



The Lakeville Journal

Small Business Spotlight, Page A2

TriCornerNews.com

34 PAGES IN 3 SECTIONS VOLUME 127 NUMBER 21 © 2023 The Lakeville Journal Company, Periodical Rate Postage Paid at Lakeville (Town of Salisbury), Connecticut 06039 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21 & 28, 2023 \$2.00

Covering The News In Connecticut's Northwest Corner And Its Environs Since 1897

Part One: 'A Public Health Emergency'

After a decline, homelessness rises again across the Northwest Corner

By Debra A. Aleksinas

Editor's note: This is the first part of a series exploring homelessness in rural Northwest Connecticut.

TORRINGTON — On a frigid day in early December, a newborn entered the world naked and homeless — but not hopeless.

Upon release from the hospital maternity ward, the infant's young mother, abandoned by family, returned with her swaddled baby to the homeless shelter in Torrington where she had been staying while awaiting the child's birth.

"We are currently housing eight children and a baby," explained Deirdre DiCara, executive director of the nonprofit Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwest Connecticut Inc. (FISH), as she organized a bassinet in preparation for the shelter's newest and youngest arrival.

While at FISH, infant and mother will receive health care and sup-

port services from local organizations aimed at placing them in permanent housing, said DiCara. "Hopefully, with time, she will reunite with her parents."

A public health emergency
Homelessness in rural Northwest Connecticut, which has surged for the second year in a row after a decade of decline, far exceeds the number of beds available at the only two shelters serving the state's rural Northwest Corner.

"It's a public health emergency and a humanitarian crisis," noted DiCara.

The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness has reported that homelessness jumped 39% statewide from 2020 to 2022, and as of fall 2023, had risen 13% over the prior year.

In the Northwest Corner, 30% of those experiencing homelessness are considered chronically homeless, meaning they had expe-

See HOMELESSNESS, Page A12



PHOTO BY PAUL VENTI
Participants in the Northwest YMCA's 'Freezin' for a Reason' fundraiser warm their hands on the open fire.

COG names Jerram new chairman, moves trash dilemma to 'front burner'

By Riley Klein

LITCHFIELD — Northwest Hills Council of Governments (COG) appointed Daniel Jerram as the board's new leader, who got straight to work at the first meeting of the new board Thursday, Dec. 14.

Jerram, first selectman from New Hartford since 2009, replaced Henry Todd as COG chairman. The board also welcomed seven new members at this meeting after an eventful election cycle in the Northwest Corner.

Brian Ohler (North Canaan), Marty Lindenmayer (Kent), Dave Barger (Falls Village), Casey Flanagan (Sharon), Nick Lukiwsky (Barkhamsted), Bradley Bremer (Colebrook), and Bob Geiger (interim town manager for Winsted) were seated on the COG to represent their respective towns.

Two new COG staff members were introduced Dec. 14 as well:

See COG, Page A12

Remembering Sandy Hook 11 years later

By Patrick L. Sullivan

SALISBURY — About 60 people turned out at the town Green in Salisbury Friday evening, Dec. 15, for a candlelight vigil noting the 11th anniversary of the school shooting in Sandy Hook Dec. 14, 2012.

The event was sponsored by the

Northwest Corner Committee for Gun Violence Prevention.

Organizer Sophia Deboer said, "Many of us thought that Sandy Hook was going to be the unfathomable event that changed things, the tipping point, that our elected officials would respond forcefully to prevent more mass shootings."

She expressed disappointment

about action at the federal level but noted the passage in 2022 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

State Rep. Maria Horn (D-64) noted that Connecticut has taken significant legal steps since Sandy Hook.

"We have passed strong laws and

See SANDY HOOK, Page A12



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Breakfast with Santa

Zoey and Stella Pruitt had pancakes with Santa Claus at St. Andrew's Parish House in Kent on Saturday, Dec. 16. Those on the "nice list" enjoyed a breakfast spread and arts and crafts stations to take in the full holiday spirit. Guests were also invited to take photos with Santa and let him know what to bring down the chimney. Hosted by Kent Community Nursery School, the fun-filled morning doubled as a fundraiser to support KCNS.



PHOTO BY RILEY KLEIN

Housy hoops

Housatonic Valley Regional High School basketball returned last week with both boys and girls games. Above, Jesse Bonhotel split the defenders when HVRHS hosted Terryville on Dec. 14.



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In The Journal this week

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Online This Week

Falls Village ups bulk waste fees

The Transfer Station will have a new fee schedule, Jan. 1, 2024. More on www.tricornernews.com

Sharon hears human resource report

Tracey Abut presented a progress report to the selectmen. More on www.tricornernews.com

POLICE BLOTTER: TROOP B

The following information was provided by the Connecticut State Police at Troop B. All suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Hits utility pole on Rt. 7

On Sunday, Dec. 10, at approximately 11:15 p.m., Michael Sullivan, 24, of Scheenectedy, New York, was traveling southbound on Route 7 in Canaan in a 2006 Ford F150 and failed to maintain his lane, striking a utility pole. Sullivan declined medical attention and was issued a written warning for failure to maintain lane. The truck was towed from the scene.

Collision at intersection

On Monday, Dec. 11, at approximately 11:30 a.m., Tamara Newell, 33, of Canaan, was traveling eastbound on Route 44 at the intersection of Route 7 in North Canaan. Theodore Hicks, 18, of Kent, was traveling westbound and made a left turn in front of Newell's car, striking it. Cynthia Newell, 61, of Canaan, a passenger in Newell's car, was transported by ambulance to the Winsted Health Center for evaluation. Hicks was is-

sued a written warning for failure to grant right of way at an intersection.

Bicyclist hit by mirror

On Wednesday, Dec. 13 at approximately 3:30 p.m. Margaret Chapman, 90, of Salisbury, was traveling south on Dugway Road in Salisbury and struck a bicyclist with the passenger side mirror while traveling straight. No one reported injuries. Chapman was issued a written warning for improper passing, unsafe distance.

The Lakeville Journal will publish the outcome of police charges. Contact us by mail at P.O. Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039, Attn: Police Blotter, or send an email, with "police blotter" in the subject line, to johnc@lakevillejournal.com.



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

Rapids rage after heavy rain

Kent Falls was full to the brim after a stormy weekend, culminating with torrential rain and strong winds early in the morning of Monday, Dec. 18. Unseasonably high temperatures prevented the precipitation from turning into snow. On Dec. 18, temps were recorded around 60 degrees in Northwestern Connecticut.

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Canaan Foundation accepting grant applications

NORTH CANAAN — The Canaan Foundation is accepting grant proposals from not-for-profit organizations for community programs and projects that benefit residents of the Town of North Canaan.

The application deadline is Jan. 31, 2024. Foundation grants up to a maximum of \$2,000 will be announced in March 2024.

Proposals are welcomed in such areas as education, essential services, the environment, recreation, the arts, health, social services and community outreach. Download and submit the application form at www.canaan-foundation.org. Al-

ternatively, email the completed request to mperotti@wmperotti.com or mail to The Canaan Foundation, P.O. Box 823, North Canaan, CT 06018. Since its creation in 2000, The Canaan Foundation has awarded over \$500,000 in grants.

Also, thanks to a \$5,000 challenge grant from a long-time supporter of the Foundation, increased donations from current small donors (\$100 or below) and donations of any amount from new or lapsed donors will be

matched dollar for dollar up to a total challenge match of \$5,000. See the Foundation's website: www.canaan-foundation.org or mail your donation to P.O. Box 823, North Canaan, CT 06018.

Don't Miss This Week's Special Inserts! Sales and more!

Check them out inside.

- Ocean State Job Lot
- The Lakeville Journal Co.

LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF CANAAN

Pursuant to Sec. 12-145 of the Connecticut statutes, the Tax Collector, Town of Canaan gives notice that she will be ready to receive Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes and the 2nd installment of Real Estate & Personal Property taxes due January 1, 2024 at the Canaan Town Hall, PO Box 47, 108 Main St., Falls Village, CT 06031.

Office Hours: Monday's 9-12, 1-4 and Wednesdays 9-Noon.

Payments must be received or postmarked by February 1, 2024 to avoid interest.

All taxes remaining unpaid after February 1, 2024 will be charged interest from January 1, 2024 at the rate of 1.5% for each month from the due date of the delinquent tax to the date of payment, with a minimum interest charge of \$2.00. Sec. 12-146

Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the taxpayer of their responsibility for the payment of taxes or delinquent charges. Sec.12-30

Rebecca Juchert-Derungs, CCMC
12-21-23
01-04-24
01-18-24

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF KENT

The second installment of the Real Estate, Personal Property and the Motor Vehicle Supplemental tax for the Grand List of 2022 is due and payable January 1, 2024. The second installment of the Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicle Supplemental tax for the Grand List of 2022 will become delinquent on Friday, February 2, 2024.

As soon as the tax becomes delinquent, it shall be subject to interest at the rate of 1.5% per month from January 1, 2024 until the same is paid.

Bills may be viewed and paid online by going to the Tax Collector's page on the Town of Kent website at www.townofkentct.org.

There are two options for

online payment: credit card or electronic check.

The Tax Collector's office will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. There is a red drop box next to the front door of the Town Hall for payments.

Payments are also welcome through the mail at P. O. Box 311, Kent, Connecticut 06757.

Deborah Devaux CCMC
Tax Collector
12-21-23
01-04-24
01-25-24

Notice of Decision Town of Salisbury Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission

Notice is hereby given that the following action was taken by the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission of the Town of Salisbury, Connecticut on December 11, 2023:

Denied without Prejudice - Application 2023-IW-021 by Riga Construction demolish and rebuild existing stone walls and build walkways per plans. The property is shown on Salisbury Assessor's map 67 as lot 19 and is known as 19 West Shore Place, Salisbury. The owner of the property is CAU Associates LLC.

Any aggrieved person may appeal this decision to the Connecticut Superior Court in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes §22a-43(a) & §8-8.

12-21-23

TAX COLLECTOR TOWN OF SALISBURY CT LEGAL NOTICE

Pursuant to Sec 12-145 of the Connecticut State Statutes, the tax payers of the Town of Salisbury are hereby notified the third installment of the Grand List October 1, 2022 is due and payable January 1, 2024. Pursuant to Section 12-71b of the Connecticut State Statutes, the Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax is due on January 1, 2024. Payments

must be received or post marked by February 1, 2024. If said Real Estate, Personal Property and Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes are not paid on or before February 1, 2024, interest at the rate of 1% (18% per year) will be added for each month from the time when such tax becomes due and payable until paid. Minimum interest \$2.00.

Mail to: Tax Collector, P.O. Box 338, Salisbury, CT 06068 or at Town Hall, 27 Main Street, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9am-4pm or use the drop box located in the vestibule of the Town Hall, 9am-4pm, Monday-Friday. You may pay by E-Check or Credit Card at www.salisburycr.us. Click on Departments, Tax Collector, Pay bill online.

A fee is charged. Dated at Salisbury CT this 15th day of December 2023.

Jean F. Bell, CCMC
Tax Collector Salisbury CT
06068
12-21-23
01-04-24
01-18-24

Warning Referendum Vote 64 Hilltop Road Sharon Connecticut

A referendum vote of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of Sharon, Connecticut will be held on Friday, January 5th, 2024 in the Sharon Town Hall, 63 Main Street, Sharon, CT. The Polls will be opened from 12 Noon until 8:00 PM. The Question to be voted on is:

"Shall the Town of Sharon voluntarily relinquish community recreational property at the Sharon Center School playground extension for the purpose of leasing that land to a third party for the installation of a 400+ solar panel array?" "This will be a YES or NO question.

Dated at Sharon, Connecticut this 14th day of December 2023.

Linda R. Amerighi-CCTC
12-21-23



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Our Towns

P&Z juggles Honey Hill subdivision, recreational cannabis regulations

By Riley Klein

NORTH CANAAN — With two hefty agenda items on the docket, North Canaan's Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission met late into the night Monday, Dec. 11.

The meeting began with a continuation of the public hearing for a proposed 20-lot subdivision along the Housatonic River on Honey Hill Road. P&Z Chair Tim Abbott, a member of the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), recused himself from the hearing.

Representing Bruce McEver (applicant and landowner), George Johannesen of Allied Engineering asked for a 30-day continuation of the hearing. The time is needed to complete previously requested due diligence.

"We have not received all the comments from the various agencies that we were asked to contact, which could have had an impact on the layout of the lots," acting chair Pete Brown read from Johannesen's letter to the commission.

Brown also read three testimonials into the record: two in opposition and one in support of the subdivision.

Letters from HVA and the Housatonic River Commission (HRC) voiced environmental concerns. Both groups noted the Wild & Scenic River status of the Housatonic and stressed the importance of preserving "core forests."

"Fragmented forests are known to provide substandard or poor habitat for some species and in many cases less opportunity for a variety of recreational activities," Brown read from a letter by Julia Rogers, senior land protection manager at HVA.

"Our mission is not to stop projects but to make them better projects. And



PHOTO BY RILEY KLEIN

Planning and Zoning Commission Chair Tim Abbott presented multiple maps that showed different options for buffering recreational cannabis licenses in North Canaan.

this particular project is a little bit interesting for us in that we didn't hear about it formally until Thanksgiving," said William Tingly, chair of the HRC.

Jessica Toro, co-owner of Native Habitat Restoration, submitted testimony in support of the project. She noted the current health of the forest and cited McEver's work to remediate the land as the reason it is viable today.

"We have seen an abundance of native species returning to the banks of the Housatonic and Blackberry rivers. It was Bruce McEver's foresight and concern for the environment that made him substantially invest in improving the forest and riverbank health," Brown read from Toro's letter.

P&Z unanimously voted to continue the hearing until Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

The regular meeting agenda then began and Abbott rejoined the commission. In old business, P&Z resumed discussion of recreational

cannabis regulations.

Voters approved marijuana sales in town by referendum on Nov. 7, which was later recanvassed and confirmed to have passed by a 17-vote margin. A moratorium remains in place in North Canaan through February 2024, after which time P&Z must have established regulations (or extend the moratorium).

P&Z has the power to choose which license types will be permitted, designate appropriate zones in which cannabis establishments can operate, set regulations on signage, and limit hours of operation.

All seated commission members opposed permitting large-scale growing licenses (15,000 square feet and up). P&Z was split 3-3 in an unofficial vote on whether to allow micro growers (2,000 to 10,000 square feet, with the ability to petition up to 25,000 square feet).

Commission members cited concerns related to odor.

"It has to be in an area which we specify," said P&Z member Doug Humes. "Unlike the one in Sheffield, when they turn those fans on and the lady who had her house for sale couldn't sell her house because the people turned around and walked away."

P&Z cited the potential to limit micro growers, which must be indoor facilities, to industrial zones in which other warehouses already operate. The board also felt industrial zones could be suitable for manufacturing licenses (packaging, food and drink production, etc.) and delivery licenses (shipping companies with restrictions on warehousing products).

When discussing retail licenses, the board reviewed a series of maps showing various buffer distances from qualifying institutions. The maps showed how different areas of town would be affected after buffering from schools, charitable organizations, churches, hospitals, and other similar organizations.

Applying a 500-foot buffer from such institutions would leave sections of the commercial district suitable for retail cannabis licenses. Any greater buffer distance would eliminate commercial and central business districts entirely.

P&Z also discussed the possibility of limiting the total number of licenses to one retail store and one for micro growers permitted in North Canaan.

Abbott said he hopes to have drafted text changes for the next meeting on Jan. 9. P&Z will review the language as a commission, to be revised and reviewed again in February.

"And then be prepared to have that go, as it needs to, as a text change for a public hearing," said Abbott.



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

Vintage holiday items at the Academy Building.

Holiday history in Salisbury

By Patrick L. Sullivan

SALISBURY — The Salisbury Association has an exhibit of vintage holiday items on display through mid-January.

Genial host Lou Buccheri was on hand Saturday morning, Dec. 16, to answer questions, including queries as to who polished that silver so well, and can I get mine done too?

The items range from artifacts from the Holley-Williams House to traditional

toys that are made of wood and do not require batteries.

Visitors also get a gift: A copy of "Arsenal of the Revolution," by Edward Fales Jr. (revised edition edited by Kathryn Boughton).

The Academy Building is at 24 Main St. in Salisbury and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you can't fit that into the schedule, email Sarah Morrison at morrison.sarahk@gmail.com to make other arrangements.

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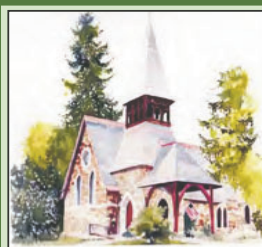


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December 31

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10:30 AM Hymn sing with readings

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Sports

HVRHS boys drop to Terryville

By Riley Klein

FALLS VILLAGE — Housatonic Valley Regional High School (HVRHS) boys basketball opened the 2023-24 season at home with a 74-53 loss to Terryville on Thursday, Dec. 14.

After getting out to a hot start, Terryville rode a comfortable lead from the first quarter through to the fourth. A late run by the Mountaineers made for a competitive second half, but the momentum came too late for HVRHS to overcome the deficit.

With just one senior in the lineup, the young Mountaineer squad stepped on the court with high hopes for the season to come. Through the first half, they slowly settled into coach Kurt Johnson's cut-and-drive offensive scheme before it really started to click late in the game.

HVRHS got tripped up by Terryville's full-court press and fell victim to traps. The onslaught caused turnover after turnover in the first quarter and helped Terryville establish a 19-2 lead.

Johnson subbed in a smaller lineup for the second quarter and the guards made an immediate impact with Jacob Marcus splashing back-to-back threes to start the quarter. Terryville capitalized on the defensive mismatches, however, and continued adding to the lead.

HVRHS trailed by 21 points at halftime.

The Mountaineers came out of the locker room looking like a different team in the second half. They played with newfound intensity on defense and put the pressure onto Terryville. HVRHS built up steam throughout the third quarter and cut the lead to 8 points.

Both sides traded baskets and the lead remained steady for most of the fourth quarter. With two and a half minutes to play, Terryville



PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Above, Anthony Labbadia drove the lane. Below, Wes Allyn lined up a jumper.



PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Mia Dodge ran point guard for HVRHS on Dec. 12.

Thomaston defeats Housatonic girls in season opener

By Riley Klein

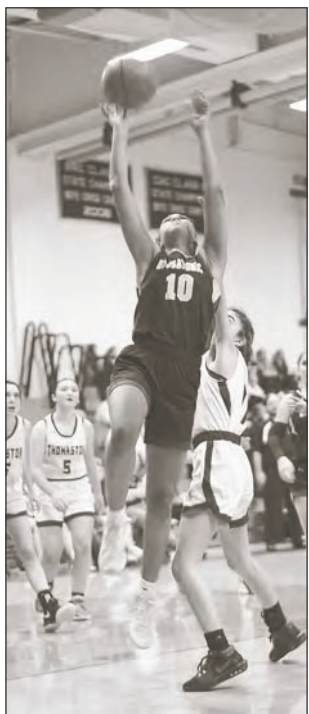
THOMASTON — Housatonic Valley Regional High School (HVRHS) girls basketball dropped a 55-24 decision in Thomaston for the first game of the season on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Plagued by turnovers, the Mountaineers struggled to find a rhythm against the Golden Bears. Thomaston utilized full-court press and isolation traps to force steal after steal, steadily building an insurmountable lead.

HVRHS kept a level head and stayed disciplined to the final buzzer. Fueled by an inspiring defensive effort from guard Daniella Brennan, the Mountaineers started to gel as a team in the second half.

Brennan showed the definition of hustle in the third quarter. She battled for rebounds like Dennis Rodman, sprinted back on defense, and disrupted Thomaston's tempo.

By the fourth quarter, HVRHS had stopped the bleeding. They scored 11 of their 24 points in the final eight minutes. The hot streak simply came too late, and



Khyra McClennon found an opening in the paint.

Thomaston took the victory. Tessa Dekker led HVRHS in scoring with 7 points.

Thomaston was led in scoring by Nicole Decker, who finished with 25 points.

The HVRHS girls will host Nonnequag on Dec. 23 for a morning match. Tip off is at 11:30 a.m.



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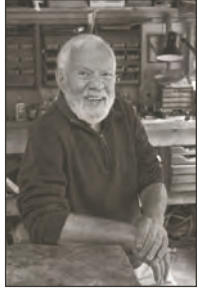
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OBITUARIES

Gerry Holzman

AMENIA — Gerry Holzman, Creator of The Empire State Carousel, Author, Teacher, Graduate of Amenia High School.



Gerry Holzman, Master Carver, died on Dec. 8, 2023. He liked to say that his entry into the world in the early summer of 1933, as the first son of Solomon and Hazel Holzman, was a statement of optimism during the depths of the Great Depression. Gerry departed this life after a 90-year sojourn while still pondering Carl Sandburg's mystifying questions: "Where to? What next?"

His brother, Steven, of Hurley, New York, predeceased him. Gerry is survived by his always loving (and always loved) wife of 66 years, Arlene Davidson Holzman; his three daughters, three sons-in-law, Nancy Holzman (Jim Stegman), Jill Irving (Jeff), and Susan Gatti (Mark). Completing this highly cherished mishpocha are six grandchildren; Gregory Gatti, Jonathan Gatti, Liam Stegman, Devan Stegman, Joshua Irving, Julie Irving; a younger brother, Larry (Dottie Eckardt); two sisters-in-law, Margie Barrett Holzman and Claire Davidson Siegel, and nieces and nephews.

Gerry and Arlene lived for decades and raised a family on Long Island, in Islip, New York and later moved to Cambridge, New York before relocating to Brunswick, Maine.

A graduate of Amenia High School, Gerry received his teaching degree from SUNY Albany. As a student at Albany, he made many life-long friends, and it is where he first heard the words that would become his mantra: Let each become all he was created capable of being. He did.

Following his college graduation, he served in the US Army in Ethiopia, Africa. He went on to have two different careers: 25 years as a public school teacher/administrator on Long Island, where he taught English and Social Studies, followed by over 40 years as a profession-

al woodcarver/sculptor. Trained in the United Kingdom by English Master Carver, Gino Masero, Gerry's diverse work can be found in museums, public libraries, churches and synagogues, educational institutions, commercial establishments, and private collections. But by far, his single most significant work is the Empire State Carousel, a full-size operating merry-go-round based entirely on the theme of New York State. Aptly described by Arlene Holzman as a museum you can ride on, this revolving history lesson is Gerry's original design, made possible with the generous and enthusiastic contributions of more than 1,000 artists and volunteers. Gerry believed the process of establishing this creative interactive community was as important as the creation of the carousel itself. The carousel lives in merry motion at the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown, New York, celebrating Gerry's lifelong love for New York State.

Gerry was a prolific author. He wrote dozens of articles for a variety of publications and three books about the art and culture of woodcarving, focusing on his gratitude for finding a profession that allowed him to bring joy and beauty into a world that is too often sad. His most recent publication, at the age of 89, is a memoir, "The Wanderings of a Wayward Woodcarver."

He aspired to live a Jewish life by studying Jewish history and memorializing Jewish culture in his carvings. He endeavored to follow Rabbi Hillel's simple admonition: "What is hateful to you, do not do to others." He will be deeply missed.

A memorial service may be held at a later date. Donations in Gerry's memory can be made to CHANS Hospice, 45 Baribeau Drive Brunswick, ME 04011, (<https://www.mainehealth.org/mainehealth-care-home/ways-give>) or your local hospice, food bank, or arts organization.

CORNWALL — On Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023, John Kimberly Mumford Dutton, quietly died in the same home in which he was raised in Cornwall. He was 93 years old. Born on Nov. 28, 1930, he was the third son of the late David Garland and Constance (Mumford) Dutton.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Yvonne, and their four children; Michael and his wife Karen, Seth and his wife Karen, Alison and her partner Jay, and Colin, as well as their grandchildren Lucas, Patrick, Caleb, and Meaghan. He is predeceased by his siblings David, Arthur, and Cynthia.

John was born in Springfield, Massachusetts and raised in Poughkeepsie, New York and Cornwall. He attended the Poughkeepsie Day School, the Hotchkiss School, Syracuse University and Babson College. After graduating from Babson, he worked briefly in the insurance business in New York City before heading west to Vancouver, British Columbia to start a long career in the lumber industry.

While in Vancouver, he met the love of his life, Yvonne McKee from Northern Ireland. They married in 1961 in Poughkeepsie, New York and began their married life in Tarrytown, New York. Later, after moving to Toledo, Ohio, their first child was born. In 1963 they returned to New York where John joined the A.C. Dutton Lumber Company, the family wholesale lumber business started in 1887 by his grandfather Arthur C. Dutton. John spent the rest of his career in Poughkeepsie before retiring in 1995. He and Yvonne moved to Cornwall in 1996 where John felt truly at home.

He thrived on hard work, caring for others, and providing for his family. His many acts of quiet kindness may never be known to anyone other than the recipients, but he instilled in his children the same sense of charity toward others.

John was a longtime

board member of the historic Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and the Dutchess County Chapter of the American Red Cross, as well as a long serving member of the vestry of the Christ Episcopal Church in Poughkeepsie. In 1970, President Nixon appointed him to the Emergency Economic Stabilization Committee, a group of industry experts charged with protecting the economy against natural and manmade disasters.

More often than not, John could be found outdoors, often creating excuses to putter around his beloved Cornwall home, usually while his entire family waited in the car to travel back to Poughkeepsie.

For many decades, John cut cords of firewood to provide cozy heat to his family,

even when home heating oil prices bottomed out. He also spent many hours cutting hay and brush in the fields surrounding his home. His children continue to honor his legacy by cutting firewood and clearing brush for no apparent reason other than "that's the way we were raised."

He was able to regale friends and family with entertaining stories of his childhood and his experiences. He was truly interested in people and celebrated when others succeeded. His smile was infectious. His sense of humor was uplifting. His good nature and sense of social responsibility stood out in a world rapidly losing both.

No formal services are planned. His ashes will be buried at the convenience of his family at the North Cornwall Cemetery in Connecticut. A memorial gathering will be held at a later date.

John Dutton



Debra Stickles

MILLERTON — It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Debra S. Stickles, daughter of the late John and Mary (Finn) Gilbert, a devoted wife to John K. Stickles II, and a loving mother to Christy Hill (Michael) of Pine Plains, Casey Stickles, and John Stickles III both of Millerton.



Debra departed from this world on Dec. 17, 2023, due to natural causes, leaving behind a legacy of compassion and selflessness. Debra worked as a certified nursing assistant in private practice for over 40 years.

Debra's unwavering commitment to others defined her character. She spent her life as a dedicated caregiver, extending her warmth to those around her — including animals which she found joy and solace in the company of. Debra was a 65 year resident of Millerton, which was not just a place to live but a community she actively contributed to and cared for.

Above all, Debra's legacy will be her big heart and never-ending care for others. She leaves behind a trail of love and kindness that will continue to inspire and comfort those who were fortunate enough to know her. In her spare time she enjoyed traveling to Lake George, Florida, Arizona and summering on Cape Cod.

In this time of grief, let us remember Debra Stickles for the love she gave, the lives she touched, and the indelible mark she left on the hearts of those who were blessed to call her wife, mother, friend, and neighbor. May her soul find eternal peace, and may her memory be a source of solace for those who mourn her passing.

In addition to her husband and children, Debra is survived by her sister, Lynn Swart and her husband Leroy of Millbrook; her nieces, Lori Cookingham (Mike) of Millerton and Jodi Swart (Bryan) of Pleasant Valley; her great niece and nephews, Andrew and Joseph Milano, Amber Gunn and Bryan Corns, Jr. and Troi Hunter (Jackie) and Cole Cookingham. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her sister, Nancy Gilbert of Millerton.

There will be no public calling hours or funeral. A Celebration of Life will be announced for family and friends at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to the Dutchess County SPCA, 636 Violet Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12538. To send an online condolence to the family, plant a tree in Debra's honor or send flowers to the family home, please visit www.conklinfuneralhome.com Arrangements have been entrusted to the Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home, 37 Park Avenue, Millerton, NY 12546.

Send obituaries to johnc@lakevillejournal.com

Voter information for Salisbury

SALISBURY — The Salisbury Registrars would like to alert its registered voters of the following:

— The presidential primary will be held April 2, 2024. This election will be the first time the state of Connecticut will be holding early voting opportunities for citizens registered to vote in Connecticut.

— Early voting will be held March 26, 27, 28 and 30. Anyone wishing to vote in the primary must be a registered member of the corresponding party. Additionally, if a voter wishes to change

parties before a primary, they must do so 90 days in advance of the primary.

— The deadline to make a party change for the presidential primary is Dec. 26, 2023. This can be done online, or by stopping by the Town Hall and filling out a new voter registration card. Please call the Registrars' office with questions, at 860-435-5175.

Salisbury GOP caucus Jan. 9

SALISBURY — There will be a caucus of all enrolled Republican electors of the Town of Salisbury on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 5 p.m. at Town Hall to endorse candidates for the Salisbury Republican Town Committee.

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Canaan United Methodist Church 2 Church St., Rte 44, Canaan, CT 11 a.m. Worship Service "Open Hearts - Open Minds - Open Doors" Rev. Lee Gangaware 860-824-5534 canaanct-umc.com canaanctumc@gmail.com We hope you will join us!	Promised Land Baptist Church 29 Granite Ave., Canaan, CT Where you will find: A Warm Welcome! Helpful Bible Messages, A Place to Grow! Sunday School - 10am Sunday Worship - 11am Wednesday Bible Study and Prayer Meeting - 7PM (860) 824-5685 VISITORS WELCOME! www.promisedlandbaptist.org
The Chapel of All Saints, Cornwall Holy Eucharist: Sundays at 9 a.m. Trinity Retreat Center Chapel Lower River Road, West Cornwall	All Saints of America Orthodox Christian Church 313 Twin Lakes Rd., Salisbury, CT Vespers Saturday at 5:00 P.M. Divine Liturgy Sunday at 9:30 A.M. Special Services Online Rev. John Kreta 860-824-1340 allsaintsofamerica.us

EDITORIAL

Homeless Among Us

Last week, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal released its 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, detailing a nationwide 12% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness over the previous year.

Among the major findings: On a single night in 2023, some 653,104 people were homeless, the highest number reported as experiencing homelessness since HUD's reporting first began in 2007. And while 59% of these people were homeless in urban areas, 23% were in the suburbs, and 18% in rural areas like the ones we live in.

The HUD report indicates that the overall rise was due to a sharp increase in the number of people who became homeless for the first time during the pandemic and attributes this largely to soaring rents, housing stock shortages, and the winding down of the Biden Administration's American Rescue Plan Act, which contained protections against evictions and housing loss.

In the first part of a series exploring rural homelessness beginning this week (Page One), Debra Aleksinas examines how this is playing out in our Northwest Connecticut communities. The number of people experiencing homelessness in the Northwest Corner has surged for a second year in a row after a decade of decline, and this number now far exceeds the number of beds available at the only two shelters, one in Torrington, the other in Winsted, that serve this area of the state. Aleksinas notes that The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness has reported that homelessness jumped 39% statewide during the pandemic, and as of the fall of 2023, has risen 13% over the previous year.

Temporary emergency housing centers and shelters provide crucial transitional services, but they are short-term solutions. As The Atlantic Magazine's staff writer Jerusalem Demsas has argued in her astute reporting on the homelessness crisis, an "obvious" solution is to create enough housing stock at affordable prices to keep people who may be "one paycheck away" from homelessness in their homes, and to create the public/private sector systems that would make this possible.

While the people experiencing homelessness around us are not living in tent cities on the Sharon Green, they are here and need the help and creative support of our community. Homes make working in and belonging to a community possible. Making sure people can afford to have homes makes every community stronger.

As the Northwest CT Community Foundation wrote in its powerful, now almost 13-year-old Plan to End Homelessness in Northwest Connecticut: "No one should experience homelessness. No one should be without a safe, stable place to call home."

Say 'Yes' to solar Jan. 5

The Sharon town meeting about a solar installation for the Sharon Center School left some residents with more questions than answers.

Residents may want to visit the proposed site, a disused nature trail adjacent to the school's large playground and playing fields, to decide for themselves if our children are lacking outdoor play space.

The children of Sharon are also blessed with thousands of acres of nature preserves and over 30 miles of trails to explore that are actively maintained by the volunteers of Sharon Land Trust, Sharon Audubon, and the Sharon Conservation Commission.

Some have suggested that the solar array be put on the roof of the school.

Three years ago, the roof was the first option considered in the planning stages of the project, but the roof is not suitable for solar for a variety of reasons:

1. The slate-roofed portion of the school is not oriented in the correct direction. Also, because slate is brittle and can be prone to cracking, it is not ideal for solar installations.

2. The flat roof section of the roof has HVAC mechanicals on it and does not have nearly enough remaining space for an array large enough to provide 85% of the school's electricity.

3. Installing the panels on

the standing seam section of the roof would have voided the guarantee.

Let me declare my bias. I said Yes, In My Back Yard (I'm a YIMBY) and installed a standing solar array where it could be seen from the bedroom.

Looking at it, I marvel at that feat of human ingenuity, while also celebrating my nearly non-existent electricity bill. The Sharon Center School's array will save well over half a million dollars for the Town over its 20-year lifespan.

Famous gardens in our region incorporate solar panels as a feature of design (see Great Gardens of the Berkshires). New York State recently passed a bill that encourages the installation of pollinator meadows with solar fields, a strategy we hope to pursue by surrounding the proposed school solar array with pollinator-friendly native plants.

I hope my fellow residents of Sharon will seize this opportunity to showcase a marriage of technology and nature that is an economic boon to boot.

Let's say Yes to solar on Jan. 5. That would be a true gift to the children of Sharon.

Katy Kinsolving
Member,
Sharon Energy
and
Environment Commission



Concerns about proposed solar for Sharon

We are not against solar but have legitimate concerns with the proposed solar array at Sharon Center School playground extension. Residents can vote YES or NO on January 5th at Sharon Town Hall and should be aware of all the issues.

Background: In April 2022, some Sharon residents learned of a solar array being planned on land next to Sharon Center School that was donated to the town by Hilltop resident, Dr. Jensen in 1992 to be used by the school as a "playground extension". This beautiful wildlife habitat borders one of Sharon's most ecologically important wetlands.

The facts: After Dr. Jensen donated the land, a resident named Mr. Kelemen sponsored and funded the building of the Kelemen Nature Trail, assisted by 133 students, faculty and local

businesses. According to the plaque "It is meant to last for years so future generations of students can enjoy it like the students that built this trail did. Students can return years from now and see how the trees have grown since they planted them."

The Sharon Energy and Environment Committee (SEEC) approved a proposal to turn the playground extension/Kelemen Nature Trail into a solar field in 2022. The proposal was voted on by 14 people in a 5-minute meeting according to the minutes from that meeting. No environmental impact nor environmental engineering studies were done by the Town.

SEEC selected the playground extension/Kelemen Nature Trail, even though flat roofs are the preferred location for industrial solar arrays. SEEC claimed the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More thoughts on solar

The solar array for the Sharon Center School at the Keleman parcel is a fantastic project for everyone in Sharon. Thank you SEEC for so generously giving your time and service to our community.

We propose adding a few necessary elements into the project. First, a plaque honoring Mr. Keleman's gift and the Nature Trail, which so many members of our community helped to build, should be erected on the property. This plaque should contain all the information that is currently on the wooden sign which is so weathered and deteriorated that it is almost unreadable. Second, a program at the school should be encouraged to study solar and other sources of renewable energy, using the new solar array as a learning tool. Third, any harvestable wood which must

cut down to construct the array should be reclaimed for artistic and/or useful objects to be displayed and at the school. We feel certain that the SEEC will support these.

Sharon's history is filled with forward thinking leaders and inventors — Simeon Smith, medical inventor, Benjamin Hotchkiss, inventor and manufacturer, Cotton Mather Smith, minister, and Charles Augustus Templeton, our 51st governor who was educated in Sharon's public schools — just to name a few.

Let's keep that tradition alive in our school and in our town; let's inspire a new generation of forward thinkers at Sharon Center School.

Vote yes on Friday, Jan. 5. Sharon Town Hall 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Deborah and David Moore
Sharon

flat roof would not generate enough power. The proposed system at Sharon Center School is twice as large as Housatonic High School's and Sharon Center School has fewer than 25% of the students.

Application to Sharon Planning and Zoning for the solar Array submitted 9/12/23.

- 456 solar panels 10 feet tall
- Configured in 6 rows sloping toward the abutting wetlands
- Surrounded by 7-foot chain link fence
- Removal of 11 of the 12 trees planted by the students to create the Kelemen Nature Trail

Concerns:
• Destruction of Kelemen Nature Trail and green space
• Impact on abutting Wetlands documented by a researcher from Central

Connecticut State University
• Errors and Omissions in the P&Z Application as determined by an environmental engineer:

- No Stormwater Management analysis or plan
- No Decommissioning plans for the solar array at end of life
- No Carbon Debt Analysis
- Inadequate screening plan from Hilltop & Still Meadow Roads
- Power Purchase Agreement
- How was the PPA Rate per kWh determined and negotiated?
- Why did the rate change from the proposed \$.084 per kWh, to \$.107 per kWh when the contract was signed and then raised to \$.126 per kWh within 60 days?
- What is the estimated cost of penalties if SCS does not use 100% of the electricity generated for the 20 years of the contract?
- Are there penalties if the SCS tries to be more energy efficient or has to downsize the use of the building based on falling enrollment?

For information visit www.scs-solar.info

David Levinson
Sharon

More letters next page.

Sharon needs neighborly solar

On Friday, Jan. 5, Sharon will hold a referendum for or against the continuation of a municipal solar project approved over a year ago. At that time, after much public review and the unanimous vote of a town meeting in favor of the project, Sharon contracted through the Connecticut Green Bank for the supply, operation, and maintenance — at no cost to Sharon — of an array of solar panels near the Sharon Center School, which will provide the school with a cheap, consistent electricity rate for the next 20 years.

This is a good project, previously vetted and already underway. So why will there be another vote?

Because certain Sharon residents, including some who live next to the solar panel lot, have successfully petitioned under state law to put a question, written in their own words, before town voters. The question would prohibit the licensing of the lot for the solar panel project. This would effectively torpedo the project and put the town in breach of its ongoing contract. The Green Bank is already saying that the town may have to pay significant damages if there is a breach.

Why are the objectors objecting? I listened to their arguments at a town meeting on Nov. 29.

These struck me as weak. (E.g., that changes in market financial numbers over the months of project develop-

ment render project numbers generally untrustworthy; that the siting of the project will dishonor a neglected, student-built "nature trail" that loops around on the lot; that there may be bog turtles nearby; etc.) So, I speculate that the real reason for objecting is that one or more people do not want the panels near their property.

There is a term used to disparage such objections to community projects: "NIMBY" ("Not In My Back Yard"). But not all NIMBY concerns need be illegitimate. These objectors are our neighbors.

Their worries (including NIMBY worries, if that's what is motivating them) should be listened to and, where reasonable, accommodated. For example, there is already a plan to screen the panels from view with native plantings. Perhaps it would be reasonable to do more now to lock in and publicize these plans and take steps to make sure they are substantial, funded, and implemented.

The objectors have not made it easy for the town to act generously. Their opposition is years late and inconsiderate of regular town governance. It threatens real monetary damage to taxpayers.

And the question being put to voters has been drafted "litigation-style" — so that if it cannot convince, it might at least confuse and leave us all unhappy.

Still, we must be neighborly. I urge the people of Sharon to vote "yes" to the referendum question, which will keep the solar project going, but also to express to town officials the strong desire that the panels be well and truly screened. In this way, all of us, including those who live near the panels, can enjoy the benefits the panels will bring.

Richard Baumann
Sharon

THE LAKEVILLE JOURNAL
(USPS 303280)
An Independent Connecticut Newspaper
Published Weekly by The Lakeville Journal Company
Owned by The Lakeville Journal Foundation; Noreen Doyle, Chair
64 Route 7 North, Falls Village, CT 06031
P.O. Box 1688, Lakeville, CT 06039-9989
(860) 435-9873 • www.tricornernews.com • editor@lakevillejournal.com

Volume 127, Number 21 Thursday, December 21 & 28, 2023

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The Lakeville Journal Company, Publishers of **The Lakeville Journal and The Millerton News**
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The Lakeville Journal Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Subscription Rates - One Year: \$82.00 in Litchfield County, \$98.00 outside county
Known Office of Publication: Lakeville, CT 06039-1688. Periodical Postage Rate Paid at Lakeville, CT 06039. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Lakeville Journal Company, PO Box 1688, Lakeville, Connecticut 06039-1688.

Viewpoint

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Solar referendum deserves attention by residents before vote on Jan. 5

The school solar referendum on Jan. 5 warrants the careful attention of Sharon residents. Simply stated, approving the proposal will save the town money, reduce taxpayers' exposure to electricity price increases, reinvigorate a disused "nature" trail, and provide the real and symbolic benefit of reduced carbon emissions at our school.

Opponents of the solar installation decry the "destruction" of a town recreational property and challenge the projected savings for the school. Neither assertion is true.

The Keleman Nature Trail's condition has declined significantly over the decades since it was created: the town has many fiscal demands, and the budget for keeping this property in good condition, free from invasives and fulfilling its promise as an educational resource, has been virtually non-existent.

"The Proposed Savings" section of the opponents' website cites 13 specific financial problems with the proposed solar array. But what appear to be legitimate concerns do not stand up to scrutiny. Of these 13 sections,

eight are demonstrably false or misleading and four are irrelevant. I embrace a good debate, but Sharon voters are ill-served by opposition to this already-approved project because:

(1) the petition initiating the referendum contains two significant, misleading and confusing assertions;

(2) opponents fail to mention that the town will face the near-certainty of a \$40,000-50,000 charge for abrogating the contract entered into more than a year ago;

(3) Sharon's reputation with state entities and independent contractors will be damaged by abrogation after three years of publicly supporting the project;

(4) the opposition's website section on financial matters ignores publicly available information and naively, or intentionally, understates the major savings to the Town: the project would provide savings of more than \$30,000 a year, or greater than \$600,000 over the 20-year life span of the project;

(5) Taxpayers will be exposed to upwards of \$1.2 million in avoidable cumulative electricity costs.

You may wonder how to make sense of each side's claims and counterclaims. I am prepared to defend those accusations against any reasonable question or challenge in an open forum. For more detail, see the town's website www.sharonct.org. Some of that detail is self-evident, some is more complex and tedious.

For perspective, the solar project at SCS was made possible by the CT Green Bank's Municipal Assistance Program [MAP]; the Green Bank was established by the CT General Assembly in 2011. To date, it has completed more than \$2.4 billion in clean energy projects in the state.

A "Yes" vote will provide both predictable savings and provide protection for 20 years from exposure to cost increases. Why not allow people of good faith on both sides to work together to propose dedicating a modest share of the savings to adequately fund the Keleman Trail? In that way, Keleman can become what everyone remembers.

Roger Liddell

Sharon

TURNING BACK THE PAGES

NORMA BOSWORTH

100 years ago — December 1923

J.G. Kimmerle last Saturday while attempting to drive his Reo delivery truck up the hill near the Salisbury Iron Co. came to grief. The road was icy and the wheels failed to hold. The truck slipped backward down hill going over a small embankment, and overturning. A number of men from the iron company helped to right up the truck which was unharmed.

Thirty headlight devices now allowed upon motor vehicles in Connecticut will become void on March 15, 1924, according to announcement made by the State Motor Vehicle Department. Thereafter only devices which have been approved by the Eastern Conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators will be allowed in Connecticut. The decision of the Connecticut department is in line with the effort to reduce the menace of the headlight glare and the inconvenience resulting from the enforcement of different headlight regulations in adjoining states. Member states comprising the Eastern Conference of Motor Vehicle Administrators are Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Miss Josephine O'Connell spent the week end with Miss Alice Visconti in Torrington.

50 years ago — December 1973

A gasoline drought overtook the Tri-state area this week on the eve of the Christmas holidays. Two of Lakeville's three service stations — Frank's and Service Plus, both of which handle Mobil products — were out of gas Wednesday afternoon. The third, Lakeville Service Station, which handles Shell, was limiting sales to \$3 a purchase.

The Tri-state area awaited the possible lash of a new winter storm Wednesday

night after Storm Felix had brought the season's first substantial snow combined with sleet and sub-zero temperatures. Felix left seven or more inches of combined snow and sleet in the area Sunday night and Monday, and the ensuing cold wave dropped temperatures Wednesday morning to a reported 15 below zero at one point in Millerton.

Peter Reilly admitted under intensive questioning by police that he may have killed his mother, Barbara Gibbons, in their Falls Village home the night of Sept. 28. Tapes made during exhaustive interrogation immediately following the murder were played last Wednesday and Thursday during a hearing on a pre-trial motion in the murder case at Litchfield Court House. Defense Attorney Catherine Roraback of Canaan is seeking the return and suppression as evidence of tapes and other material gathered by the state against Reilly, a senior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. She contends they were gained in violation of his constitutional rights and by "coercion." Young Reilly's taped acknowledgement that he could have slashed his mother's throat with a razor and broken her legs by jumping on them came only after police had repeatedly suggested the idea to him during questioning. Statements made and tapes heard in open court in Litchfield revealed that he was held in custody for more than 26 hours between 10 p.m. Sept. 28 and the moment of his arrest, 12:30 a.m. Sept. 30, during which period he did not have the services of a lawyer. During this initial detention he was questioned for a total of about 12 hours in Canaan and in Hartford. He was told the interrogation was not taped, when in fact it was. Questioning continued despite his repeated complaints of hunger and exhaustion.

The appealing child featured on the cover of the Christmas issue of Time

magazine, on the newsstands this week, is five-year-old Nathaniel Binzen of Brinton Hill, Salisbury. Nathaniel's picture was taken by his father, Bill Binzen, widely known as a photographer and illustrator of children's books.

The lifestyle of many Canaanites will be changed markedly shortly after the beginning of the new year when Jack's Meat Market closes its doors for the last time. The little market, which has been operated by the Bergenty family for the past 35 years, is being forced to close by relatively new state regulations governing the sale of meat.

25 years ago — December 1998

CANAAN — This Saturday morning, the original Snack Shack, the tiny wooden structure from which burgers and ice cream have been dispensed to locals and travelers alike over the years, will be demolished, with plans to replace it by a log cabin of the same size. It will be erected by Country Log Homes of Sheffield, Mass., over the winter months, with the reopening of the seasonal business expected sometime in the spring, as usual. Canaan resident David Ohler recently bought the business and is leasing the property from Burt Veronesi of Canaan. Plans are to construct a miniature golf course on the site next summer, along with a screened patio. The shaded picnic area and tables will remain.

Michael Hodgkins has been appointed Director of Food and Beverage at the Interlaken Inn Resort and Conference Center. In this role, he is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the center's restaurant pub, banquet and catering department.

These items were taken from *The Lakeville Journal* archives at Salisbury's Scoville Memorial Library, keeping the original wording intact as possible.

COP28: Lukewarm climate deal

After two fraught weeks in Dubai, where government ministers from around the world haggled over how to confront climate change, the U.N. conference COP28 closed on Dec. 13 with a deal that calls on countries to move away from fossil fuels — the oil, gas and coal fueling the climate crisis — by 2050 and to triple the capacity for renewable energy by 2030.

While the U.N. hailed the agreement as the beginning of the end of the fossil-fuel era, skeptics, critics, cynics and climate scientists were less impressed. They had hoped for a deal that does more than tepidly call for the transition away from the fossil fuels but substantively halts investment in oil, coal and gas and that compels countries to take the urgent action needed to prevent runaway sea level rise, mass extinctions and other catastrophic, climate-induced events.

The inevitable conclusion: Though a step in the right direction, this new climate agreement is squishy, lacks teeth and a timeframe.

Was COP28 co-opted by oil interests?

The decision to hold the annual COP conference in the United Arab Emirates—one of the world's top oil producing countries — was certainly suspect. And the appointment of Sultan Al Jaber, chief executive of the state-owned oil company, as conference president, seemed to many, including former Vice President Al Gore, an outright conflict of interest.

"It's not so much that it's in a country that produces oil; it's the appointment of the CEO of one of the biggest and least responsible oil companies on the planet to be the head of the conference," declared former Gore, arguing the fossil-fuel industry had "gone too far."

Al Jaber's claim in late November that there was "no science" behind the demand to phase out fossil fuel to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) only fueled charges that the conference had been corrupted.

That seemingly small temperature threshold that Jaber questioned was agreed to in 2015 when nearly every country in the world signed the Paris Climate Treaty. If temperatures climb much

GUEST COLUMN

BY CAROL GOODSTEIN

higher than that, climate scientists warn, the planet will face spiraling climate disaster.

Ending the fossil-fuel narrative

While fossil-fuel lobbyists were certainly well represented at COP28, with 2,700 or the 100,000 conference registrants working for the oil and gas industry, organizers categorically denied a report leaked to the nonprofit Center for Climate Reporting and the BBC alleging that briefing notes were prepared for UAE team meetings with "at least 27 foreign governments" ahead of the conference.

Whether the conference was ultimately a legitimate forum for working the world's way toward a clean energy future, an opportunity for fossil fuel producers to cut profitable deals or some combination of both, the U.N. platform is for now, our best and only option to inspire climate action globally.

Bottom line: If demand for fossil fuels continues, production will climb. While under Biden, America passed the Inflation Reduction Act — the most aggressive climate investment ever taken by Congress — that would funnel billions of dollars into programs designed to accelerate the country's energy transition and slash emissions by about 40% this decade, oil production in the U.S. is at an all-time high. White House officials contend that increased domestic oil production serves as a bridge to help us transition to renewable energy sources. And the U.S. isn't alone — Norway, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and France are all increasing fossil fuel production.

The fossil fuel industry has effectively been promulgating the narrative that the transition to clean energy will be long, costly and require gas, coal and oil. But as Al Gore recently contended: "Fossil-fuel producers have portrayed themselves as the source of trusted advice that we need to solve this crisis. But they are responding to powerful incentives to keep digging and drilling and pumping up the fossilized remains

of dead animals and plants and burning them in ways that use the atmosphere as an open sewer, threatening the future of humanity. It's enough already."

Closer to home

Here in the Northwest Corner, where warmer, wetter, wilder weather continues to intensify, the effects of climate change are increasingly palpable and undeniable. Weather extremes have alternately frozen, fried and drowned crops; caused smoke and asthma-irritating particulates from wildfires in Canada to waft down to our communities; overwhelmed riverbanks, flooded roads and homes; altered local landscapes; shifted habitat for wildlife and creating conditions for invasive species.

While the world is now off track to meet the 1.5C temperature rise and on track for 2.5-2.9°C above pre-industrial levels this century, the average temperature in Connecticut has risen nearly 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit since 1895.

We live in one of the fastest-warming regions in the U.S. The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation paints this picture: By 2050 the average annual temperature here is predicted to increase by 5°F, heatwaves will increase from four days per year to more than 50 per year and frost days will decrease from 124 to 85.

What do we do to prepare for a climate changed future? While waiting for COP29— slated for the petrostate of Azerbaijan—it's clear that it will be up to state and local governments, businesses and communities to understand current climate change realities and find solutions to shape a changing future. How will climate change affect farmers and food? What does climate change mean for healthcare? What will we do about climate migrants—the thousands of people already leaving places like Texas and California where drought and wildfires are making conditions intolerable?

Communications consultant Carol Goodstein has written extensively about climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation and related topics and for many years was director of communications and marketing at the Rainforest Alliance. She lives in Norfolk.

More letters next page.

Winter

Spoon me, sweet darling.

Under feathers and flannel,

Chase the cold away

— Kathy Volstad

where are the bears now?

I have my favorite one

Oh beneath our deck!

— Eileen L. Epperson

Ping pong parody

A life bounces back and forth

Death never loses

— Anonymous

From the Scoville Memorial Library adult writing group. Haikus written on the theme of the transition to winter.

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The Housatonic Valley Association (hvatoday.org) is a partner in the Follow the Forest initiative that focuses on both preserving forests and the pathways between the core forests for wildlife migration. The issue we are facing is the fragmentation of forests as a result of increased development, so the protection of these corridors for wildlife to move has become increasingly important. For more information and how to get involved please visit: followtheforest.org/about-us/our-mission/



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Solar project's benefits need to be understood

The Town of Sharon has approved a solar panel project that would have significant financial, educational and environmental benefits for the town. But opponents of the plan have initiated a referendum on Jan. 5 that presents such an inaccurate picture of the project that someone coming to the issue cold would have no way of judging it on its merits.

The referendum asks "Shall the Town of Sharon voluntarily relinquish community recreational property at the Sharon Center School playground extension for the purpose of leasing that land to a third party for the installation of a 400+ solar panel array?"

1. It is inaccurate to describe this plan as the town "voluntarily relinquish"ing this property, as the town retains ownership and control. This is a legitimate decision to use the field for a new purpose.

2. Describing this as "community recreational property at the Sharon Central School" is misleading. This field has not been

used by the school for fifteen years; the "nature walk" is in complete disrepair, and while the lot in question is occasionally mowed, it has not been maintained as an active recreational property.

3. It is misleadingly incomplete to describe the project as "leasing" "to a third party", as if the agreement has nothing to do with Sharon. The town will benefit from lower energy costs, educational opportunities, and construction of a new nature walk.

This project has been under consideration for years and approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance, and the Board of Education. If Sharon residents are being asked to shoulder the cost of a referendum and potential financial liability for the cancellation of a project already underway, they should at least be given the chance to consider the project on its actual merits. The authors of this referendum have not given them the opportunity to do so.

Sharon

Anne Vance

Thanking everyone at Sharon Center School

As the end of 2023 approaches, the members of the Sharon Board of Education wish to express their gratitude to the principal, faculty, and staff of the Sharon Center School for all they have done to help our elementary and middle school students grow and thrive.

The fruits of their 2023-2023 school year efforts are borne out by notable accomplishments including:

SCS student progress and performance as reflected in Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Results which showed:

Significant improvement in Mathematics and English Language Arts and the percentage of students meeting their learning growth targets.

The overall percentage of points earned by our students increased by over 4% percent.

Students' outperformed Connecticut student performance by more than 2.5%

SCS was one of 154 schools awarded the CT State Department of Education "Schools of Distinction" for the category of high student growth in mathematics for our students with high needs.

We also celebrate the Growth in student participation in the Regional Middle School Summer Program

Our art department and its innovative mural and Troutbeck programs

To get a sense of the spirit "within the walls" visit

<https://region1schools.org/>.

We wish to express our thanks to the administration and staff at the RSSC (Central Office) for their leadership, support, and stewardship; their combined efforts have made a difference in our schools and for our children. We particularly appreciate the partnerships they have developed with numerous local educational and philanthropic organizations.

Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to our former Board of Education members, Monica Connor, Deborah Rathbun, and Mandy Thompson who, this fall, stepped down from the Board after many years of dedicated service. Their time and efforts have enhanced Sharon Center School, our teachers' and staff members' work, and most importantly our children's learning.

As members of the Sharon Board of Education, we extend hopeful wishes to our community neighbors for a joyous holiday season and prosperous and healthy new year. We look forward to working together as a collaborative team to continued school growth and student success.

Happy Holidays from,
The Sharon Board of Education:

Doug Cahill
Anne Vance
Nancy Hegy Martin
Kitty Visconti
Philip O'Reilly

Voting 'Yes' on Sharon solar

As Dr. James Shepherd told a recent Salisbury Forum audience, we face a real existential threat from global warming and we need to act on sustainable solutions now. At a recent Sharon town meeting, every speaker said they were in favor of sustainable energy solutions.

In a few weeks Sharon residents will have an opportunity to approve a contract to install some 400 solar panels in an overgrown weed-filled lot near the Sharon Center School. The proposal will even save the school thousands of dollars in electricity costs each year and lower our taxes. That's because Connecticut Green Bank will install and maintain the panels at no cost whatsoever to the town or the school district.

Here's how Sharon residents can help: the town will hold a referendum on the project on Friday, Jan. 5th, from Noon to 8 PM at the Sharon Town Hall. It's important that all residents turn out to vote "YES" for this win-win project. If we want to do something about climate change, here's our chance. It's not enough to say "I like solar, but..." Now's the time for the citizens of Sharon to vote like we mean it.

To learn more about the future of clean energy for Sharon Center School, go to solar4sharon.org.

For years to come, Sharon students will be able to point with pride to their town's visible effort to save the environment.

You can vote by absentee ballot or in person at Town Hall on January 5th.

Frank Fitzmaurice
Sharon

More letters
previous page.

SWSA Learn to Jump Camp

The Salisbury Winter Sports Association (SWSA) will host its annual Junior Jump Camp, a two-day fun introduction to ski jumping, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 29 and 30, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Satre Hill in Salisbury.

Children 7 years old and up are eligible. The cost of the event is \$50 per child, which includes lunch and instruction for both days.

Please bring downhill skis, boots and helmets — no poles required—. For more information or to register, call Ken Barker at 860 806-0471, email kennethsbarker@gmail.com or visit jumpfest.org.

Send news tips to johnc@lakevillejournal.com

40 years promoting peace

By Kathryn Boughton

SALISBURY—Week after week, in rain, snow and summer's heat they gather.

More than 2,000 times over the past 40 years, a small group of like-minded individuals have come together on the White Hart Inn green to unfurl their banners, advocating first for nuclear disarmament and now for peace and justice.

Their diligence has made them the longest-running vigil promoting peace in Connecticut.

The Northwest Corner Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament, formed in 1981 as a grassroots effort to halt the nuclear arms race, occupied the Green first and has since morphed into the Coalition for Peace and Justice. The vigils began Oct. 15, 1983, and continue to this day.

"In the beginning, we stood on the Town Hall steps," said Al Ginouves, who now organizes the weekly vigils, "but then we moved down here."

The coalition draws members from throughout the tristate region but numbers have waxed and waned over the years. There were only a handful of regulars standing in the line behind the group's banner on a wet Saturday last week, but Ginouves was not discouraged. "We get a lot of [supportive] honks — and every now and then someone gives us the finger," he said with a laugh.

Ginouves comes by his activism honestly. His mother was a member of WILPF (The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), which was founded in 1915 to promote world peace from a feminist viewpoint. He was protesting the war in Vietnam by the time he was 16 and introduced his chil-



PHOTO BY KATHRYN BOUGHTON

Larry Burcroff, left, and Leonard Polletta were among those gathered on the green in front of the White Hart Inn recently.

dren to activism early, as well.

"I used to bring them when they were kids," he recalled. "I would put a blanket in the shade of a tree and let them play during the vigil." He said he never realized that the children were frightened until his son wrote a Father's Day essay at school.

"He said, 'My father is brave,'" Ginouves recounted. "I asked him why he wrote that, and he said because I stood on the Green. It turns out he was afraid of a car hitting us. He was born in 1996, so he was well aware of the tensions in the nation."

Some of those tensions have led to direct exchanges with people of differing opinions. Ginouves recalled one World War II veteran who stood in front of the banner and said, "I love the atomic bomb." Ginouves asked him why, and the old man said, "Because it saved my life."

"He said he would have been sent in to help defeat Japan and could have been killed," Ginouves said. "I didn't get upset or argue with him. I just said, 'That was then, and this is now.' He stayed for the rest of the vigil. He didn't come stand on our side of the banner, but he stood with us."

Another woman who frequently walked by the vigil confronted them once and

asked why they stood there week after week when they knew it would do no good. Ginouves simply asked her if she went to church and, if so, why.

For a while, in the 1980s, it appeared that some of the group's dreams were being fulfilled. During Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure the group sponsored cultural and agricultural exchanges with Russia, sending groups of local high school students to Russia and bringing Russian youths to the Northwest Corner.

At the same time, Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987. But with the disintegration of the USSR and the tightening of the authoritarian regime, relations again cooled.

A feeling of solidarity is a byproduct of the vigils, according to Pam Patterson of Salisbury, who stands with the Coalition for Peace and Justice and who has a long history of advocating for peace. "I started in high school, protesting the Vietnam war," she said. "My older brother and our friends were all being drafted, and I was just against the war. These vigils give like-minded people a chance to get together."

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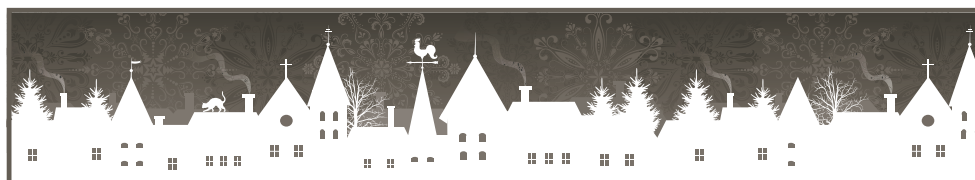
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Our Towns

Ridgways revise cidery proposal

By Riley Klein

CORNWALL — The third installment of a public hearing for the application by Jayne and Ian Ridgway to add a cidery at their farm on Town Street was held in Town Hall on Dec. 12.

Ian Ridgway spoke at the top of the meeting to address concerns about the proximity of the cidery to neighbors' homes. Ridgway stated the proposal has been altered to move the building 1,100 feet farther from the road, making the Ridgway home the closest residence to the cidery.

The applicants also agreed to reduce deliveries and trash pickup to one day per week and to limit hours of operation so the cidery would never be open past sundown. Additionally, the Ridgways' revised proposal included a double driveway to accommodate bidirectional traffic to the cidery.

Numerous residents voiced concerns about the project, particularly related

to alcohol in a residential area and increased traffic on Town Street.

"All the adjacent neighbors — every one — is opposed to this," said Diane Ingersoll. "Making cider is one thing, but inviting the public into an entertainment venue where alcohol will be served is a totally different situation and unacceptable. There will be no peace in peaceful North Cornwall if this permit is allowed."

"The Ridgways don't know who their customers will be, and if a cidery appears on Google Maps people will come from all over the region," said Roxanna Robinson on the potential for increased traffic.

Other residents spoke out in support of the application.

"In order for people to stay in agriculture, they have no choice but to adjust with the times and this is no different," said Richard Dolan. Dolan also noted that Cream Hill Lake Association, just up the road from Ridgway Farm, is a lake club that al-

lows BYOB drinking. "You can bring as much booze as you want, whatever you want, and there's no one monitoring that place."

"Major compromises have been made by the applicant, and it's about time some compromises were made by

the opponents," said Richard Bramley.

Once all residents had testified, the public hearing on this application was closed. P&Z will vote on the cidery proposal at its next regular meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 9.



PHOTO BY LANS CHRISTENSEN

The reason for the season

Kent Historical Society's 21st annual Community Holiday Celebration was held at the Kent Community House on Saturday, Dec. 16. Guests enjoyed a seasonal spread and donations benefited the historical society.



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

Ginny Apple spoke on the bald eagle's comeback at Hunt Library on Saturday, Dec. 16.

Bald eagles make comeback in Connecticut

By Patrick L. Sullivan

FALLS VILLAGE — Ginny Apple came to the Hunt Library Saturday, Dec. 16, with good news.

The bald eagle is alive and well in Connecticut.

Apple is a master wildlife conservationist with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. She gives dozens of talks per year, accompanied by slide-shows that feature stunning photography, much of it from her network of friends who just happen to be professional wildlife photographers.

Apple noted that the bald eagle is a national symbol but is not the national bird. (There is no national bird, she added.)

She pointed to the bald eagle's revival as one of the great success stories of environmental laws.

The bald eagle suffered greatly from being shot in great numbers in the Colonial and post-Revolutionary periods. Industrial development resulting in loss of habitat did not help. Neither did the use of the pesticide DDT, which affected the ecosystem in such a way as to cause a decline in bald eagles and many other species.

The once prolific and numerous bald eagles were almost gone from the lower 48 states by the 1960s, she said.

Starting with the federal Endangered Species Act in 1973, a ban on DDT, and re-introduction programs, the bird recovered.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reclassified the bald eagle from "endangered" to "threatened" in 1995 for the lower 48, and in 2007, the bald eagle was removed

from the federal endangered species list. Apple noted that bald eagles — and other species — are still protected under federal legislation passed in 1940 and by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

Closer to home, Apple showed several graphics demonstrating how bald eagles have become a fairly routine sight in Connecticut, nesting in unlikely places such as near a shopping center in Hamden.

Every January, DEEP volunteers go out in the field looking for bald eagle nests. In 2021, they spotted some 215 eagles. Back in the early '90s, the volunteers felt lucky to spot one.

Despite the significant progress, Apple said the bald eagle still faces challenges. Wind turbines kill all sorts of birds. Rodent poisons and lead shot — used by hunters — also find their way into the ecosystem.

Power lines are also a problem. Apple showed a photo of a lineman installing a triangular device on a power line pole designed to prevent perching next to the live wires.

Apple played two audio clips. The first was a shrieking sound. The second was more of a chirrup.

She asked the audience to guess which sound was a bald eagle and which was a red-tailed hawk.

The shriek was the hawk, not the eagle.

Apple said popular nature television programs do a lot of good by educating people about wildlife, but sometimes the producers can't resist substituting the dramatic shriek for the more sedate chirruping sound.

Lakeville fire doused with quick response

By Patrick L. Sullivan

LAKEVILLE — What was initially reported as a barn fire on Sunday morning, Dec. 17, turned out to be a fire on a workbench in a maintenance building at Town Hill Farm in Lakeville.

Lakeville Hose Company Chief Jason Wilson said "it was a big show for something that took 15 minutes."

Wilson said the call came in around 9:05 a.m. When

firefighters got to the scene, they found smoke coming from the maintenance building, and discovered a fire on a workbench. Wilson said tools with plastic components, such as cordless drills, were on fire.

It took the responders 15 minutes or so to put the fire out. Fire companies from Sharon, Falls Village and Miller-ton also responded, and were sent back home.

No injuries to humans or animals were reported.

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HOMELESSNESS

Continued from Page A1

rienced homelessness four or more times in three years, according to The Plan to End Homelessness in Northwest CT, a comprehensive report prepared by the Northwest CT Community Foundation (NCCF) in collaboration with about 30 regional social service agencies.

The rural homeless are less visible than those in more urban areas, said service providers. They are camped out in dense woods, under bridges or living in cars, tents or structures unfit for human habitation.

51 beds for entire Northwest Corner

The dipping temperatures drive homeless people to seek a warm place to sleep, bur-

dening local shelters.

"We have 51 shelter beds in Northwest Connecticut. There are 35 beds at FISH, five of which are dedicated to veterans funded by the Veterans Administration (VA), and 16 beds at the Y in Winsted. It's a very rural region, and transportation is a big issue," said Julia Scharnberg, vice president of community engagement for NCCF.

"Our shelters are constantly full. We are stuck with a real logjam," she noted. "Every day that passes, the wait list is long enough to fill all 51 slots about twice."

Scharnberg, who also serves on the board of The Housing Collective, said she has seen a rise in the number

of unhoused seniors. "Many are on a fixed or low income and any increase in monthly expenses puts them at risk of homelessness."

The lack of low-income housing in the Northwest Corner has reached a critical point, explained the FISH executive director. "I often say it's about housing affordability, not affordable housing."

Complicating matters, the planned mid-November opening of an emergency cold-weather shelter in downtown Torrington, known as Operation Overflow, has been delayed as service providers search for a suitable location. Several churches have offered space, but a group of parents objected to the shelter's proximity to a nearby school.

'A problem that touches everybody'

Rural homelessness, according to The Plan to End Homelessness in Rural Northwest Connecticut, has many of the same root causes as the more visible urban settings: the persistent lack of affordable housing, evictions, poverty, domestic violence, mental illness and the invisible injuries of combat.

The Northwest Corner towns, unlike larger cities, lack shelters to call their own. Except for assistance from municipal social services agents, the task of assisting and monitoring homelessness falls heavily on municipal, faith or business leaders, health care agencies, charitable institutions and volunteers.

"There is nothing here because our towns are so small. What has happened is an in-

formal web of arrangements," said state Rep. Maria Horn (D-64).

"They are often put up in a hotel, or transported to where there are services. There have been a lot of good intentions, but the processes seem to have gone astray," said Horn. "People are forced to find their way to Torrington and Winsted, and we tend to think we don't have a problem."

Help starts with 2-1-1

New Beginnings of Northwest Hills Litchfield County is a regional service agency and sponsor of The Gathering Place, which implemented the 2-1-1 intake system in Litchfield County in 2014. It offers unhoused people in Northwest Connecticut "assistance and access to services to help individuals transition out of homelessness and into a new chapter of their lives," according to director Nancy Cannavo.

Its Gathering Place offers visitors a safe place to receive their mail, take a shower, do laundry, get a haircut, speak to a provider one-on-one, make phone calls and obtain clothing for employment interviews. Visitors also receive mental health and substance abuse referrals and supported employment.

Cannavo, a psychiatric nurse at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and coordinator of the Mental Health Services to the Homeless program, said that between January 2022 and November 2023, The Gathering Place saw 608 homeless clients.

"We are fully committed to caring for all people and ensuring that no one is left behind," said Cannavo.



PHOTO BY DEBRA A. ALEKSINAS

Winsted resident Paul Venti awaits help from the Boy Scouts to pitch his borrowed tent.

Winsted man's mission: 'Fighting the good fight' on homelessness

By Debra A. Aleksinas

WINSTED — As dusk turned to darkness, Paul Venti sat alone in the shadows of the town green, awaiting help from the local Boy Scouts to pitch his borrowed tent so he could hunker down for the night.

Surrounded by a pile of warm clothing, a lantern, jumbo thermos, bottled water and rolled-up sleeping bag, Venti arrived early to secure his space on the cold, hard ground.

Soon, the green would be filled with participants for the Winsted Area Branch YMCA's 12th annual "Freezin' for a Reason" sleep-out and fundraiser to help raise awareness about homelessness in the Northwest Corner and support the work of the Winsted Y's 16-bed emergency shelter.

As cars swished by during the busy evening rush hour, Venti, of Winsted, revealed his reason for supporting the event for the second year in a row: "I am doing this in memory of a friend that I lost to PTSD, a veteran. Tonight is his night."

Venti, a retired member of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 777 and former food drive coordinator for his union, explained that he has taken the battle against hunger and homelessness as a personal challenge in the hope of helping lift fellow citizens out of their plights: "I have dedicated my life to this. This is my mission."

In 2016, Venti, a retired Navy veteran, founded The Good Fight on Hunger and Homelessness, a nonprofit corporation aimed at helping the unhoused. He also volunteers and coordinates food drives with the Missions of Mercy (M.O.M.) free dental clinic and has hosted seminars around the country.

His home's two-car garage, he said, doubles as a food pantry: "The FedEx guy knows us well."

With every food and supply run, Venti said, his savings were quickly depleting, so he sold his coveted United Association (UI) pin collec-

tion, which took him two and a half decades to collect, to continue his mission.

A union brother suggested he design a pin of his own for Fighting the Good Fight, which resulted in a stream of revenue that allowed him to buy many needed items like sleeping bags, tents, hoodies and sneakers to hand out.

Venti is also author of the book "Fighting the Good Fight on Hunger and Homelessness: Life Stories and Meeting Inspiring People," available on Amazon. He said he learned valuable lessons from his friends on the streets: "I never walked in their shoes, so I don't judge."

He recalled attending a Medicare summit in Washington, D.C., on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of Retired Americans, when he came across a group of homeless people on Pennsylvania Avenue, two blocks from the White House, huddled in sleeping bags on top of steam grates to stay warm. "There are a lot of myths about homelessness," said Venti. "Homeless does not mean undereducated, jobless, you're a drug addict, alcoholic or lazy. Nobody is exempt from being homeless."

SANDY HOOK

Continued from Page A1



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

State Representative Maria Horn (D-64) spoke at the vigil in remembrance of the victims of Sandy Hook 11 years after the incident.

they work," she said, noting that Connecticut has one of the lowest rates of gun deaths in the U.S.

The Rev. Dr. John Nelson, pastor of Salisbury Congregational Church, asked, "Is it necessary to say once again that the right to fullness of life supercedes any rights to

wield a weapon?"

As Ed Thorney and Gary Reiss played guitars and sang, followed by the reading of the names of the Sandy Hook victims, Nelson disappeared down the street. He went to ring the church bells, once for each of the 26 victims.

COG

Continued from Page A1

Rista Malanca, new director of community and economic development; and Jean Speck, former COG member from Kent and new senior regional planner at COG.

Following introductions, representatives from MIRA Dissolution Authority addressed the board on the future disposition of transfer stations.

On June 30, 2027, Connecticut's trash-to-energy facility in Hartford will no longer process municipal solid waste. This will leave 12 COG towns with nowhere to send their garbage.

"July 1 of 2027, the towns will be on their own," said Bert Hunter, chair of the MIRA Dissolution Authority board. "The towns that were left behind are basically the towns here in the Northwest Corner and the towns in the Southeast."

The two remaining transfer stations in the state that use MIRA to process waste are in Torrington and Essex.

"When June 30, '27 comes, towns will have to have, through their process, selected a new facility or operator and be able to take over at that point," said chief financial officer Mark Daley.

COG members expressed frustration with the process and noted the state's lack of support on this issue. Daley stated there is approximately \$55 million available to put toward the dissolution and

transfer of services, but that is primarily expected to be used to remediate the 80 acres in Hartford on which the plant sits.

"I feel like I've been whipped around by the legislature," said Curtis Rand of Salisbury. "We need long-term security. We can't possibly manage this way."

"This is our number one issue," said Jerram. "It's fourth quarter, people. And it's not looking good because we're down three touchdowns."

Jerram moved the solid waste problem to "the front burner" and looked to solve the issue at a regional level through the COG.

"Is this Council of Governments a qualifying agency to take on ownership of the Torrington transfer station?" Jerram asked Daley.

"Yes, I don't see why not," Daley responded.

Jerram then asked if part of the \$55 million could be used for a phase two site assessment on the Torrington transfer station.

"We're not at that stage," said Daley.

Jerram then suggested COG form a special committee to determine if purchasing the Torrington transfer station is a viable option.

"I think the bylaws need to be reviewed quickly and efficiently to move forward and then we need to consider as a group whether to pursue the Torrington site," said Jerram.

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COMPASS

Your Guide to Tri-State Arts & Entertainment

LIFESTYLE: NATALIA ZUKERMAN

North Canaan's Ilse coffee brewers

A very unique coffee experience is brewing at the Ilse coffeeshop on Railroad Street in North Canaan, Connecticut, in the old location of Jim's Garage.

The light-filled and airy space is a testament to the dedication of its founders, Rebecca Grossman and Lucas Smith. About five years ago, Smith, while working at Provisions, the café at the White Hart Inn in Salisbury, encountered a coffee that forever changed his perspective on the beverage.

"Until then," Smith explained, "coffee was just this harsh, bitter thing they put milk and sugar in just for caffeine. And then I had a cup of coffee that tasted kind of floral and tea-like, and it just blew my mind. I never knew coffee could taste like that. And then that was it."

Originally from the

Berkshires, Grossman was home on vacation from Holyoke when she and Smith met at the White Hart. Through Grossman, Smith connected with a coffee roasting company near her school and found himself learning the art of coffee roasting and the intricacies of the coffee world. When Grossman graduated, the couple moved back to Smith's hometown of Westport, Connecticut, to help his mother open a restaurant in nearby Fairfield.

There, they rented a roasting machine and started their company by buying coffee, paper bags, and a few stickers. "We were working full-time at his mom's restaurant," said Grossman. "We barely had a day off, so we would work after hours. It was just the two of us for the first maybe two and a half years of the business."

"We had \$1,000 and



PHOTO BY NATALIA ZUKERMAN

Owners Rebecca Grossman, left, and Lucas Smith of Ilse Coffee in North Canaan, Conn.

a credit card," laughed Smith.

"It was pretty naïve, honestly," added Grossman. "I think most people start companies

with a lot more money than we did. We just kind of went for it."

They went for it, and it began to work for them. Soon, Grossman

and Smith moved back to Canaan and opened Ilse, named after Smith's grandmother. "This is kind of where the journey started," Grossman

mused, "so it's a very cool coming home."

They started out with mostly a wholesale,

Continued on next page



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISEY

The cast of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" performed six shows at Sharon Playhouse Dec. 13-17.

THEATER: MATTHEW KRETA

Through the wardrobe

Last week the Sharon Playhouse presented "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," adapted by Don Quinn. The show followed four newly adopted siblings who are whisked into the fantasy world of Narnia when they walk through a wardrobe in their new home. The play opened Wednesday, Dec. 13 and closed Sunday, Dec. 17.

Every member of the cast brought a whimsy and charm to the show that kept the hour-long production fresh and enjoyable throughout. The four siblings, played by Carter McCabe, Kennadi Mitchell, Jasper Burger and Wild Handel had a believable sib-

ling bond among them, and each brought their character's personalities through very well.

McCabe, playing the older brother Peter, had a sense of leadership and was a focal point for his younger siblings. Mitchell, playing the older sister Susan, had a similar, though gentler approach to leading the siblings. Burger, playing the younger brother Edmund, brought a wide range of delightful childishness and high emotion as the ever-bullied younger sibling. Finally, Handel, playing the younger sister Lucy, showed the character's smarts and courage

Continued on next page

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48 MAIN STREET, MILLERTON, NY

...wardrobe

Continued from previous page



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISSEY

proudly for all to see.

Every story needs its villain, and Tess Marks brought a haughty and intimidating royal flair to her role as the White Witch. As a queen of everlasting winter, Marks presented an appropriate chill to the role as a skillful manipulator and master of magic. The beaver couple, played by Alex Wilbur and Katelin Lopes, had many of the night's largest laughs, thanks in no small part to their excellent comedic timing. Andy Delgado, playing the Witch's right-hand man, also had his fair share of laughs from the audience, and fit his role wonderfully as a sometimes bumbling, sometimes serious lackey.

The remainder of the company, though perhaps less at the forefront of the plot, brought an incredibly valued and impressively focused energy to the show that kept the whole thing exciting. Things like waving coats around the cast to symbolize them walking through the

wardrobe, large chorus and dance numbers, acting as living and listening trees and fighting as part of the Witch's army, the company of the production made the world of Narnia feel alive and exciting.

Finally, the entire show was interspersed with selections of various carols sung by a trio comprised of C.C. Stevenson, Tyler Manning and Mollie Sosin. This mini chorus was absolutely delightful and navigated difficult polyphony, fast-paced and varied harmony together at a level far above what their ages would suggest. Their meticulously tight, three-part harmony was a standout of the show.

Beyond the cast, much love was given to the set design, props, music and costuming of the show. The crew behind the show's many layers of decoration, lighting and stage direction had clearly felt a passion for the show and helped the building feel like a fantasy world.

BOOKS: JUDITH O'HARE BALFE

How a short story became a trilogy

'Anna Magdalena' started out as a short story that grew into a trilogy, written by Maureen McNeil, who gave a lively talk at the Roeliff Jansen Community Library on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

McNeil determined at an early age that she would become a writer. Even as a child, she had a vivid imagination, brought on by a kindergarten teacher's story of dinosaurs. She also told of going to church often as a child, before school, and the stained glass windows and other church art encouraged her to make up stories about what was pictured.

Her sister taught her to read and write, and McNeil's course in life

was charted. Her sister, incidentally, became a teacher. A few years after telling her sister that she would be a writer, she told her mother, who found her a mentor with whom McNeil worked for over 20 years.

Being open to other cultures, becoming immersed in them, McNeil was able to learn about people, feelings, conditions and causes that her own upbringing in the Pacific Northwest, as well as her traditional schooling, wouldn't have allowed.

"Anna Magdalena" was originally a short story that begins in the Northwest. McNeil was working on it at a workshop at New York University. When someone



PHOTO BY TAMARA GASKELL

Maureen McNeil

remarked that they'd like to know what happened when one of the characters went to New York, the story grew into a novel. After talking to a publisher about the book, McNeil ended up with a contract for a three-book deal, so Anna Magdalena, who is a performance artist, became the catalyst for a trilogy.

Introduced by library director Tamara Gaskell, McNeil proved to be natural and charming. In reading the first two chapters from the book, she invited the audience into a world that enveloped freedom, imagination and life. The prose is descriptive and, while never too much, one can "see" each item, each scene, each person or thing, clearly, never cloying or rigid. The words flow in a steady stream of sight, sound, shapes and smell, all of the senses are touched as the reader becomes enmeshed in the story of this powerful contemporary woman.

Life experiences have given birth to McNeil's

Continued on next page

...coffee

Continued from previous page

direct-to-consumer business on their website, opening the cafe space just eight months ago. They transformed the old garage into a bright and cozy spot for coffee lovers, an open concept space that showcases their entire production. This transparency also translates to their inspiring mission of quality and sustainability.

Their approach is both global and personal, sourcing beans from countries such as Ethiopia, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Kenya and Rwanda. Their focus is on supporting small farmers by establishing a practice of buying entire harvests. Grossman explained: "We buy from producers, and we really commit to them, which is a super important thing. We'll buy their coffee every harvest."

Smith added: "Coffee farmers have one harvest a year, sometimes two. We've been in business for five years, and there's a number of producers that we've been working with for all of those five

years, which is really cool."

Meeting and creating sustainable relationships with the coffee producers is a goal of their business. Smith said, "Our whole focus is really working to establish connections and relationships with all the countries we source." They explain that this connection has been easier in some countries than others. The couple was able to travel to Colombia last January, and plans to visit every year. "Other countries, it's a little bit harder to establish relationships," said Smith, "but it's a goal for us to have those relationships everywhere that we source."

The couple has a clear passion for coffee, which extends to their passion for education. Each bag of coffee that they sell has the origin story on the back, showcasing the name of the grower and the farm. Everything from the altitude to the variety of the seed itself to the flavor profile is listed on the bag. There's also a cost breakdown,

which adds to the transparent approach.

"We get asked all the time if our coffee is fair-trade, and we're actually paying far above fair trade," Smith explained. "Fair trade is a certification that provides the producer X amount above the stock market price for coffee. And so, we don't trade coffee based on the stock market. At any given time, we're paying usually about 200% above the fair-trade price for our coffee. So, you can look at any of our bags, you just turn it on the back, and you can see how much the producer got paid and how much we paid for the coffee."

Grossman added: "A lot of the farmers that we're buying from are in producer-led initiatives. So the producers are setting the price, which is super important."

Grossman and Smith's business practices are unique, and so too is their roasting style, which they describe as influenced by Nordic methods. There is a focus on bringing out

the natural flavors, showcasing the coffee's inherent qualities. Their favorite, preferred and recommended brewing method is a manual brew method using a Hario V60 pour-over that they sell in their shop. It brings out the flavors and "makes a really nice, clear cup," said Grossman.

There's a bit more construction planned in the space to have it "exactly like we want it," said Smith, but once the renovation is complete, the couple wants to host events and coffee tastings, home brewing classes, and a "seed to cup" course. Said Smith, "Most people don't even know that coffee's a seed of a fruit. It's not a bean." He almost yells with wonder, "It's a seed!"

Grossman added to his enthusiasm: "It's an agricultural, seasonal product, grown in a fruit. Our coffee is seasonal and rotates throughout the year. I don't think people are aware of that." She said, "I know I certainly wasn't before I got into coffee."

Smith and Grossman's story is one of passion, dedication, and a deep respect for coffee and the people who grow it. Starting with minimal resources, they're excited to be able to grow alongside the small and supportive community of specialty coffee roasters in the area. "There've been hard moments, but it's been amazing," said Grossman. Smith added: "When we started the company, our big thing was helping people experience how great coffee can be. So if people actually want to see coffee in a different perspective rather than the way that they know it, then I think this would be a good place to come and check out."

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COMPASS

THEATER: LEE A. DAVIES

The healing power of live theater: Part 1

At its core, live theater is about (1) the escape and disconnect from daily life and the stress of our external environment and (2) the immersion into a new experience that requires our full attention. While these concepts are not unique to live theater (watching a movie or television program, listening to music, viewing art, reading literature), the immediacy and experience of being in the presence of live performers offers a specific set of health benefits — both mental and physical — that are not accessible in other media (certainly not in the digital age of streaming, email and social media) Nor will AI ever replace live actors.

A lighthearted romp that prompts a spon-

taneous eruption of laughter is therapeutic. The Mayo Clinic says that a good laugh can go a long way. Laughter makes you take in more oxygen, which stimulates the lungs as well as your heart. Positive emotions elicited from laughter and similar sources also trigger the brain to release what are known as happy chemicals: dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins. The immediacy of live theater is intended to transport us to another world and create a unique relationship between performers on the stage and those in the audience. A seething drama can pull you into a conflict, or an intellectual exercise can challenge us to consider (or reconsider) held beliefs. We in the audience are

not merely observers; we are participants in the creative process, as performers need us as much as need them.

“Attending a live performance creates a special bond between the performers and the audience,” says Lakeville and New York City resident Astrid Baumgardner, JD. She’s the author of “Creative Success Now: How Creatives Can Thrive in the 21st Century,” a lecturer at Yale University’s School of Music, and a TEDx 2020 speaker, Cracking the Code on Creativity. “My students at Yale — all professional musicians — feel inspired by the presence of the audience. This, in turn, fuels their desire to make great art and to provide the audience with the transformative power of live, communal

performance, to elevate us from our day-to-day lives, to inspire us with the beauty and power of music and to comfort us in challenging times.”

In his book “All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me,” author Patrick Bringley describes his transition from a publishing job to a becoming a guard at the Met, following the death of his brother, as a coping mechanism. Unfettered by other responsibilities, he spent his days steeped in works of art, both famous and obscure. He considered in a way not possible when one is rushing through the museum.

Much has been written about the use of art and drama therapy in treating people with anxiety disorders. Yet surprisingly little exists about the therapeutic value of attending live theater as a member of the audience.

“When we’re absorbed in a situation that is created on the stage by talented performers, we can become a part of it, sometimes forgetting time and our surroundings, and losing ourselves in the creative process. This state has been referred to as ‘flow.’ It is a feeling that allows us to focus on the pres-



PHOTO BY ALY MORRISEY

ent moment and moves us away from current anxieties in our lives. The experience can expand our own world, facilitate empathy, take us out of our habitual way of thinking, and allow us to discover new ideas and sometimes new ways of coping.

All of these developments are expressions of a creative process that allows us to shift from current anxieties into areas that bring us to a more hopeful place,” writes clinical psychologist Sophia Richman, Ph.D., author of “Mended by the Muse: Creative Transformations of Trauma.”

Richman adds: “The experience of good theater is also one that is shared with others and can provide a sense of community. Often when we go to the theater with friends, we have an opportunity to discuss our experiences and reactions to the show. This can expand our

perspective and encourage us to look at things in a new way. Discovery, curiosity, surprise are the hallmarks of the creative process. As we watch this taking place on the stage, we experience our own version of the creative process within ourselves.”

Thank you all for your patronage of The Sharon Playhouse’s record-breaking 2023 season. And stay tuned for announcements about upcoming productions and the 2024 season. For more information — and to make a donation to help us keep you mentally and physically fit healthy — please go to www.sharonplayhouse.org.

Lee A. Davies is a Member of the Board of Directors of The Sharon Playhouse and a resident of Cornwall Bridge

Next Part: Eight Health Benefits of Attending Live Theater.

...short story

Continued from previous page

writings; she also uses historical references in a gentle fashion. A restaurant she opened with a college friend in Washington shaped some early writings. Work at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute found her reading the diary of the last seven months of Marilyn Monroe’s life. Her book “Dear Red: The Lost Diary of Marilyn Monroe” was written at that time. McNeil stated that without her intimate knowledge of Monroe, she could not have written as she did about Anna Magdalena.

After leaving the West Coast, McNeil has spent her time in Brooklyn and Woodstock, New York. The second novel of the trilogy, “Tinker Street,” is the story of Anna Magdalena as a teen coming of age in Woodstock, and the evolution of a performance artist’s life. That book is due out January

2024. The third book, “Clover Road,” is expected in 2025, and described by McNeil as utopian or dystopian, she’s not sure which.

Following the reading, questions were asked. Asked if any of her writings are autobiographical, McNeil noted that all writers write about what they know, but her stories are not autobiographical. She also said that writers create communities in their writings. As for performance artists, she thinks we are all performers, but asserts that you need to be who you are. Writing, she feels, gives you an opportunity to free yourself. She also said that, for her, writing nonfiction is harder than writing fiction.

Other works by McNeil include “Red Hook Stories,” from the beginning of her days in Brooklyn; and a collection of short

stories, “Wild Blueberries.” She was a finalist for the Tiferet Fiction Prize in 2021 and won second place in the 2021 Barry Lopez Nonfiction Prize. She is a lecturer, teaches writing workshops, and is an activist who still splits her time between Woodstock and Brooklyn. She has worked with the Anne Frank Center USA, PEN America’s prison program, and the Prison Public Memory Project. In addition, she has designed and taught workshops for Yad Vashem, the Woodstock Day School, the Morgan Library and Skidmore College.

Next in the library’s author series is author and chef Julie Gale, who will discuss her new memoir “The View From My Kitchen Window,” a chronological journey of the kitchens in the author’s life, on Wednesday, Jan. 10, at 5:30 p.m.

The Lakeville Journal FOUNDATION

Dear Friends and Readers,

There is GOOD NEWS to report about The Lakeville Journal and The Millerton News! We have added more journalists to our staff, expanded our news coverage and we are about to launch new websites for both papers with seven-day-a-week news coverage.

Like many newspapers across the country, we face financial pressures that threaten our ability to continue this vital work. Even after a successful matching campaign, we still need your help. As a non-profit news organization, we must close the gap between what we earn by selling newspapers and ads and our operating expenses. That’s why we are reaching out to you, our loyal readers and community members.

The papers led the way this year in reporting on important issues to our community: Sharon Hospital, affordable housing, and environmental challenges to our lakes and state parks. And, of course, we remain the place to catch up on the police blotter, town meetings, local elections, local sports, festivals, movies, and the latest bear and wildlife sightings.

Since The Lakeville Journal and The Millerton News were converted to non-profit status last year, you have kept us in business with your generous contributions. We are asking you once again to consider a tax-deductible contribution as part of your year-end giving. Every donation goes to support our journalists and the mission to deliver the stories that matter to you.

To donate, please visit www.tricornernews.com/contribute or fill out the form below and mail a check. For information on donating shares of stock, please email donation@lakevillejournal.com.

Thank you for your continued support!

Noreen Doyle

Noreen Doyle, Chair
The Lakeville Journal Foundation, Inc.

Susan Hassler

Susan Hassler, CEO, publisher

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TRI-CORNER CALENDAR

ART: DEBORAH MAIER

Lacke Studio duo show

Suzanne Lacke (pronounced “lake”) and Scott Culbreth presented landscapes and other paintings on the ground floor of the Music Cellar, the pink building just off Main Street toward Amenia, on Saturday, Dec. 16, and Sunday, Dec. 17.

Lacke, a recent transplant to Salisbury, Connecticut, from California, grew up in Westchester County and completed her art studies on both the East and West coasts. She spoke movingly of teacher Marshall Glasier at the Art Students League, who “...set me on a path of an art practice. He helped liberate us through working large” and imparting the wisdom of his mentor, George Grosz. Over the years, Lacke has returned the favor to her many and varied students.

As in the work of her long-ago mentor, there was a visceral quality to Lacke’s landscapes with their saturated jewel tones and an interplay between modernist flatness and sensuous, almost expressionist

brushwork. Many reflect her time as a Californian, while some seem at home in the Litchfield Hills. She foresees more landscapes from this region soon.

Lacke’s “Dresses” series, once exhibited as “Disembodied Robes,” are larger vertical compositions with unusual qualities of liveliness and, at a distance, even photorealistic effects, though they share a painterly quality with her other works.

Her urban scenes have the air of an updated Edward Hopper, with their glimpses into people caught in their reveries while waiting for a green light or crossing a street. Rich, brushy color treatments and close attention to body language and the vagaries of light make for satisfying viewing experiences.

Culbreth was raised in southern Connecticut and moved to Millerton 45 years ago with his artist wife Karen, desiring closeness to family and this area’s natural beauty. The son of two artists himself, he grew up in a home “steeped in the practice of transcribing and producing visual imagery,” the smell of turpentine and the clink of brush ferrules against the mouths of jars.

In his half of the show, Culbreth offered a dozen mid-sized canvases, including landscapes noted for their subtle yet lively colors and poetic realism, as well as some richly textured still life paintings; and some recent abstractions, revisiting an idiom he explored deeply in the past.

Widely exhibited in this region over many years, from the Re Institute to museums in Connecticut, Culbreth, like Lacke, shows no sign of abating in the exploration of the creative life.

Lacke Studio is currently a thriving presence in the community, with an ongoing Saturday studio experience/workshop for young artists, figure drawing sessions for adults with various live models, and plans for daylong or weekend workshops on color theory and use starting in January, at 14 Main St. in Millerton. For more information, see suzannelacke.com

DECEMBER 22

Free Community Yoga Nidra and Sound Healing Bath

Kent Memorial Library, 32 North Main St., Kent, Conn. kentmemoriallibrary.org

On Friday, Dec. 22 at 6 p.m. in the Kent Memorial Library reading room, join Lisa Shea, LCSW RYT RMT, for a free community yoga nidra and sound healing bath. All are welcome. RSVP by email: kla-bmcallister@biblio.org

DECEMBER 23

The Audubon Presents: Birds of Prey!

Kent Memorial Library, 32 North Main St., Kent, Conn. kentmemoriallibrary.org

On Dec. 23, at 11 a.m., in Kent Memorial Library’s Junior Room, learn all about bird biology, conservation, ecology, and adaptations for survival through the use of live birds of prey and bird-related props. Various species of live hawks and owls will accompany Sharon Audubon Center Staff to demonstrate their beauty, power, and connection with the natural world. Similarities and differences of these amazing birds of prey will be discussed and several props will also be on hand for viewing.

Kent Memorial Library is located at 32 North Main Street, Kent, Connecticut, 860-927-3761. Visit kentmemoriallibrary.org for more information.

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Service at Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls

Church of St. John in the Wilderness, 261 NY-344, Copake Falls, N.Y.

On Sunday, Dec. 24, there will be a candlelight Christmas Eve Service at the Church of St. John in the Wilderness in Copake Falls, N.Y., with carols at 7 p.m. and service at 7:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 28

Hidden Treasures: A Storytelling Tour of Scoville Library Secrets

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

Did you ever wonder about the story behind the many stories collected at the Scoville Memorial Library? Would you like to explore secret staircases, unseen book stacks, and discover what lurks in the concealed chambers of our iconic 130-year-old building? Join SML staff and volunteers on Thursday, Dec. 28 from 5 to 7 p.m. for a magical evening as we share hidden gems and stories of auld langsyne that have been passed down, helping to make the library the community treasure it is today. Enjoy hot cocoa and refreshments at the end of the tour as we play a game of answering riddles based on the stories shared! This event is open to all ages.

ayne that have been passed down, helping to make the library the community treasure it is today. Enjoy hot cocoa and refreshments at the end of the tour as we play a game of answering riddles based on the stories shared! This event is open to all ages.

JANUARY 6

Cool & Collected 2024

Kenise Barnes Fine Art, 7 Fulling Lane, Kent, Conn.

Kenise Barnes Fine Art is pleased to present the tenth iteration of our exhibition series “Cool & Collected” featuring work by Matt Barter, Joan Linder, Mary Tooley Parker and Polly Shindler. The opening reception will be held Jan. 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. Carefully observed with affection these subjects capture feelings that tug just a tiny bit on our heartstrings and brings a smile of recognition to the viewer.

Cornwall Landscapes

Cornwall Library, 30 Pine St., Cornwall, Conn. cornwalllibrary.org

In his upcoming show at The Cornwall Library, artist Robert Adzema presents energetic watercolors that capture his love of the Cornwall landscape. The show runs from Jan. 6 through Feb. 17. Opening reception is Saturday, Jan. 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. Registration for the reception and more information about the show is at: cornwalllibrary.org/events/

Book Talk with Author Peter Kaufman

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

On Saturday, Jan. 6, from 4 to 5 p.m., Peter Kaufman will discuss the award-winning book *Overreach, The Inside Story of Putin and Russia’s War Against Ukraine*, by journalist Owen Matthews. This fascinating investigation into the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war takes readers from the corridors of the Kremlin to the trenches of Mariupol. Drawing on over 25 years of experience as a correspondent in Moscow, and his family ties to Russia and Ukraine, Matthews provides an authoritative, poignant account of history, personalities, and politics. Presenter Peter B. Kaufman is a writer, teacher, and documentary producer, and works at MIT Open Learning and the Knowledge Futures Group. He is the author of *The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge* (Seven Stories

Press, 2021). Registration is required. Please visit scovillelibrary.libcal.com/calendar.

JANUARY 7

Sophisticated Snowflakes

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

On Sunday, Jan. 7, 2 to 4 p.m., join us to learn the art of fine-cut snowflakes with Shepherd Myers, taking the art of paper snowflakes to the next level. Entomologist and illustrator Shepherd Myers brings science to paper craft in this workshop. Myers has spent a decade at Bishop Museum in Honolulu managing one of the largest insect collections, combining scientific outreach and exhibit design.

This event is for teens, with limited seats also reserved for adults. Please email Scovilleteens@biblio.org to register.

Reading and Book Signing

Hotchkiss Library of Sharon, 10 Upper Main St., Sharon, Conn. hotchkisslibrary.org

The New Detective has just been published to rave reviews. Join the Hotchkiss Library of Sharon for a reading with author Peter Steiner. His first three Willi Geismeier novels tell Willi’s story from the 1920s through World War II. This program is free but registration is required. Books will be for sale. For more information and to register: hotchkisslibrary.libcal.com/event/11674791

JANUARY 9

Winter Drawing Workshop with Artist Pieter Lefferts

Scoville Memorial Library, 38 Main St., Salisbury, Conn. scovillelibrary.org

On Jan. 9 and 23, Feb. 6 and 20, from 2 to 4 p.m., improve your drawing skills with artist and art educator Pieter Lefferts. This class provides instruction for adults of all levels, from beginner to expert. Draw from a photo or still life or bring in a drawing project of your own. Drawing materials will be provided. Pieter Lefferts is a professional artist working in oils, acrylics, and pastels. His specialties include landscape paintings of the Adirondacks, the Hudson Valley, and New England. He is a 2023 Nautilus Book Awards Gold Winner and the founder of Northlight Art Center in Amenia, where he conducts art classes. To register, please visit scovillelibrary.libcal.com/calendar.

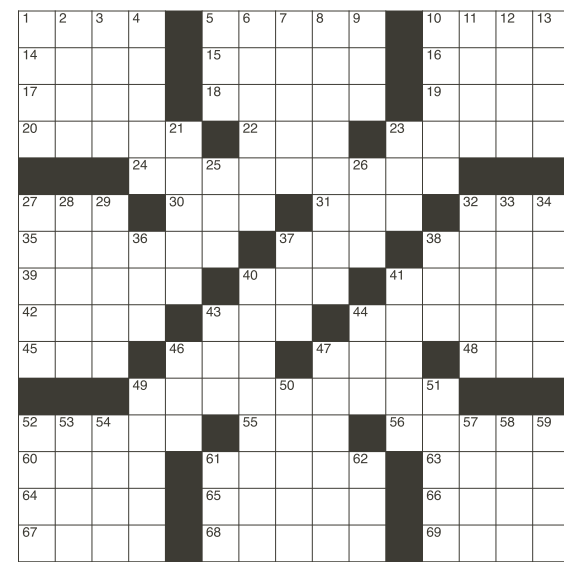
Brain Teasers

CLUES ACROSS

- Droops
- Subatomic particle
- Not in danger
- Nursemaid
- Black band worn in mourning
- Long song in opera
- Edible seed of a Philippine tree
- Chicago political family
- Pursues pleasure from one place to another
- Appetizer
- Hill (Celtic)
- Simple shoe
- Songs to one you love
- Secret activities
- Upset
- Popular hot drink
- Body art (slang)
- Fired
- Blood relation
- Identical
- Porticos
- Partner to cheese
- Type of sword
- Enough (archaic)
- Surface layer of ground
- Cotton fabric woven like satin
- Choose for a post
- Father
- Tell on
- Indian title of respect
- Fonts
- Fencing sword
- Mock
- Vaccine developer
- Atmosphere surrounding a person or place
- Martern with a short tail
- Chinese temple
- Invests in little enterprises
- Popular cut of meat
- Charity
- Iron-containing compound
- River in Northern Europe
- One point east of southeast

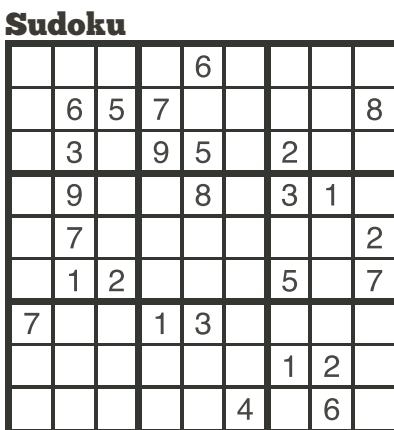
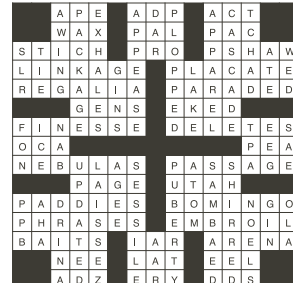
CLUES DOWN

- Exhausts
- Genus of fish related to gars
- Impudent behavior
- Adherents to Islam
- They come after A
- Spoke
- Room to receive guests
- About opera

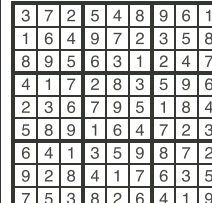


- End-blown flute
- Heroic tales
- Member of a Semitic people
- Dog’s name
- Opposite of west
- Political divisions in ancient Greece
- Ocean
- Cool!
- Young woman about to enter society
- One from central Caucasus
- Indian city
- A way to serve ice cream
- Emaciation
- Escort aircraft carrier
- Italian city
- Mythical settler of Kansas
- Unhappy
- High schoolers’ test
- Measured in pace
- Satisfies
- Gullible person
- Enclosed space
- Substance used to color something
- Shirt type
- Discover by investigation
- Castell, makers of pens
- Semitic Sun god
- Grads wear one
- French river
- Part of a cap
- Digestive fluid
- Metrical foot
- Body part
- Very fast airplane
- Supplement with difficulty

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Our Towns

Sharon discusses MBR with state

By Leila Hawken

SHARON — In an effort to understand the state's minimum budget requirement (MBR) and its effect on the town expense budget for Sharon Center School, the Board of Finance held a special meeting Wednesday, Dec. 13, with a representative of the Finance Office of the state Board of Education. The meeting was held via Zoom, with the finance board gathered at the Town Hall.

Representing the Office of Finance at the state Board of Education was Kevin Chambers, who fielded questions in response to the local finance board's interest in

exploring ways to lower the MBR, citing declining enrollment, and asking how relief from the MBR could be obtained.

Chambers indicated that there are three ways that local schools can lower the MBR: a decline in student enrollment, increased efficiencies, or closing the school. He also noted that the MBR is tied to grades K-12, so that Region One would benefit from any reduction in the MBR.

"We are spending an arbitrary amount of money because of a calculation by the state," commented one finance board member.

Pursuing another track, finance board Chairman

Tom Bartram indicated that some capital expense items may have been entered on the wrong budget lines in recent years. He asked what the effect would have been on the MBR if the capital projects were taken out of the budget.

Board of Education Chairman Doug Cahill noted that a five-year capital plan had been created a few years ago bringing a shift in the accounting. Capital projects had been included under building repairs, he noted.

Chambers agreed that capital projects should not be included in MBR computations, leading to a deeper debate on that point.

"If we took our capital line

out of the Board of Education budget, could we get a reduction for one year in the MBR?" Bartram asked.

"They don't want the town moving money around just to beat the MBR," Chambers replied.

"It's a good law that protects education," Cahill said of the MBR.

As a result of discussion, Chambers said that he could be willing to go back three years to see if there had been an overpayment of the MBR when the town had been including capital expense in the local budget. Cahill agreed to send the relevant documents to assist with the research.



PHOTO BY PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

Community celebrates Christmas in Cornwall

By Riley Klein

CORNWALL — Park and Recreation hosted the annual Christmas pasta dinner at Cornwall Consolidated School (CCS) on Friday, Dec. 15.

The eighth graders set up workshop stations around the school and provided holiday-themed activities for guests in exchange for a donation toward the class trip to Washington, D.C. Ornament making, cookie decorating, and a friendly basketball game were of particular interest to attendees.

"Santa's here," shouted excited children as Mr. Claus himself arrived at CCS.

"You don't look much like the real Santa," said one skeptic



A friendly basketball game was played at CCS.

tical youngster.

Santa and the Grinch took part in the on-court action, and Santa even balled out while carrying a small child.

As the event progressed, the enticing scent of garlic and herbs filled the school. Park and Rec members satisfied the salivating guests and served up pasta dinner.




PHOTOS BY RILEY KLEIN

Santa Claus heard wish lists on Friday, Dec. 15.

No snow, no problem

Just in time for the holidays, a white-walled snowman has popped up outside Jacob's Garage in Falls Village. The seven-tire sculpture was unfazed by 60-degree weather on Monday, Dec. 18.



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THE TOWN OF KENT: is seeking candidates for its Park and Recreation Director. This is a full-time position and the person is responsible to coordinate, promote, supervise and evaluate a comprehensive, year-round recreational program for the children, teens, adults, and seniors of the Kent community, including but not limited to sports and seasonal programs, after-school program, bus trips, community and special events, and maintenance of the parks. Works with the Parks and Recreation Commission to develop long-range plans for programs, parks, and facilities to accommodate town goals and recreation needs. Candidates should have a Bachelor's Degree and/or relevant life experience and interest in Park and Recreation. Salary range is \$60,000 to \$63,000. The full job description is available at www.townofkentct.org. Send cover letter, resume and three references to adminassist@townofkentct.org prior to Jan. 5, 2024. Subject line should include candidate's name and Park and Recreation Director Applicant.

HELP WANTED

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REAL ESTATE

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