

In the current legislative session, Connecticut lawmakers are considering House Bill 6667 – "An Act Addressing Gun Violence". This bill aims to close loopholes in the state's assault weapons ban along with the following:

- Strengthen penalties related to the state's ban on large-capacity magazines to make that ban enforceable
- Increase the age to purchase all firearms to 21
- Ban the open carrying of firearms in public, while continuing to allow concealed carry with a permit except in certain locations
- Limit handgun purchases to one per month
- Update the ban on unregistered "ghost guns"
- Require a 10-day waiting period before purchasing a firearm
- Increase education requirements for firearm licenses
- Require safe storage regardless of who lives at a given residence
- Improve the design safety standards for semiautomatic handguns
- Make the commission of a family violence crime or being a fugitive an automatic disqualifier for holding a pistol permit
- Prohibit the carrying of any loaded long gun in a vehicle
- · Require trigger locks for all firearm purchases

There are 41 legislators who have co-signed the bill, including Redding's Representative Anne Hughes of the 135th Congressional District and State Senator Ceci Maher of the 26th Senate District. The legislative session ends June 7 – contact your legislators with your views on the bill by using the list at cga.ct.gov/asp/content/townlist.asp

There are also opportunities at the town level to honor victims of gun violence and bring awareness to the issue. Last year, nearly 20 municipalities across Connecticut proclaimed June 2 Gun Violence Awareness Day. Redding can be a part of this effort, with the hope that in the future, the threat of gun violence is curbed, and such proclamations will no longer be required with such urgency.

Legal Notice

Please take notice that a public information session will be held in connection with a proposal by MCM Holdings, LLC ("MCM") for development of a wireless telecommunications tower facility located at 3 Marchant Road (Camp Hoyt) in the Town of Redding. The public information session will be held at Town Hall, 100 Hill Road, on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 6:30 PM.

This wireless telecommunications tower facility is proposed to meet Verizon's need and the needs of other FCC wireless carriers for new infrastructure to reliably serve the public in the immediate area. MCM would own, maintain, and operate the tower facility. The facility will be unmanned with no sanitary or water facilities and will consist of a monopole structure that is 150' tall located within a fenced compound in the center of the approximately 172acre host parcel with access from Simpaug Turnpike. Verizon would install panel antennas and related equipment at a centerline height of 146' above grade level and would install an equipment cabinet, a back-up battery cabinet, and a propane-fueled backup generator on a 10' x 20' concrete pad in the northeastern corner of the fenced compound. The tower would be designed for future shared use by

other FCC licensed wireless carri-

The Connecticut Siting Council has exclusive jurisdiction over the location and siting of wireless telecommunications towers in the State of Connecticut and as such, no local zoning or land use approvals are required. The public information session that is the subject of this notice is being held as part of MCM's municipal consultation with the Town of Redding in accordance with Section 16-50l of the Connecticut General Statutes. The purpose of the municipal consultation is to provide information to the Town about the proposed facility so that the Town can provide MCM with recommendations or preferences regarding the siting of the proposed wireless telecommunications facility. ■

> Cuddy & Feder LLP Attorneys for MCM Holdings, LLC 445 Hamilton Avenue, 14th Floor White Plains, New York 10601 (914) 761-1300

Letters to the Editor

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

To the Editor,

The Redding Democratic Town Committee is currently seeking nominees for this year's 2023 municipal election.

We are looking for potential candidates who will support the Democratic Party's values and mission on Redding boards or commissions. If your readers are interested in learning more, they can visit reddingdemocrats.org for descriptions of the roles and where they can connect with me directly.

The Committee is excited to hear from Democrats who want to make a difference in their community through public service.

If you or your readers have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out and ask.

Meghan Ely Nominating Chair Redding Democratic Town Committee Apple Lane

To the Editor,

I'm writing in response to Douglas Renfield-Miller's letter that appeared in the May 11 edition of the Sentinel, in which he indicates that he does not think speeding is a problem on Sidecut Road.

I've lived on Sidecut Road for 23 years. Speeding is a huge problem, and I've tried to address it multiple times over the years, but to no avail. I can understand why Mr. Renfield-Miller may feel inconvenienced by the extra stop sign that was recently installed, but I invite him to sit in a chair at the end of my driveway for a couple of hours so that he can see for himself the degree to which people speed down Sidecut Road all day long, often at dangerous speeds.

Larry Leibowitz Sidecut Road

To the Editor,

Cole Tucker-Walton's poetic description of his walk through the Bogus Brook Preserve has an enchanting fairy tale quality. I am in awe of Cole's woodman's knowledge and his clear love for all that the trail yields. Thank you to the Redding Sentinel for the Redding's Big Outdoors column each week. It's like comfort food soothing and satisfying. But better - not fattening.

Jill Edelman Barberie Shady Lane

To the Editor,

The Redding Garden Club would like to thank all who came out to our annual Plant Sale on May 13. We were delighted to see so many friends and neighbors from Redding and neighboring communities. It is always a pleasure to share our love of plants.

Our event was enhanced by the support and participation of Redding's community of organizations with common missions of protecting and enjoying our environment: Redding Historical Society, Backyard Beekeepers, Highstead, New Pond Farm Education Center, Norwalk River Valley Trail, The Redding Grange, Redding Land Trust, Redding Neighbors & Newcomers, and the Trail Tenders. We greatly value our partnership with these groups.

Sarah Cummings Redding Garden Club Plant Sale Chair High Ridge Road

Investigation into February 14 fire concludes | By Jessie Wright

The investigation of a devastating fire at 10 Diamond Hill Road has concluded, according to Michael R. Grasso, Fire Marshal for Redding Fire District #2. The fire broke out late February 14, 2023, destroying much of the home and claiming the life of Brien Karlson, a sixth-grade student at John Read

Middle School.

A joint investigation of the fire's origin and cause was conducted by the West Redding Fire Marshal's Office, the Redding Police Department, and the Connecticut State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit. A press release provided by the Fire

Marshal's office said that the fire was determined to have originated along the wall of the first-floor mudroom, but, due to the extensive damage, the exact cause of the fire could not be determined. There is no criminal aspect to this fire

Correction to the May 11, 2023 Issue:

The headline of an article on page 2 contained an incorrect word. The headline should read "Person killed by falling tree". We regret this error.

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Thank you

Gilbert & Bennett

Progress Report & Public Forum

Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Public Forum Monday, May 22, 2023 at 6 pm

> at the Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road, Redding CT

You are invited to attend a progress report on the environmental & structural assessments at town-owned Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill & a discussion of next steps.

The meeting will provide a forum for public comment & will be livestreamed & recorded.

Participants: Tighe & Bond—Engineers • First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton • Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee • Economic Development Committee

For more information on the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill, visit: bit.ly/3W7pgpQ

Redding Sentinel Ltd

News and Views of Redding, Connecticut

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Single copy price \$3.00 / Annual subscription \$85.00

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

New Topstone playground on drawing board By Rob Sample



Photo courtesy of Town of Redding

At a recent meeting, the Topstone Improvement Working Group of the Park and Recreation Commission unanimously approved allocating up to \$4,000 for engineering drawings and site work at Topstone Park.

This is the first step in an initiative to make multiple improvements at Topstone - which is Redding's sole municipal park. It also marks the initial expenditure of funds from the \$150,000 ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant made in 2022 for Topstone improvements.

"The \$150,000 ARPA grant will facilitate improvements long requested by town residents," noted Angela Caes, Co-Chairman of the nine-person Working Group. "Small items such as a diaper changing table will be considered alongside larger concepts such as greater seating, shaded areas for camp and performances, and play structures."

Last spring, the Town oversaw the removal of a 15-year-old wooden playground that posed equipment-safety and maintenance issues. This three-part play structure included an open-play area as well as a structure where

kids could climb, slide, and crawl through tunnels. The third part of the structure was for younger children and was equipped with tactile buttons, wheels, and other items for play. The grant funding will, in part, fund the construction of a new

playscape to be built. "Our intention is to provide innovative play structures that enhance the opportunities for children to play," said Caes. "Play structures will typically be focused on age groups such as 2-5 years and 5-12 years. The structures will also offer options compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to meet the needs of all children.

"We also want the new struc-

ture to fit into the landscape of Topstone Park," she continued. "But in order to move ahead, we will need to have engineering designs."

Topstone Park encompasses 280 acres of preserved forest, a 25-acre pond, and a 3.61-mile trail system. It is open year-round, though vehicle and parking access is not always available in the winter months. The pond beachfront offers residents and visitors a lifeguard-supervised swimming area during the summer that's equipped with restrooms and changing facilities.

In addition, there are picnic tables and grills, a basketball shooting area, and a new dog park - which comes complete with a "watering hole." The latter was the brainchild of Ian Cedusky, an Eagle Scout from Redding's Troop 15.

The Topstone Improvement Working Group is working toward a series of recommendations to be submitted to the Park and Recreation Commission and, ultimately, to the Board of Selectmen. Refer to townofreddingct.org/events for times and dates of meetings, all of which are open to the public.

"It's a long process, but one we need to do to conform to the requirements of the Town," said Caes. "Topstone is a wonderful town resource, and by making these improvements, we aim to have a big, beneficial impact on our town."

Wire Mill Committee calls for further investigation

By Rocco Valluzzo

Based on the findings of an ecological risk assessment, the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill Advisory Committee has recommended that the Board of Selectmen proceed with a supplemental environmental assessment for the 44 acres of Town-owned land in Georgetown.

James Olsen of Tighe & Bond, the Middletown-based environmental engineering firm that conducted the ecological assessment, told the Committee at its May 11 meeting that with the historic operation of the Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill, the discharge of industrial waste and metals (like lead, arsenic, and antimony) into the Norwalk River is an area of con-

"On all these Brownfield sites on rivers in Connecticut, this is a very common issue," he said. "In the Brass Valley there are countless mills on the river that all had the same issue."

A study conducted in 2007 by Tighe & Bond looked at risks associated with four ecological habitats in a channelized portion of the Norwalk River site where the river walls are. While there was no risk of harm found for the survival of fish and aquatic life, semi-aquatic wildlife, or the terrestrial plant community, there was risk for the bottom macro invertebrates, such

as worms, crayfish, larvae, and other creatures that live in the sediment.

Olsen noted that these findings would likely need updating and further discussion with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP). Tighe & Bond also has a couple of ecological sub-consultants that it uses who are experts in this area.

"So, it looks like there might have to be some sediment removal from the river through the site, which I'm not surprised," said Olsen. "That's where the highest concentrations are. The good news is it doesn't appear to extend beyond the site. Perhaps some of the future river wall work can be tied to that in some kind of overall plan or part of a future grant application."

Olsen plans to meet with Tighe & Bond's ecological sub-consultant and review recommendations together. There are certain tests, such as bioavailability tests, to determine the concentrations of contaminants and exposure levels for living organisms.

The Committee will review the reports, finalize them, and discuss recommendations for further investigations at a public presentation on Monday, May 22 at 6:00 p.m. at Redding Community Center.

Short-term rentals subcommittee charge approved / continued from page 1

shall be appointed by their respective committees as well as the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

"If that committee believes it's narrowly defined, they'll come back to us and tell us," said Selectwoman Peg O'Donnell of the charge. "If we need to direct them I think this does it. It directs

them pretty seriously what it is we are after."

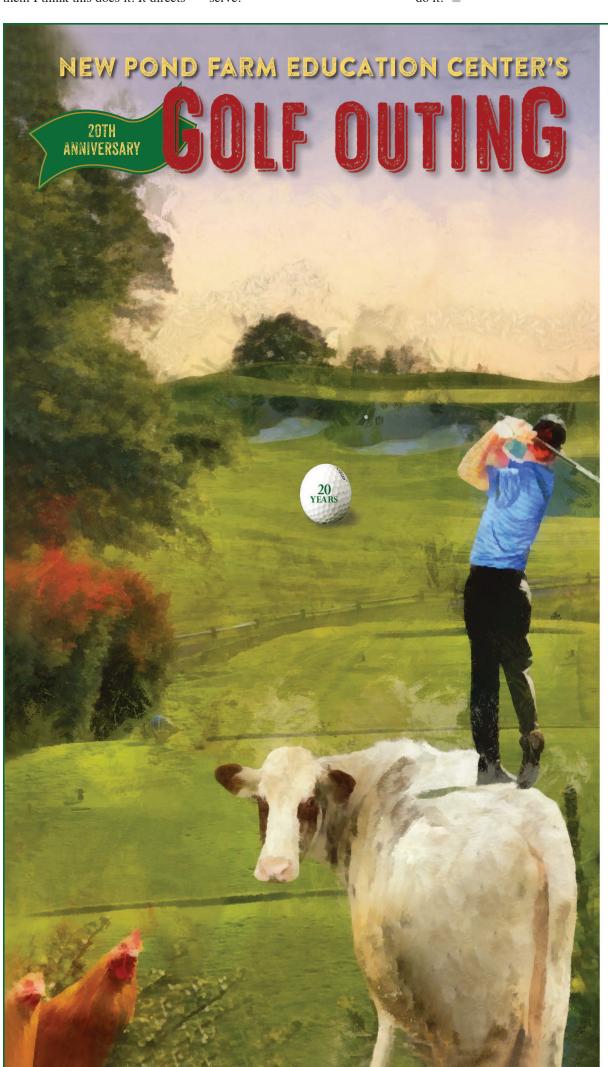
First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said the Selectmen will send a letter to the Chairs of the Planning and Zoning Commissions requesting the appointment of one member to serve.

"We think this is the appropriate charge," said Planning Commission Chairman Dan Barrett. "I think it should start narrowly. If we need to change it, we can come back to the Board to change it, but I think this is the right thing to do and this is the right way to do it." ■



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Falcons split with Newtown, Masuk

Girls track and field | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Joel Barlow high's Hannah Gourad throws the discus during a girls track meet at Newtown on Tuesday, May 9. Barlow beat Masuk 97-54 but lost 94-57 to Newtown.

Additional depth in certain events would have worked to the advantage of the Joel Barlow girls track and field team in its meet last week.

The Falcons were light on scorers in a few areas when they took on Masuk and Newtown on Tuesday, May 9. While they had enough to out-distance the former 97-54, they came up short 94-57 to the latter at Blue and Gold Stadium in Newtown.

Newtown's depth became apparent in a number of events, in-

cluding the 100 meters, in which it took the top two overall places. Third went to Barlow's Jenna Najjar in 13.2 seconds, just ahead of teammate Olivia Taylor, who had the same time for a personal record.

The same two also scored for Barlow in the 200 meters. Najjar was second in 26.8 and Taylor followed in 27.4, both personal records. Fifth went to Sedonia Holub in 27.8, a personal record as well.

The Nighthawks dominated the 400, 800 and 3,200 meters – the

Falcons did not score against them in any of these events. Barlow, however, fared better in the 1,600 with Ally Bardani and Olivia Kotula going one-two, respectively. The former clocked a 5:47 and the

latter a 5:50, both personal records. Two more personal records came in the 100 high hurdles, as Jordan Carr was second in 17.5 and Sofia Benitez was third in 18.6. The latter also scored for the Falcons in the 300 intermediate hurdles with a second place time and personal record of 51.8.

It was a close finish in the 4x100 relay. Taylor, Sedonia Holub, Najjar, and Emma Bourgeault combined to win it in 51.4, 0.1 seconds ahead of Newtown. Holub, Najjar, Katherine Czerkawski, and Bourgeault ran the 4x400 and took second in 4:24.6.

Barlow followed with a number of standout performances in the field events. Although Newtown took four of the top five spots in the javelin, the Falcons were first with Isabelle Wildgoose's toss of 88 feet 9 inches, a personal record.

Carr cleared 11 feet to win the pole vault and Anna Asmodeo had 7 feet 6 inches for fourth overall. Barlow's points in the long jump came from Carr (second) and Bourgeault (third) with distances of 15 feet 6 inches and 15 feet 5 inches, both personal records. The former also took second in the triple jump with 32 feet 10 inches, also a personal record.

Barlow, now 9-2 overall, takes part in the South-West Conference finals on Monday, May 22 at Bunnell High at 3:00 p.m. ■

Barlow trounces Trumbull

Girls lacrosse | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo
Allison Wick scored three goals for
the Joel Barlow High girls lacrosse
team in its game against Glastonbury on Saturday, May 13. Barlow

lost 11-9, but beat Trumbull 14-2 two days earlier.

Aside from giving up an early goal, the Joel Barlow High girls varsity lacrosse team had little

difficulty in its game at Trumbull

last week.

The Falcons trailed by one point last Thursday, May 11. Shortly thereafter, their attack stepped up, scoring goal after goal in a 14-2 win at McDougall Stadium.

Trumbull's only lead came at 22:35 in the first half, courtesy of a goal by Jayne Hughes.

In the meantime, the Falcons got busy, netting five straight goals in under six minutes. Julia Champagne led the charge with a three-goal hat trick. Allison Wick and Allie Ogden added one and two goals respectively as the Falcons took a lead they would never lose.

Wick added another and Savannah Herman tallied one of her own in the time remaining in the half. Abby Ho scored what turned out to be Trumbull's last goal of the day with 5:54 left in the first half, but at that point, the Falcons owned an 8-2 advantage.

When play resumed, Barlow's defense stepped up, thwarting any threat from the Eagles who

managed only three shots. At the other end of the field, the Falcons' attack remained sharp.

Herman scored three more goals to lead the way. Olivia Jones scored two of her own, and Barlow's Ruby Ludwig added one as well to seal the victory.

Drew Williams had a quiet day in goal for Barlow, having to make just five saves.

The Falcons were in for a much more evenly-matched contest when they hosted Glastonbury on Saturday, May 13. Several lead changes and ties highlighted the action before Barlow came up on the short side of an 11-9 score.

Barlow struck first with goals by Avery Santangeli and Wick in the first seven minutes, but the Guardians answered with three straight goals of their own. Two more from Champagne helped the Falcons tie it at 4-4 going into halftime.

A particular source of frustration for Barlow was Glastonbury's Stephanie Koppy. The junior netted six goals, including two early in the second half to put her team up 6-4.

Not to be outdone, the Falcons responded with Ludwig tallying one and Herman getting two to give the Falcons back the lead with 20:44 left to play. That was still a lot of time, however, and three more ties followed.

Wick's goal with 12:40 left gave the Falcons their last lead at 9-7. Four unanswered goals by the Guardians, however, ended Barlow's chances.

Wick led Barlow with three goals and Champagne netted two, as did Herman (one assist). Ludwig (one assist) and Santangeli had one apiece. Ogden had three assists.

Williams had three saves in goal for Barlow, which is now 9-6 overall. ■

Falcons keep streak intact

Boys volleyball By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Grayson Vanderberg receives a serve during a Joel Barlow High boys varsity volleyball match on Friday, May 12. Barlow won 3-0.

Close matches have not been that common for the Joel Barlow High boys varsity volleyball team in recent seasons. The Falcons have been unbeaten since 2021, handily defeating most opponents since then. Their closest threat came when they hosted Masuk on Tuesday, May 9.

For the first time in three seasons, the Falcons had to play a five-set match. Things went down to the wire before the Falcons held on for a 3-2 (25-22, 25-27, 25-23,12-25,17-15) win. It was Barlow's 62nd straight win.

"They have a lot of really good players," said Barlow Head Coach Kevin Marino. "Their outside hitter Nate McCauley is fantastic."

The Panthers held an 11-7 lead in the first set before Barlow battled back. A three-point service run by Ryan Schmid put the hosts up 24-20 before sealing the win.

The second set proved even closer. It was a one or two-point affair for much of the way and very much up for grabs near the end.

But with the score tied at 25-25, McCauley served up two points to put Masuk over the top.

Things were not that different in the third set, another two-point contest. Barlow clung to a 25-24 lead before scoring the winning point on Dan Parkin's serve.

Barlow had some trouble in the fourth set, as the Panthers went up 16-7 and never looked back.

"They (Masuk) played great," said Marino. "We made too many unforced errors."

Barlow's streak was in jeopardy in the final set. It trailed 13-12 before calling a timeout in order to settle down and eventually tied it at 15-15, winning back the serve.

With Cameron Lynn at the ser-

vice line, Barlow secured the next two points to remain unbeaten.

Hosting Pomperaug three days later, Barlow had a somewhat easier time. While they did have a close call in the second set, they held on in that one and took the rest in a 3-0 (25-17, 25-23, 25-13)

The Falcons were also holding their third annual "Play for Luke" match to raise money for the Jordan Porco Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to mental health support and suicide prevention. The event is held in honor of former Barlow volleyball player Luke Glidden, who passed away in 2018.

Early in the match, the Panthers were helped by some strong net play from Zack Farren in particular, with the score tied at 11-11 in the first set. After winning back the serve, the Falcons reeled off five straight points on the serve of Alex Llach, including a pair of aces. Kills by Schmid helped increase the lead and eventually close out the set

Numerous ties and lead changes highlighted the next set, as both teams battled for supremacy. With things tied at 19-19, Llach's kill won back the serve and Barlow held the lead the rest of the way.

Up 10-8 in the final set, the Falcons got six straight service points from Llach with kills by Noah Avery, Parkin, and Schmid to go up 18-10 and end the threat.

"We really looked at today as an opportunity to play as close to our best game, and we did that," said Marino. "We're obviously still working on a lot of things in the gym everyday, but I'm happy with the way they played today."

Barlow, now 18-0, finishes the regular season this week before entering the South-West Conference tournament as the top seed.



Falcons rout Bulldogs

Boys lacrosse | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo Joel Barlow High's Jack Gilbert, right, battles Bunnell-Stratford's Brandin Bryant for the ball during a boys varsity lacrosse game on Monday, May 8. Barlow won 22-1.

What started out as a boys lacrosse game soon turned into a scoring clinic of sorts when Joel Barlow High hosted Bunnell-Stratford Co-op last week.

The Falcons' attack was simply too much for their opponent to handle on Monday, May 8. A total of 12 different players scored in what resulted in a 22-1 win on Senior Day.

It was the most lopsided win of the season for Barlow so far.

Despite missing a number of shots early on, Barlow's attack soon got in gear. Griffin Ellis started things for Barlow with a pair of goals.

Tyler Ramirez added one off a quick flip from Ian Lent a minute later, which marked the beginning of a five-goal scoring run in two-and-a-half minutes, with Lent, Ramirez, Joey Bonanno, and Danny Shaban all finding the net.

Up 7-0 with less than 20 seconds left in the first quarter, the Falcons still had time for two more tallies from Shaban, the last coming with just a second remaining for a hat trick and a 9-0 lead.

As the second quarter got underway, the Falcons scored five more in a two-minute span courtesy of Ramirez, Ellis, Spencer Skiddell, and Forrest Greiner (two) for a 14-0 lead. Before the half was done, Adam Goodacre and Joey Bonanno scored as well for an insurmountable 16-0 at halftime.

Barlow's attack eased up in the second half, netting only six more goals. The Bulldogs also managed to end the shutout with a lone goal of their own.

Besides Shaban (six assists), Ellis, Skiddell, and Ramirez (four assists) also recorded three goals. Joey Bonanno and Greiner each had two.

Lent (one assist), Luke Bishop, Goodacre, Dylan Greiner, Andrew Zaia, and Chad Pranzo scored one goal apiece. Luke Bonanno and Frankie Branca had two assists each while Jack Gilbert, Scott Romano, Kaden Holub and Quinn Pranzo each had one.

Barlow won 15 of 21 face-offs with Dylan Taylor winning nine. Cole Bonanno and Rob Krueger shared time in goal, the former making one save in the first half and the latter getting two in the second

Barlow finished the regular season this week before starting the South-West Conference play-offs.

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Barlow Eco Club

Thinking globally and acting locally



Photo courtesy of Joel Barlow Eco Club

The Joel Barlow Eco Club often spends weekends doing garbage clean-up at sites throughout Southern Connecticut. Here, Anna Asmodeo and Catie Gutowski work on a major cleanup alongside the Norwalk River underneath I-95's Yankee Doodle Bridge.

Saving the planet might seem to be a very complex goal - but taken together, many small initiatives can have a great impact. About 30 of those environmentally conscious helping hands are right down the street, at Joel Barlow High School's Eco Club.

Now that the weather is warm, you'll often find members of the Eco Club at local beaches, rivers, and streams, picking up refuse that other people casually discard. Their efforts help make such spaces more pleasant for the public to enjoy – and ecosystems such as the Long Island Sound safer for fish and other wildlife.

It's all part of a larger effort to help make the world a better, and cleaner, place. As the Club's mission statement puts it: "Our group of students aims to provide various information, activities, and guides to help you to reduce your own carbon footprint and create an eco-friendly lifestyle."

To be sure, Easton and Redding are both, by most measures, rural and bucolic. The group's clean-up targets often are much less so.

"I distinctly remember my first time at a clean-up at Jennings Beach in Fairfield," noted Catie Gutowski, a senior at Barlow and the Club's co-leader. "We picked up 300 cigarette butts in the space of a few hours, as well as a lot of small plastic pieces left behind by beachgoers. And whenever we go back, there's always a large volume of trash for us to pick up. Last time we were there, we removed 500 pounds of trash."

Gutowski noted that when a clean-up is scheduled for a beach or other public spot, any interested person from the public is welcome to pitch in to help get the job done.

"We try to sign up to assist with those local efforts that we think will work best for our organization," said Tobias Manayath, also a Barlow senior and the other co-leader of the Eco Club.

The group's most challenging clean-up was at a site alongside the Norwalk River near the Yankee Doodle Bridge, the section of I-95 which spans the river. There, members removed construction waste as well as garbage tossed from speeding cars.

The Eco Club has also embarked on a worthwhile project right at Barlow: Composting food waste in the school cafeteria. "We began trying to do it when I was a freshman at Barlow, but because of Covid that didn't happen," said Gutowski. "We're now collecting food waste every day at the cafeteria."

There, the Eco Club's impossible-to-miss red bins collect fruits, vegetables, bread, and paper products. The contents are poured each week into a larger container outside the building. It all gets stirred and turned, and eventually becomes compost for use as fertil-

Besides supporting local growers, this Eco Club initiative helps acquaint the larger community with the value of composting. Gutowski explains that any homeowner can start a backyard compost heap with leaves raked during autumn to which food waste can be added. Good candidates for composting include fruit and vegetables scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags and coffee filters, and crushed eggshells. No good are meats, dairy products, or grease. The result is nutrient-dense material that can enrich soil and help with any

size of backyard garden.

"The coolest thing about it is it is one of the best ways we can reduce the waste that goes into our landfills," said Manayath. "Even if you just dump your compost in the woods behind your house, it will have a beneficial impact."

Besides finding creative ways to deal with waste, the Eco Club encourages people to waste less simply by using less. "My family is from India, and my parents have always taught me to only take as much food as I am going to eat," noted Manayath. "This is a good practice for everybody to do, and it can lead us to greatly reduce food waste."

The group also has sponsored several children's projects. Together with the Easton Library, it recently hosted an event for kids that involved planting sunflowers. Other local initiatives involve work with the garden clubs in both Easton and Redding, and partnerships with the GoGreen initiative in neighboring Wilton. It will also host a composting workshop at the Easton Library on July 10.

Gutowski, Manayath, and many of their Eco Club colleagues have all taken environmental science classes at Barlow. The course immerses students in environmental study and how an individual can pursue environmental sustainability. It even devotes attention to local flora, covering topics such as medicinal plants and local invasive species.

Both Manayath and Gutowski lived in much more crowded surroundings earlier in their childhoods - Manayath in Stamford and Gutowski in Norwalk. While not as bucolic as where they live now, each developed an appreciation for nature at a young age.

"I was a PBS kid," said Manayth. "I remember watching an 'eco game' on PBS, which explored how to make your house ecological. Even back then, I wanted to help the environment."

"Living here has definitely shifted my perspective," said Gutowski. "The only stores here are places where you can buy locally-produced food, and I've met some of the people who own those

Want to learn more? The Eco Club will be one of the student organizations to be showcased at next week's Barlow Palooza. It takes place next Wednesday, May 24, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Joel Barlow High School at 100 Black Rock Turnpike. ■

Middle schoolers delight in

Once Upon a Mattress

Photos by Jaime Bairaktaris









Students at John Read Middle School performed and ran tech for the musical Once Upon a Mattress on May 4-6.

Barlow Palooza

Celebrating learning inside and outside of school By Jessie Wright

On Wednesday, May 24, community members of all ages are invited to Barlow Palooza to enjoy first-hand the breadth and depth of students' interests, learning opportunities, and projects at Joel Barlow High School.

"Barlow Palooza was started as a way to celebrate student learning, and the impetus for that was to give a platform and event to celebrate all the things students do both inside and outside of school," explained Tim Huminski, a Barlow English teacher and Director of the Writing Center who heads up the

Now in its 17th year, Barlow Palooza features student presentations, a student art show, musical performances, handson demonstrations by student groups, food truck fare, and more alongside a Science Symposium with speakers and Q&As.

A slate of student presentations from Barlow's Senior Passages program, a capstone course in which students create self-designed courses of study, will be running throughout the evening. Barlow Palooza serves as a showcase for the seniors' projects and a chance for them to receive feedback from community members and subject matter experts. Some of the Passages projects this year include self-published novels, jazz composition, an exploration of adoption culture, an original screenplay, and original scripts for

a new tabletop roleplaying game

The event taps into Barlow's "Community Assets Network", a group of parents and community members who have agreed to help students as they explore real-world projects and areas of interest. Members of the network will attend the Passages presentations and provide feedback.

"I have two students who are self-publishing novels," said Huminski as he explained the power of the network. "So, how can we put them in touch with experts in the field to gain some insight into this world, into their study, and things that they should be focusing on? They can ask them content-specific questions about their own process and how to best achieve what their vision is."

Everyone is welcome to enjoy the event, where, weather permitting, there will be activities and celebrations of learning both indoors and outdoors.

"People can go, walk around, get a bite to eat, they can listen to some music, listen to some projects, see some presentations, see some demonstrations," Huminski said. "It's a great night to come and see the wonderful diversity of learning and creativity that is going on in the ER9 community."

Barlow Palooza will be held Wednesday, May 24 from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Joel Barlow High School, 100 Black Rock Turnpike. ■

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The Zalmon Read Barn Photograph by Charley Couch

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All you need is popcorn

Free cinema series for seniors at the Ridgefield Playhouse

By Pamela Brown

What better way to spend the afternoon than going to the movies - for free! The Senior Cinema Series, a program by the Ridgefield Playhouse, is presenting screenings of six classic films for seniors throughout the summer. "While the films have been selected for our senior audience, all films are open to the community," said Ashley Paltauf, Managing Director, Operations & Development. "We invite you to bring your friends, cool off in our beautiful theater, and enjoy these classic films on the big screen, the way they were meant to be enjoyed." A fullystaffed concession stand offers popcorn, snacks, and hot and cold beverages.

The line-up begins on Tuesday, May 23 with Grumpy Old Men and follows up with The Bucket List (June 15); Fences (June 20); Something's Gotta Give (July 11); Chinatown (July 25); and Going in Style (August 8).

The films were selected by Robin Ronai, Ridgefield Playhouse's Film and Events Manager, who researched the cast and the box office for the movies' original runs and felt the films were most appropriate for a more mature audience. "We wanted to showcase timeless classics. For instance, winner of best Original Screenplay in 1975, Chinatown stars Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway, both nominated for best Actor/Actress that year. You'll see films featuring Morgan Freeman, Diane Keaton, George Burns, and

Art Carney," said Paltauf, who also invites the public to offer suggestions for next year's line-up.

The Ridgefield Playhouse is hoping to make the Senior Cinema Series an annual event. "It's a great way to come in and beat the heat during the summer, enjoy a movie in our air-conditioned theater, and socialize with your friends in our newly renovated lobby," she said.

Here's a short summary of the

Grumpy Old Men. For over 50 years, elderly next-door neighbors John and Max have been arguing and insulting each other – until the day Ariel moves across the street. With both men attracted to her, their rivalry heats up. Starring: Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, and Ann-Margret.

The Bucket List. Corporate billionaire Edward Cole and working-class mechanic Carter Chambers have nothing in common except for their terminal illnesses. Sharing a hospital room, they escape to accomplish a bucket list of all the things they've ever wanted to do before they die. Starring: Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman.

Fences. Troy Maxson is a sanitation worker in 1950s Pittsburgh who once dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player, but was deemed too old when the major leagues began admitting black athletes. Bitter over his missed opportunity,

Maxson creates further tension in his family when he squashes his son's chance to meet a college football recruiter. Starring: Denzel Washington and Viola Davis.

Something's Gotta Give. Harry Sanborn, an aged music industry executive, has a fondness for younger women, like Marin. Things get awkward when he suffers a heart attack at the home of Marin's mother, Erica, that sets off a love triangle. Starring: Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, and Keanu Reeves.

Chinatown. In 1937 Los Angeles, private investigator Jake 'J.J.' Gittes specializes in cheatingspouse cases. After taking on a convoluted case that is part of an even larger mystery, Gittes is caught in a web of conspiracy, deceit, corruption, and murder. Starring: Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway.

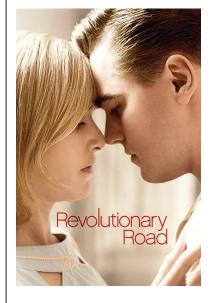
Going In Style. Joe, Al, and Willie are three old men who have resigned themselves to dying. One night, Joe hatches a scheme to put a bit of excitement back into their lives: robbing a bank. Starring: George Burns, Art Carney, and Lee Strasberg. ■

> For more information, visit ridgefieldplayhouse.org

Movie Series

Revolutionary Road

By Donna Christopher



A quaint Connecticut setting belies a dark drama of a young couple who leave the city to live the suburban American dream as their marriage unravels.

The 2008 movie Revolutionary Road is based on the 1961 novel by the same name by Richard Yates which was filmed throughout the region and has ties to Redding.

Kate Winslet (April) and Leonardo DiCaprio (Frank) star as the Wheelers, in their first film together since their blockbuster work in Titanic. Frank works in a meaningless job at Knox Business Machines and April is an aspiring actress who moves to the suburbs and raises two kids. Meanwhile, Frank is having an affair with Maureen, a colleague at work.

April and Frank aspire to escape from their mundane lives in the suburbs, and April proposes that they move to Paris to begin a new life there. The plan reignites excitement and closeness in their relationship, but before they have a chance to go to Paris, the story comes to a tragic end.

The movie includes scenes shot on Sasco Beach in Fairfield and the Wheeler's two-story, whiteshuttered house is in Darien. A train station in Thomaston is used for scenes when Frank starts his dreary commute to Grand Central

According to IMDb, Revolutionary Road also includes locations in Bethel, Greenwich, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, Redding, and Trumbull.

Yates does not identify the town where the Wheelers live on Revolutionary Road by name. However, Yates himself lived for a time in the 1950s with his wife and young daughter on Old Redding

Road in Redding, and it is plausible to suggest his experiences may have influenced his crafting of the

The author reportedly "loathed living in Redding" according to an interview in Moffly Media with Blake Bailey, the author of Yates's biography, A Tragic Honesty: The Life and Work of Richard Yates. The interview suggested his view came from high mortgage payments, unfulfilling work in public relations, and neighbors he considered thieves, among other reasons.

The quaint Connecticut life, however, is central to the storyline in both the book and the movie.

"A lot of people think it is one of the great American novels, an early, very sharp critique of suburban life, especially through the eyes of the wife," said Joe Myers, journalist and director of Programming for Focus on French Cinema and co-host of 'Now a Major Motion Picture!' podcast. "There'd been talk about a film, and finally one in 2008 with Sam Mendes (American Beauty) as director. He was coming off having won Best Director. He had a lot of clout."

Myers thinks the movie would have been a vehicle for Winslet to win an Academy Award, had she not starred in The Reader which came out around the same time.

"They (producers) moved heaven and earth, and she got the nomination and won for The Reader," Myers explained. "It was almost a decade out since Titanic. It got a lot of attention. What hurt the film (Revolutionary Road) a little bit is that it came out in December, and The Reader came out the same month," Myers said.

Myers described the movie as a "dark, downbeat story."

"It's revealed in the beauty of Connecticut," Myers said. "It is about the deadening impact of suburban life."

Still, the main theme may not be about life in the suburbs at all. As Yates himself said in a 1972 interview, "The book widely read as an anti-suburban novel, and that disappointed me. The Wheelers may have thought the suburbs were to blame for all their problems, but I meant it to be implicit in the text that that was their delusion, their problem, not mine." ■

The Quick:

Changing the way we see the world through the arts

By Justin Reynolds



Photos courtesy of The Quick



For more than 30 years, The Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts has been striving to fulfill its mission of creating "a dynamic and inclusive visual and performing arts center for the whole community that inspires intellectual curiosity, broadens perspectives, and transforms the way we see the world and how we interact with one another."

And that's exactly what Executive Director Peter Van Heerden and his team do.

Each season, The Quick -Fairfield University's arts center located at 1073 North Benson Road in Fairfield - offers robust programming, including jazz, classical, and world music concerts; dance performances; plays; and even circus acts.

The Center is also host to the Open VISIONS Forum, a speaker's series that featured the likes of Carl Bernstein, Bret Stephens, and Judy Woodruff this

Van Heerden has been The Quick's Executive Director for nearly 10 years. Originally from South Africa, Van Heerden who has a background in theater and performance - now lives in Westport.

"Our responsibility and duty as a higher education institution is to provide programming that challenges the perspectives of our students and community," Van Heerden said. "Good art changes the way you see the world. When you watch an incredible performance, you should walk out seeing the world in a different way."

In his role, he oversees a team of seven, as well as over 30 students who fill front of house and parking attendant roles.

Each year, Van Heerden and Lori Jones, Director of Programming and Audience Development, work together to create The Quick's schedule.

"We've met so many artists over the years that we invite, and we try and shop around for artists who we believe are at the pinnacle of their careers," Van Heerden said. "We provide programming that doesn't exist anywhere else between New

York and New Haven." Each year, The Quick also offers students the opportunity to participate in summer camps put on by the Missoula Children's Theatre, a renowned children's performing arts program that's been a partner of The Quick for

more than 30 years.

This summer, The Quick is offering six one-week sessions that accommodate up to 60 students at a time. Participating students attend a one-week session, spend through Thursday Monday learning and rehearsing a play, and perform it in front of an audience on Friday.

"We've had 400 kids pass through here each summer for 30 years," Van Heerden said. "That's a lot of kids."

Registration is currently open, and the first session kicks off July 10 - around the same time The Quick will announce its 2023-2024 season programming.

In addition to the summer camp program, The Quick also offers a Summer Intensives series, which features singing, acting, dance, fashion design classes, and more - along with a Wizard Academy, where students learn wizard history and lore.

There are several performing arts venues in the area. So, what sets The Quick apart?

"It's the caliber of our programming," Van Heerden explained. "We offer a diverse range of programming that accommodates our entire community."

While the arts center prides itself on its programming, Van Heerden also enjoys the fact that The Quick is a placemaking venue that encourages folks to visit Fairfield and experience all it has to offer. To this end, the Center has struck up partnerships with local businesses and restaurants to maximize the impact the arts have on the area's economy.

"Everyone's had a really tough time over the last couple of years - especially kids, who were taken out of the schools. We need the arts more than ever."

Why should folks visit The

"Not-for-profits and theater are some of the best kept secrets out there," Van Heerden said. "Take the risk, embrace the challenge, and get off your butt - Netflix will always be there when you get home."

> For more on The Quick including upcoming shows, events, and summer camp registration, visit quickcenter. fairfield.edu

Music Note

North County Band to play at Daryl's House Club

By Linda Meyer Mitchell



Redding-based North County Band will perform at the wellknown Daryl's House Club in Pawling, NY on Wednesday, May 24 at 7:00 p.m.

The famous music club was purchased and restored by Daryl Hall of Hall & Oates fame and has become one of the premiere intimate live music venues in the Northeast. The club was converted to the 18th century style of Hall's actual home where episodes of his Webby Award-winning series "Live From Daryl's House" were recorded.

North County Band is a Country/Americana band performing originals and covers and has been nominated for a New England Music Award. They performed earlier this month at the Mark Twain Library Frog Frolic. Come and support our local musicians on May 24. Tickets are \$10 general admission and \$15 reserved dinner seating and are available at darylshouseclub.com

Why Redding?

After years of world travels, the Laceys landed in Redding



Photo courtesy of Meadow Ridge Jody Lacey with her granddaughter, who lives in nearby Newtown.

For Jody and Nick Lacey, the decision to move to Redding was effortless. "After moving over fifteen times in the span of twenty-four years in the Air Force, what was one more move?" said Jody, who has been a resident of Meadow Ridge with Nick for two years. "Our decision was based on wanting and needing to be close to our daughter's family who live in Newtown."

The Laceys made their move to town from Annapolis, Maryland. Nick was an Air Force pilot, FAA executive, and aviation consultant while living in the Washington D.C. area. While in the Air Force, Nick was assigned to Special Missions at Andrews Air Force Base and flew several Vice Presidents, First Ladies, and high-ranking members of the Federal Government as a pilot on Air Force Two. Although loving both Annapolis and boating, after their only grandchild was born, the couple began contemplating a change. After visiting their daughter and her family in Connecticut consistently for eight years, the Laceys started seriously considering senior communities in the area. Visiting Meadow Ridge, they knew it was the perfect place for them. "On our initial visit to Meadow Ridge, my husband was blown away when we stepped into the Atrium. This place looks like a five-star hotel!" he said.

Redding's pastoral surroundings and welcoming atmosphere also attracted the Laceys. "We love the beauty of Redding, the historic churches and homes, the stone walls, the hills and trees. The area is so bucolic – the farms, open spaces, and the large acreage that each home seems to have," said Jody. "We've found that the people of Redding have pride in the history and the conservancy of this beautiful land and are delighted to share this love and appreciation with newcomers like us."

Jody is active in a variety of town events, including playing in several charity golf tournaments at the Redding Country Club. She and her husband recently joined New Pond Farm Education Center as members. "With our Meadow Ridge hiking group, we've walked some of the trails, and we attended the fall festival featuring the birds of prey and enjoyed the craft exhibits. Now that we're members, we look forward to participating in many more activities."

The Laceys also enjoy attending the Memorial Day Parade, the Concert on the Green series, visiting the gardens of InSitu, the Poverty Hollow Llama Farm, and the Buddhist Blessing of the Animals.

With her six-year-old granddaughter attending Westbrook Nature School on Long Ridge Road, Jody has enjoyed participating in school-based outdoor nature activities with her as well. She also looks forward to participating in the activities of the Mark Twain Library. "The quality of the art work shown in December was impressive. Visiting the knitting group, I found the women



Photo by Carol Morgan Nick and Jody Lacey moved to Redding after years of moving during Nick's time serving in the Air Force.

to be interesting and helpful. The collaboration between the Library and the satellite library at Meadow Ridge is so appreciated by the residents," she said.

Jody also frequents many restaurants in Georgetown. "We enjoy Milestone and the Black Cat. I recently had an outstanding luncheon at the Barn Door with two golf friends, one of whom is a woman who grew up in my hometown of Wayne, Pennsylvania. We graduated from high school together! Lovely meeting an old friend who shares

stories of her 50 years in Redding." Hiking is also one of the Laceys' favorite activities. "Our hiking group from Meadow Ridge ventures out each Friday morning, thanks to a great leader with much local knowledge and history of the area," said Jody, noting she enjoys Topstone, Huntington State Park, Devils Den, Saugatuck Falls, and The Reservoir.

Reading the Sentinel is a bright spot in Jody's week. "Initially, moving to Redding, we were disappointed that there was no local paper. How excited we were when the Redding Sentinel was established," she said. "We look forward to reading the interesting articles and the listings of the events in the area. We have a greater awareness of what's going on around town and what makes Redding such a great place to live." ■

Easton's Here to Help

New local group combatting substance misuse and mental health disorders among youth By Justin Reyolds



Photo courtesy of Easton's Here to Help

Alison Witherbee and Sarah Lehberger, Co-Chairs of Easton's Here to Help, attending Easton Pride.

According to government data, nearly 50-percent of adolescents experience mental health disorders at one point in their lives, and nearly one-third of all 12th graders in America use illicit drugs. Since March 2022, a local group, Easton's Here to Help (EHTH), has been working to improve those numbers in our local community.

"Easton's Here to Help is a coalition working to decrease substance misuse and mental health disorders among our youth and families," said Sarah Lehberger, a member of the Region 9 Board of Education who is also the Prevention Council Co-Chair at EHTH. "We work with local stakeholders to build a healthy, safe, and thriving community by providing prevention resources, educational opportunities, and collaboration on community-wide initiatives."

EHTH was founded in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic after it became apparent that youth, families, and other local residents were suffering from isolation and mental health issues, according to Lehberger. To provide help to those who were struggling, Easton First Selectman David Bindelglass approached two Easton residents

Alison Witherbee, Easton's Director of Social Services, and Lehberger, Marketing Manager at United Way of Coastal Fairfield County – to lead the effort.

"At the time, Easton was the only town in southwest Connecticut that didn't have a local prevention council," Lehberger continued, adding that the council is tasked with increasing "public awareness of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention and to stimulate the development and implementation of local prevention activities, with a primary focus on youth."

Recognizing the strong relationship between substance misuse and mental health disorders, many of these councils also address social-emotional health.

"Easton's Here to Help is vital to our community, as we serve to educate and inform the community about mental health issues and where to find help, as well as informing residents on substance misuse and the challenges our youth face with drugs and alcohol," Witherbee said. "It's a lot scarier than it was when we were teenagers. We can't fix things, but we can strive to help as many as we can."

According to recent data from CNN and the Kaiser Family Foundation, 90-percent Americans agree there is a mental health crisis in the country today. Current best practices from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration suggest that prevention and early intervention can reduce the impact of substance misuse and mental disorders.

"Providing tips, tools, and healthy coping mechanisms to reduce stress and improve our overall health and wellness can lower our risk for depression, suicide, and other conditions," Lehberger said. "When properly done, a good preventive intervention is long-lasting and focused on reducing vulnerability and enhancing wellness, which is our hope for Easton and Redding youth."

EHTH is funded by the State. The group includes volunteers from town government, emergency services personnel, administrators from the ER9 district, members of the Easton PTO and Joel Barlow PTSA, faith leaders, and folks from many other local groups. In conjunction with The Hub CT, a regional behavioral health action organization based in Bridgeport, EHTH offers:

- Free peer support groups for behavioral health
- Free education, training, and workshops (their most recent webinar, "Cultivating Emotional Stability for Teens", is available to view on their website)
- Services for crisis, mental health, and substance use disorders to families throughout Fairfield County, in both English and Spanish

EHTH also maintains a presence on Facebook and Instagram, where the group posts helpful information and words encouragement.

Currently, Lehberger Witherbee co-chair the group, and they're looking to onboard more members for the 2023-2024 school year.

"We are hoping to grow our coalition membership with parent and youth volunteers," Lehberger said. "If we grow our capacity, we can reach and serve more residents and apply for more grant funding which would allow us to provide more relevant events, programming, and initiatives."

Though EHTH certainly wants more adult volunteers, they are also eager to partner with more students.

"Student leaders would play an important role in our mission by sharing their experiences, unique perspectives, and ideas, and helping us shape how we can educate, empower, and engage their peers or the youth and families of our community and neighboring towns," Lehberger said.

EHTH meets via Zoom every other month and loves hearing feedback about programs and initiatives. Those who involved will collaborate to bring a health-related speaker, event, training session, or skill-building workshop to the Easton and Redding communities.

"You could also volunteer at upcoming events like fun runs or work a booth at health fairs to hand out information," Lehberger said. "There will also be an opportunity to assist with multimedia and design for those who would like to showcase their creative talents by making videos, flyers, or social media graphics."

The way Lehberger sees it, most people still don't really like discussing these topics, which are often taboo.

"There's still a stigma surrounding mental health, addiction, and substance abuse, and I want to end the stigma," she said. "The work we are doing with Easton's Here to Help is so important because it saves lives. We are all human, imperfect, and I want to see our neighbors thriving." ■

For more information, to get involved as a volunteer, or to watch the group's latest Zoom webinar, "Cultivating Emotional Stability for Teens", visit eastonsheretohelp.org

Police Department round-up By Donna Christopher

A utility pole sustained minor damage on Umpawaug Road when it was hit by a motor vehicle on May 2. Police said the driver was located on Mallory Lane. Frontier was notified to check for damage

to make sure the pole was safe. A motor vehicle accident on May 2 on Route 107 resulted in injuries to the driver. The incident occurred when the driver rounded a very sharp curve, lost control of the vehicle on the wet roadway due to a rainstorm, then struck a stone wall on the northbound shoulder of the road, according to police. The driver was treated for minor injuries at the scene and signed a waiver refusing transport to the hospital.

Police responded to a Wood-

land Drive residence on May 6 at 4:22 a.m. due to an attempted theft of a motor vehicle. A homeowner reportedly interrupted two persons attempting to enter his vehicle while it was parked in the driveway, police said. The homeowner reported that the floodlights were activated by motion, and he went outside and observed two persons exit his vehicle and run away to a vehicle parked on the road. The driver's side rear window had been broken for entry. Nothing was taken out of the vehicle, according to

A Pennsylvania man was arrested on Cross Highway in the early morning of May 6 on an active extraditable warrant from the Northampton County, PA Sheriff's Department for failure to appear on multiple unspecified charges, according to the Redding Police Department. Police were called for a suspicious person, and the man was found hitchhiking on Cross Highway. Before offering to transport the man, the officer ran a records check, according to the report. Sebastian Walsh, 31, was taken into custody where he was charged, police said. Walsh was taken to Danbury Court on May 8 for arraignment, pending extradition by Northampton County Sheriff's Department.

Police received a report on May 7 that a tenant issued a bad check on Pocahontas Road. The matter is being investigated. ■



Business Spotlight

The Redding Seamstress

From prom dresses to beloved stuffed animals, alterations with care and kindness By Justin Reynolds



Photo courtesy of Laura D'Onofrio Cunningham

Growing up, Laura D'Onofrio Cunningham loved working with her hands. After spending her formative years drawing and painting, she majored in art and minored in clothing construction in college. Today, she's putting these talents and experiences together through her work as "The Redding Seamstress", her one-woman business where she fixes and alters everything from clothing and blankets to curtains and stuffed animals.

"I get a lot of satisfaction from my work," said Cunningham, who's lived in Redding since 2015

with her husband and three kids. "I love meeting people, I love that I get to work with my hands, and I love how each job is different so it expands my skills."

Cunningham launched the business in 2017. On Facebook, she'd seen several people asking whether anyone else knew of a local seamstress who could fix particular garments. Over the years, Cunningham had "fixed a lot of things for a lot of people" at previous jobs, so she started engaging members of the community who needed a seamstress.

"After one or two years, I started getting a steady stream of clients," Cunningham said. "People were recommending me so much that I didn't have to advertise anymore. I was getting all my clients entirely from word of mouth, which was very helpful and very kind."

Since then, she's worked with hundreds of clients. Typically, a client sets up an appointment, comes over to Cunningham's house, gets pinned up, and then can pick up the garment within a week - and usually much faster, even on the same day.

"I will get five or so people a week," said Cunningham, who accepts cash, checks, and Venmo. "During prom season, I'll get about 20 or 30 dresses - that's my really busy time."

For Cunningham, the best part of the job is being hired to fix up loveys and stuffed animals for kids.

"I love fixing torn up stuffed animals, because they have a face and are cute, and I feel like I'm saving them," she said with a laugh.

Once, a mother brought in her daughter's stuffed Eeyore that was completely shredded up by a dog; at the time, the daughter was heartbroken. Not knowing what to do, the mother took what was left of Eeyore and put it in a plastic bag, where it stayed for many years.

"She hired me, I fixed it, and gave it back," Cunningham said. "Her daughter was now a junior in high school, and her mom put Eeyore on the breakfast table on the day of the SAT, and it was a huge surprise, and she was so moved. She ended up writing me the sweetest letter, and I still have

Cunningham was also hired to help fix a long-time, very muchloved blanket for a mother's autistic adult son, who couldn't sleep without it.

"It was really special to be able to do something so meaningful like that," she recalled.

Though Cunningham loves her job, it's not without its challenges. One of the hardest jobs she's worked on was hemming a wedding dress with appliqué.

"The threads are so invisible, you can hardly see them," she said. "You take off the appliqué, hem the dress, and then you have to place it and sew it back on. It takes a lot of time."

When she was just starting to scale her business and wasn't used to the volume, there was also a time she made a mistake. "As humans, we all make mistakes, but I believe that mistakes are lessons that can help me be a better seamstress," she said. A girl brought Cunningham a prom dress to hem. Usually, Cunningham folds up the bottom of the hem and pins all the way around, having her clients walk around to ensure it flows well and doesn't drag on the floor.

"I was crunched with time and thought I could cut corners," she said. "I only pinned one side of the dress, and I cut it all the way around the same amount. I think that particular dress was lopsided originally, so when I cut all the way around, one side was much higher than the other."

Cunningham "freaked out" and called the mother, saying that if the dress was ruined, she'd pay for it.

"A teenager coming out, trying the dress on, looking in the mirror, seeing that it's too short and starting to cry - that just killed me," Cunningham said, adding she paid cash for the dress to rectify the mistake. "From that day forward, I never let anyone leave without me pinning the hem all the way around and making sure it's level with their body. That was a lesson I really needed to learn, and it was an expensive one. I take things to heart, so the experience was a hard blow to me emotionally, because I care about all my clients."

One of the best parts of working as the community seamstress is meeting the "most wonderful people," she said.

"People are very kind and understanding of my time," Cunningham said. "They see that I'm a mom and that I work from home and that I have a life and I'm a human being."

Each year, Cunningham saves scrap fabrics, sews them up into dog beds, and brings them to the Bethel Humane Society. It's another hidden bonus of the gig.

"I'm really grateful for the steady stream of work and that I'm allowed to work from home," Cunningham said. "Having a little bit of extra money is so helpful for our family, and I have an immense sense of gratitude for my clients and people who recommend me."

If you're in need of the services of a talented and kind seamstress, search for Cunningham on Facebook or shoot her a text at 203-570-7480

New Pond Farm Education Center Art Show

Attendees become artists at this year's show June 3-11 By Gina Marcus



Photo courtesy of New Pond Farm Education Center

Kris Holm, Artist in Residence at New Pond Farm Education Center, has led the event since 2007.

Several of Redding's resident artists as well as creatives from the surrounding region – nearly fifty in all – will be participating in New Pond Farm Education Center's Art Show this year.

The much-loved biennial event will be held during the first week of June, with daily gallery hours from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Admission is free to the public, and all pieces will be available for purchase with a portion of proceeds helping to fulfill the Center's important work connecting people with the land through educational programs and workshops. Attendees of a special preview party on Friday, June 2 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. will have the first chance to view and purchase the works of art, all of natural world.

Artist in Residence Kris Holm will be returning to organize the Art Show and is thrilled to have so many talented artists from the area joining in on the exhibit and sale this year. Holm, who has spearheaded the Art Show since its start in 2007, has added a new facet to the show this year. Following their visit to the galleries, visitors will be encouraged to take a prepared tote bag filled with art supplies to artistically chronicle their own visit to New Pond Farm's 102 acres. A beautiful hand-crafted nature journal with specific drawing prompts will also be available to be taken along during exploration of the property.

Holm traces her admiration for New Pond Farm to her own father, who grew up on a Danish dairy farm. "I personally love the farm because of the deep sense of wellbeing I have from the moment I step out of my car," she said.

"It just feels like home to me. We visited Denmark for extended periods many times throughout my childhood. And although we live in the States now, there is still a strong connection to that way of life."

Holm said she first learned about New Pond Farm when her oldest child was invited to a friend's birthday party hosted there. She was immediately smitten and started coming to all the festivals and educational programs. Both of her children have attended the summer camps, which she describes as a great immersive experience in farm life. Her children then joined New Pond Farm's Junior Staff, which gave them farm chore training and allowed them to interact more closely with the animals. She recalls them feeling very privileged to be allowed inside the paddock to bottle feed the newborn calves. Holm describes New Pond Farm for an artist "as an endless source of inspiration with rolling pastures, leafy woodlands,

wildflower gardens, dairy cows, contented sheep, and comical chickens. Everywhere one looks there is a landscape or animal just waiting to be painted. Creating artwork is a great way to stay engaged with this beautiful natural world."

The week-long celebration of art at New Pond Farm Education Center will be marked by daily workshops for children ages 8 to 12, an opportunity to take part in plein air painting (painting outdoors) with fellow artists led by John Forgione, a special dropin visit by wildlife sculptor Peter Bowe, a curated Silent Auction and much more. Complete details can be found at newpondfarm.org or by calling the Center at 203-938-2117. ■

> Gina Marcus is Membership Coordinator, New Pond Farm **Education Center**



The Grange hosts Open Mic | Photo by Linda Meyer Mitchell



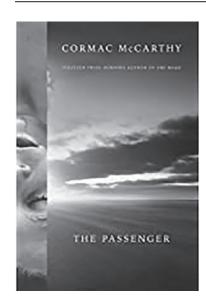
Redding Grange #15 held its first Open Mic Night on April 11. The fun evening, featuring several individuals and groups performing a wide variety of music, was organized by Grange member Scott Smith. An appreciative crowd turned out to enjoy the music, snacks, and community camaraderie.

BOOK REVIEW

The Passenger

By Cormac McCarthy

383 p.p. / Knopf / \$30



In McCarthy country, two men are having a casual conversation on the origins of quantum mechanics and that the laws of thermodynamics at some scale might not be fixed – their words are casually filled with speculation at the indeterminacy of reality itself. The signature characteristic of the McCarthy protagonist is high intelligence. Arcane knowledge is brought forth by (mainly) men in close conversations over coffee at diners, or over drinks in bars, often impoverished men, wearing soiled t-shirts and old clothes, otherwise average-seeming men running from something, looking for something, or hiding out. One can imagine that the author has had these conversations. And in fact, he has. McCarthy is a dedicated member of the Santa Fe Institute (an association of scientists), and by his own admission knows few, if any, writers of fiction. He himself has lived in poverty and survived profound material uncertainty. And yet, this writer lives largely in his imagination and always has. Fiction is his world, and creating it is his way of representing and testing reality as it is served up on an average day – life in its isolation, life as lonely wandering, its meaning an unresolved speculation.

Robert "Bobby" Western and is brilliant, much adored but deceased sister, Alicia - by suicide - have a fictional providence. They are literary cousins to Salinger's Holden Caulfield and his sister, Phoebe, and Faulkner's Eula Varner and Dewy Dell Bundren. Desirable, fragile, prey to ongoing hallucinations, too unique for the world, and finally suicidal, Alicia is beautiful and singularly brilliant. Her character, though

rarely present in the narrative, carries one of McCarthy's central messages: "She knew that in the end you really can't know. You can't get hold of the world. You can only draw a picture. Whether it's a bull on the wall of a cave or a partial differential equation it's all the same thing."

There is a chapter where Bobby Western confers with his sister's "psyche", a dwarfish man afflicted with thalidomide flippers for hands (and who ran a minstrel show at the foot of her bed when Alicia was alive). But finally, Bobby Western is the avatar of Cornelius Suttree, a previous protagonist who embodied the life and mind and the uneven, penurious experiences of Cormac McCarthy.

And so, who is the missing passenger on what trip, made without navigation materials which never make its destination in any case? Is Goldfinger conjured - signified by a tub-full of mint quality \$20 gold pieces stashed in lead pipes, gold fingers as it were, buried and retrieved from the basement of Western's grandmother's modest home, torn down, razed (made to disappear) in Akron, Ohio – or Capitalism's western franchise? Or perhaps McCarthy intends an admonition that you should not be found missing from your own life.

The Westerns, Robert and Alicia, are children of a man who helped to make the atom bomb at White Sands. The Western legacy. Toward the end of The Passenger, Alicia's vision for the future is that everything will be simulated. Is it happening now? Because if it is, that would be one reason "You can't get hold of the world." For what exactly is the world when reality is just a perfect simulation...of simulation?

Cormac McCarthy might be America's greatest living novelist. He is not a beach read, rather he is an artist, and what he proposes might not be immediately obvious. He asks more from his readers. But his characters live and breathe on the page. His writing depicts life as a peripatetic struggle which takes place in outlying spaces between the road we travel on and Armageddon.

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

Redding's Big Outdoors: Blackman's Brook and Huckleberry Swamp / continued from page 1

A few yards down, I have a window onto a vast lawn, its fresh stripes silver in the sun, and a turquoise swimming pool. I pass under dogwoods in flower, a fat old maple, and an even fatter oak with new leaves still drooping. Two more catbirds chatter to each other - past each other, really, completely overlapping and not keeping time at all.

The next woods are owned by Connecticut Audubon Society. I bear left for Steichen's Westway, where water pools in boot and dog prints, and chocolate syrup slops onto my white shoes. To my left, the quiet and uncrowded forest fades into someone's shady lawn. How nice to live there, with such a high-ceilinged emerald outbuilding!

The trail turns under a big maple bearing a sign for the Huckleberry Swamp boardwalk. A paper notice from the Connecticut Audubon Society says that the old trails and boardwalk are no longer maintained – explore with caution. I comply.

But at the first blaze, I'm stumped. Satellites and Google Maps aren't talking. A dog barks, possibly at me. I complete another spin and this time, see the next blaze; recovering the trail, I make out the silhouette of a sign downhill. A welcome breeze is blowing off the swamp; I'm on the verge of getting hot.

I reach the sign, which seems to be making up names. I head north, following sporadic white mark-

ers and dubious divots in the leaf litter. The supposedly abandoned trails are spawning as I go, and I do my best to ignore a sudden string of red blazes. Wandering between the hill I came from and a swamp, there's little room to get lost, but I seem very liable to end up on someone else's property.

I'm stuck between gears, trying to orient myself while contentedly taking pictures of an interrupted fern. Halfway up its fronds, a set of fertile leaflets is curled and black with spore cases. Then, I'm at the foot of someone's yard, approaching another stone wall, crashing through dry leaves, thinking maybe I'd better not rely so much on my non-threatening aura. As I stand on the corner of a stone wall, Google Maps finally graces me with a map, saying I'm not where I meant to be. I trudge back uphill, almost losing my sneaker in the muck. A train rumbles and hoots across the swamp, and I'm suddenly glad I brought a Gatorade, because I have gotten hot. The remaining yards of Steichen's Westway bring me to Topstone Road, closer to the park.

Looking again at Google Maps, I realize that the property lines match the Huckleberry Swamp lines in The Book of Trails. I return to the sign with uncorroborated names and head south. Across a softly babbling stream, there's the ghost of a path, with a ghost's sense of humor: a single blue blaze pops into existence.

At a wall of reeds and multiflora

LIBRARY CORNER

By Erin Shea Dummeyer

Last week, I had the good fortune to attend the Connecticut Library Association conference in Mystic, Connecticut. I've attended many library conferences during my career, and the non-industry folks are often interested to know what librarians do at conferences. "Do you talk about your favorite books? Share tips about shushing people?" It may surprise you to learn that we don't generally talk about the Dewey Decimal system, although there was one session on rearranging your library's religion section based on chronology and geography.

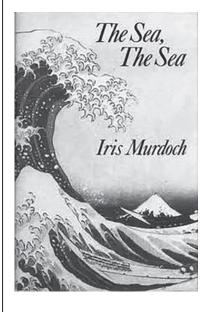
A library conference is similar

to any industry conference, with a mix of keynote speakers, educational sessions, skill sharing, and of course drinks with colleagues at the hotel bar. The best session I attended was called "It Takes a Village to Raise a Library", which featured a panel of elected officials, town managers, library advocates, and community members sharing their experience raising support for the renovation and expansion of the Manchester Public Library.

As is often the case at conferences though, the most valuable part of the experience for me is gathering with other Connecticut library directors to share tips and discuss what we're currently working on. Some of the more exciting ideas I've had in my career were spawned in an exhibit hall hallway. I've also met great friends and mentors by attending conferences like this and just striking up conversation in the buffet line. So, while you may think librarians only talk about cats and cardigans at library conferences (we do), we're also dreaming up big things to bring back to our communities.

> Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

Good books for good readers | By Margi Esten



Iris Murdoch. She was an Irish and British novelist and philosopher and best known for her novels that address good and evil. She was also brilliant and, sadly, died in 1999 at the age of 79. I was an English Literature major in college and was fortunate enough to be introduced to her first novel, Under the Net, while I was a student, which she wrote in 1954. I believe, and I am not alone, that Iris Murdoch was one of the greatest novelists of the late 20th century.

My favorite of her writing although it's so difficult to choose – is *The Sea*, the Sea, published in 1978 and winner of the Booker

Prize. Set on the northern English coast, it's essentially about the obsessions that haunt a playwright as he writes his memoirs. None of Murdoch's books are "easy" reading, but her writing is so beautiful and her characters and their relationships to other characters are so riveting, they are worth the investment.

Of the 30+ wonderful novels Murdoch produced, a few of my other favorite recommendations are A Fairly Honourable Defeat, An Accidental Man, Henry and Cato, Nuns and Soldiers, The Good Apprentice, and The Green

Who was Zalmon Read?

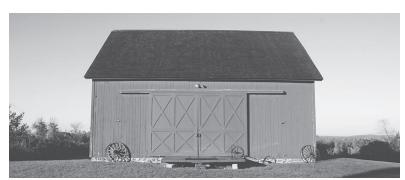
By Dan Souza and Janice Dimon



Town of Redding

Many residents may know that Redding is named after John Read, one of the earliest settlers to acquire land and raise his family in A previous Redding town emblem, pictured above, depicts John Read receiving a deed to property from Native American Chief Chickens Warrups. But who was Zalmon Read?

Born in 1740, Zalmon Read was a grandson of John Read, a son of Colonel John Read, and a brother to Esther Read. Zalmon married Hulda Bradley of Greenfield (Fairfield) on January 31, 1758, and together with five children they settled a farm on property north of Lonetown Farm. At the first Revolutionary action at a Town meeting on April 2, 1775, he was chosen as one of a committee, "to hire Soldiers to serve in the Continental Army..." Thereafter, Captain Zalmon Read served in various Revolutionary War campaigns including, but not limited to, Danbury and Northern New York, receiving special mention for distinguished service in the Fishkill campaign. At one point, he



joined the encampment at what is now Putnam Memorial State Park.

Zalmon Read died on January 15, 1801 at the age of 61, and he was buried in Redding Center Cemetery at 4 Cross Highway where his headstone still stands

The legacy of Zalmon Read and the Read family name is enshrined in the historic structures located at Lonetown Farm, the home of the Redding Historical Society at 43 Lonetown Road. These structures include the Lonetown Farmhouse and Museum and the Zalmon Read Barn. The farmhouse was first occupied by Zalmon's sister, Esther Read, and her husband Daniel Bartlett who married in 1788. The barn, aptly named the Zalmon Read Barn, was built circa 1760 on the former Zalmon Read property. In 1980, it was moved to its present location at Lonetown Farm and painstakingly reassembled and restored by the Redding Historical

This 18th century barn is likely the most historically significant barn of its vintage bearing the Read name that still stands today. In 1993, it was described by the National Register of Historic Places to be "a good, well-preserved example of an English-style barn, with central doors and threshing floor and box lofts to the sides."

The Zalmon Read Barn has been the scenic and historical venue for community events, such as car shows, antique fairs, and tractor fairs, and continues to host historic lectures and meetings, the annual Redding Garden Club plant sale, and private events including weddings and graduations. It is an attractive photographic venue for school fund-raisers, wedding photos, and barn enthusiasts. The Zalmon Read Barn is also a prominent feature of the Rock 'n Roots Revival, an annual celebration of our nation's July 4 anniversary, which presents music, food, and a spectacu-lar fireworks display to the community.

> Dan Souza and Janice Dimon are Board members of the Redding Historical Society

rose, I concede. The trail is undeniably abandoned, and I am undeniably parched. Someone not rocketing back and forth looking for sunken trails could have relaxed down here; by this drooping grape vine, say, or that sunny patch of

ferns with a tall shagbark hickory.

I teeter back toward Charlie Hill Road. I make a note to ask Stuart Green, leader of Redding's Trail Tenders, what happened with Connecticut Audubon Society - I type as I walk and confidently slam my forehead straight into the thick horizontal limb of a dogwood. My teeth rattle a bit, but I just stagger forward thinking I'll probably have to wear a hat for a few days, or at least my hair down.

Blackman's Brook Trail offers a consolation prize: a dark bird with a little pointed cap and flashy

white marks on its tail. I make a note and plow on. Funny how different the return is, not using my looking eyes; all I'm aware of is that I'm tired and hot and my skull is in my way.

A few days later (forehead fine), I ask Stuart what happened with Connecticut Audubon Society and the boardwalk at Huckleberry Swamp. The answer is nothing dramatic - the ground is wet, and the reeds and briars grow quickly. Of course, the habitat is still protected, and still open for adventures. It is, however, a reminder that trails don't grow on trees.

At home, I look up the final showy bird (male eastern towhee), and the origin of the brook's name (James L. Blackman, property owner). At least I think it's named for him - before I can pursue the

lead, I get lost in an April 2020 archaeological survey. Apparently, Blackman's Brook was already a notable area over 4,000 years ago; just across from the trail's Topstone Road entrance, locals found a favorable spot to hunt, mine quartz for their arrowheads and knives, and perhaps camp in the winter sun. Maybe in another 4,000 years, even if the Redding Trail Tenders have lost their last volunteer, people will visit the brook anyway - some places just want guests. ■

> Cole Tucker-Walton is a member of the Redding Land Trust Board of Trustees

The Natural World

Plant sale season in full swing















Photos by Eva Trotter

Plant sales are a beloved springtime tradition that can help raise money for local organizations, provide an opportunity for neighbors to meet and enjoy the outdoors together, put seasoned and novice gardeners together for advice, and present a "buy local" alternative to larger garden centers.

Last weekend boasted a wealth of local plant sales for gardeners of all types and skill levels. The Redding Garden Club and Homefront Farmers both held sales in Redding, with garden clubs in Weston, Easton, Wilton, and Westport following suit.

If you missed out on any of the fun last weekend, there is still time to stop by some of the nearby sales happening this spring nearby.

Georgetown Volunteer **Fire Company** 2nd Annual Plant Sale and Swap

Saturday, May 20 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Granite Church at 5 North Main Street, Georgetown

This fundraiser is presented by the Georgetown Volunteer Fire

Company (GVFC) along with the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, a branch of the department that provides non-firefighting support. All proceeds benefit GVFC and the Georgetown community in times of need. Flowers, herbs, and vegetables will be available, plus marigolds and packs of petunia, salvia, and more. Garden swap items can be dropped off on May 19 from 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. or during the event May 20. Suggested swap items are bulbs and perennial cuttings or plants, garden tools, and garden

accessories (pots, work benches, gloves, etc).

Greens Farms Garden Club Plant Sale

Saturday, May 20 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sherman Town Green at 1451 Post Road, Fairfield

A wide array of potted, locally grown garden plants will be available, along with items from a garden-related boutique. Experts from Bartlett Tree will also be on hand to help with any questions you may

Plant Sale & Gardenpalooza Saturday, May 20 from

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. The Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens at 1 Green Hill Road, Washington Depot

A variety of perennials, annuals, flowers, veggies, and herb plants will be on offer at this plant sale along with several community organizations sharing about various projects and initiatives they are involved in. ■

Butterflies in our backyards

Orange Sulphurs, here since the talkies

By Victor DeMasi



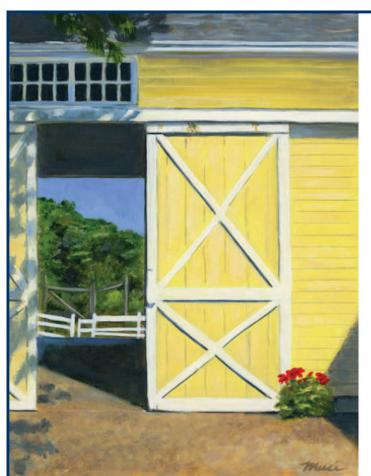
Photo from the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas The underside of an Orange Sulphur.

That's right – butterflies come and go. The Orange Sulphur is really a prairie species but gradually moved east as clearing land for agriculture continued. You might have seen your first Orange Sulphur arrival in Redding in 1930. If you were lucky, it was a prize back then. In 28 years of counting butterflies in Redding, Oranges have come and gone, with some years plentiful and other years absent. They frequent fields and meadows where they find clovers and a suite of similar species for their caterpillars.

Don't confuse them with their pale-yellow brethren, the Clouded Sulfur. Both are midsized butterflies, but the Orange is a vivid orange on top with a bold, black border. The photo shows the deep-yellow underside. Clouded Sulphurs are the original Connecticut resident, being here long before Oranges arrived, and they are by all counts the more common in most years.

If you see Orange or Clouded Sulphurs, send me a message at monarchvictor@gmail.com and a picture too if you can sneak in close enough. I am entering all sightings in a database.

> Victor DeMasi is a curatorial affiliate at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History His field work with butterflies contributed almost a thousand citations to the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas





OPEN DAILY 11 AM - 5 PM

beauty of New Pond Farm and the surrounding country side. Including a silent auction, artist demonstrations, and Children's Activities. Details posted on the website.

SPECIAL PREVIEW FRIDAY, JUNE 2ND • 6 PM - 8 PM

Visit the art show and mingle with artists and art lovers, while enjoying a signature cocktail, local wine, brews and festive bites. \$50 admits one and includes \$25 art purchase credit. RSVP by May 25 online or by phone.



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

Early voting to debut in CT next year / continued from page 1

Thomas was on record in support of a 10-day period.

The new law also stipulates hours of voting that municipalities must allow for early voting. Those hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for 12 of the 14 days prior to the election. Hours would need to

be 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the Tuesday and Thursday preceding Election Day.

Originally, the legislature sought to have the new law in place by this year's November elections. "But that is not going to happen, because so many logistics have yet

to be worked out," Grande said. "At this point, we don't really know anything else of what is going to happen, just that they'll be rolling it out in 2024." ■

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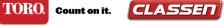


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Arts

Thursday, May 18

Photography Workshop -**Composition, People & Places** Part II

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Zoom Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org R

Friday, May 19 - Sunday, May 21

Joel Barlow High School's **Production of** *The Hunchback* of Notre Dame

7:00 p.m. on May 19 and May 20 2:00 p.m. on May 20 and May 21 Joel Barlow High School 100 Black Rock Turnpike joelbarlowps.org R

Saturday, May 20

Craig Peyton Artist Talk

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.Georgetown Arts and Cultural Center 5 Main Street Georgetown E-mail: bobmarty@gmail.com

Sunday, May 21

American Brass Quintet

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Western CT State University / Visual and Performing Arts Center 43 Lake Avenue Extension Danbury danburyconcert.org \$, R

Sunday, May 21

A Special Reading of

Steel Magnolias

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.A reading of a play about a group of southern women and one member's complications with Type 1 diabetes, Steel Magnolias depicts a story centered around friendship and perseverance. Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrabry.org

Wednesday, May 24

Classic Film Series

7:00 p.m. Easton Public Library / Community Room 691 Morehouse Road Easton eastonlibrary.org

Thursday, May 25

Author Talk: Ross Douthat. The Deep Places Ridgefield Library

472 Main Street Ridgefield ridgefieldlibrary.org

Saturday, June 3 – 10

New Pond Farm Art Show

Open Daily 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org

CHILDREN, TEENS

Wednesday, May 24

Informational Meeting on Torch Club

6:15 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Grades 5-7 Boys & Girls Club of Easton-Redding 170 Cross Highway signupgenius.com/ go/30E0F44ACAE22A4FA7bgcre1 R

Saturday, May 27

STEAM Corner

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. For K - 5 graders interested in science, technology, engineering, arts or math. Easton Public Library / Storytime/ **Innovation Space Room** 691 Morehouse Road Easton eastonlibrary.org

Wednesday, May 31

College Application Timeline

7:30 p.m. For students in grades 8 – 11 and their parents. Zoom eastonlibrary.org R

Friday, June 2

World Language Social

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Learn about the foreign languages offered at Joel Barlow and enjoy arts. dances, food, games, and more.

Joel Barlow High School 100 Black Rock Turnpike bit.ly/WLHSSocial \$, R

Saturday, June 3

Cyanotype Prints

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. For middle and high school students, combine water and simple chemicals to create prints of leaves, flowers, and other natural materials. New Pond Farm Education Center 101 Marchant Road newpondfarm.org \$, R

Saturday, June 10

Redding - Easton Falcons **Cheerleading Clinic**

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. For K-6 graders looking try out cheerleading, no experience needed, wear sneakers and comfortable clothes, have your hair pulled back, and bring water. Joel Barlow High School / Upper Gym

100 Black Rock Turnpike falconsyouthcheer.com RSVP to refalconscheer@gmail. com \$, R

FOOD

Thursday, June 1

Cooking with the Thirsty Radish - Sumptuous Spring **Side Dishes**

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Zoom marktwainlibrary.org R

Georgetown Arts & Cultural Center

rtist Ta

Craig Peyton will share his incredible, inspiring

journey from Redding to the top of the music charts,

soaring through the clouds for Hollywood studios,

beating a bout of deadly cancer!

Please join us for our 1st Artist Talk ever!

Saturday May 20th 4-5pm

PLUS!

Champagne & Strawberries

5 Main Street

Georgetown, CT 06829

Health, Wellness

Thursday, May 18 and 25

Midday Recharge: Spring **Meditation Series** 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Zoom Mark Twain Library 439 Redding Road marktwainlibrary.org

Saturday, June 3

Mindful Movement Outdoors at Westbrook

10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Low impact 45-minute outdoor class with a blend of Pilates, Barre + Yoga. All levels welcome. Westbrook Nature School 7 Long Ridge Road westbrooknatureschool.org \$, R

Saturday, June 10

Yoga in the Park

8:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Putnam Park / North Entrance 73 – 79 Putnam Park Road kgscreates.com/upcomingclasses

Nature

Saturday, May 20

Georgetown Volunteer Fire Company 2nd Annual Plant Sale and Swap

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Preorder by May 12 or purchase day of the sale. Plants for swap can be dropped off day of or between 5:00 p.m. -6:30 p.m. May 19. Granite Church 5 North Main Street E-mail gvfcauxiliary@gmail.com

Saturday, May 20

Kids to Parks Day

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Hike, participate in scavenger hunts, and explore Weir Farm in this National Park Trust's Kids event, which hopes to encourage families to visit local parks. Weir Farm National Historical Park 735 Nod Hill Road Wilton nps.gov/wefa/index.htm

Through Wednesday, May 31

Recycling and Compost Story Walk

All day Visit the story walk along Redding's Parade Path and learn about composting, recycling, and managing trash. Redding Town Green 100 Hill Road E-mail asmith@ townofreddingct.org for more information

Religious Services

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Sundays at 10:00 a.m. (in person) or 10:15 a.m. (Zoom) 44 Portland Avenue bethlehemlutheranct.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

Sacred Heart Church:

Vigil Mass (Saturday): 4:00 p.m. Sunday Mass: 9:00 a.m & 10:30 a.m 12:00 noon LATIN Weekday Mass: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 a.m Wednesday 6:00 p.m. LATIN 30 Church Street

St. Patrick Church:

Vigil Mass (Saturday): 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM, 5:00 p.m. Weekday Mass: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 a.m. 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

Friday, May 19

Heritage Center Tag Sale

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Sign up now as a vendor or save the date if you want to shop. Heritage Center Parking Lot 37 Lonetown Road E-mail mpilato@townofreddingct.org to register as a vendor R

Saturday, May 20

Redding Shredding and E-Waste Event

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Transfer Station & Recycling Center 84 Hopewell Woods Road townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, May 24

Joel Barlow High School Barlow Palooza

5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Joel Barlow High School 100 Black Rock Turnpike joelbarlowps.org

Saturday, June 3

Bethel CT Pride Parade and Celebration

12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Bethel Municipal Center 1 School Street, Bethel bethelctpride.com

Sunday, June 11

Georgetown Day Celebration 12:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Main Street, Georgetown georgetownct.org

MEETINGS

Thursday, May 18

Democratic Town Committee 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Thursday, May 18

West Redding Fire District Annual Budget Meeting

7:30 p.m. West Redding Firehouse 306 Umpawaug Road townofreddingct.org

Monday, May 22

Gilbert & Bennett Wire Mill **Progress Report and Public Forum**

6:00 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org

Monday, May 22

Economic Development Committee Special Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, May 23

ER9 Joint Boards of Education

7:00 p.m. Joel Barlow High School Library Learning Commons 100 Black Rock Turnpike er9.org

Tuesday, May 23

Planning Commission

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

Tuesday, May 23

Special Town Meeting

7:30 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org

Wednesday, May 24

Zoning Commission

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

Thursday, June 1

Redding Safety Committee

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Zoom townofreddingct.org

Monday, June 5

Parks and Recreation Commission

7:00 p.m. Redding Community Center 37 Lonetown Road townofreddingct.org

Monday, June 5

Republican Town Committee 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall / Hearing Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, June 6

Economic Development Committee

8:30 a.m. Town Hall / Conference Room 100 Hill Road townofreddingct.org

Tuesday, June 6

Redding Board of Education 7:00 p.m.

John Read Middle School 486 Redding Road er9.org

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

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Call Mary to discuss your mortgage options.

Applicant subject to credit and underwriting approval (20221102-1745808) 1 General Nation House Consider Mary Dent NMLS ID: 260216 | CT - LO-260216 | GRANMLS ID #1598647 (Nationwide Mortgage Licensing System www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org) ⋅ CT - Lic # MCL-1598647



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