

Woodbridge Town News



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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021

Selectmen Hit 'Pause' On Country Club Development

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

After several months of rising tension over the Arbor Haven development proposal for the Country Club of Woodbridge property, First Selectman Beth Heller last week suggested — and her fellow board members agreed — to push “pause” and to hire a town planner in the hopes that an independent planning consultant might guide them through the issues facing the town.

The Arbor Haven proposal would build approximately 145 homes of different sizes on the bulk of the Country Club of Woodbridge property, along with bike paths and a number of public recreational amenities, such as pool and playground. About 20% of the units would be income restricted. The developer offers to purchase the property from the town for \$9 million and deed back 50 acres primarily between Woodfield Road and the Route 15 highway.

Tied in with the question of what to do with the Country Club property are issues such as a stagnant Grand List, the need for housing opportunities, the preservation of open space, recreational opportunities and more.

Several other proposals have surfaced since then — one from New England Brewing Co. has been withdrawn; a residents' petition to post a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the old clubhouse is on hold while the Selectmen are waiting for a report from the Housing Opportunity Committee.

Most recently, the Woodbridge Land Trust and the Park Association, represented by Chris Dickerson and

Bryan Pines, offered to pay \$250,000 in return for a conservation easement on 140 acres of the property, carving out the clubhouse and surrounding acreage for possible commercial use.

“All Woodbridge residents want this property kept as open space,” Dickerson told the selectmen at their December 8 regular meeting. Their proposal allows to maintain town ownership of the land, provide money to offset the cost of the property and leaves the clubhouse available for use as a banquet facility, thereby creating the potential for tax revenue.

Pines' comments at the selectmen's meeting touched on the historic significance of the property, where 18th century Roger Sherman's Clover Hill Farm was said to be located. Sherman, a mayor of New Haven, was the only person to sign all four founding documents, the Continental Association, the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

“We request you bring our proposal to the taxpayers for a vote,” said Dickerson. “I feel very strongly the divisiveness and contentiousness will disappear.”

Heller pointed out that there is no consensus on what the best plan is for the property. The proposed conservation easement would tie up 140 acres with access to sewer and water, she said, adding that \$250,000 is less than one year's debt payment. The town has about ten years left on the debt, and spends about \$400,000 annually on it.

See “Pause” On Page 27

Housing Study Group Ready to Start a Conversation

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Likening housing to running water, housing expert David Fink said we usually don't think about it until it's not available, and he encouraged the Housing Opportunity Study Committee to engage in conversation with the community and to be patient with one another. “Conversations will help clear up a lot of myths and misconceptions,” he said at an informational session for the public on December 6. Originally the meeting was planned to take place at the Jewish Community Center, but town officials canceled in-person meetings when Corona numbers spiked. So, the meeting was virtual, and started a half hour late, to give people who had missed the announcement to go home and log on.

Fink, a housing policy consultant who advises the South Central Council of Governments (SCROG) — of which Woodbridge is a member town — came at the invitation of the Housing Opportunity Study Committee to facilitate an introduction to a sensitive issue here and throughout the state.

Fink had his presentation consolidated in bullet points, which he went through, touching on the most stereotypical arguments that come up in these conversations, such as the influx of school-age children that will overwhelm local services; and the impact on property values.

People are afraid of change, he said, and a few may be unkind, but the majority will be open to hear about the experience of others and the research that has been done in this field. The

interest in these issues is high currently, as the state has challenged its 169 towns to all come up with an affordable housing plan by June of 2022.

Some 37 participants were said to be following the presentation, and a handful of residents spoke at the end to address the committee, among them former First Selectman Amey Marrella.

Marrella encouraged the committee to look beyond cluster housing on undeveloped land. She said by allowing accessory apartments — which the Zoning Commission did earlier this year — more people may be able to age in place and stay in their own home, given appropriate support. She challenged the town to do a build-out analysis to show what the new rules allow. “I don't understand why one isn't in the works,” she said.

As for people economically “on the margin,” she recommended to look into programs that offer tax relief in return for making their homes legally affordable, thereby creating a win-win for those who live in those houses now and those who would buy them in the future. She said the town already has a tax relief program in which 102 households are enrolled.

Similarly, Woodbridge resident Cathy Wick suggested to look into a housing program dubbed “Inclusionary Housing,” which pinpoints “naturally affordable” homes and turns them into deed restricted properties. By working with existing housing stock, it may preserve open space and farmland. She specifically recommended looking into

See “Study Group” On Page 11

From Our Family to Yours - Happy Holidays!



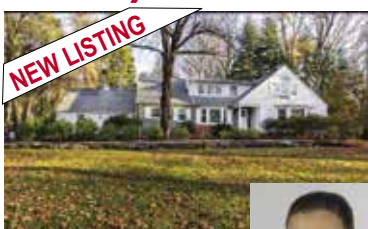
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From the Democratic Town Committee

BY LAURENCE GROTHEER



Season’s greetings, one and all! This simple wish is broadcast without prejudice; rather, with hope that anyone reading will realize - and savor - the joyful contentment to which many people aspire this time of year.

Yet even while aspirations for peace, comradery, and hope for the future abound, current events generate concern in government and political circles alike: the specter of minority rule - the exact antithesis of American democracy - has become a genuine and growing risk for the new year.

Consider current membership of the U.S. Senate, where 50 Democratic Senators represent 40 million more Americans than their Republican counterparts, the minority caucus repeatedly blocks legislation, threatens government funding shutdowns, and withholds appointment confirmation for vital judicial and diplomatic positions. In fact, it was recently acknowledged there is no Republican legislative agenda for 2022. Instead, that caucus will devote itself entirely to obstruction and interference, and while doing so wage arbitrary ‘culture wars’ to try and distract the public.

Consider membership of the Supreme Court of the United States, where five of the nine justices were appointed by presidents elected without a popular vote majority. These justices now wield extraordinary influence in cases that potentially impact every aspect of American life, from gun control to healthcare and reproductive freedom, and from voting rights to other, basic civil liberties.

Consider new laws in 19 states restricting the most fundamental feature of majority rule: access to the ballot box. In several states with Republican leadership, new laws transfer responsibility for counting and certifying election results from non-partisan officials to partisans, who can also exclude votes they deem ‘fraudulent.’ The terrifying potential here is that literally millions of voters could be overruled by a few hundred legislators or a relative handful of hand-picked partisan officials.

In some states redrawn district

maps award clear and distinct advantage to Republicans, contradicting the goal of free and fair elections. For example, in Georgia - a state President Biden won - new Republican maps would award 64% of Congressional seats and 59% of state senate seats to candidates of their own party.

In Wisconsin - another state President Biden won - 75% of Congressional seats and 60% of legislative seats would go to Republicans. North Carolina’s Republican legislature calously gave its party a glaring head start for approximately 75% of its Congressional seats. The U.S. Department of Justice recently filed suit to stop Texas from imposing similarly slanted redistricting.

Now Woodbridge Republicans are trying to launch their own brand of minority rule. Last month the two Republican selectmen called their own meeting - permissible under Town Charter - to exercise a rogue ‘government in exile,’ similar to what the former president has done by falsely insisting President Biden ‘stole’ his election victory.

Absent a quorum, the Republican selectmen couldn’t transact any business or act on behalf of the Town. Instead, they seemed intent on prioritizing and advancing their own partisan talking points in what amounted to a Republican Town Committee echo chamber. Doing so creates increased division, acrimony, and partisanship in town; Woodbridge would be better served if they worked as hard to address the town’s current challenges.

Instead, they used Town resources - hypocritical for those who constantly complain about ‘government waste’ - for their dog ‘n pony show, yet failed to offer remedies for continuing budget stressors, arguably the most pressing responsibility they have these next couple of months.

It seems the Republican party, across the country and now in Woodbridge, has doubled down as the party of ‘no,’ and remains willing to go to extremes to wrest control of government wherever, whenever, and however it can, majority opinion be damned.

Other Side of the Aisle

BY CHUCK PYNE
WRTC CHAIRMAN



Guardedly Optimistic with an Historical Correction

The December 8 Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting was, potentially, a positive turning point in the 12-year saga over the future of the Country Club of Woodbridge.

At the meeting the Woodbridge Land Trust and Woodbridge Park Association presented a joint offer to purchase a Grant of Conservation Restriction on the property, excluding a 10-acre portion around the clubhouse, for \$250,000. This would protect 145 acres from development and open the door for potential farming, passive recreation and open space. In his remarks, Park Association President Chris Dickerson reminded the BOS, as the Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society has done in the past, that the property was once a farm owned by Roger Sherman, the only person to sign all four founding documents that formed our country. For this reason, going forward we should refer to the parcel as the Roger Sherman Farm. Doing so gives proper historical context to the property and highlights its national historical significance. What other town can make such a claim (except maybe Sherman, CT)?

The offer by the two conservation-minded organizations clearly had an impact on the First Selectman. In what sounded amazingly like a proposal the Republican candidates made in 2013, and have repeated in every local election cycle since, Beth Heller suggested the Town hire a consultant to assess our options for the property. The First Selectman’s statement is potentially a very good turning point for the Town, but we need to see how this plays out, as the handling of the HRSF’s future has been fumbled repeatedly.

Still at issue is the troubling way the BOS majority is handling the other two Roger Sherman Farm proposals that preceded the Land Trust/Park Association offer. Residential developer Arbor Haven has been given access to our Boards and Commissions to present its case, while a competing idea to invite bids on the commercial/business development of the clubhouse and its surrounding 10 acres has been tabled until at least June 2022, despite the support of 300 petition-signing residents. This wildly inconsistent handling lacks any rationale, despite Selectmen Dave Vogel and Dave Lober’s repeated attempts to discuss the in-

consistency with their fellow Selectmen, and does not serve the Town well. Additionally, the First Selectman continues her public advocacy for the Arbor Haven proposal, despite clear data showing the \$9 Million offer will not benefit Woodbridge financially in the long run. This leaves plenty of room for skepticism that the First Selectman has truly changed direction and is open to alternatives.

In the short term, the Selectmen need to reach a consistent approach for handling the pending proposals offered by (1) the Woodbridge Land Trust and Woodbridge Park Association, (2) Arbor Haven, and (3) the 300 petitioners who want to see the clubhouse returned to a commercial/business use.

There’s a world-weary view that consultants are hired to tell you what you want to hear or make a case for the outcome you desire. At the BOS meeting Selectman Lober expressed concern, given the First Selectman’s bias, that we would hire a consultant merely to recommend residential development of the Roger Sherman Farm. The First Selectman assured him that the ideal consultant would be skilled in land use issues – not a “development” expert. Also, the First Selectman recognized hiring a consultant will cost money so the expense will need to be included in next year’s budget, which is now in the crafting stage. Good.

The selection of the land use expert is the first critical step in the process that must lead us to a referendum on the Roger Sherman Farm’s future. Input from all the Selectmen and the public throughout the process is also critical, as is a sense of urgency, as this situation has dragged on for far too long. It’s the number one issue in town, so it would be appropriate to make it the first agenda item for the BOS at every meeting and show progress each time.

Woodbridge has experienced twelve years of mismanagement, sometimes through no management, of the Roger Sherman Farm. Today we find ourselves at the beginning of what may be a sound process to resolve its future. The best chance for success will come from transparency, bipartisanship and focus. 2022 could be a milestone year for Woodbridge. Let’s hope it’s a milestone that will be looked upon favorably in the years to come.



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Woodbridge Town News

Below are the next three issue dates & deadlines of the Woodbridge Town News.
Thank you for your submissions to Your Home Town Newspaper.

Upcoming Issue Date	Issue Deadline
January 14 New Year's Issue.....	January 7
February 11 Valentine's Day Issue.....	February 4
March 11 St. Patrick's Day Issue.....	March 4

Note: Copy due by 4:00p.m. Thank you.

FROM OUR READERS

Amity Problems
are Not Unique

During this past year, I have read articles and watched news reports and public comments about all the problems at Amity High School. To be honest, as someone who has probably spent more time in that building during my more than 35 years of teaching than almost any other educator, I admit problems exist. They exist as they do in almost every high school in the country and are nothing more or less than a reflection of the communities in which we live. Amity is not unique in having such problems, they are not new, and they are not ignored in the hopes that they will go away. From the day that I joined the Amity staff in the 1980s there have been workshops, special training, counselors, parent meetings, seminars, but most of all continuous work with students individually and in groups to help them grow into respectful and successful adults.

Amity's culture is one of high expectations for every individual. If you are sending your child to a public high school, I can think of few that are better, which is the reason my family moved into the District more than forty years ago. My children went to school here and now my grandchildren. I have worked with thousands of students during my career. Some have had problems and working with our support systems we addressed them. They became part of an extraordinary student body with the assistance of dedicated teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, office staff, custodians, and security staff. Amity graduates continue to contribute their skills and talents in all areas at the highest levels around the world.

In the few years since my retirement, I continue my relationship with Amity at sporting events, special programs in the arts and cultural events. I have spoken to hundreds of graduates and

parents regularly who continuously express how grateful they are for the education they received at Amity. Yes, there are always stories about teachers they did not like, kids that caused trouble, and things we could have done differently, but that is all part of life. I have never held back when I thought someone needed advice. Our communities are fortunate to have a school like Amity. It is time to get off social media, cease denigrating teachers and administrators, stop calling news outlets, take politics out of education, and deal with real identified problems directly with the people involved. Amity can be better than ever, but only with the support of our communities and positive parent involvement. In attending various school activities, I have witnessed the high levels of achievement by Amity students working together. Maybe the adults in our communities could better emulate the kids in that respect.

Hoping for a better future.
Debbie Davis

Keep Your Friends,
Families and
Neighbors Safe

It's the most wonderful time of the year! With family gatherings, gift swaps and midnight toasts quickly approaching this holiday season, Anheuser-Busch and Dichello Distributors, Inc. are more thankful than ever to be a part of your festivities. Whether you're raising a glass at a loved one's house or celebrating with a night on the town, remember to keep yourself and your community safe.

If you'll be spreading holiday cheer with an ice-cold beer or two, don't forget to plan ahead for a safe ride. There is an average of 300,000 daily incidents and 10,000 annual fatalities related to alcohol-impaired driving in the U.S. – and this problem is 100% preventable.

See "Letters" On Page 22

Woodbridge Town News

WTN LETTERS POLICY

Submit your letters for our "From Our Readers" section to:
Woodbridge Town News, P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477
or email: letters@woodbridgetownnews.com.

Please limit letters to 500 words and include a daytime phone number in case we have any questions. Letters must be exclusive to the Woodbridge Town News for publication. We reserve the right to reject any letter.



WOODBIDGE EDUCATION ROUNDUP

The Woodbridge Board of Education Budget Series: Capital Planning

BY LYNN PIASCYK, MARIA MADONICK,
SARAH BETH DELPRETE, JAY DAHYA,
BROOKE HOPKINS, JEFF HUGHES,
DAVID ROSS, MIKE STRAMBLER,
AND ERIN WILLIAMSON

The Woodbridge Board of Education (WBOE) has begun drafting its budget for the next fiscal year. We will be writing a series of articles to help town residents better understand the process, what is included in our budget, and the importance of investing in our amazing school. As always, the WBOE recognizes the support and long-term investment of both the town leadership and residents in Beecher Road School.

This article will provide an overview of the Capital Plan that the WBOE presented to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen on December 2, 2021 and includes 4 priority projects: 1) roof replacement, 2) remediation of drainage issues, 3) asbestos abatement, floor replacement, and potential building reorganization/repurposing/expansion to address capacity issues, and 4) repairing of cracks in parking lots and sidewalks. A recording of the WBOE's presentation can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k07Nq16DqIs>

Areas of Beecher's roof have a history of leaking that has reached a level that now requires a full roof replacement where the roof has reached or exceeded its lifespan. Excessive leakage, combined with drainage issues, results in significant pooling of water both inside and immediately outside of our building every time it rains, even when

there is a light or modest rainstorm.

There is also an urgent need to replace the flooring, which should only be done once the roof and drainage issues have been addressed. This need results from asbestos which is currently sealed under carpeting. This asbestos does not pose any current threats to the staff and children at Beecher; however, abatement is a necessity given the severity of the water pooling in and around the same area. Moreover, this raises concern regarding the long-term impact of damp flooring in terms of mold and air quality.

In addition, Beecher's sidewalks and parking lots are cracking and crumbling which are a hazard to children, parents, staff, and visitors and have already caused injury. It is important to note, that our building and grounds are used 7 days a week, all year long to support other town programs, in addition to providing education. Finally, Beecher must get a comprehensive assessment of what is necessary in terms of reorganizing, repurposing, and/or expanding the current footprint to meet enrollment trends, strains on building capacity, and any potential new housing in Woodbridge.

For context, Beecher Road School was originally built in 1960, with the additions of the South school in 1971, the D wing in the early 1990s, and the K wing, cafeteria, and library between 1995-1997. Between 2014-2016 there was a comprehensive and sustainable energy renovation that involved a state-of-the-art HVAC system, win-

dows, and additional security. Beyond these renovations, however, few other upgrades have taken place, while other towns have invested in new and improved school facilities.

We are now at a pivotal moment in our district in which our current building has reached its capacity. Beecher's current enrollment requires 55 classrooms: 43 dedicated to grades K-6 instruction with the remaining necessary for specials (e.g., art, music, etc.), pre-K, and special education services. Beecher only has 54 classrooms and so this year we were forced to temporarily repurpose the Rotunda into a special education space. Based on enrollment projections through 2027-2028, and the distribution of enrolled students across grade levels, Beecher will require 42-44 classrooms for grades K-6 instruction every year. Therefore, our building is at and in some years will be exceeding its capacity. In addition, future development and zoning changes could potentially further increase student enrollment.

There is wide agreement in Woodbridge that Beecher Road School is one of our town gems, and something that deserves ongoing investment and revitalization. Beecher is the place where our children learn and grow, and where many of us began our own education. It is also a place of exceptional academic achievement; this past year, during a time of COVID, our school ranked among the top 3% in the State for the percentage of children meeting or exceeding grade level standards for math and literacy. This is a true testimony

to the dedication and work of our educators, administrators, and staff at Beecher who make it such an amazing place for our children.

While these educators have continued to do wonderful things with our children inside our school building year over year, during this same tenure the building itself has aged dramatically. While our children score within the top 3% of academic achievement, we can all agree that Beecher is not within the top 3% of school buildings in the State.

In total, the WBOE is requesting the town invest in excess of \$2 million over a 6-year period. As a focal point of our town, and a primary factor in our housing values and tax revenue, we must invest in Beecher Road School. We would never allow this level of disrepair to be neglected in our own homes, and we should not permit these needs to go neglected in our school either. As the WBOE, we voted unanimously to seek this investment from the Town of Woodbridge and we hope that the community also recognizes the current needs of Beecher Road School and supports this investment in our much-loved school.

Any residents who are interested in learning more are encouraged to attend town meetings, including WBOE meetings. All WBOE meeting agendas and minutes are published on the district website. In addition, if you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out to Superintendent Jonathan Budd at jbudd@woodbridgeps.org.

The Benefits Of In Person Holiday Shopping

The 2020 holiday season was unlike any other. The COVID-19 pandemic was still affecting daily life across the globe over the final months of 2020, prompting many families and individuals to alter holiday traditions they'd embraced for decades. That included how people shop. Many people avoided in person holiday shopping in 2020. However, the successful rollout of various COVID-19 vaccines has made in person shopping safe again. That's good news for local businesses and great news for shoppers, who may have forgotten just how much they can benefit from shopping in person.

In person shopping is convenient. Much is made of the convenience of online shopping. And it's undeniable that the ability to shop at all hours of the day and night is convenient. How-

ever, in person shopping, especially when shopping for others, is much more convenient than shoppers may realize. When shopping in person, shoppers can get a feel for an item, size it up and even inspect its quality prior to purchasing it. That can save shoppers from that disappointing feeling of receiving an item in the mail only to realize it's poorly made or oddly sized and therefore unlikely to fit its eventual recipient.

In person shopping isn't all about shipping. Shipping speed is a significant factor for online shoppers, and that may affect just which gift they give come the holiday season. According to a Dotcom report titled "How Fast Delivery and Quality Packaging Drives Customer Loyalty," 87 percent of shoppers surveyed indicated shipping was

a key factor when deciding whether to shop with an e-commerce brand again. That's an important consideration, as shoppers may be more inclined to buy an item from a retailer simply because of their shipping speed capabilities and not because of the quality of the item and whether or not it's what they want to give to their loved one. Shopping in person removes shipping from the equation, ensuring gift givers will give a gift they truly want to give and not just the one that will arrive on time.

In person shopping allows for more accessible browsing. Within minutes of entering a store and walking around, shoppers may see a handful of gifts that will ultimately be great for various people on their lists, even if they had no idea what to get prior to entering. That ability to browse is more difficult

when shopping online, especially when buying from online retailers with massive inventories of a range of products. Such sites often require visitors to pick a category to streamline their searches. That's not always easy or enjoyable for shoppers who cherish the opportunity to uncover hidden gems or more unique gifts that aren't available all over the internet.

In person shopping gets shoppers out of the house. Since the onset of the pandemic, people have spent more time than ever within the confines of their homes. The 2021 holiday shopping season provides a great opportunity to get out of the house and disconnect from devices. Shoppers can even do so alongside friends and family members they weren't able to see last holiday season.

WOODBRIDGE EDUCATION ROUNDUP

Young Writer Wins Competition

Alexie Petrov, 11, of Woodbridge, was named the 2020 winner of the Young Writers Competition sponsored by the Lockwood Mathews Mansion and Museum in Norwalk. Due to the pandemic, Alexie will be honored at an award ceremony in early January 2022, along with the three 2021 winners.

The theme in 2020 was “What in the Mansion Is This,” and it challenged the young writers to identify certain items in the Victorian-era mansion, determine what they were used for, and then include them in a fun, fictional story.

According to its website, the Lockwood Mathews Mansion was built by railroad tycoon LeGrand Lockwood from 1864-1868, and was considered a technological marvel of its time: it had indoor hot and cold plumbing, gas lighting, ventilation and a central heating system that burned a ton of coal

a day. In 1876 the property was sold to Charles D. Mathews, whose family lived there until 1938. In 1941, the estate was sold to the City of Norwalk and designated a public park.

Among the items they had to identify were a Victorian call bell, which would set off a bell in the servants’ quarters and not only beckon help, but also indicated where the help was needed, said Education Program Director Iliana Begetis. Luckily, the museum had pictures of the items on its website, so the competition could continue even after the museum closed its doors to the public in late March 2020 due to the general lockdown.

Begetis remembered fondly the story that Alexie submitted, saying it integrated dialogue, and was very advanced for a young writer who was in third grade at the time. “It was so fun to read,” she said.

Tips To Keep Your Tree Fresh This Holiday Season

Christmas trees are often the pièce de résistance of holiday decor. Few things draw the attention of holiday guests quite like an awe-inspiring Christmas tree, especially when that tree maintains its fresh, healthy sheen throughout December.

Many families purchase fresh trees over Thanksgiving weekend or during the first weekend of December. Though the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day may seem like a long time to keep a tree looking great, there are a handful of ways for holiday celebrants to help their trees maintain that undeniable appeal for the long haul.

Pick the right tree. Choosing the right tree is one of the simplest ways to keep a tree looking good throughout the holiday season. A freshly cut tree that buyers choose and cut down themselves or have cut down can reassure them that the tree is likely to stay strong throughout December. Trees purchased from a tree lot may have been cut down long before they made it to the lot, which can make it harder to keep them looking good until Christmas Day.

Cut an inch off the base of any tree that is not freshly cut. MSU Extension at Michigan State University notes that all Christmas trees are conifers, which means they have resin canals in their trunks. Once a tree is cut, the resin can block the pores and make it harder for the tree to take in water. Cutting

an inch off the base of a tree that was not freshly cut just before putting it in the stand can help ensure it gets the water it needs to stay healthy and firm. MSU Extension notes that this approach should be taken with any tree that was not cut within six to eight hours of being put in a stand.

Replenish the water supply every day. Fresh tree veterans recognize that Christmas trees can be very thirsty, especially within the first week or so of being cut and brought home. Fill the stand with water each morning and, if necessary, refill it each night before going to bed. The more water a tree gets and drinks, the more likely it is that the tree will look healthy all the way to Christmas Day. MSU Extension notes that many decorative or antique tree stands do not hold much water, so anyone with such a stand may need to replenish the water supply more than once or twice per day.

Keep the tree away from a heat source. For safety’s sake, trees should be kept away from heating vents, fireplaces and space heaters. But keeping trees away from such heat sources, and ensuring they are not spending the daytime in direct sunlight, also decreases the chances they will dry out before Christmas Day.

A handful of simple strategies can help holiday celebrants keep their Christmas trees looking good throughout the month of December.

Bethany Public School District Names New Superintendent

The Bethany Board of Education is pleased to announce that Kai Byrd has been appointed the Superintendent of the Bethany Public School District effective July 1, 2022, upon the retirement of current Superintendent Colleen Murray. The Board wishes to thank the staff, parents/guardians, and community members for sharing their input throughout the hiring process by identifying the defining skills and qualities required of the next superintendent.

Mrs. Byrd has served as Bethany’s Director of Special Services, Curriculum, and Instruction since 2018. She came to Bethany from the Orange Public School District, where she served as the Director of Special Services and then Principal of the Mary L. Tracy School. In Bethany, she oversaw a highly successful reorganization of special education services, bringing a rare combination of deep knowledge, clarity of goals and responsibilities, and profound empathy to the support of our children. She has a talent for connecting both with students and with their families. In her curricular role, she has overseen a major reorganization of our curriculum, bringing it in line with the new Common Core standards, incorporating modern principles of how children learn, and moving us towards the goal of individualized educational plans for every student. Her ability to manage these distinct roles with such a facility is exceptional – there is no other district in the State in which these roles are combined, and there may well be nobody else in the state who could manage such a portfolio so successfully.

Mrs. Byrd is a committed and experienced educator with a proven record



Kai Byrd

of success. She is an authentic, collaborative, and reflective educational leader with a proven record of achievement, innovative growth mindset, strong organizational and prioritization abilities, fiscal responsibility, and commitment to the community. Mrs. Byrd serves on many local and state committees and organizations and is sought out for her expertise by her peers.

When Mrs. Byrd is not working with students or teachers; she spends time with her husband, son, and two grandsons. She is involved in many organizations and is a proud member of the Epsilon Omicron Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and the Waterbury CT Chapter of the Links, Incorporated. The Bethany Board of Education is confident that the District will be in good hands in the coming years with Kai Byrd at the helm.

The Board will hold a reception in the spring in order for the Bethany community to welcome Mrs. Byrd into her new role as Superintendent.

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Display ads start at only \$110 per issue.

Call 203-298-4399 to place your ad!

Attention Teachers!

We want to know what’s going on in your classroom!
Let us know about any fun activities or holiday projects.

You can also send us your pictures.

(Parental consent required)

Woodbridge Town News

P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477 • edit@WoodbridgeTownNews.com

Both statewide and locally, our COVID-19 positivity rate unfortunately increased significantly just before Thanksgiving. Sadly, the pandemic is not over. I would remind everyone to please take advantage of the widespread availability of FREE vaccines, boosters, and tests to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and to keep yourself and our community safe. To find a vaccine or testing site, visit portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus. As a result of the high positivity rate, we are, unfortunately, back to holding meetings virtually.

Now that we are in our budget season, I will continue to remind everyone that education takes up approximately two-thirds of the Town's annual operating budget. As the school districts' budgets continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the Town's grand list, the Town may be forced to reduce services and/or raise taxes. It will be up to the Boards of Finance and Selectmen to make these hard choices.

Please remember that ALL RESIDENTS have a voice in the budget process. We have already had two Capital Budget presentations in early December. Operating Budget presentations will begin in late January and February to the Boards of Finance and Selectmen, and then discussions will ensue. Residents are encouraged to ask budget questions or make suggestions to boards and commissions, or department heads. Budget meetings can be watched live on Channel 79, Webex and the WGATV YouTube page – links to the meetings are in the meet-

From the First Selectman BY BETH HELLER



ing agenda notice. Videos of meetings that have occurred can be found as recorded written minutes on the Town website, and also on YouTube. You may have noticed that cable channel 79 (where WGATV is broadcast) was not working. I was informed by the cable company that there was a “fiber break” which affected the “Milford hub” and “the fiber team is working on the repair.” As of this writing, the issue has been resolved.

Another video I suggest watching, if you missed the meeting, is the Housing Opportunity Study Committee's informational session, which took place December 6 and was led by housing policy expert David Fink. Mr. Fink provided background on the Town's housing planning process, shared housing best practices, and engaged residents to hear their views about housing. The committee is working to draft the Town's Affordable Housing Plan which will be recommended to the Board of Selectmen this spring, so that we may address the State's requirements related to developing our local affordable housing plan, as required by state statute § 8-30j.

At the December Board of Selectmen meeting the Board heard from the Woodbridge Land Trust and Woodbridge Parks Association who together sent a letter of offer to purchase a conservation easement on 140

of the 150 acres at the former Country Club of Woodbridge for \$250,000. I shared my view at the meeting that I am opposed to this idea for a few reasons: it ties up forever approximately 140 acres of land with access to sewer and water, and the \$250,000 proposed purchase price is less than one year's payment on the Town's remaining debt on this property. Currently we pay approximately \$430,000 annually toward reducing the debt, and we still have about 10 more years before it is paid off. Additionally, we also have a pending offer from developers Arbor Haven to purchase and develop 100 of the 150 acres for \$9 million dollars.

The issue of how best to use this property (the former Country Club of Woodbridge) is controversial. While we contemplate the future of the former CCW, we are faced with a stagnant grand list, and at the same time we are required by the State to submit a housing plan for the Town by June 2022. I'm sure everyone is aware of the need for diverse housing options in Woodbridge, and we also need senior (over 55) housing, so residents can downsize locally. In addition, there are some folks who want to preserve some or all of the former CCW land. There are plenty of other ideas as well, including business, solar, and recreational opportunities.

I proposed, and the Board agreed,

to put a short hold on the proposals and retain the services of a consultant who would assist us in creating a plan for the property. This plan may be able to include several of these ideas. We are also exploring a plan for the business district. At future Board meetings I expect to discuss the hiring of a consultant to guide us through a review of these issues and ideas for the former CCW and recommend to the Board of Selectmen how to proceed in a way that's in the best interest of the Town and its residents.

Also at that meeting, we discussed another proactive step I would like the Board of Selectmen to take to create an overall strategic plan for the Board of Selectmen. This plan would include a mission statement for the Town and a number of goals that the Board would focus on over the next year or two, including resolving the CCW use. This strategic planning initiative will help guide and focus our work so we are better able to serve our residents.

As we close 2021, I am reminded that the end of the year is a time for remembrance. Let's be indeed thankful that we have all made it together through this trying year, and now look to the future with hope that better days are ahead. I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season, and may your new year be filled with love and friendship. Happy Holidays!

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions or comments. I can be reached at 203-389-3401 or bheller@woodbridgect.org.

Land Trust and Park Association Join Together with Offer to Protect Town Owned Open Space

The Woodbridge Land Trust (WLT) and the Woodbridge Park Association (WPA) have submitted a formal offer to the Town of Woodbridge to purchase a Grant of Conservation restriction on 145 acres of the former Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW) to protect the land in perpetuity.

In 2009, the town purchased the CCW, one of the largest contiguous land parcels in town, to prevent dense residential development and preserve the land as open space. Former First Selectman Ed Sheehy sent a letter to every town resident on April 30, 2009, soliciting support for the purchase. In that letter he stated, “The Board of Selectmen carefully analyzed the proposed purchase and recognized the importance of maintaining the property as open space...If the purchase is approved, the town will acquire 150 acres of beautiful open space to be en-

joyed by residents for generations. It would be irresponsible for the Board to allow the property to fall into the hands of developers.” Town residents agreed and turned out in record numbers at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting and voted overwhelmingly to purchase the land. Since then, Woodbridge residents have repeatedly opposed development proposals, defeating by a resounding 2:1 margin the one proposal that was put to referendum.

The property is home to wetlands and abundant wildlife; it is a beautiful and valuable asset that contributes to the quality of life of every Woodbridge resident.

In addition to its aesthetic and ecological value, this land has important historical value. In the 18th century Roger Sherman owned the farm on this property and named it Clover Hill Farm. As a Founding Father of the United

States, Sherman is the only individual to have signed all four of our nation's founding documents: the Continental Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. He represented the people of Connecticut by serving as a Judge of the Superior Court, as a U.S. Representative in Congress, as a U.S. Senator, and as the Mayor of New Haven.

Our proposal, which offers a \$250,000 payment to the town, is by far the most financially advantageous for Woodbridge taxpayers. Any proposed residential development leads to increases in school population, necessary added expenses for infrastructure, along with other additional costs including police, fire, etc. It is well established that Open Space costs towns far less than residential lands.*

The 2017 Woodbridge Open Space

Plan lists fourteen goals worthy of attaining when considering the preservation of open space. Roger Sherman's historic Clover Hill Farm (aka CCW) meets every one of those objectives.

The CCW has been a divisive issue for Woodbridge for almost 12 years. This proposal is an opportunity to end the divisiveness and bring our town together. Our organizations are strongly committed to working with the town to protect this priceless natural resource for the benefit of all to enjoy.

* Thomas DiNapoli, *Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation*, (New York, Office of the State Comptroller, March 2010); Isabel Holland and Spencer Meyer, *The Economic Case for Conservation: A Synthesis of the Economic Impacts of Natural Resources and Conservation in New England*, (Ridgefield, Connecticut, Highstead Foundation, 2018).

“A holiday is an opportunity to journey within. It is also a chance to chill, to relax. It is when I switch on my rest mode.” — PRABHAS

TOWN DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

Youth Services

BY NANCY PFUND



Woodbridge Youth Services Program Coordinator Sarah Pearson thanks Amity students and residents for donating “We Care Kits” for the homeless



Fred Ortolini from TEAM collects toys donated by Woodbridge residents from Woodbridge Youth Services Director Nancy Pfund for the Toys 4 Kids program which brings holiday cheer to children from Woodbridge and other local communities

Call 203-389-3429 or email npfund@woodbridgetown.org for information or to sign up for programs

Job Bank

Woodbridge teens who want paid, outdoor work should contact Youth Services to schedule an interview. The Job Bank is a referral service for residents who offer odd jobs to members. Snow shovellers will be needed soon.

Residents should contact Youth Services to hire a teen or plan now for snow shoveling as needed since teens are limited.

Do You Have A Teen Who Vapes?

Yale’s Vaping Cessation program can help high school students to quit the habit. They offer a virtual program which provides financial rewards for progress in the effort to end the use

of harmful substances in the vape oils. Teens also receive a note pad to use for checking in with Yale. To join the program and receive the support needed, please call Youth Services for more information. Students are encouraged to call for assistance.

We Care Kits

Over 100 “We Care” kits with essentials have been made by Amity students and residents. The kits and additional donations will be delivered by Youth Services to the New Reach for the homeless in New Haven.

Toys 4 Kids

Over 40 toys were collected in the Woodbridge Library and in The Center Building for children in need. Donations were delivered to TEAM, Inc. to supplement its toy program for local families.

Town Modifies Bulk Trash Fee

Starting February 1, the Town will modify its bulk trash fee. The Board of Selectmen approved this fee after reviewing and discussing data from the Transfer Station.

The Town’s Transfer Station has a scale which is used to charge haulers bringing in residential trash. Starting February 1, the scale will also be used for residents and contractors bringing in “bulk” trash items, such as furniture and construction demolition. That fee will be \$0.10 per pound. Cash is not accepted at the Transfer Station.

“This modified fee is one way for the Town to prepare for a difficult fiscal future by shifting the cost of the service to those who use it rather than have all residents subsidize it,” said First Selectman Beth Heller. “As we begin budget season, it’s important to remember that education takes up approximately two-thirds of our annual operating budget. As the school districts’ budgets continue to increase without a corresponding increase in the Town’s grand list from either new commercial buildings, more businesses and/or more homes, the Town will be forced to cut services, cut education and/or raise taxes. None of these are palatable options but may be necessary in the future as we continue to have no new revenue sources.”

Currently the Town charges \$20/ cubic yard – in fiscal year 2021 the Town collected \$4,511 in bulk trash

fees but paid out \$69,490 to haul and dispose of bulk trash. The new fee will cover the Town’s costs.

In addition, the Town will continue to offer bulk trash pickup five months a year, but with a fee. Starting on February 1 there will be a \$50 per appointment fee. That fee will partially cover the Town’s cost to run this program including staff time and disposal costs. Bulk pickup is scheduled to run March, April and May and again in the fall.

In the next decade or so there will be a significant reduction in trash disposal capacity statewide and in the Northeast, which will drive up costs for municipalities and their residents. The Town’s bulk trash fee is, in part, a response to this looming trash crisis.

Simultaneously, the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is strongly encouraging towns to institute a program called Pay As You Throw (PAYT) or Save Money and Reduce Trash (SMART).

PAYT means that households are charged for the amount of waste they throw away. This provides incentives for residents to decrease the waste they generate and increase the amount they reuse and recycle. Woodbridge has been invited to apply for a PAYT grant after submitting an expression of interest, and the Board of Selectmen will continue to explore and learn more about the program.



AT THE WOODBRIDGE CENTER



Are you over 55 years old? Contact The Woodbridge Center: Call 203-389-3430 or email kmoriarty@woodbridgetc.org for information and registration for all programming.

Facebook: Follow us on Facebook (The Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge CT) for current updates and local information.

Email blasts: Please be sure you are on our email blast list to receive Woodbridge Center updates.

Time to Move Forward: As the year comes to an end and we reflect on 2021, The Center has had its challenges: adapting to the ongoing pandemic by trying to balance programs and services with everyone's safety, the flood damage to The Center and subsequent relocation of offices and programs, and most difficult, losing many of those who were a part of The Center. Despite these adversities, we continue to come together to support each other. Just last month, The Center held a delicious Thanksgiving Drive-thru Luncheon thanks to the generosity and assistance of four Woodbridge sponsors: Coachman Square at Woodbridge, The Linden at Woodbridge, The Willows, and The Woodbridge Police Union. Many residents who attended the drive-thru generously donated as well. In addition, Julie Averbach, a Yale student with a double major in art history and psychology, provided two fascinating and well-attended virtual arts tours of the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and clients made beautiful Thanksgiving Centerpieces in a workshop offered by Hamden

Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. This month, The Woodbridge Child Center's pre-kindergarten class donated beautiful handmade snowflake ornaments to distribute to Center clients and The Rotary Club will be sponsoring the Holiday Drive-thru in its entirety. The Center sincerely thanks all of those who contributed to The Center throughout the year, whether through donations, volunteering, or acts of kindness - it is all appreciated and will be what The Center builds upon in 2022 to create a dynamic, welcoming Center to come together once again.

Start 2022 focusing on your health with these new programs (Not sure if an exercise class is right for you? Try a complimentary class!)

Balance/Flexibility Class: Wednesdays beginning January 12, 9-10 am in the Center Building gym. Led by Michele Tenney, this class welcomes all fitness levels to improve necessary balance and flexibility through a combination of exercises, core work, and stretching. Please bring a yoga mat and yoga strap. (Yoga straps are available from instructor for \$10.) The 8-week session fee is \$40.

How To Strengthen Your Shoulders and Avoid a Rotator Cuff Injury: January 14 from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm on Zoom and on WGATV channel 79. Just in time for snow shoveling and spring training, Kyle Branday, MSPT, of Amity Physical Therapy, will discuss movement mechanics of the shoulder, common injuries, and what can be done to prevent shoulder dysfunction, pain, and avoid the dreaded rotator cuff repair. No fee.

Evidence-Based Lifestyle Change Program (Diabetes Prevention): January 18 from 1-2 pm, in the Center Building, Room 16. The first class will be an informational session to discuss the program in detail and answer questions. This program, a \$1,200 annual value, will be provided *AT NO COST to everyone 60+ years of age* as it is sponsored by Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA) and non-profit Monitor My Health (MMH) in an effort to promote good health. The program includes 22 coach-led weekly sessions on healthy eating, physical activity, weight loss, stress management, diabetes prevention, and more. You will also participate in individual sessions with a Registered Dietician and learn new recipes and skills on how to create healthy, balanced meals that can help prevent or manage various health conditions. The program will meet on Tuesdays, beginning the following Tuesday, January 25, from 1-2 pm, in the Center Building, Room 16. Call The Center to sign up (203-389-3430).

...and these continuing programs

Aerobics Class with Laura Richling: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11 am, in the Center Building gym. Come enjoy a complete aerobic, cardio and strength training workout to a variety of music. Bring your own 1- or 2-pound hand weights, if you have them, to use during the class. There is a \$3 fee paid at the beginning of each class.

Pickleball: Monday through Friday, 12:30-3:30 pm, in the Center Building gym. New players please call

to register. All levels are welcome. Call for more information.

Targeted Strength Training with Michele Tenney: Mondays, 9-10 am, in the Center Building gym. This exercise class uses exercise bands to focus on strengthening specific muscle groups to help increase balance, stability, and flexibility. Bands are available for purchase through the instructor. The class fee is \$40 for an 8-week session. Next session began December 13 (no class December 27) and will be prorated as needed.

Zumba Gold with Amanda Aranzullo: Fridays, 9-9:45 am, in the Center Building gym. Who says exercise can't be fun? This fun "dance party" focuses on all elements of cardiovascular health, muscular conditioning, flexibility and balance. No prior Zumba experience required. The fee is \$30 for a 6-week session. Next session begins January 24, prorated as needed.

Ongoing Activities at The Center Hobbies/Social

Computer lab is open Monday-Friday, 10 am - 2 pm. Computers are available for two hours of use per day/person. Two-person limit in computer lab. Printing is available (first 5 pages free). Preregistration is required.

Craft Group: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm, in The Center café. Bring your current knitting or crocheting project to work on while enjoying a lovely time socializing.

Painting for Pleasure with Car-

See "Woodbridge Center" On Page 11

“Woodbridge Center” From Page 10

ole Abbate: Explore a new hobby for the new year- next session to start January 10! Monday 10 am -12 pm, in The Center café. You will find joy in creating your own paintings as Carole helps inspire rank beginners to intermediates to paint with acrylics or watercolors. Paint the subject of your choice - bring in a postcard or photo for inspiration. Call to sign-up for this 6-week, \$36 class.

Services Offered

AAA Driver Improvement Class, January. 24 from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm: Member and non-members may be able to lower their auto insurance costs while improving their driving skills when they enroll in AAA’s Driver Improvement Program that teaches the basics of defensive driving and provides current driving practice updates. Location is in the Woodbridge Library’s meeting room– space is limited. No cost. Pre-registration is required.

Tech Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:45-4:00 pm: Need some help navigating your computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone? Not sure where to start? Want to know more about what features you aren’t using? Call 203-389-3430 to sign-up for a 1:1 session in The Center’s computer lab with patient, knowledgeable, Amity High School student volunteers. No fee.

Transportation for medical appointments is available for those 60+ or with disabilities, Monday- Friday

from 9 am – 4:00 pm with limited exceptions. Transportation for grocery shopping and pharmacy pick-up is also available. Call to arrange car or wheelchair accessible van transportation. Vehicles are cleaned between each use. Masks are required.

Meals: Seniors may reserve healthy, well balanced, flash frozen meals complete with a protein, starch, vegetables, and fresh fruit for \$5.25/meal. Order by noon on Monday for delivery to your home on Tuesday. Choose from a wide variety of options including chicken parmesan, crabmeat stuffed sole, eggplant rollatini, meatloaf, vegetable frittata, and fresh Cobb salad with grilled chicken breast. Meals include a roll, fresh fruit, and dessert. There is a minimum order of two meals.

Frozen soups are available for \$1.50 per 10 oz. container. Varieties include: Italian wedding, beef orzo, matzo ball, broccoli and cheddar, chicken noodle and many more. Call 203-389-3430 to place your order.

Looking for company? Call Judi Young, Senior Social Worker, at 203-389-3429, to arrange for a friendly visitor.

Medical Loan Closet: Durable medical equipment is available for lending including walkers, wheelchairs, knee rollers, shower chairs and more. Call for details.

Job Bank: Residents may call Nancy Pfund, Youth Services, at 203-389-3429, to request a student worker. Schedule helpers now for snow shoveling, and more.

“Study Group” From Page 1

a program in Davidson, N.C. One person in the audience suggested to the committee to look into Tiny Homes communities.

Fink stayed away from discussing the Country Club of Woodbridge property. He did say that his town, West Hartford, has created a lot of multi-family housing over the last few years, and it really helped the Grand List, which in turn helped keep taxes – well, not low, but lower than they would have been without it.

Fink included pictures of developments in and around the state which incorporate some affordable units, including in upscale communities such as Simsbury. They are what the market wants, he said. And, if properly designed, such developments can help stabilize communities.

In Woodbridge, some 21% of households are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed) – in other words, the working poor.

As far as the correlation of number of bedrooms with the influx of school-age children is concerned, he cited a Rutgers University study, which found that with one- and two-bedroom apartments, the influx is minimal (0.04 and .27 children respectively), but the number rises to 1.38 children with 3-bedroom units. “You get more school children with four-bedroom colonials,”

he noted. The issue is not the number of children moving into a community, but whether the school will have to add another wing or a classroom teacher, he added.

In terms of finding the right location, his recommendation is for towns to work with developers – walk through certain areas where multi-family housing may be a good fit and see what they suggest. Some towns have helped the process along by providing subsidies to make it worthwhile for developers to include units below market rate.

Fink said a pet peeve of his is when he hears people say “Our town is built out.” There is no such thing, he replied. There are always properties that can be re-zoned and used for something else.

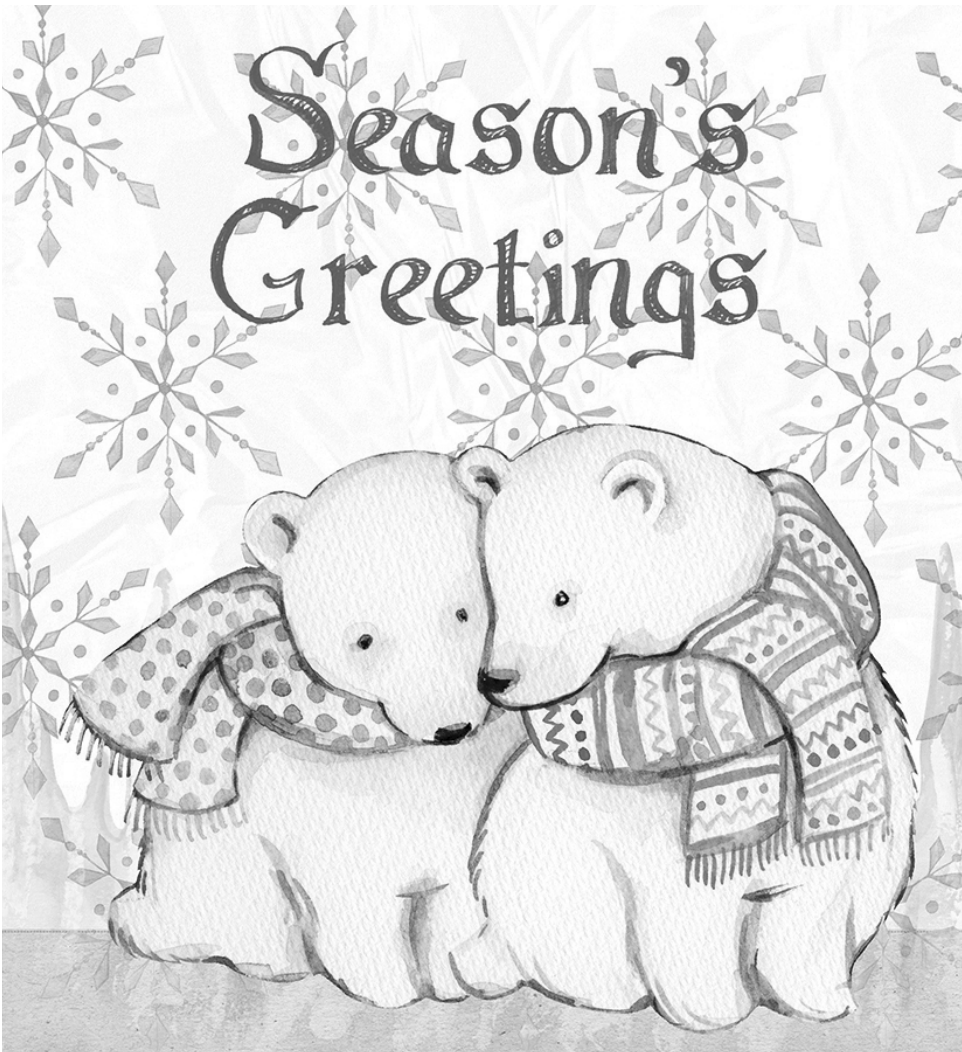
The SCROG survey had a lively response in Woodbridge, said Dominick Thomas, the chairman of the Housing Opportunity Study Committee, even though there were a number of questions that did not relate to Woodbridge. However, sometime early in 2022, the Committee plans to put out a Woodbridge-specific survey to learn more about local housing needs. Thomas and his committee members hope that it will attract as much attention as the first one. Committee members include Kathleen Hunter, Nicole Donzelo, Elaine Friedman, Jim Graham, Buddy DeGennaro, Debbie Brander, Donovan Lofters, Dwight Rowland and Lewis Shaffer.

Town of Woodbridge Meetings for the Month of January 2022



(Subject to Change, Check with Town Clerk’s Office, 203-389-3422)

1/3	Fire Commission Special Meeting.....	6:00 PM	Fire Station
	Town Plan & Zoning Commission.....	6:30 PM	Town Hall
1/4	Human Services Commission	7:00 PM	
1/5	Housing Opportunity Study Cmte	7:00 PM	Town Hall
1/10	Fire Commission	6:00 PM	
	Library Commission	6:30 PM	Library
	Zoning Board of Appeals	7:30 PM	Town Hall
1/11	Agricultural Commission	6:00 PM	Virtual
1/12	Board of Selectmen (BOS).....	5:00 PM	
1/13	Community Council.....	9:30 AM	
1/18	2030 Task Force	6:00 PM	
1/19	Inland/Wetlands Agency	7:30 PM	Town Hall
1/20	Board of Finance (BOF).....	6:00 PM	Town Hall
	Police Commission.....	6:15 PM	
	Conservation Commission.....	7:30 PM	Town Hall
1/24	CUPOP.....	5:30 PM	Town Hall
	Recreation Commission	7:00 PM	Beecher Rd School S
1/25	BOF & BOS Joint Budget Mtg.	6:00 PM	
	Gov’t Access TV Commission	7:30 PM	Town Hall
1/27	BOF & BOS Joint Budget Mtg.	6:00 PM	



HUMAN SERVICES



Thank you to Human Services’ community partners Bailey, Moore, Schaefer, Glazer and Proto, LLC and the Woodbridge Rotary Club for their efforts to support and assist with the distribution of pies and gift cards ahead of the Thanksgiving holidays. Thanks also to Peter Lerner for his coordination efforts. The Woodbridge Human Services Thanksgiving holiday distribution is an annual tradition which provides support to Woodbridge neighbors in need.



Many thanks to Woodbridge Brownie troop 60865 and Woodbridge Daisy troop 67884 for their collection of over 800 pairs of socks for the Human Services Holiday Basket program.



Stephanie Cabral, center, co-owner of Progressions Salon in Woodbridge, stands with staff and many of the socks collected during their 15th annual sock drive to benefit Woodbridge Human Services Holiday Basket program.



Gabby Durso, left, president, and her brother, Chase, vice-president, run the Good Night, Sleep Tight PJ Program. The pair managed to raise funds and provide pajamas for all the children in the Holiday Basket program.

Holiday Basket Program

Many thanks to all the donors, groups and community support which made the Holiday Basket program such a success. While we cannot name all the donor families here, we offer gratitude to the 36 repeat donors and the four new donors who stepped up to provide a wealth of giving to Woodbridge families in need. We recognize the many resident donors who contributed gift cards added to the Holiday Baskets. The staff at Human Services acknowledges the full community support received from local organizations, groups, and businesses. Many thanks to Bailey, Moore, Schaefer, Glazer and Proto, LLP, The Friends of the Woodbridge Library, Progressions Salon, Good Night, Sleep Tight PJ Program, Brownie Troop 60865 and Daisy Troop 67884, BRS Student Council members, Surreybrook Preschool, First Church of Christ, One of Kind Foundation, Spartan Academy students, Anthony Taddei and the Woodbridge Club, Barry and Hyla Vine, Town Hall employees and Beth Heller, Woodbridge Library

employees, Woodbridge Childcare Center, and Alice Lippman and Lillian Malkus for contributing handmade knitted gifts.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

In partnership with the IRS and the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS), the Woodbridge Center offers free tax preparation through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The program runs Tuesdays from 9 am- 12 pm beginning February 8. In this third tax season of the pandemic, taxpayers with low to moderate income, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and those with limited English now have four options to safely and accurately complete 2021 tax returns. If you have access to a computer and internet, you can complete your own tax return through MyFreeTaxes.com, supported by United Way in partnership with the IRS. If doing your own taxes seems daunting, preparers can complete your return either virtually or in person. If you have a camera phone, you

can virtually access Woodbridge VITA tax preparers through [GetYourRefund.org/WBSC-CT](https://www.woodbridgect.org/223/Human-Services-Department) without leaving home. If you don’t have access to technology, call Woodbridge Human Services (203) 389-3429 for a drive-through or in-person appointment. For more details on Woodbridge VITA services, see the Human Services website here: <https://www.woodbridgect.org/223/Human-Services-Department>.

3G Network Shutdown

Although most people have devices on 4G and 5G networks, the shutdown of 3G systems coming in 2022 may impact older medical devices, medical alert systems, iPhones older than the iPhone 6, and some security systems according to the National Center on Law and Elder Rights. Residents can reach out to their service provider or the Federal Communications Commission for more information or call the Human Services Department for assistance.

Social Security Benefit

Recipients of Social Security ben-

efit payments may soon see a change in delivery dates. The distribution schedule of monthly Social Security Income is changing effective January 1, 2022. This will affect those who began receiving benefits after May 1997. The new schedule will associate delivery dates with birthdates. If you have questions, please contact the Human Services Department.

Energy Assistance Program

Human Services will accept appointments for residents to apply for the 2021-2022 CT Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, Inc. Income eligibility requirements must be met. For information, or to schedule an appointment, call Judi Young at 203-389-3429.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a weather emergency or power outage, elderly residents and those with disabilities are encouraged to register for the Emergency Call List by calling the Human Services Department.



What To Get Young Professionals This Holiday Season

Holiday shoppers relish the moment when a loved one unwraps a gift and immediately smiles widely. Hitting the nail on the head in regard to a holiday gift is its own reward, and there's no shame in looking around for some inspiration to find a gift loved ones will truly cherish.

Shopping for young professionals this holiday season could be a little tricky, as changes sparked by the pandemic continue to affect work environments. However, shoppers can still find gifts to make young professionals happy this holiday season.

Home office essentials: Many businesses have welcomed workers back to the office, but some are taking a hybrid approach to being in the office. Many professionals who once went into the office five days a week are now spending one or two days a week at home. Others may still be working remotely full-time. Holiday shoppers can take this into consideration when shopping for young professionals and look for some basic home office essentials. A comfortable office chair, a monitor that can be paired with a company-issued laptop and even a single-serve coffee pot for young people accustomed to getting their morning coffee on the way into the office can help professionals seamlessly transition from the office to their home office during the work week.

Messenger bag: Looking the part

can boost young professionals' confidence as they begin their careers. A leather messenger bag is a stylish and sophisticated way for young professionals to carry their laptops and other workday essentials to and from work. Professionals working in especially formal environments may prefer a leather briefcase, which creates a more traditional look for young people who will be entertaining clients or shuffling from one business meeting to another.

Business card holder: Though they might not be as prevalent as they once were, business cards remain an effective way for young professionals to build their networks. An elegant, monogrammed business card holder can help young professionals make a strong first impression.

Luggage: Business travel may not be back to its pre-pandemic levels just yet, but many young professionals will undoubtedly still appreciate an upgrade over the luggage they used in college. If designer luggage is a budget buster, look for a sturdy, elegant alternative that young professionals will be proud to tote around on their first official business trip.

Business may still be unusual as the world continues to emerge from the pandemic. But shoppers can look to some old favorites as they search for the perfect gifts for the young professionals on their holiday shopping lists this season.



Home gym equipment can make for a great gift this holiday season.

Gifts To Excite The Family Athlete This Holiday Season

Holiday shoppers know that few things can match the joy of finding the perfect gift for a loved one. Whether that loved one is a tiny tot who can't wait to unwrap this year's must-have toy or an adult hoping to find the latest gadget under the tree on Christmas morning, the thrill of giving a great gift is part of what makes the holiday season so enjoyable.

Friends and family members may fall into certain categories, and that can make holiday shopping a little easier. For example, loved ones who can't wait to sit down with a good book would no doubt appreciate a new e-reader or the latest bestseller. When it comes to gifting the family athlete, the following ideas can provide the inspiration shoppers need to put a smile on the face of fitness-minded friends and family members .

Weighted vest: Weighted vests have gained popularity in recent years. Available from a variety of manufacturers and for athletes of varying skill levels, weighted vests can be ideal for athletes who want to burn more calories and build strength during their workouts. This can be an especially useful gift for endurance athletes who want their training sessions to mimic the challenges posed by nature or difficult competitive terrains.

Noise-canceling headphones or earbuds: Many athletes relish their workouts not only as opportunities to zero in on their fitness goals, but also

as chances to block out distractions and clear their heads for an hour or two each day. Noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds effectively block out external noises, allowing athletes to direct all of their focus on their workouts and training sessions.

Energy drinks: Though it might not seem like the most exciting gift to unwrap on Christmas morning, energy drinks are vital to many fitness enthusiasts' athletic endeavors. For example, endurance athletes may appreciate a tub of Osmo Active Hydration Performance Drink Mix, which contains an optimal ratio of sucrose, glucose and electrolytes, helping athletes improve their endurance and power while reducing instances of cramping and fatigue. Energy drinks make for a perfect stocking stuffer.

Home gym equipment: Pandemic-related gym closures turned athletes into their own personal trainers, and some may not want to return to local fitness facilities even now that they've safely reopened. Home gym equipment can help athletes continue to build their own private home gyms, making items like kettle bells, dumbbells, weight benches, and resistance bands great items to put under the tree this holiday season.

It's never been easier to shop for the family athlete during the holiday season. A heightened focus on fitness ensures there's something for every type of athlete on your holiday shopping list.



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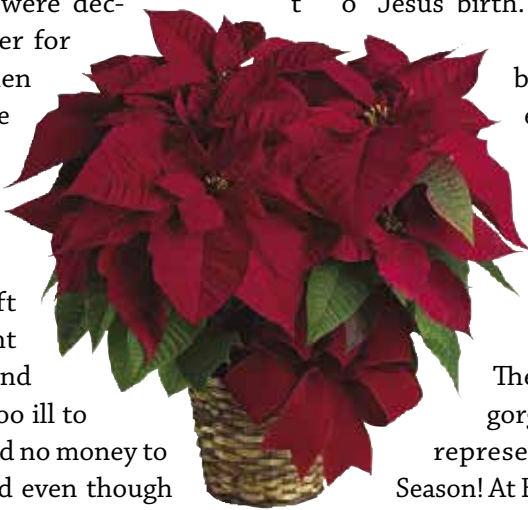
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ARTS & LEISURE

The True Meaning of Christmas, Inspired by the Poinsettia

By JAMIE APPELBERG
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OFFICER

Although we have several plants that all represent Christmas, did you know that the Poinsettia plant represents the true spirit of Christmas? Long ago in a small town in Mexico, the townspeople were decorating the manger for Christmas Eve when they would celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus and offer gifts and prayers. A young girl in town needed a gift for him to represent her love for him, and her parents were too ill to help. Her family had no money to spare on a gift, and even though she tried several different ways to make baby Jesus a gift, she could not complete them. On the night of the celebration, she was crying and hiding, embarrassed she had nothing to offer. She felt as though she let Jesus down, at this moment an Angel approached her. The Angel told the young girl to look around in the local fields for a gift. She scanned the fields and jumped up to pick large green weeds, she brought them to church to lay across the altar. Suddenly, bright red flowers shaped like stars bloomed from these weeds.



What the young girl thought was a meaningless gift was a beautiful, colorful, celebration of Jesus's Birthday and therefore the Holiday Season. The star shape of the flower is even said to represent the star of Bethlehem, which is the star that led the Three Wise Men to Jesus' birth.

This plant is a beautiful reminder that the season is truly about giving, even the simplest of gifts have immense value to the receiver. There are so many gorgeous plants that represent the Holiday Season! At Bethany Farm and Nursery we have the perfect plants to help wish your loved ones a Happy Holiday. There are Poinsettias, Christmas Cacti, Dwarf Alberta Spruce's, Cyclamen, and European Evergreens. Some of these plants are dusted with snow, wrapped in foil, or covered in ornaments and topped with a bow! We have the perfect gift to give your Holiday Host or to bring some Christmas magic into your home. Happiest of Holidays from the Team at Bethany Farm and Nursery, thank you all for a wonderful year.

Special Holiday Break Creature Feature at the ANRC

Program Name: Holiday Break Creature Feature
Date: Wednesday, December 29, 2021
Location: Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center, 10 Deerfield Lane, Ansonia, CT 06401
Time: 12 pm
Cost: Free to Enter
Contact/Questions: 203-736-1053 or ansnaturectr@ansoniac.org
Join us for a Holiday Break Creature Feature. We will bring out just about every animal that inhabits the Nature Center's Visitor Center! Learn about our animal ambassadors, and how they help teach thousands of people per year about nature and conservation. You

never know who you'll see on this fun filled day! Come in, hang out, and visit our gift shop afterwards! This is a free program that is suitable for all ages. Donations are appreciated. Please email ansnaturectr@ansoniac.org to register. "Dedicated to creating a lifelong connection to nature." Our mission is to foster environmental stewardship that connects our communities to the natural world of the Lower Naugatuck River Valley, and balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation. Our 156-acre nature preserve is located at 10 Deerfield Lane, Ansonia, CT. For more information, visit ansnaturectr@ansoniac.org.



Local Dancers Performed In The Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade

Orange residents Molly Blair and Greta Pedenski from the Amity High School Dance Team are two of more than 600 high school cheerleaders and dancers from across the country that represented the camp brands of Varsity Spirit in the Varsity Spirit Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade in Honolulu, HI from December 4-8, 2021. The individuals invited to perform are part of a select group of cheerleaders and dancers chosen as All-Americans during Varsity Spirit summer camps across the country. All-Americans are selected via tryout based on either superior cheerleading or dance skills at camps operated by Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA), Universal Dance Association (UDA), National Cheerleaders Association (NCA), National Dance Alliance (NDA), United Spirit Association (USA) or Urban Cheerleading Experience (UCE). Only the top 10% of the cheerleaders and dancers from Varsity Spirit camps earn the chance to march in a holiday parade of this caliber. Greta and Molly performed with the Varsity Spirit All-Americans in an exclusive performance prior to the opening ceremony of the parade and then were a part of the parade before thousands of fans lining the streets of Waikiki Beach. This trip marks the 80th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The parade theme was "remembering the past and celebrating our future." We honor our veterans and their families while recognizing that once bitter enemies can become loyal friends and allies. Besides being able to perform for

true national heroes, athletes had the opportunity to meet cheerleaders and dancers from across that nation and enjoy a memorable trip to the Pearl Harbor Memorial and the USS Missouri Battleship. For more information, visit www.varsity.com or contact John Calitri at (800) 238-0286 or jcalitri@varsity.com. Memphis-based Varsity Spirit, the driving force behind cheerleading's dynamic transformation into the high-energy, athletic activity it is today, is the leading global source for all things spirit, including cheerleading, dance team and performing arts. A division of Varsity Brands, Varsity Spirit is a leader in uniform innovation, as well as educational camps, clinics and competitions, impacting more than a million athletes each year. Focused on safety, entertainment and traditional school leadership, Varsity Spirit's employees have been dedicated to celebrating spirit through its brands since 1974. For more information about Varsity Spirit or Varsity Brands, please visit varsity.com or varsitybrands.com. The Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade Committee has been commissioned to organize the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade, commemorating the anniversary of the invasion of Pearl Harbor each year on December 7th. The Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade is proclaimed by the Mayor of Honolulu as the "Official Public Event Marking the Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor". For more information about the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade, visit www.pearlharborparade.org.

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EDUCATION



2020-2021 CAS Scholar Leader Award Winners

Dr. Jason Tracy (Principal) and the AMSB community wishes congratulations to eighth grade students Kirby Perler (above) and Sophia Messina (missing from picture) who were selected by Amity Middle School Bethany to receive the 2020-2021 “Scholar-Leaders Award” sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). This award program is designed to recognize two students from each middle level school in Connecticut, who have distinguished herself/himself in scholarship and leadership in school and community.

Team Black nominates Kirby Perler for the CAS Scholar-Leader Award. Kirby is an outstanding academic student. His work and ethic are exemplary and he is a true leader in the classroom. Kirby demonstrates strong critical thinking skills in his academic work. He is a mature participant in his classes. He is a natural leader; students seek him out as a peer tutor and follow his lead in small group discussions. Kirby is also a committed athlete and spends his free time playing hockey and improving his game. He has traveled to Italy, Canada, and across the United States playing hockey. Next year, Kirby is looking forward to playing on the Mid Fairfield Hockey team. Kirby is

also a musician. He plays guitar and saxophone and participates in our school band. Kirby enjoys traveling and taking care of his three cats. Kirby is awesome.

The AMSB Gold Team nominates Sophia Messina as our CAS award winner. Sophia is a hard-working student who consistently puts forth her best effort in everything she does. Despite being a remote learner for the majority of the year, Sophia has been an active participant and is consistently engaged in all her classes. She received straight A's during her tenure at AMSB; her consistent work ethic and desire to learn have ensured that she truly understands and retains all material at a deeper level. Outside of school, Sophia has been a competitive swimmer with the Woodbridge Aquatic Club since fifth grade. Her commitment to her sport is evident as she has swim practices of up to 2 hours per day, 6 days per week. Furthermore, Sophia has taken on an active role in her household. With two frontline, healthcare professionals for parents, Sophia stepped up to assist her younger siblings with remote learning being both a student and “at home teacher” this year. Sophia is a wonderful young lady who embodies our Be AMITY motto.



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LOCAL BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Wareck D'Ostilio Real Estate Welcomes New Agents

John Wareck and Frank D'Ostilio, Jr., partners of Wareck D'Ostilio Real Estate take great pride in welcoming four Realtors to the company.

Richard P. Ballou

Ricky grew up in Woodbridge and attended Cornell University where he played varsity football. After graduation, Ricky went to work for a major national commercial broker, Marcus and Millichap, in Los Angeles for about 3 years. Ricky was named "Salesperson of the Month" twice within his first year as he was able to list \$20m worth of properties within his first seven months at the firm. He moved back to Connecticut and now lives in Southbury. Contact Ricky at 203-823-5509 or ricky.ballou@wdsells.com.



Robert Potter

Previously in the restaurant industry, he owned and operated several popular and successful establishments including Prime 16 in Orange, CT. A graduate from CCSU with a BA in Marketing, Bob is an experienced commercial real estate investor. A resident of Milford, his goal is to match investors with properties that meet their criteria while developing and expanding the relationships with investors. He can be reached at 203-494-6752 or robert.potter@wdsells.com.



Laura Hart

Originally from Stratford, Laura is a high school math teacher with a love and passion for real estate sales. She and her husband live in Woodbridge and have three grown children. She will work from the Woodbridge office at the Red Barn on Amity Road. Laura can be reached at 203-424-0785 or laura.hart@wdsells.com.



Amir Glenn

A resident of New Haven, Amir has been specializing in multi-families and rehab homes since 2017. The areas he covers are New Haven, Woodbridge, Hamden, West Haven, Cheshire, North Haven, Bridgeport, and Stratford. His passion for the industry focuses on helping people build generational wealth. Contact Amir at 203-507-3457 or amir.glenn@wdsells.com.



"We are delighted to have these fine Realtors affiliated with Wareck D'Ostilio Real Estate," said John Wareck, Partner/broker. "It is the combined efforts of all our agents that have enabled us to maintain a strong position. It is also what is nurturing our continued growth. Our upward movement, expansion into other markets and high presence is why Ricky, Bob, Laura and Amir joined our team," added Frank D'Ostilio, Jr., Partner.



Pictured L to R: Kelly King, Jennifer Brennan, Tahinee Sanchez

Much Kneaded Wellness Opens

Jennifer Brennan is the owner of Much Kneaded Wellness. She has been a massage therapist and reiki practitioner for 17 years and decided to expand her wellness center in January of 2020. Little did she know that when she signed the lease on a larger space for her massage business, it would be a week before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down everything. Brennan started Much Kneaded Wellness by renting a room from local chiropractor, Dr. Brian Hollander, on Hazel Terrace for five years. She wanted to grow and open a wellness center and she wanted to stay in Woodbridge where she had already built a reputation and felt that there was room for the wellness market to grow. A friend alerted her to 1,000 square feet of available space at 214 Amity Road. The pandemic was a scary time for

small business owners, let alone investing in and building a new space. "As a single mom trying to start a business, I had a minor meltdown when the pandemic hit," Brennan said. She took the opportunity to rebrand her business and prepare for the renovations. Thankfully, unemployment checks kept her afloat during the downturn. She was able to invest all of her stimulus checks to pay for her to create four treatment rooms to create the wellness center. Brennan utilizes one treatment room and rents out the other three. There are now 7 other women-owned businesses sharing the space. Most have full-time jobs and having a space at the wellness center makes it easier to start and grow their business. Brennan says she doesn't want clients to see her

See "Wellness Center" On Page 23

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HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS

The First Church of Christ, Woodbridge

The First Church of Christ welcomes you to our Worship Service every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. in the Meetinghouse

Zoom Option: The option to attend Sunday Service via Zoom is available for the time being. To receive an invite, please email the office or log on to our website and add your name to our church email list. All people in the community are welcome in person or via Zoom.



First Church of Christ Woodbridge

Live Stream: Sunday Service can be viewed on our website every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. A video recording of the live stream is featured for the entire week following the service. To view previous Sunday Services, visit our YouTube channel, using the link provided on all pages of our website. (Links, contact info, and a schedule of upcoming Services are listed at the bottom of this article.)

*If you would like assistance gaining access to Sunday Services, please call us by Friday morning, at 203-389-2119, or email us at office@uccw.org.

Office Hours: The Church office in the Parish House is open from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

Events Update: Our Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve Service will take place in the Meetinghouse at 5:00 p.m. on December 24th. Please join us for this annual FCCW holiday tradition. Visitors are always welcomed!

Weekly Bible Study: Bible Study meets at the Parish House each Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. All are invited!

Join the FCCW Choir! New members are always welcome. Join us for rehearsals Wednesdays at 6:30PM.

Boy Scout Troop #907: Regular scout meetings are held every Thursday, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish House. Stop by with the young man in your family (ages 11-17 years old) and meet our great scouts! New members are always welcome. For more information

go to www.troop907.org.

Sanctuary Décor Restoration: The John Canning Company has completed the Phase One sanctuary restoration. The scaffolding is removed, the organ reassembled and tuned, the Christmas decorations and poinsettias displayed, and normal church activities have resumed. Please attend a service and see the restored ceiling, rosette, cornices, and the north wall. The décor is glorious (Luke 2:14).

Pre-school space is available: Pre-school/day care space is available in the Parish House at 5 Meetinghouse Lane. Three rooms, 1,200 sq. ft., and an outside fenced playground.

For More Information: Visit our website at www.uccw.org for resources such as our calendar of events, monthly newsletter, ministry and volunteer opportunities, photo galleries, scout info, and much more! Follow us on Facebook and stay up-to-date with parish happenings, including memorials and baptism announcements.

Feel free to email us or call the office with all your questions. We are happy to hear from you!

FCCW Sunday Service Schedule		
Dec. 12 th	Rev. Karl Duetzmann	
Dec. 19 th	Rev. Janice Touloukian	
Christmas Eve Service		
Dec. 24 th at 5:00 p.m.		
	Lessons and Carols	
	Rev. Walter Pitman	
Dec. 26 th	Rev. Raquel Irizarry	

Congregation Or Shalom Happenings

Join Us For Weekly Services

Morning Minyan

- › Sunday 9:00 AM – Zoomed
- › Monday 8:30 AM – Zoomed
- › Thursday 8:30 AM – Zoomed

Shabbat Services

- › Friday 7:30 PM – Zoomed & in person
- › Saturday 9:30 AM – Zoomed & in person

(Please call the synagogue office at 203-799-2341 for more information).

Virtual Learning This Month

The Rabbi's Wednesday Morning "Coffee &.. Learn" Class: IN-PERSON & VIA ZOOM

11am-Noon

TOPIC: THE BIBLE'S TOP TEN MOST IMPORTANT VERSES

In this course, Rabbi Wainhaus will explore Judaism's most important ideological contributions to human civilization. The course is based on the idea that the essence of the Bible's message can be discovered in 10 key verses. All Welcome! Current masking and social distancing will be in place if you attend in person. Email coshalom@sbcglobal.net or call the synagogue office at 203-799-2341 to receive the ZOOM link.

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Congregation Or Shalom

geous summer night, and the mother who will never give up trying to find them. On a beautiful summer night in a charming English suburb, a young woman and her boyfriend disappear after partying at the massive country estate of a new college friend.

One year later, a writer moves into a cottage on the edge of the woods that borders the same estate. Known locally as the Dark Place, the dense forest is the writer's favorite area for long walks and it's on one such walk that she stumbles upon a mysterious note that simply reads, "DIG HERE."

Could this be a clue towards what has happened to the missing young couple? And what exactly is buried in this haunted ground? With her signature "rich, dark, and intricately twisted" (Ruth Ware, New York Times bestselling author) prose, Lisa Jewell has crafted a dazzling work of suspense that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the final page.

To receive the link to register in advance for the Book Discussion, please email the synagogue at coshalom@sbcglobal.net

Social Action

MITZVAH OF THE MONTH

Our monthly mitzvah for December is collecting blankets and socks. You can drop of these items off at the Synagogue

Sunday Mass: 5:00pm

Contact us: 203-795-5076

ourladyofsorrowsct@yahoo.com

Facebook: @OurLadyOfSorrowsTraditional

378 Spring St., Orange (off of Racebrook Rd)

Woodbridge Town News

ATTENTION CHURCHES, SYNAGOGUES, AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP!

Send us your organizations events listings and items of interest.

We will publish them for free.

Woodbridge Town News – P.O. Box 1126, Orange, CT 06477

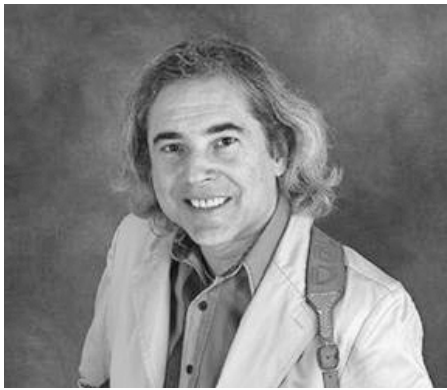
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HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS

Congregation Beth El – Keser Israel Events



Stacy Phillips

Bluegrass Music

The Bluegrass Characters Revue will present “A Tribute to Phil Zimmerman and Stacy Phillips” at BEKI on Thursday, December 23 at 7:30 pm. Also performing is Kol Kahol, a group of young musicians drawing inspiration from bluegrass musicians like Phillips, as well as contemporary Jewish bands such as the Klezmatics, the Moshav Band, and Nefesh Mountain.

When Phillips died in June 2018, his band, which had been called Stacy Phillips and His Bluegrass Characters, continued the tradition of this annual concert, led by Phillips’ longtime collaborator and bandmate Phil Zimmerman, but Zimmerman died in April 2021. This year’s performance by the remaining Characters will be a tribute to both Zimmerman and Phillips.

One of the members of Kol Kahol, violinist, bassist, and vocalist Sofia Chiarandini, was Phillips’ student and a veteran of the annual Bluegrass Characters concert. A classical as well as



bluegrass violinist, she is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music.

The doors to BEKI will open when the hall is ready for seating, around 7 pm. Masks are required for all audience members; no food or beverages will be allowed. There is no charge for admission, but the musicians will pass the hat.

Melodies for Prayer

Ethnomusicologist Rachel Adelstein will offer a 6-part program on Mondays at 8:00 pm, starting January 10, focusing on the origins and the evolution of tunes for Jewish prayers. Adelstein, who received her PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Chicago, regularly offers classes at BEKI about Jewish music. Tune in

for some or all of the sessions, provided with support from the Morris & Sara Oppenheim Fund for Sacred Music. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org.



Tu Bishvat Seder

BEKI will celebrate Tu Bishvat, the New Year for Trees, on Sunday, January 16 with a Zoom Seder from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. To fully participate, prepare a glass of wine or grape juice and a dish of three things that grow on trees, such as almonds, walnuts, cashews, oranges, apples, pears, or olives. The program will



offer songs, conversation, and videos to keep both adults and children engaged. This is one of BEKI’s Synagogue Vegan Challenge events, supported by Vegfund. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org.

Bruce Oren Art

The current exhibition in the BEKI galleries, “Entropy Warriors,” presents sculpture, photography and paintings by New Haven artist Bruce Oren. A direct carver of stone, Oren begins carving without preconception, maquette or plan, letting the stone initially dictate its form. After the stone is roughly carved, “the rock reveals its images hidden inside,” he explains. “It’s nothing cosmic. It’s like seeing shapes in clouds — a variety of natural gestalt closure.” Some of his work plays on one’s mind seeing figurative images in random or abstract shapes.



The community is welcome to participate in a conversation with the artist on Saturday, February 5 at 12:30 pm; Sabbath rules will be observed. The snow date is February 12. Oren’s art is on display until February 26. To arrange a time to visit the galleries, call the BEKI office at 203-389-2108 x114.

Located at 85 Harrison Street (corner of Whalley Avenue – Route 63 – in Westville)

Orange Congregational Church Events

Orange Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, invites you to join us at 205 Meeting House Lane in Orange for worship, or on YouTube at Orange Congregational Church, UCC for our livestreamed services. Our regular in-person Sunday worship is at 10:00 a.m. Christmas Eve worship will take place in-person on Friday, December 24, 2021 in our Sanctuary at 3pm & 5pm There will be intergenerational worship and at 10pm. We will have a traditional candlelight service with the choir singing. Registration in advance is requested to ensure room for all who wish to attend; please call 203-795-9749, email occhurch@snet.net, or visit our website at orangecongregational-church.org and fill out the attendance form. Masks are also required. The Christmas Eve 3pm & 10pm worship



Congregational Church

services will also be livestreamed for those at home.

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation, which means we welcome all people into the full life and leadership of the church regardless of race, class, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or family type. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Last-Minute Holiday Shopping Tips

Some people thrive by doing all of their tasks early. Others seem to do their best work when faced with a time crunch. The methods individuals use to manage their time at work and play may extend to the ways they approach holiday shopping as well.

There’s no right or wrong way to handle holiday shopping tasks, though Christmas Eve crowds at malls and throughout shopping districts suggest that there’s more late comers than there are early birds. The following tips can help those who typically wait until the last minute to check names off their lists.



Utilize free shipping services. Shoppers who shop for gifts online at the last minute run the risk of gifts not arriving on time. Many online retailers charge a premium for expedited shipping. Try to stick to shopping at online retailers that offer free shipping even in the eleventh hour.

Create a budget. When rushing around from store to store, it may be easy to spend more than you want to. Make a list of how much you want to spend on each person, and stick to that limit for each person. Move on to the next store if you didn’t find what you need in your price range.

Establish a time limit. Stores have strategies in place to keep shoppers in their establishments longer, hoping you’ll make impulse buys. These tricks include scenting the air with inviting

aromas, putting necessities at the rear of the store, failing to display the time, and putting discounted items by the registers or door to attract shoppers. Set an alarm on your watch or phone for each store so you get what you need and get out on time.

Subdivide bulk gifts. Think about purchasing bulk gifts like gift baskets from wholesale clubs and then breaking them down into individual gifts. This way you can gift several people on one purchase and save time in the process.

Choose one-size-fits-all gifts. Think about a gift that can be purchased for mul-

multiple people so you can save time shopping for individualized gifts for everyone. For example, print a personalized photo calendar for several members of your family. You also can purchase multiple subscriptions or memberships to zoos or magazines for people on your list. Streamlining gifting in this way may save money as well as time.

Choose in-store pickup. Rather than scouring various aisles, you can shop a retailer’s website and then pick up items in the store. You’ll save on potential shipping fees but still benefit by avoiding crowds.

Some people wait until the last minute to do their holiday shopping. A few tricks of the procrastinator’s trade can make last-minute shopping go smoothly.

“Letters” From Page 5

That’s why we’ve joined forces with Anheuser-Busch, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Uber in a first-of-its-kind industry coalition that is focused on ending drunk driving. In a new initiative called Decide To Ride, we are encouraging everyone to plan ahead for a safe ride home, before the celebrations even begin – because you can’t drive drunk if you don’t drive there.

For more than 35 years, Anheuser-Busch and its wholesaler partners have invested more than \$1 billion in responsible drinking initiatives and community-based programs to prevent underage drinking, impaired driving and other harmful uses of alcohol. At Dichello Distributors Inc., we’re proud to work alongside Anheuser-Busch to ensure that we keep our friends, families and neighbors safe by planning ahead for a safe ride home.

Cheers to a safe, happy and healthy holiday season!

Tony Lota
Alcohol Awareness Coordinator
Dichello Distributors, Inc.
Orange CT

Reasons Arbor Haven Proposal Should Be Rejected

~Woodbridge is the only town bordering New Haven that is not over developed.

~This unique feature and its rural feeling make Woodbridge a desirable place to live, increasing the value of residential homes.

~The Arbor Haven proposal would undermine what makes Woodbridge special and would drive down residential property values.

~This is merely one reason, among many others, why the Arbor Haven proposal should be rejected.

~Do not be blinded by the siren song of easy money; the Arbor Haven proposal is not good for the Town or for Woodbridge home owners.

Virginia and David Schneider

Get The Facts

The Earth is round. Climate change is occurring. JFK is dead.

These facts matter. Let’s get the facts before we decide what to believe about the best future for the Country Club of Woodbridge property.

A couple of years ago, as a member of the Board of Selectmen, I shared a paper with my board colleagues written by Thomas DiNapoli, the New York State Comptroller. Entitled “Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation,” this paper systematically explains, from the point of view of a finance expert, why open space is more financially beneficial to municipalities than residential development.

More recently, the Highstead Foundation of Redding, CT., published

“The Economic Case for Conservation.” Among many facts presented in this paper is a summary of 39 separate studies conducted across New England proving, again and again, that open space land provides financial benefit to towns and residential development creates a financial drain on towns.

Time and again, developers have come to Woodbridge claiming that housing at the CCW will be a financial boon for our town – this is equivalent to claiming that the earth is flat, that climate change is a hoax, and that JFK lives on. Surprisingly, some of the Selectmen seem to believe these “alternative” facts.

Preserving the CCW land as open space is a financially responsible decision based on facts. Do facts matter? They must.

Maria Kayne

CCW – What Are Our Selectmen Doing? – Once Again!

In the Woodbridge Town News edition of November 16, 2018 appeared a letter by me titled “Country Club of Woodbridge – What Are Our Selectmen Doing?” Most all of what I wrote about at that time is still true today with the misguided potential supported by the First Selectman, the town attorney and other Selectmen to develop the priceless open space at the Country Club of Woodbridge. I have also written about this being a recurring nightmare.

At the time, in the “Woodbridge News and Events” for November 2018 under November Planning and Updates, First Selectman Beth Heller wrote about the Former Country Club Property. She advised then that the Selectmen had received a new proposal for the former Country Club of Woodbridge (CCW) from the developer of Fieldstone Village of Orange. Now it is a new, unsolicited proposal from new developers interested in building approximately 145 homes on the property being touted by our First Selectman. If this were to go through it will create enormous challenges for our schools and town services in the years to come.

What follows is exactly what I wrote three years ago:

“Simply stated, we need leadership from our town leaders. It appears the Selectmen are awaiting anyone to send a proposal in to them as to what to do with the former CCW property. This is not leadership; this is management by incoming letter.

“I am on record in a previous Letter to the Editor, apparently ignored by our Selectmen, for the preservation of the open space of this very historically significant “crown jewel” property. Any zoning change for this property will have enormous follow-on consequences for other properties in town and

bring in housing much more clustered than our present 1½ acre zoning that our town leaders have had the vision to include in our residential zoning regulations for many years. It is due to this that Woodbridge, although significantly developed, has retained its unique character.

“I informed townspeople about the history of the property deeds for the former CCW and the history of this property. One-time owners included Captain John Beecher and Patriot & Statesman Roger Sherman. The Roger Sherman connection to the CCW property is that he owned that property as Clover Hill Farm during the time he served as mayor of New Haven.

“If you do not know who Roger Sherman was, or if you are not aware of the historical significance, I suggest you do your own assessment. It is easy, start with: <http://www.townhistory.org/clover-hill-farm/>. USA Founding Father Roger Sherman lived from 1721 to 1793 and is the only person to have signed all papers of independence of the United States: the Continental Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. He was an influential member of the Constitutional Convention and a true statesman. In 1784, he was the first mayor of New Haven.

“The former CCW property owner prior to Roger Sherman was Captain John Beecher, and his family’s presence on this property prior to the incorporation of the Town of Woodbridge takes us back as far as the founding of New Haven and the original Beecher family in America. (Think Beecher Road). If you don’t know of Captain John Beecher, he was an ancestor of Lyman Beecher and his daughter Harriet Beecher Stowe — and her siblings. The former CCW property was also owned at one time by James Hillhouse; there is so much more about these families in books and references on Woodbridge history.

“We have a very unique opportunity to save this property as was envisioned when the town purchased it and decisions made now will have for-ever consequences. Please recognize the history of this property, I argue it is the most historically significant location in our town.”

I continue to strongly recommend maintaining the open space of the former golf course, when developed, it will be gone for the public good and historical purposes forever. An RFP process should be constructed that invites proposals for:

1. Renovation/replacement of the country club catering/banquet facility for operation as a for-profit property tax-paying venture;
2. Renovation/replacement of the pool for townspeople summer use, there is no other outdoor town owned pool;

3. Create an open space/conservation easement or farmland preservation grant to guarantee operation of the former golf course as a farm; we need more local farms; or just provide for public access and outdoor enjoyment; and
4. Alternatively consider working with our legislators to create a state park for this parcel to teach our children about history!

As we know, town leaders have had issues managing the golf course facility under contract to an operating firm. Town leaders proved that they were unable to manage the golf course either by itself or under contract to a provider. We must preserve this critical parcel of open space; it is one of the most important opportunities we have at this time to leave a legacy to generations of townspeople to come.

Richard J. Forselius

Its Time to Undo the “Bad Deals”

Cathy Wick asserts the Arbor Haven Proposal will produce a large financial loss for the town. The Proposal – and Ms. Wick – persist in using average costs instead of marginal costs. That is, what is the cost of adding one more residence and family?

To determine this, we should look at the families that have moved into Woodbridge in recent years – say, five years – and see how many school-age children they had and have. For the same period, we can determine how many children attended Woodbridge schools, and what was the percentage of capacity use of our schools. With this information, we can begin to calculate the costs of an additional 153 students – or however many additional students we may reasonably expect over time. Similarly, we can estimate the marginal cost of police, library, roads, and general overhead to estimate “the additional cost of adding adult residents to the town” in Ms. Wick words.

If we “sharpen up our pencils” I am reasonably sure that the deficit projected by Ms. Wick is illusory. The sale of the land will enable the town to pay off the remaining debt associated with its purchase and have a substantial sum – perhaps \$5.5 million – left over to use for town capital projects. If the Board of Selectmen is interested in this Project, they should prepare the necessary calculations and present them to the voters, with a complete explanation of the assumptions underlying them.

It was a bad deal for the town when the WCC property was acquired, a bad deal when the town leased the property to a golf club operator, and a worse deal when the town tried to operate a golf course. It is past time to undo these “bad deals” and put the property to productive use for the benefit of the taxpayers of the town!

Hillel J. Auerbach

WOODBRIDGE LIBRARY

All information accurate at press time. Be sure to check our website woodbridgetownlibrary.org or call us before your visit for any changes to our hours or events.

LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Hours and Holiday Closings

The Library will be closed Friday, December 25; Saturday, December 26; Friday, December 31; and Saturday, January 1 for the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

Our weekly schedule is: Monday, 1-7 pm; Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 am-5 pm; Thursday, 10 am-7 pm; Saturday 10 am-5 pm.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Visit the Library website 24/7 to access digital resources - woodbridgetownlibrary.org

- What's available:
- › In-person browsing: come see all of the new books, audio-books, and DVDs;
 - › Computers: one hour per user; no appointment needed;
 - › Printing, copying, faxing, and scanning;
 - › Periodicals: recent newspapers, plus catch up on the past year's magazines;
 - › Reference help: including getting started/troubleshooting our digital library services (hoopla, Kanopy, Libby, Creativebug).

At this time, the Woodbridge Room is closed, however staff can retrieve items shelved there (magazines, poetry, plays, etc.). The study room is available for one-hour reservations; please call the reference desk to book your time. Seating throughout the Library is extremely limited and no puzzles or children's toys are in use.

Not ready to come inside? Call or email to place holds, ask questions, find out information, and more. Due to current staffing levels, you may need to leave a message if calling. Please leave a message, we WILL call you back!

Department phones



WOODBRIDGE TOWN LIBRARY



and emails

- › **Adult Services/Reference:** 203-389-3434; reference@woodbridgetownlibrary.org
 - › **Children's Department:** 203-389-3439; childrens@woodbridgetownlibrary.org
 - › **Circulation/General info:** 203-389-3433; circulation@woodbridgetownlibrary.org
- Not sure who you need? Email ask-us@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.

Socialize with us!

- › **Facebook:** [@woodbridge.town.library](https://www.facebook.com/woodbridge.town.library)
- › **Instagram:** [@woodbridgetownlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/woodbridgetownlibrary)
- › **TikTok:** [@woodbridge_town_library](https://www.tiktok.com/@woodbridge_town_library)

LIBRARY EVENTS

Art Exhibits are returning to the Library's Meeting Room in 2022! We will be featuring a different artist every month; stop by and check out these talented artists. Interested in having your artwork displayed? Fill out the form here: <https://woodbridge.lioninc.org/events/art-exhibits/>. Contact Kira Edic at kedic@woodbridgetownlibrary.org for more information.

FROM ADULT SERVICES

Ancestry at Home Ending - Ancestry has made the difficult decision to end remote access for Ancestry Library Edition at the end of 2021; the library will be deleting the link that enabled you to use the service from a non-library computer. Patrons are welcome to return to the library to access Ancestry Library Edition through our computers provided by the library or within the building with your own laptop, tablet, or mobile phone.

Adult Winter Reading is going to be chill this year! Read books and complete challenges to earn tickets between January 10 and February 28, which can then be exchanged for prizes. For more information, call or email the Reference Desk.

Mindless to Mindful Eating Makeover - January 20, 2022 at 7 pm - Are your eating habits weighing you down? Start the new year by learning about the stress eating cycle, personal triggers, and how to create a life with greater balance. You will leave this program with insight toward healthier behaviors and how to create goals for improved personal habits. Registration required; look on our website or call the Reference Desk.

Tech help is available to Wood-

bridge residents, including troubleshooting smartphones, tablets, and laptops; setting up an email account; learning to attach documents to emails; and more. Appointments are required. To book a half hour session with a librarian, please call or email the Reference Desk. (We can always answer quick tech questions on a walk-in basis, but to have one-on-one dedicated help, appointments must be made.)

FROM THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

Thursday Craft Time is now **Monday and Thursday Craft Time!** Two sessions will continue through the winter from 4 to 4:30 in the children's department. Suitable for ages 3+, online registration is required so that we have enough supplies for your children.

A new STEAM Take-Home Activity began December 13! Register to pick up a fun STEAM-themed activity kit at the children's desk! Kits will be available every other week until February. Online registration required. Suitable for ages 5+.

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The Friends give back! The Friends of the Woodbridge Town Library recently revived a long-time tradition of gifting books to families in need. The gift books were culled, cleaned and sorted into age categories from generous donations the Friends received from the public. They'll be given to families who have been identified by Woodbridge Human Services as in need. Thank you to everyone for your donations which made these gifts possible.

Think of the Friends for some of your gifting—we'll be making book pairing suggestions for you to help you get started! The Friends Bookstore Alley is open anytime the library is. We can't wait to see you!

You can also lend support by shopping on Amazon via Amazon Smile, and selecting Friends of the Woodbridge Library as your designated charity. The Friends also accept donations via PayPal.

"Wellness Center" From Page 18

because she is their only option but because they are the best fit to the way she practices massage and reiki.

Much Kneaded Wellness's new space officially opened in September of 2020, while Brennan continued to update the space up until now, which is now close to how she envisioned it. The rooms are relaxing with soft colors, plush rugs, comfortable furniture and bohemian touches. There is also a small space for local vendors who sell through Venmo. Businesses sharing the space in-

clude Tahinee Sanchez, LE Venus Holistic Esthetics; Nicole Sanchez, LMT -Oasis Healing Arts; Kelly King, LMT - Kelly King LMT; Shannon Preuss, LMT, LE - Transitions Massage and Skin-care; Amanda Grant, Mandy's Massage; Solmarie Santiago & Agosto-Polnett, Body Contouring - Solei Body Contouring Spa.

The practitioners all have different schedules, so although there is always activity the space never feels busy.

Brennan is a huge advocate of self-care and self-love. Through her massage and reiki practice she is able to create

an environment that encourages such. "Wellness is so needed right now. What better time than during a time when people are struggling? I love working with caregivers as clients" Brennan said. "I enjoy taking care of people who are taking care of others and holding space for them. It's so fulfilling to be able to help people improve their quality of life."

Much Kneaded Wellness offers deep tissue; Swedish; couples; craniosacral; couples; hot stone and prenatal massage; reiki; cupping; and localized chronic pain care plus waxing and fa-

cials. There are complimentary CBD applications with massages for those who want it.

Brennan specializes in deep tissue massage and pain relief, especially relieving neck pain.

Much Kneaded Wellness is currently offering a holiday special: Buy two hours of massage and get a third for free, to be redeemed after New Year's.

Much Kneaded Wellness is open Tuesday - Friday 10 am - 6 pm and Saturday 10 - 3 pm. Visit <https://www.muchkneadedwellness.com/> for more details.

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS



4-H Program Returns to Woodbridge

It all began when Joi Prud'homme and Enrene Van Tonder started the Woodbridge Gardens for Wildlife Facebook Group and were granted permission from the Board of Selectmen to establish an educational garden in the Community Gardens. While searching for curriculum they were looking for local 4-H programs and found that most were 30 minutes or more away. They quickly decided it made sense to become 4-H Volunteers to bring 4-H programming back to Woodbridge. Over the years, Woodbridge has had 4-H Programs for poultry, gardening and various other focus areas but those programs faded away due to lack of available volunteers.

For more than 100 years, 4H has been the nation's leading youth organization giving youth voice to express who they are and how they make their lives and communities better. The 4-H Youth Development Program welcomes young people of all beliefs, abilities and backgrounds, empowering them with skills to lead for a lifetime and uses a learn-by-doing approach to help them develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world. This is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of caring adults. Youth can join 4-H and take part in 4-H clubs, special interest programs, educational programs, camps, animal and other shows and public speaking programs. All 4-H clubs are led by screened, trained 4-H adult volunteers.

The first meeting for the Woodbridge 4-H Club of the 2021-2022 Year was held on October 23rd in the garden plot that was generously allocated by the Woodbridge Community Gardens and the Board of Selectmen. This plot was unused for a significant period of time and lots of debris had to be removed before it was safe for the kids to work in the space. While

there is still much work to be done, the first "seeds" have been planted for the upcoming spring gardening season! The plot has an outdoor classroom space to safely hold meetings and the 4-Hers will be creating a Sustainability and Wildlife Garden. Currently the Club is for Grades 4-6 and limited to 10 children. We would love to expand to other age groups, but will need additional leaders. This is due to the fact that the curriculum is age based, and Youth to Leader Ratio limitations. We would gladly walk any adults interested through the process and give information on what the commitment entails. We are also happy to discuss how the club can accommodate other projects youth would like to explore, like dog training, animal care, science, creative arts, robotics, etc.

This year our core club project will be Sustainability and Wildlife Conscious Gardening. Some of the things we will do include:

- › Go on trail hikes;
- › Meet with Master Gardeners;
- › Learn about composting and vermicomposting;
- › Do Nature Crafts;
- › Sow native seeds;
- › Design a wildlife garden;
- › Work on getting Woodbridge on the Pollinator Pathway;
- › Grow vegetables and flowers with the option of taking products to 4-H Fair in 2022.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Joi Prud'homme at seasidejoi@outlook.com or Enrene van Tonder at vantonder77@gmail.com.

Registration is first come-first served. A wait list will be established. After 2 absences the slot will be filled from the wait list. We can add additional ages based on availability of more volunteer leaders. UConn Extension 4-H is an equal opportunity employer and program provider.

Historical Societies to Participate in Collections Assessment

The Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society announces that it is one of 98 institutions in the United States, and one of only three in Connecticut, selected to participate in the Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program. CAP helps museums improve the care of their collections by providing support for a general conservation assessment of the museum's collections and buildings. The museum will work with a team of preservation professionals to identify preventive conservation priorities. The final assessment report will help the museum prioritize its collections care efforts in the coming years.

"We are very excited to receive a CAP program award which rarely go to all-volunteer organizations. This program will help to transform both our organization and our museum by providing us with expert guidance to facilitate better preservation of our collections, an important component of fulfilling our mission" says Alexia Belperron, President of the Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society.

The CAP program is administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation through a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society is located at 1907 Litchfield Turnpike. Learn more at woodbridge-history.org.

The Foundation for Advancement in Conservation saves cultural heritage for future generations, protecting it from decay and destruction. Learn more about FAIC at www.culturalheritage.org/foundation.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Community Council Announces Winter Events

The Woodbridge ad hoc Community Council invites residents to get outside and be social this winter. The Community Council will host two outdoor events at Fitzgerald Tract and a New Resident Meetup.

On Saturday, December 18 the Community Council will partner with the Library Children's Department for a full moon lantern walk. The walk will leave from the parking lot at 5 pm and will follow the main path. Lanterns (or flashlights) are encouraged.

Due to the increase in positive COVID-19 cases, the Library's craft event will no longer be in person. Instead, families can stop by the children's department anytime between Monday, December 13 and Saturday, December 18 to pick up a lantern craft kit. No registration required, one kit per person.

On Saturday, February 5 the Community Council will host a stargazing event at the Fitzgerald Tract at 7 pm. Participants will meet in the parking lot and walk to the viewing location as a group. Lanterns and flashlights

strongly encouraged. A few telescopes will be available; residents are encouraged to bring one to share if available. Local astronomy enthusiast Harvey Kliman will guide the viewing.

Poor weather may cancel either outdoor event. RSVP to byagla@woodbridged.org to be notified of cancellations.

The Community Council also invites all new residents to a virtual welcome meet-up on Friday, February 4 at 9 a.m. The link will be available soon on the Town's online calendar, www.woodbridged.org/calendar.

"We know it takes a while for people to feel part of a new community, and we'd like to help ease that transition," says Community Council chair Debbie Brander. "It must be especially hard during a pandemic and we hope these events will help new and new-ish residents feel more connected to Woodbridge."

Attendees will get answers to their questions and meet other new residents. RSVP to Betsy Yagla at byagla@woodbridged.org.

RESERVE YOUR AD SPACE TODAY. CALL US AT 203-298-4399.

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS



Dog Park Begins 3rd Year of Operations

Boasts Growing Membership and New Board of Directors

The Woodbridge Dog Park Cooperative (WDPC) celebrated two years of successful operations at its annual meeting December 2. Under provisions of a formal agreement with the Town, the dog park is open daily on the Fitzgerald Tract - often referred to as the cornfield - where there used to be an asphalt pad and seasonal skating rink. WDPC operations and finances are completely independent from town government; its third year begins with a new board of directors, new officers of that board, and expanding membership. The WDPC now has well over 100 member families.

"The availability of a dedicated, fenced-in park has quickly proven very popular among residents - both human and canine - as it just happened to open a few months prior to pandemic restrictions and concerns," newly elected board president Mary Beth Womer said. "This outdoor facility, meant to provide an exercise and social outlet for dogs, also wound up providing a valued opportunity for dog owners to congregate. It has rapidly become a favorite destination these past couple of years where a community within the community has formed."

The extraordinary contributions of several longstanding WDPC board members were acknowledged at the annual meeting. Bonnie Blake, Car-

ole LaMotte, Carole Abbate, and Beck Swanson cycled off the most recent board after years of dedicated service. The efforts of founding board members Deena Myers, Ramie Ackley, Bonnie Blake, and Michelle Ditzian were also praised as was their successful work to get the dog park planned, approved, funded, built, and operational.

"Each week literally scores of dogs and dog owners have the vision, dedication, and perseverance of these founders and early board members to thank for a chance to stretch their legs, breathe fresh air, and make new friends," Womer said. "All these WDPC pioneers can now retire from the board satisfied and gratified that their sustained efforts are appreciated, and that the legacy they leave for our new board is a clean, well-run, and financially sound community resource."

Other new officers of the WDPC, Karin King, vice-president, Jessica Hoffman, secretary, and Joe Giulietti, treasurer were introduced at the annual meeting, as were new, at-large board members: Melissa Federico, Jeanette Glicksman, Nicole Graas, Laurence Grotheer, Jack Nork, Ben Silvert, and John Womer.

Those who seek additional information about the WDPC are encouraged to visit its website at www.woodbridgedogpark.org or send an inquiry to woodbridgedogpark@gmail.com.



Classic Holiday Films Families Can Enjoy Together

The holiday season is steeped in tradition. Few traditions may elicit more collective belly laughs than holiday movie night, a tradition in millions of households across the globe. Families can consider these classic holiday films as they plan family movie night this holiday season.

"Miracle on 34th Street" (1947): This classic is centered around a man named "Kris Kringle" (Edmund Gwenn) who claims to be the real Santa Claus after a successful stint as a department store Santa in midtown Manhattan. A trial to determine if Mr. Kringle is telling the truth soon follows. This version of the tale has earned a 96 percent rating on the popular film review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.

"A Christmas Story" (1983): Though it airs all day long on Christmas on the cable television network TBS, families can get a head-start on that marathon and watch the film uninterrupted whenever they choose. Families can laugh together as 9-year-old Ralphie (Peter Billingsley) hopes to unwrap his official Red Ryder BB gun on Christmas morning. The film, which boasts an 89 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, includes a memorable performance by Darren McGavin, who plays Ralphie's father.

"Babes In Toyland" (1934): Also known as "March of the Wooden Soldiers," this nearly century-old classic stars the legendary comedy duo Laurel and Hardy as two helpful tenants liv-

ing in Mother Peep's shoe in Toyland.

"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (1967): An animated version of the Dr. Seuss classic, this film has entertained scores of children since it was first released more than 50 years ago.

"Holiday Inn" (1942): Hollywood legends Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire star in this classic that is perhaps most remembered for introducing the Irving Berlin class "White Christmas" to the masses. The film boasts a 100 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes and has something for fans of song, dance and romance.

"Arthur Christmas" (2011): Not all Christmas films date back to the 20th century. This animated tale tells the story of Arthur (voiced by James McAvoy), Santa's youngest son who is thrust into the Christmas Eve business of delivering presents when his father fails to deliver a present to one child out of the hundreds of millions of kids on his list.

"A Christmas Carol" (1951): Many holiday season celebrants cannot imagine letting a season go by without watching at least one adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale. The 1951 version is widely considered the most faithful to Dickens' 1843 novella that recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Alastair Sim stars as Scrooge, and many consider his performance the best of any actor to take a turn as the notorious 19th century miser.



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All in the Family

With the holiday season upon us there may be many plans of traveling to relatives homes...or maybe not if multiple family members already live under the same roof. Several generations living under the same roof once was the norm in America. A variety of social and economic factors have led an increasing number of families to once again live together under the same roof. What's the best way to structure the arrangement legally?

Issues to consider:

- Who legally owns the house as reflected on the Deed?
- Who paid for the house, when, and how much?
- Who will pay for the real estate taxes, insurance, utilities, and general maintenance?
- Who makes decisions when "big" repairs, such as an addition, new roof, driveway repair, replacing mechanicals, etc, are necessary?
- Who will pay for "big" repairs or improvements to the house?
- Who will claim the income tax deductions?
- What will happen if someone in the older generation requires long-term care in the home or out of the home?
- What happens if everyone no longer is happy living together?
- Who makes decisions related to when and how to sell the home?

Addressing these issues in writing is important. Here are a few ways to do so:

- Contract signed by all owners and residents of the home
- Personal Care Agreement

If you are in a joint living arrangement or are thinking of entering into one please contact the office. We can help you create a legal structure that responds to your unique family dynamic and reflects your family story. We would be glad to meet with you for a no hassle, no charge initial consultation, no matter how long it lasts.



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HEALTH & FITNESS

Hip Flexor Tightness and Why It Is Killing Your Low Back

By KYLE BRANDAY MSPT

All of us have woken up from a long night's sleep with that nagging pain through your lower back. We pull our knees to our chest...no relief. We try and rotate our lumbar spine hoping for our pain to reduce...nothing. Maybe it's that pesky piriformis muscle we all keep hearing about. But none of this is alleviating the pain we are having.

What if that pain is stemming from a place very few of people associate with lower back pain? We need to look outside the box in order to track down the illusive nature of our pain. Enter the iliopsoas muscle, better known as the hip flexor. The iliopsoas runs from the front of our lumbar spine and hip bone to the front and top of our femur. This muscle being tight and bound down not only pulls our hip bone forward, but also pulls our lumbar spine into a hyperextended position increasing the joint pressure. Hence that nagging low back pain we just can't shake.

Pulling our knees to our chest or opening the rotation of our spine will have little to no effect on pain generated from this type of restriction. Think about the amount of time we spend these days sitting at our desk, in front of our computer, tablet, or cell phone. Our hips are naturally flexed, putting the hip flexor in a shortened position, allowing it to tighten down and put this tremendous amount of pressure on our spine. We have all heard or been told that changing positions during the day to stand up and get out of our chair will help to prevent soreness, stiffness, and back pain. Well, there is obviously a method to the madness here. By standing upright we are taking that hip flexor and putting it back onto a more normal, elongated position.

Cranking on our lower back to stretch out or performing only stability exercises such as pelvic tilts, crunches, or bridges can help out some aspects of lower back pain, but if you are not assessing your hip flexor mobility you could be missing the boat to fixing this problem. Core stabilization is a very



Kyle Branday MSPT

important part of treatment and will assist with maintain decompression for the long term, but only if you are concomitantly working to elongate tight and restricted soft tissues. One of the best exercises to stretch the hip flexor is the half kneeling hip flexor stretch. To perform simply attain a half kneeling position with the side to be stretched oriented directly under your trunk with the thigh pointed straight to the floor. The other leg should be bent up to a 90-degree position at the hip and knee. Next, slowly transfer your trunk forward onto the forward leg, allowing the kneeling leg to stretch rearward as shown in the image above. The stretch should be felt through the front of the hip and thigh.

Given that spine pain can have a wide variety of origin, you should seek out consultation from a trained and highly skilled physical therapist to assess and determine the direct cause of your pain. With physical therapists no longer needing a doctor's referral to begin treatment since the enactment of the Direct Access act in 2006, seeing your PT is a great place to start.

Kyle Branday, MSPT is a physical therapist at Amity Physical Therapy with locations in Woodbridge, Hamden, Branford and Milford. To set an appointment he can be contacted at (203) 389-4593; www.amitypt.com.



ARTS & LEISURE

Massaro Farm, Griffin Health to Offer Free CSA Shares

Massaro Community Farm announced that it has enrolled 12 participants in a free fall vegetable subscription program in partnership with Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, located at Griffin Hospital (PRC). The primary intent of this pilot program is to evaluate a fresh vegetable (CSA) share for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants living in the lower Naugatuck Valley. Together, the farm and the hospital will evaluate participant perspective of a SNAP-supported CSA share with the intention to inform a larger study that will offer a full-season SNAP-supported CSA share.

Participants will visit the farm weekly for several weeks and receive a selection of fall items such as kale, carrots, fennel, kohlrabi, lettuce, winter squash and eggs. They'll also receive information about the farm, the vegetables and suggested ways to prepare items that may be unfamiliar to them.

Massaro and the PRC hope that results from this pilot will be used to design nutrition education programs through existing Federally funded programs (SNAP-Ed or EFNEP). Such work also ties to the farm's oversight of 12 community gardens across the Naugatuck Valley towns of Ansonia, Seymour, Shelton, Seymour and Oxford. These gardens broaden community access to fresh vegetables.

Massaro Community Farm donates at least 10% of its harvest all season long to nearby hunger relief agencies. In 2021, the farm began accepting EBT as payment for vegetables, jarred

products, eggs and honey. This partnership with the PRC is an example of the farm's commitment to making healthy food affordable and accessible.

"I feel confident that providing fresh vegetables and being able to collect measurable health impact data from SNAP participants will show that people will choose to eat healthier when they can," said executive director Caty Poole. "The end result will be a healthier community overall."

Registration for the farm's 2022 CSA season is now open. The farm is offering a tiered pricing structure for subscriptions in order to make the CSA accessible at various price points. Fruit and egg shares are available as add-ons, and you can choose to pick up at the farm, or at District in New Haven. At the farm, you can take advantage of u-pick crops like cherry tomatoes, peas, green beans, flowers and herbs, when available.

Massaro Community Farm is a non-profit, certified organic community farm on 57 acres of land whose mission is to keep farming, feed people, and build community. In addition to growing vegetables for seasonal subscribers, the farm donates thousands of pounds each year to hunger relief. The farm serves as a hub of education for all ages and shares its space with the community. The farm's nature trail is open to the public 365 days a year. For more information, visit our website at www.MassaroFarm.org or contact Executive Director Caty Poole at 203-736-8618 or at caty@massarofarm.org.



Selectmen Lober, Vogel and Crisco attend a special meeting called by the Republican minority to discuss the Arbor Haven proposal. This was the only in-person meeting of the board in the Town Hall meeting room before spiking infections caused the town to revert to virtual meetings. Selectmen Heller, McCreven and Kuriakose were not in attendance.

“Pause” From Page 1

Heller emphasized that she is not looking to hire a land consultant rather than a planning consultant, who could help the town not only come to a consensus on how best to use the land of the Country Club, but also achieve a business model for the commercial district, and finally, come up with a recommendation to the selectmen that will show a way forward.

"I believe it's in the best interest of the town to hold off...with any proposal at this time," she said. She hopes that the right person will assist the Board of Selectmen to develop a comprehensive plan that residents can support. "This is a proactive way for us to determine the future for our town."

Selectman David Lober, who has spoken out against the Arbor Haven proposal, seemed skeptical. "I have no objection to hiring a consultant," he said, adding that he and the Republican ticket have been asking for a consultant for a long time. However, he also cautioned that consultants generally "will give you the answer you hire him to give you," he said. "Give him or her all criteria," he said, "do not just come back with residential development."

And while they agreed on the need for a planner, Lober and Heller soon clashed again over the question whether a housing development will create an income stream for the town.

Heller thought Arbor Haven presented a very good proposal, which satisfies many of the town's concerns, she said — namely revenue, diverse housing and significant open space.

But Lober, who rejects the notion that the town will see any profit from the development, given costs for services and schools, thinks the developer is using numbers that are not rooted in reality. "We have to stop promulgating this fiction that we will get money from this property," he said. "The numbers just don't work."

"I believe what I believe and you be-

lieve what you believe, and Welcome to America," retorted Heller.

"I work with facts," Lober said.

Special meeting: The split on the Board of Selectmen was most palpable the week before, when Selectmen David Lober and David Vogel had called a special meeting of the board, which took place on November 30, specifically to discuss the Arbor Haven proposal.

This was the first — and last — in-person meeting in Town Hall, given new spikes in Covid infections. Neither the first selectman, nor selectmen Sheila McCreven or Paul Kuriakose attended. Of the Democratic ticket, only Selectman Joseph Crisco was present. He did not comment on the remarks made by his Republican colleagues, but he did say he respected their action.

McCreven said she couldn't rearrange her schedule on short notice, as the meeting had been posted the day before Thanksgiving.

The meeting was recorded and posted on WGAT, but it is unclear whether minutes were taken; there are none on the town's website.

Vogel spoke first and criticized the administration for pausing the requested RFP while advancing the Arbor Haven proposal.

Lober meanwhile quoted at length from a letter that members of the Conservation Commission were working on, expressing their wide-ranging concerns about the proposed development.

Heller said although the letter was directed at the Board of Selectmen, only Lober had seen it. He is the Board of Selectmen's liaison to the Board of Conservation.

Heller's subsequent suggestion to hit the pause button on all fronts seemed to respond to the criticism. "I believe it's in the best interest of the town to hold off for now with a special town meeting for approval of any proposal at this time," she said. "My hope is this will help make sense of all these ideas...and will assist the Board of Selectmen to develop a comprehensive plan that residents can support."

LOCAL SPORTS

Petrov Headed to Junior Olympics

Woodbridge resident Nikhil Petrov, age 14, recently qualified for the 2022 Junior Olympics Fencing Championships in Utah. He fences epee at Rogue

Fencing Academy in Woodbridge. The Junior Olympics is scheduled to take place February 18-21, 2022 in Salt Lake City, Utah.



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Woodbridge Town News

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Tips For Traveling With Gifts In Tow

"There's no place like home for the holidays." The popular Christmas tune says it best, and millions of people support that notion every year by heading back to their hometowns to spend the holidays with friends and family.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics points out that the Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Year's holiday periods are some of the busiest times for long-distance travel. Around Thanksgiving, the number of trips to and from a destination 50 miles or more away increases by 54 percent. During the December holiday period, the number rises by 23 percent.

When traveling for the holidays, suitcases and other baggage tends to be filled with gifts, decorations and other items like food. Packing for travel can become a little more complicated during this time of year. But these suggestions can help ensure holiday items make it there and back relatively easily.

airlines charge fees for extra baggage, which can quickly add up with bulky holiday gifts. Instead, ship gifts to their destination, trying to plan accordingly so that someone will be there to receive them when they arrive. Pick a shipping rate that fits your budget.

Make a "small gift" pact
Speak with family members and agree to a set gift size (and/or dollar value). A theme, such as limiting gifts to gift cards, perfume/cologne or food, can make this more manageable. Try to avoid delicate items which can break during transit. Small gifts are easily stashed in luggage or boxes to bring home, saving everyone a little stress.

Remove packaging and wrapping
While they may not look as pristine as carefully wrapped boxes, wrap soft clothing items right in wrapping paper or tissue paper to save on space so gifts will take up less space. On the return trip home, break down clothing boxes and remove toys from their cardboard and plastic packaging to make them easier to transport.

Bring along an empty piece of luggage
Much like on vacation, you'll probably return home with a few more items than you arrived with during the holidays. Plan ahead with an empty piece of luggage for stowing the new gifts. Nest soft or foldable items into other gifts to save on space. Shirts rolled into shoes can save significant space.

Millions of people travel for the holidays. A plan to get gifts to and from can make trips go smoothly.

Wrap them there

One way to preserve the integrity of holiday gifts and ensure they look attractive rather than crushed or ripped is to wrap items when you arrive. Build extra time into holiday travel so that you arrive a day or two early. Seek out a quiet spot and get your wrapping done.

Ship them there or back


Depending on your mode of travel, there may be limited cargo space in the trunk or back of the SUV. Also, if you're taking a long road trip that involves rest stops or even staying over at a hotel, gifts left in a vehicle may attract the attention of thieves. Lugging them into the hotel may not be practical, either. In addition, many

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE LEGAL NOTICE

Woodbridge Republican Town Committee Caucus

Notice is hereby given that there will be a caucus of all **enrolled Republicans electors** of the Town of Woodbridge on **Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Cafeteria of the Orange Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road, Orange, CT to revise our By-Laws and endorse candidates for the Woodbridge Republican Town Committee. Call (203) 376-2309 for more information.

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WEDDINGS & ENGAGEMENTS



Payne, Percy Wed

The marriage of Miss Katharine Colonna Payne, daughter of David Robert Payne and Sally Wool Pearson to Dr. Andrew Percy, son of Craig Percy and the late Jayne Percy of Westlake Village, CA (formerly of Woodbridge) took place on Saturday, November 6, 2021 at the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, VA. Dr. Robert Horton of Jonesville, VA officiated.

Katharine is the granddaughter of Roberta Holt Curtis and the late Joseph Craig Wool Jr. and Mrs. Sheila Payne and the late Dr. Charles Franklin Payne of Virginia Beach, VA. Andrew is the grandson of John and Jane Percy of Westfield, NJ and Gerard and Judy Kornblum of Bellmore, NY.

Following the ceremony, the bride's parents hosted a reception at the Tredegar Iron Works. The groom's father

hosted a brunch at the Kent -Valentine House in Richmond, VA the day after the wedding.

The bride is a graduate of King William High School and North Carolina State University, and she received her Masters Degree from Johns Hopkins University in Environmental Science and Policy. She is currently Account Manager at Solenis Corporation. The groom is a graduate of Amity High School and Bates College. He received his medical degree from VCU School of Medicine in Richmond, VA, after which he completed his pediatrics residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and he is currently a pediatric critical care fellow at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The couple resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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