

Woodbridge Town News



Woodbridge's Exclusive Newspaper

Mailed Free To Every Home in Woodbridge
Mailed Free To Every Home & Business in Woodbridge & Bethany

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CIRCULATION 3654

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023



Gerry Shaw To Retire

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT WILL BE FETED
WITH A RECEPTION AT TOWN HALL

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The town will mark the upcoming retirement of long-time Executive Assistant Geraldine Shaw with a farewell drop-in reception on Wednesday, December 20, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the town hall. January 2 will be her last day in the office, 48 years, 6 months and two days after she first started at the Town Hall on July 1, 1975.

"We wish her well on her next adventure, and thank her for sharing her wisdom, expertise and good humor these past 48 years," reads the invitation on Facebook. The invitation is for all who knew her as the liaison to their local government.

"I was hired to work as the assistant to the town's accountant," she remembered when we sat down to talk about the past 48 years. But pretty

soon then-First Selectman Russ Stoddard hired her to assist him in his office, and from there she served seven first selectmen, namely Russ Stoddard, Nan Birdwhistell, Roger Harrison, Amey Marrella, Ed Sheehy, Ellen Scalettar, and Beth Heller.

"I love the job, I love the people, she said. But with a new administration starting at Town Hall this year, she felt it was a good time to move on. It will give her time to travel and visit great-grandchildren, and to enjoy her hobbies – mainly road trips to nurseries far and wide; embroidery and volunteering for her church in Bethany.

Her seat behind the big counter at the heart of the Town Hall has a direct view down the hallway; that's where

See "Shaw" On Page 9



Water Wheel – Elan and Ari in Tim Rourke's 5th grade used their iPads to develop a water wheel to clean up our rivers. The paddles pick up water which filters through before it drips back into the river.

Beecher Named Apple Distinguished School

Beecher School Recognized for Its Use of Technology

BY BETTINA THIEL

WOODBIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Beecher Road School recently was named an Apple Distinguished School, a recognition by the Apple company for schools that are making exemplary use of technology in teaching and learning. Only two programs in Connecticut have earned that distinction, the Stowe Early Learning Center in Enfield and Beecher Road School.

"This room is filled with creative thinkers," declared School Supt. Vonda Tencza at a celebratory assembly November 21 in the South Gym. Students were outfitted with streams in blue and silver, and punched blue bal-

loons through the large space, and delighted in confetti cannons popped by Principal Analisa Sherman. There was no doubt that this was a special celebration.

Guests of honor included representatives of the company, Norma Jean Loftus and Devin McLaughlin; also members of the Board of Education, and retired technology teacher Rick Wood, who was greeted by many teachers with a hug. "Mr. Wood was my technology teacher in 4th, 5th and 6th grade," announced technology specialists Jeanne Ciarleglio, who, along

See "School" On Page 17

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Leave the Leaves; Nurture the Nature.

BY ANDREW DANZIG,
WOODBRIDGE TRAILMASTER

Fall is a wonderful time to enjoy the changing color of the leaves, the quiet and the denizens of the woods, such as deer, turkeys, and other birds. The beauty, serenity and benefits of wild spaces can also be cultivated at home if our landscapes mimic the natural processes of native trees and shrubs. Along with the beauty, autumn brings the burden of what to do with all the fallen leaves. The tranquility of the season is disrupted by the roar of leaf

blowers as they remove every last leaf from the monoculture that is the typical suburban lawn. Fortunately, leaves do not need to be a burden, but can be treated as a useful resource.

By being mindful of the purpose of fallen leaves in nature, you can easily create meaningful habitat, that is, space that provides food and shelter for many beneficial animals and plants, outside your own home, regardless of lot size. Remember, pine needles

See "Leaves" On Page 9



34 Hemlock Hollow Road
SOLD! ~ \$600,000



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62 North Racebrook Road
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37 Spoke Drive
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2023-2024

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From the First Selectman

BY BETH HELLER

I extend the warmest of wishes to each of you this holiday season. I'm so grateful to all our generous neighbors who supported the Human Services Holiday Basket program providing tangible holiday spirit to our neighbors in need. It truly does take a village. May your holidays be cheerful and memorable, and may your new year be full of peace and joy.

This is my last column for the Woodbridge Town News. I've enjoyed sharing news from the First Selectman's Office including information about many projects, programs, challenges, and successes. I've tried to bring you up to date, with full transparency, throughout my six plus years as your First Selectman. I have loved serving this Town and am so grateful for the opportunity you have provided me.

Congratulations to the elected members of the new Board of Selectmen. I know you had a very busy fall with your campaigns, and now the work begins! I am confident that I pass Town governance into capable hands. First Selectman-elect Mica Cardozo has shown us he has the dedication and the energy necessary for the job. I look forward to a fresh approach from a new team for continuing success in Woodbridge.

I am passing the torch onto the newly elected Board of Selectmen and a new Board of Finance that will oversee the FY25 budget process. Please remember that all residents have a voice; Operating and Capital Budget presentations will be held in January and February, and then discussions will begin. Residents are encouraged to ask any budget questions, or make suggestions to boards and commissions, or department heads. Budget meetings can be watched live on

Channel 79 and the WGATV YouTube page. Videos of meetings that have occurred can be found as recorded written minutes on the Town website, and on YouTube.

I remind everyone that education expenses take 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 join us on Wednesday, December 20 as we wish good luck to Executive Assistant Gerry Shaw on her retirement. Stop by between 10 am and 2 pm in the main meeting room at Town Hall to wish her well on her next adventure, and thank her for sharing her wisdom, her expertise, and her good humor over the past 48 years. She has consistently been the go-to person for seven first selectmen, countless town employees, and too many residents to count. If you cannot attend the farewell gathering, we're collecting best wishes and shared memories into a 'Happy Retirement Keepsake Message Book'. Please email your kind thoughts and well-wishes to bheller@woodbridgett.org to be compiled into a lovely book for Gerry. All submissions should be made no later than Monday, December 18th.

I fondly say farewell and thank you to a terrific Town staff. While it is time for me to begin a new journey, I want to thank all of my extraordinary colleagues here in Town government. Your dedication and teamwork have inspired me. Though leaving is bittersweet, I'm grateful for the meaningful work we have accomplished together.



Amity Contract Seeks to Attract New Teachers

BY BETTINA THIEL
WOODBIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

In an effort to stem the tide of teachers leaving the district and to support teacher retention, the Amity Board of Education and the Teachers Union have agreed to an unprecedented 13.5% salary increase spread over the next three school years. "Both the administration team and the Board of Education are in support of a teacher's contract that both attracts new teachers to the district to fill vacancies and supports teacher retention to limit the disruption of education to our students," wrote Amity Supt. Dr. Jennifer Byars in an email. The contract will cover the years starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2027.

Many industries have seen large turnover rates in the wake of the pandemic, but teacher burnout, in particular, has been in the headlines nation-wide and led to pockets of shortages.

Amity has seen its share of teachers leaving, some choosing to retire and others leaving to join higher-paying districts or to leave the profession altogether. Amity Education Association (AEA) President Patrick Cumpstone said since the beginning of the Covid pandemic in 2020, some 56 teachers had left the district. That figure represents about 25% of the faculty, according to Cumpstone. His union represents 227 teachers spread among the high school and two middle schools.

This level of turnover is unusual for the Amity district, especially given it occurred partly during the school year. For the teachers who are staying that often means taking on more responsibility to cover for colleagues until new hires can take over. But filling openings takes time. Seeing long-time colleagues move on also takes an emotional toll. Moreover, the turnover has an impact on students, academically and emotionally, especially when it occurs during the school year.

The focus during the negotiations this year was on wages, Cumpstone said. Even so, the 13.5% increase does not mean that all teachers will walk away with a 13.5% wage increase. It is an overall number that describes a web of working conditions and remuneration which rewards longevity and academic advancement, but seeks to make it easier for new hires to build a career at Amity.

The contract reduces the step scale – which increases the salary each year a teacher is at Amity – from currently 13 steps to 12, which allows them to reach the top faster, Cumpstone said. It also cuts steps 1, 2 and 3, thereby creating a starting salary of over \$60,000 for a candidate with a Master's degree. Step increases themselves make up almost 7% of the wage increase, without add-

ing in the general wage increase. A major benefit for young families is that starting in July 2024 the contract will allow those expecting to grow their family – either by birth or by adoption – to add accrued sick time when on approved Family Medical Leave. It means up to 12 weeks of paid maternity/paternity leave.

New in the contract is a tuition reimbursement program for teachers who pursue an advanced degree. Cumpstone said some 15-20 teachers had expressed an interest. This feature, according to Dr. Byars, not only makes Amity's contract competitive with other school districts, but also supports the district's strategic goal to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development and learning.

Dr. Byars pointed out that revisions to the sections of the contract addressing class size will provide the administration with more flexibility and options if school schedule changes are ever needed.

The contract provides that at the middle school, class sizes shall be no greater than 22 students, with the exception of accelerated math, which shall be no greater than 28 students. At the high school, class sizes shall be no greater than 27 students. Physical education classes shall be no greater than 35 students.

At the same time, the contract provides that "in unusual circumstances, the class size or the total class teaching load may be modified." Similarly, courses meeting fewer than three times per four-day rotation shall not be subject to the provisions of [the total class load as described in] Article V, Section A.2.

Negotiations for the contract ended in mediation, but both sides seemed eager to support the final contract. Cumpstone said in his view, both the Board of Education and the administration shared the concerns brought forward by the teachers. "They value our teachers," he said, adding, "we understand that they also have an obligation to the towns."

Dr. Byars expressed a more muted support. "Overall, we were very pleased to have reached an agreement through the mediation process and without having to go to arbitration," she wrote. When asked about the towns' input, she pointed out that the selectmen have the option by law to reject the contract, up to 30 days after it was filed, but warned that such action would move it into arbitration.

Budget impact: Given that salaries account for approximately 60% of the Amity budget, Dr. Byars said she expects the annual salary increase in the 2024-25 budget to be greater than 4%. "The budget will have to increase proportionally to maintain our current programs," she wrote.

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Woodbridge Town News

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

Upcoming Issue Date	Issue Deadline
February 9 Valentine's Day Issue.....	February 2
March 8 St. Patrick's Day Issue.....	March 1

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

FROM OUR READERS

Amity Spartans
Football Team is
Headed to Orlando

I trust that your extended weekend and any celebrated holiday were delightful. We are excited to share that our son, Lloyd, and his 9-year-old and under (9u) Amity Spartans football team won the New England Regional Pop Warner Championship and are headed to Orlando the first week of December to compete in the Pop Warner Super Bowl. This is the first time an Amity Pop Warner football team has made it to Nationals AND it's the first year that any 9u age group is playing in the Pop Warner Super Bowl.

To make this dream a reality for him and his teammates, the team has set up a GoFundMe campaign to help with travel expenses for the players and coaches. We understand that everyone has their own commitments, but if you're able to contribute or share our GoFundMe link within our community, it would mean the world to us. Every little bit helps, and your support will directly contribute to creating lasting memories for these young athletes. Here's the link to the GoFundMe campaign: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/amity-9u-pop-warner>.

Thank you so much for considering and for being such wonderful neighbors. We truly appreciate any support you can provide.

Larissa + Dan

The Most Wonderful
Time of the Year

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.

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.

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.

Woodbridge Town News

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OPINION

From the Democratic
Town Committee

BY ELLEN SCALETTAR
WDTCT CHAIRMAN



Looking Ahead at Year's End

The holiday season is a time for coming together, celebrating the accomplishments of the past year, and looking ahead with a spirit of optimism toward the New Year. For our Town, there is much to feel good about 2023 and a genuine sense of excitement for what we can accomplish together in 2024.

What tops my list of accomplishments for this past year?

Certainly, as head of our local Democratic Town Committee, I was heartened by the high turnout in our recent municipal election among Democrats, Republicans, and Unaffiliated voters, demonstrating the strength of Woodbridge residents' commitment to democracy. In a world where too many anti-democratic leaders continue to seek out new ways to hold onto power by limiting the rights of their citizens, we are reminded how precious our system of governance is.

I am also proud of how we affirmed the priority that brought so many of us to Woodbridge: ensuring that our children have a high-quality education, free from censorship and bias, that will prepare them to lead in the world they will inherit. This is the bedrock accomplishment required of an educational system in a democracy—ensuring that we are raising open-minded critical thinkers empowered to champion what they believe and to challenge forces that could do harm to our society's vulnerable members and to our cherished rights. And included in our affirmation was an unequivocal message to our educators that we trust their expertise and judgment.

The advances we've made in nurturing our community's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through the work of the Town's DEI Committee ranks high on my list of our Town's accomplishments. From book discussions to sharing findings from the Experiencing Woodbridge Survey to the robust community participation in the third annual Woodbridge Like Me Day, our friends and neighbors have shown that they are committed to ensuring that our Town is a deeply welcoming place for everyone. In a frightening period of rising global antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, homophobia, racial prejudices, and general intolerance of difference, our community's ability to celebrate what makes each of us unique is that much more special.

Looking ahead to next year, I am confident that our new First Selectman, Mica Cardozo, will maximize collaboration among the members of the Board of Selectmen, regardless of party affiliation, and across the many volunteer boards and commissions serving Woodbridge, to find bipartisan solutions that address longstanding challenges facing our community. I firmly believe that this coming year will set Woodbridge on a clear and firm path toward resolving what to do with the Country Club property, growing our economic base, and ensuring that our educational system continues to be a beacon for families.

2024 will be a big year, locally and nationally, and will require engagement and civic participation by us all. So, rest up over these next couple of weeks, as we have a lot to accomplish together come January.

In the meantime, the Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee wishes all our neighbors and friends a splendid holiday season and a happy, healthy, and transformative New Year!

If you are interested in learning more about the Woodbridge Democratic Town Committee, please be in touch with us by email at: communications@woodbridgedems.org or visit our website: <http://www.woodbridgedems.org>.

From Across the Aisle

BY ROBERT ROSASCO



Leading From Behind

For those who do not know me, I am honored to be the new Chairperson of the Woodbridge Republican Town Committee (the "WRTC"). As the Chair, I want to emphasize the focus of the WRTC – we care about Woodbridge as a Town, not state or national politics. In my short time in this capacity, it is abundantly clear to me that every member of the WRTC is eager to help our town be the best it can be.

The WRTC supports people of all political affiliations who seek to put forward their talents in order to help our town. Indeed, over 30% (4 of 13) of the candidates we endorsed for the 2023 election were registered as Unaffiliated or Democrat, not Republican. We take the same approach when recommending residents to serve on appointed Boards and Commissions. We focus on each person's talent, experience, and ideas. As Chair, I will build on the WRTC's tradition of seeing beyond party affiliation and focusing on what is important to Woodbridge. I also pledge to support the town and its leadership through the sharing of information and ideas. These monthly columns will focus on local issues.

Given the recent confirmation of our new leaders, and the months of campaign materials you've undoubtedly seen, you are likely aware of, and perhaps well-versed in, the critical issues our town continues to face. To meet these challenging topics, we need collaboration, creative thinking, and knowledge sharing. While I am doing the writing, I want these columns to highlight the ideas and insights of others. I ask that you reach out to me (WRTCChairman@gmail.com), those in office, or those on the WRTC if you have ideas and/or suggestions about how to keep Woodbridge moving forward. One such way to offer your thoughts is to attend our monthly meeting on the second Tuesday of each month, in the Senior Center. We typically start between 7pm and 7:30pm.

Diversity of thought is tantamount to success, and we can support our new town leaders with our insights and perspectives that might otherwise be overlooked. We are fortunate to have a town full of intelligent and well-intentioned people to offer ideas and participate in creating solutions. To assist in the exchange of ideas, the WRTC will make background information and supporting facts available on our website, at www.woodbridgedems.org. Together, we can use this newspaper space to enhance the discussion and resolution of our important town issues.

My goal as WRTC Chair is to be supportive, respectful, and constructive. If you are reading this, thank you for your time. I look forward to learning more from you, sharing more with you, and growing with this community. I wish you all and the town much success and happiness in 2024.



Woodbridge Town News

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TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THERE WILL BE A CAUCUS OF ALL ENROLLED REPUBLICAN ELECTORS OF THE TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE, CT, ON JANUARY 9TH, 2024, AT 7:30 PM IN THE SENIOR CENTER, LOCATED AT 4 MEETINGHOUSE LANE, WOODBRIDGE, CT, 06525, TO ENDORSE CANDIDATES FOR THE REPUBLICAN TOWN COMMITTEE.

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.

From Adult Services Winter Reading is BACK!!!

Our Winter Reading game for adults has returned after several years' hiatus. Stop by the library to pick up your Winter Reading bingo sheets—and maybe a mystery book or two! You'll notice by the front entry that we have wrapped books—a gift to yourself! Choose a book by the brief description on the cover, check it out at the circulation desk, unwrap and read! Completed bingo sheets should be dropped off at the information desk to be entered into a Winter Reading Raffle—drawing will be held on Tuesday, February 20. Thank you to the Friends of the Library for their support in this program!

Arts & Craft Supply Swap

Come to the information desk with any unwanted craft supplies and browse other supplies brought by community members.

A Christmas Carol

Friday, December 22 at 3 pm to 4:30 pm
Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" performed as a one man show by Mike Rose.

Adults Art & Craft Club

Wednesday, January 10 at 5:30 PM
Want to learn knitting? Working on a needlepoint? Have a project you want to show off? Join us to unleash your creativity! Bring in your art and craft project, or use library-provided acrylic painting supplies, and enjoy the company of community members and refreshments. More details and registration on our website. For questions or registration, email Donna: dfaryna@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.

Recurring Adult Programs Woodbridge Writers Workshop

Every first and third Tuesday of the month, from 3 to 5 pm.
Gather with area writers as we read and critique our works in a friendly atmosphere. Register online or at the library. More information on our website or call the reference desk.

Woodbridge Scrabble Group

Wednesdays at 11 AM
Meet with friends and neighbors for friendly games of Scrabble every week in the Meeting Room. No registration required.

Thursday Night Film Screenings

NOW beginning at 6 pm!
Join us on Thursday evenings for a movie screening in our Meeting Room.



WOODBRIDGE
TOWN LIBRARY

No registration is required to attend, but seating is first come, first serve.

Upcoming Titles:

- › December 21: A Christmas Story Christmas (2022)
 - › December 28: Golda (2023)
- Please visit our website or stop by the library to see our film screening lineup for January.

Saturday Morning Meditation

Every Saturday at 10:15 am, one hour of silent Vipassana (mindfulness) meditation is hosted by Dr. Aruna Pawashe, a retired lecturer and scientist from Yale University. She has been practicing Vipassana (which translates as: seeing things as they really are) meditation for over 15 years. She is a volunteer and a trustee member for the Vipassana Meditation Center in Shelburne, Massachusetts. Aruna has hosted many Vipassana meditation programs over the years throughout the greater New Haven area. When she is not available, Mrs. Nita Lathia, her colleague and fellow Vipassana meditation practitioner, will host the group meditation event. Registration suggested, but walk-ins welcome too! Zoom option is available, <https://woodbridgetownlibrary.org/events/meditation/>.

From The Children's Department Teen Advisory Board

Meets monthly on Fridays at 3 pm
See our Teen Volunteers page on our website for more info! Special winter decorating party on Friday, December 22!

Buildwave Program During Winter Break

Wednesday, December 27 at 2:30 pm in the meeting room
For ages 5 and up
Explore and create with a variety of building materials in this fun and fast-paced family activity! For more info, check out their website www.buildwave.com. Online registration (on the library's website) required; children MUST be five years old to participate.

Animal Facts

Monday, January 22 at 6:30 pm
Ages 7+. Registration required. This month's theme is Antarctic Animals!

Save the date for Music Together!

Saturday, January 27 at 2 pm
Michele Urban presents a program for young children. Please check our website for more details and to register.
Also Save the Date for Take Your Child to the Library Day: Saturday, February 3
Check out our website for other win-

ter and vacation week programs, <https://woodbridgetownlibrary.org/events/>.

Recurring Children's Programs:

- Baby Group:** Mondays at 10:30 am (Newborn to 18 months)
- Storytime:** Wednesdays at 10:30 am (Ages 2 and up)
- Craft Time:** Thursdays at 4 pm (Ages 3 and up)
- Story Craft:** Fridays at 11 am (Ages 3 to 5 years)

From The Friends Of The Library

Check out our page on the library's website to see all of the great things we've been doing! Thank you as always for all of the community support. Your contributions and book donations allow us to make updates to the building and bring fantastic programs (among other things) to the library which benefits YOU.

Library Announcements

- We will be closed on the following days:
- › Saturday, December 23
 - › Monday, December 25
 - › Monday, January 1

Now Open Saturdays Year-Round

The Woodbridge Town Library is open on Saturdays year-round:

- › Monday—Thursday: 10 am to 8 pm;
- › Friday & Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm.

Our wifi works on the library grounds, even when the library is closed. Picnic tables are available. Enjoy!

Art Exhibits at the Library

December's artist: Woodbridge resident Chris McLaughlin: oil paintings.
January's artist: Wing Na Wong.
If you are interested in exhibiting your art work in the library, please contact Donna Faryna, Adult Services Librarian (dfaryna@woodbridgetownlibrary.org) or visit our art exhibits page for more information.

Online Card Registration Available

Are you a Woodbridge resident? You can sign up for a library card online! Visit our website, woodbridgetownlibrary.org. After registering, you will immediately be able to use your new account to place holds on items for pick up at the library. We will then contact you via email within 2 business days with your new library card number. At this time, you will get full access to our electronic resources, including downloadable books and magazines. Please note that this is a temporary registration that will

expire in 30 days. Before the 30 days is up, please visit the Woodbridge Town Library in person to verify your name and address. At that time, you will receive a permanent library card.

Do we have your email address?

Sign up for our email newsletters to receive notifications about events, new offerings, and library hours/closings. We typically only send one email a week. Join our mailing list by visiting our website and entering your email address in the form provided. That's it! (You can also give us your email address while in the building.)

Need a Notary?

Notary Services are now available at the Library by appointment or by chance! Please contact the Reference Desk for more information desk (stop by or call 203-389-3434) or email Bill (warmstrong@woodbridgetownlibrary.org).

Historic Woodbridge, Second Edition on Sale

Historic Woodbridge, Second Edition may make the perfect gift this holiday season. Woodbridge homes, community buildings, and the people of 'olden days' come alive in Historic Woodbridge. Learn about Woodbridge's historic houses and the people who called Woodbridge their home. Illustrations are included throughout the book as the history of the community and its architecture are highlighted. The book is now priced at \$30 (discounted from \$45). To purchase, stop by the library or the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall. Cash payment or a check made payable to the Woodbridge Town Clerk will be accepted.

Library Information

Visit the Library website 24/7 to access digital resources - woodbridgetownlibrary.org. We are fine-free and have automatic renewals on most items. Call or email to place holds, ask questions, find out information, and more.

Department phones 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 askus@woodbridgetownlibrary.org.
- › Socialize with us!
- › Facebook: @woodbridge.town.library
- › Instagram: @woodbridgetownlibrary
- › TikTok: @woodbridge_town_library

TOWN DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES

Youth Services

BY NANCY PFUND





Students display their creative works from Youth Services Paint Party

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

- › Sign up for Youth Services Notifications: <https://www.woodbridge.org/list.aspx>
- › See Youth Services' Website: <https://www.woodbridge.org/160/Youth-Services>
- › Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WoodbridgeYouthServices.CT>

Fall Paint Party

Amity Middle School students enjoyed the Paint Party instructed by Picasso Parties and hosted by Youth Services. The youth delighted in their masterpieces and had fun relaxing with friends and having delicious snacks.

Toys 4 Kids

Youth Services collected many toys at the Woodbridge Library and in the Center Building for TEAM's Toys 4 Kids program, which serves local families. Many thanks to those who donated so generously.

Helping the Homeless

Donations of "We Care" bags from local students and families will be donated to New Reach in New Haven to help homeless individuals and families. Students earned community service hours for their efforts. We thank all those who make selfless contributions.

Job Bank Seeks Woodbridge and Bethany Teens Who Want Work

The Job Bank guides teens ages 13-18 as they apply, interview, and earn money doing odd jobs for Woodbridge residents. Teens are needed, especially



Girl Scout Troop 67884 donates We Care bags for homeless in New Haven.

for raking and yard work. Contact the Job Bank to schedule your interview. Other jobs include snow shoveling, babysitting, housework, animal care, tutoring and tech assistance.

Teens Need Jobs

Woodbridge residents who wish to hire someone for odd jobs like raking, babysitting, yard cleanup, snow shoveling, moving boxes, etc. Save your energy and keep teens working to gain experience. Call 203-389-3429 for more information.

Woodbridge Youth Advisory Board

Woodbridge Youth Services seeks Woodbridge parents to join its Advisory Board which meets five times per year (September through May). Representation from our diverse population is encouraged. Contact Nancy Pfund at 203-389-3429 for more information.

Woodbridge Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee

Our lecture series continues! December's Sustainability Lecture will elaborate on the hot topic of HEAT PUMPS as an alternative to fossil fuel heating! Is this something that might benefit you?

Please join us on December 16 at 3pm at the Woodbridge Library Meeting Room. Bring the kids too! We will have a story and an activity for children upstairs.

SURVEY SAYS: In Fall 2023, our committee circulated a Fall 2023 Call to Action Survey in Woodbridge to help determine what the community wants in terms of Sustainability efforts. Here are the results:

- › 164 responses between October 1-October 15, open to all Woodbridge Adult Residents;
- › Overall, respondents felt that Woodbridge is currently making some efforts to be sustainable;
- › 88.3% of respondents are interested in making sustainable changes in their daily lives;
- › There was interest in:
 - Improving Town Building Energy Use,
 - Improving Private Home Energy Use,
 - Increasing Recycling programs such as film plastic, textiles etc.,
 - Reducing Food Waste with composting,
 - Electric Vehicles or rideshare,
 - Improving Water Conservation for Private homes,
 - Educational opportunities about all of the above;
- › Respondents are very interested in learning about solar energy, heat pumps & geothermal energy sources as well as rain barrels & energy efficient appliances to help save energy and water in private homes;
- › Respondents are interested in improving local food systems by buying local and learning more about backyard and commercial composting options;
- › Respondents are interested in bike/walking options (e.g., sidewalks and bike trails) and Electric Vehicles;
- › For upcoming Earth Day festivities – respondents would love to see: plant/seed swap, clothing Freecycle, electronics recycling, mattress & textile recycling, tag sale, food trucks and live entertainment etc.

The Woodbridge Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee hopes to make all these wishes a reality!

Join us for our Monthly Sustainability Lecture at the Woodbridge Library, on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 3-4pm in the Library Meeting Room and keep checking back here for more sustainable tips and ideas.

Save the Date: Saturday, April 27 for Woodbridge Earth Day Celebration!

GREEN TIPS: 'Tis the season to be GREEN. Challenge your White Elephant, grab bag parties, or family gift exchanges with only buying reused, repurposed, or thrifted items. It's a great way to introduce folks to the joys of thrifting, as well as stretch that dollar!

- Other GREEN gift ideas:
- › Buy local instead of online;
 - › Buy items that come in less packaging;
 - › Choose printable/emailed gift cards instead of the plastic gift cards;
 - › Gift of Experience (concert tickets, movie passes, date night coupons, escape rooms, shopping spree, special playdates, makeovers);
 - › Gift of Time (babysitting, house cleaning, car wash, professional organizer, yard service);
 - › Gift of Moments (photography sessions, video collection of family member interviews);
 - › Memberships (museums, zoos, trampoline parks);
 - › Consumables (local food, surprise prepared dinner, gift cards);
 - › Classes (internet Master classes, painting, private coaching, physical trainer, art);
 - › For more ideas: <https://greenthatlfe.com/eco-friendly-gift-giving-guide>

Wrap your presents with GREEN materials:

- › Use up the brown paper from Amazon's package stuffing;
- › Wrap small gifts with one-of-a-kind artwork from your kids;
- › Use twine and pine cones or sprigs of pine in lieu of plastic ribbons and bows;
- › Wrap in old newspapers;
- › Wrap your presents with scarves (Google Furoshiki wrapping).

Contact us at Woodbridge.Com-posts@gmail.com for any questions or comments or to find out how you can help!

TOWN DEPARTMENTS

Recreation News



T'ai Chi – Thursday evenings. 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm in room 16 at the Center Building– Adults – ongoing registration.

Yoga – with Bill Banick- Adults -Daily mornings 8:30 am to 9:45 am, and Tuesday evenings available 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm. Ongoing registration. New winter session runs from December 1– February 29 in room 16 at the Center building.

Gentle Yoga – with Diane King- Monday and Wednesday morning classes 10:30 am to 11:45 am, and Monday evening classes available, 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm– ongoing registration. Current Monday session: November 6– December 18. Current Wednesday session: November 1-December 20. All classes take place in room 16 in the Center Building. Stay tuned for more information on the January/February Gentle Yoga session.

For registration information, please

visit <https://secure.rec1.com/CT/woodbridge-ct/catalog>.

Winter Youth Programs: Registration for winter programs is currently in progress. Most winter programs begin on December 11. Programs include Bowling, Taekwondo, Kumon, Cooking, Basketball, Little Scientists, Indoor Soccer, Chess, & Gymnastics. Check our registration website for a complete listing, <https://secure.rec1.com/CT/woodbridge-ct/catalog> or register in person at our office location in the lower level of Town Hall, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Girls Basketball Clinic: There is still time to register for the girl's youth winter basketball clinic! Friday nights from 6:00-8:00pm in the Beecher South Gym. Limited spots remain. Register online at <https://secure.rec1.com/CT/woodbridge-ct/catalog> or call the Rec Office at 203-389-3446 for more details.

"Shaw" From Page 1

she spent most of her time, even during the pandemic, when the town hall was technically closed.

"I was here," she said, simply. "I couldn't work remotely. We'd stay in our own little spot." Residents would call rather than walk in when they needed information.

Gerry Shaw frequently served as the bastion at Town Hall. She would come in even when snow storms had everyone hunkering down. "A couple of times Public Works picked me up and brought me here," she said, chuckling. Somebody needed to field phone calls from residents.

When she first started, back in 1975, they worked in a corner of what is now the main meeting room. During the subsequent renovation, everyone worked in that room together. "It was interesting," she said.

"You have to be able to work with people," she said. "You have to remember they are not screaming at you, but at the situation. Most people are very understanding."

Few people know the recent history of the town like she does. Hurricanes Gloria, Sandy and Irene; the flooding of the Town Hall, she has seen several renovations since then, departments being moved around.

What has changed most for the job is the role that technology plays. When she first started, she had a typewrit-

er; then an electric typewriter; then a word processor and finally, computers. Back in the day they would send out notices to residents by mail.

"We used to type address labels," she remembered. "I would take them home, and my hubby and the kids and I would put the labels on." She used to deliver the packets with documents to the selectmen's homes. Now everything is scanned and sent electronically.

The late First Selectman Ed Sheehy paid tribute to Gerry Shaw back in 2012, when Massaro Farm honored her at a farm dinner. "She is the same in private as she is in public," he said at the time. "She always has a friendly and hopeful attitude. Always willing to make that extra effort and take the extra time to get it right."

Gerry Shaw grew up in Westville, and graduated from Hillhouse High School. But even as a child she remembers coming to Woodbridge, which was very much a village with farms at the time. They would come to get fresh vegetables and to skate on Konold's Pond in the winter. Her husband's father owned Creamline Dairy Farm in Bethany, and they would visit. Finally, they found a property on Sperry Road in Bethay, and built their house there.

Later, she found out that her great-grandmother was Henrietta Downs, of a prominent Woodbridge family; and her father was a descendant of the Sperry family. "I am right where I belong," she said, with a smile.

"Leaves" From Page 3

are leaves also. Before we explore alternatives to removing leaves, let's consider the role fallen leaves have in the environment.

Dead leaves, called leaf litter, contain organic matter and nutrients that are utilized by a wide variety of organisms. Reptiles, birds, and beneficial insects, many of whom are pollinators, need leaf litter to survive and reproduce. Who doesn't enjoy seeing fireflies perform their light show on a summer evening? Did you know that they are actually beetles and only the males fly? The females hide out in the safety of leaf litter until they find their mates and lay eggs beneath the leaves. The larvae live for 1-2 years in the leaf litter and soil eating snails, slugs, earthworms or small insects. Chemicals in the tails of adults that allow them to light up are used in medicine and science.

Loss of habitat from leaf removal, along with the disruption of animals' behavior from bright outdoor lights at night (see my September 1, 2023 column, www.woodbridgetownnews.com), contribute to declining numbers of fireflies, beneficial insects and birds. Many moths and butterflies overwinter in dead leaves, either as eggs, pupae or adults.

Birds and other insectivores feed on these insects. As the leaves decay, with the help of soil fungi, they add nutrients to the soil feeding the trees from which they fell. Tree nuts, another important food source for many animals, are often lost when leaves are removed.

Removing leaves offsite contributes to the solid waste problem we have in Connecticut. There is no reason for them to be in landfills. There are several eco-friendly ways for handling your leaves.

1. Rake them under a few trees to create mini-ecosystems.
2. Shred the leaves where they lay with a mulching mower. This allows for quicker decomposition which provide necessary nutrients for your lawn. This action alone obviates the need to purchase chemical lawn fertilizers (which have many negative environmental consequences).
3. Replace expensive wood mulch with leaves in your landscape

beds. Wood mulch requires a lot of energy to produce and deliver to your home, whereas leaf mulch comes at no cost and enriches the soil, holds in moisture, helps protect your plants, and provide shelter for beneficial insects.

4. Make your own compost. Leaves can be composted alone or added to your yard and garden clippings/vegetable scraps compost pile. Shredding them will speed up the composting process, but isn't necessary. The compost produced is free fertilizer.

Depending on how many leaves you have, a combination of these strategies is likely most desirable. The benefits of keeping leaves on your property also include improvement to physical and mental well-being and keeping more money in your wallet. Using a hand rake instead of a noisy, polluting blower offers wonderful aerobic exercise. Be mindful of how your body feels and don't do too much at once. There's no hurry. Make it a family event. Allow other stresses in your life to melt away as you breath in cool fresh air as you work. It is not only nature that is nurtured when you engage in these eco-friendly practices.

In the following spring and summer, keep a journal to note any changes in your home's local ecosystem that you see. Take pride in the results of leaving the leaves. You deserve it!!

Trails Update: On November 12th, a group of volunteers cleared a new trail in the Park Lane area from Krum Elbow to the Blue trail, east of the new solar farm. I hope you'll check it out. The next second Sunday of the month trail cleanup/maintenance event is scheduled for December 10th from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm. If you would like to be on the email list for these events or would like to report any issues on a specific trail, please visit <http://woodbridgetrails.org/> or email me at trailmaster@woodbridget.org. Please remember that to enable everyone to equally enjoy our wonderful open spaces, motor bikes are not allowed, dogs must be leashed and all trash, including dog waste, must be carried out with you.

Andrew Danzig is the Woodbridge Trailmaster and a UConn certified Advanced Master Gardener.



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"Winter is a season of recovery and preparation." — PAUL THEROUX





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ARTS & LEISURE



Left: Broadway actors Erika Henningsen and Kyle Selig offered a workshop for students in Amity’s Performing Arts program. Right: Samantha Gallagher performs a song from Mean Girls.

Broadway Actors Present Workshop at Amity

BY BETTINA THIEL
WOODBRIDGE TOWN NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Amity performing arts students had the chance to rub shoulders with a bit of Broadway glamor recently, when Erika Henningsen and Kyle Selig – both actors from the original cast of Mean Girls the Musical - visited the school to present a workshop in the school’s Black Box Theater. Students were eager

to perform songs from the musical and get some tips from the actors. Mean Girls will be the spring musical at Amity come April 2024.

Both Henningsen and Selig seemed to enjoy the students’ performances. Their comments put the songs into context, pointing out the moments the characters pivot or realize something about themselves. “There is an

epiphany in this song,” Selig said to a rendition of ‘I’d Rather Be Me.’ This is your Declaration of Independence.” In another scene he encouraged the student to address a particular student directly with their song. “Try to get that person to walk to you,” he recommended.

In “What’s Wrong with Me,” Erika Henningsen pointed to all the ques-

tions in the lyrics expressing self-doubt – until later in the story the character launches into her newfound freedom in “Fearless.” Every song is a scene with beginning, middle and end, she said. Songs are part of the story.

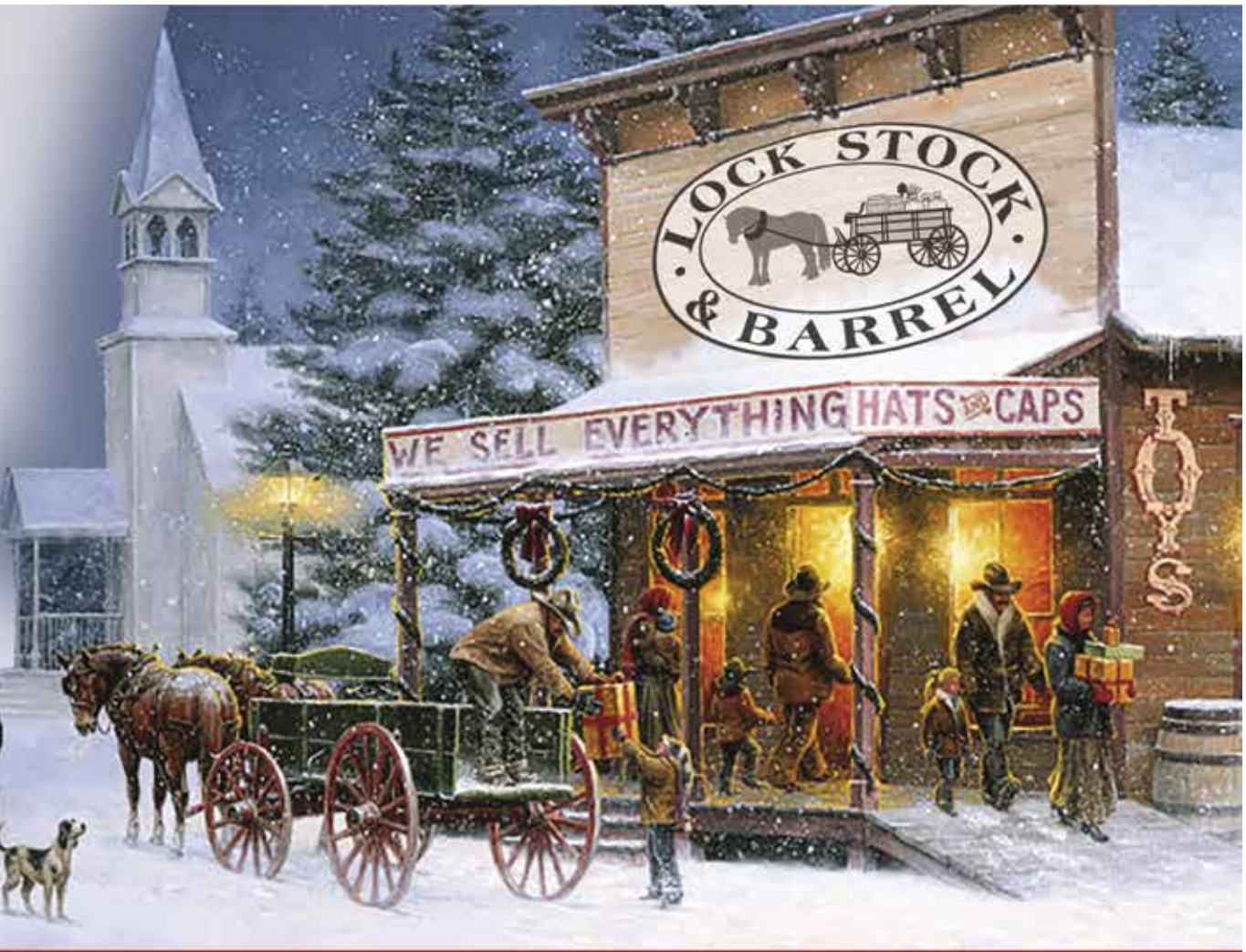
The music for Mean Girls was written by Jeff Richmond, with lyrics by

See “Workshop” On Page 14



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AT THE WOODBRIDGE CENTER



Left: Participants of the Thanksgiving Luncheon enjoy lively conversation and delicious food catered by Lasse’s Restaurant made possible by the generous sponsorships of: Autumn Lake at The Willows, Coachman Square at Woodbridge, the Holli Shanbrom Team – Coldwell Banker Realty, The Linden at Woodbridge, and the Woodbridge Police Union. Right: Attendees of the Snow Globe Vase craft, provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, display their beautiful, finished pieces.

Contact The Woodbridge Center:
More information on available programs and services can be found on The Center’s page of the Town Website. Call 203-389-3430 or email kmoriarty@woodbridgect.org with questions or to register for programming. Follow us on Facebook (The Woodbridge Center, Woodbridge CT) for current updates, local information, and fun programming photos.

The Center will be closed Monday, December 25 in observance of Christmas, January 1 in observance of New Year’s Day, and Monday, January 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Sponsored Coffee Bar
The Center Café, no charge
Stop by The Center between the hours of 9 am – 4 pm and enjoy a hot cup of coffee or tea at no charge. Sponsorship for the month of December is provided by Woodbridge residents Barry and Hyla Vine. Sponsorship for the month of January is courtesy of an anonymous sponsor.

Art Wall
The Center Café
The artwork display for the month of December is provided by local photographer and Center member Phyllis Gamm. Please stop by The Center Café to view her beautiful works of art.

Super Sponsor Wall
The Center Café
Coachman Square at Woodbridge is a “Super Sponsor” for the months of December and January.

Upcoming Programs
In-person Lunch
Stop by for a quick bite to eat, linger a while, or pick-up lunch to go.
For residents and non-residents 55 years of age and older
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-1 pm
The Center Café
Lunch includes a choice of hot entrée with a roll and sides or a sandwich. Dessert, coffee/tea and water are also included. The price for lunch is \$5.00 for residents, \$6.00 for non-residents, with a \$1.00 additional fee for take-out

(waived for sandwich choice). Please RSVP with The Center 203-389-3430 by noon the day before.
Choices for December are as follows:
› 12/19 Stuffed peppers or seafood salad on a croissant;
› 12/21 Baked manicotti or chicken salad with apples and cranberries on a roll;
› 12/26 and 12/28 No lunch service.
Choices for January are as follows:
› 1/2 Eggplant rollatini or turkey and American cheese on a wrap;
› 1/4 Beer marinated beef brisket or tuna salad on a wrap;
› 1/9 Fish cakes or roast beef and Swiss cheese on a roll;
› 1/11 Vegetable lasagna or chicken salad on a roll;
› 1/16 Ground beef stroganoff or egg salad on a roll (please order by noon on Friday, January 12 as The Center is closed on January 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day);
› 1/18 Chicken parmesan or tuna salad on a roll;
› 1/23 Meatloaf with gravy or seafood salad on a wrap;
› 1/25 Chicken pot pie or roast beef and Swiss on a roll;
› 1/30 Chicken marsala or egg salad on a roll.

Christmas in Europe
Tuesday, December 19, 12:45-1:45 pm
The Center Café, no charge
Experience Christmas on a virtual tour throughout nine European countries. Hot cocoa and cookies will be served. Program provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Extend your day by participating in The Center’s regular lunch program at noon, and/or stay for the movie “The Polar Express” following the Christmas in Europe tour. Please call The Center 203-389-3430 to register.

December Birthdays Celebration
Thursday, December 21, 12-1 pm
The Center Café
December birthdays will be celebrated during the regular lunch from 12-1 pm. Cupcakes or cake will be provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and

Health Care Center. Future birthdays will be celebrated on the third Thursday of each month.
Ask the Nurse & Ask a Cardiology PA Programs
January 9 and 25th, 11 am – 12 pm
Center Consultation Office, no charge
See details below.

Museum & Lunch Trip
Friday, January 12
Van leaves The Center at 9:30 am
No charge for Museum tour, self-pay at restaurant
Meet at The Center then depart on The Center’s van to a 1-hour guided tour of the Yale Museum of Art. At 11:45 am the van will leave the Museum for lunch at Brazi’s Italian Restaurant in New Haven. Self-pay for your meal at the restaurant. \$5.00 suggested donation for transportation. Call The Center to RSVP by January 5. Space is limited.

January Birthdays Celebration
Thursday, January 18, 12-1 pm
The Center Café
January birthdays will be celebrated during the regular lunch from 12-1 pm. Cupcakes or cake will be provided by Hamden Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Future birthdays will be celebrated on the third Thursday of each month.

Lunch & Learn: Kick your Clutter: From Overwhelmed to Organized
Wednesday, January 24, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
The Center Café

Participants will learn common sources of clutter, how decluttering improves one’s mood and mental health, and some guidelines and tips for taking back control of your space. Participants will leave with the tools and the inspiration to get decluttered and organized. Program offered by Lauren Hass, Founder of Clutter Kicker, LLC and a Professional Organizer, Declutter Coach and Collectibles Advisor. Lunch will be provided by Coachman Square at Woodbridge. Please call to RSVP by

January 17.
Tech Assistance
2:45-4:15 pm
Need help navigating your computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone? Call to sign-up for a 1:1 session in The Center’s computer lab with patient, knowledgeable, Amity High School student volunteers. No charge.

Regular Programs Exercise
Not sure if a class is right for you? Try a complimentary class first!

Aerobics Class with Laura Richling
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11 am
The Center café
Fee: \$3.00 payable at the start of each class

Come enjoy a complete cardio and strength training workout to music. Bring your own 1- or 2-pound hand weights, if you have them, to use during the class.

Indoor Pickleball
Monday through Friday, 12:30-3:30 pm
Center Building Gymnasium
Annual fee: \$20 for residents, \$25 for non-residents

All levels are welcome. The annual fee includes seasonal outdoor play as well. The dues for the 2024 calendar year are now due. Call for more information.

Hobbies/Social Bridge
Wednesdays, 1-4 pm
The Center Café

Seasoned bridge players are welcome to play bridge every Wednesday in The Center Café. Please call The Center prior to first attendance.

Mahjongg
Mondays 12:30 – 2:30 pm
The Center Lounge
Seasoned Mahjongg players are invited to participate. Please call The Center prior to first attendance.

See “Woodbridge Center” On Page 17



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SATURDAY
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“Workshop” From Page 11

Nell Benjamin, based on a book by Tina Fey. The musical premiered at the National Theatre, Washington, D.C., in 2017 and opened on Broadway in April 2018 at the August Wilson Theatre. A film is set to open in early 2024. It’s a coming-of-age story, with a young girl, Cady, who moves to a suburban high school from Kenya.

Mean Girls The Musical will be on stage at Amity April 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13.

Following the workshop, students had a chance to ask questions. Stage fright? It never goes away, both actors agreed. But, be as prepared as possible, they recommended, and over time it gets better.

Should they watch the movie which is about to be released? Selig said he

watched the first movie once, then never again (“They don’t sing!”). And Erika agreed. “I can’t be Lindsay Lohan,” she said. I just went in and did my own thing.”

One question was whether it’s better to study musical theater at a college or to go straight into acting. For Henningsen, who studied at the University of Michigan, there are many schools where you can get good training. Ask yourself where you are going to be happy, she recommended. At school, people can make mistakes and still succeed in a safe environment, she said, adding that might not be the case in a professional setting. Selig added, “you need to be an active participant in your education.”

The event was sponsored by the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation.



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HUMAN SERVICES



Left to right: 1.) Many thanks to Girl Scout Juniors Troop 60865 for its donation to the Holiday Basket program. 2.) Stephanie Cabral, right, co-owner of Progressions Salon in Woodbridge, stands with salon manager Jean DeMayo and many of the socks collected during their 17th annual sock drive to benefit Woodbridge Human Services Holiday Basket program. 3.) Representatives from the Surreybrook School in Bethany from left Christina Papa, Serena Brylewski, and Isaiah Kane stand with Human Service's Ellen McDonald and their food donation to the Woodbridge Food Pantry. 4.) Gabby Durso, right, president, and her brother, Chase Durso, vice-president, run the Good Night, Sleep Tight PJ Program; the pair raised funds to provide pajamas for all the children in the Human Services Holiday Basket program. 5.) First Selectman Beth Heller presents a citation of appreciation to Woodbridge Human Services Commission chair Susan Davidson; Davidson will be stepping down from the commission at the end of December after more than twelve years of service to the Department and the Town. 6.) Members of the Woodbridge Rotary Club stand with Thanksgiving donations for local families in need; the Woodbridge Rotary Club helps coordinate the Thanksgiving program for local families

Holiday Basket Program

Many thanks to all the donors, groups, and community support that made the Holiday Basket program such a success. While we cannot name all the donor families here, we offer gratitude to the many loyal donors who stepped up again this year to provide a wealth of giving to Woodbridge families in need. 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, The Good Night, Sleep Tight PJ Program, Girl Scout Juniors Troop 60865, the Beecher Road School Student Council, The Surreybrook School, the First Church of Christ, the One of Kind Foundation, Spartan Academy students, Barry and Hyla Vine, John and Mary Beth Womer, First Selectman Beth Heller and the Town Hall employees, the Woodbridge Library employees, the Woodbridge Childcare Center, Alice Lippman for handmade knitted gifts, and Tim and Cathy Austin for their wonderful assistance throughout the distribution.

Vaccine Clinic

It's not too late to get your vaccinations! On January 19 Woodbridge Human Services, in partnership with Valley Pharmacy, will hold a vaccine clinic for those members of the community who received their first Shingles vaccine at one of the fall clinics. Additionally, we will also have COVID-19 boosters, flu vaccine, RSV, and Prevnaar-20 available that day for those who have not yet received their updated booster or other vaccines. According to the CDC, the updated COVID-19 vaccine closely targets circulating variants. It can also help provide protection for you, your family, and your friends. Please call 203-389-3429 for an appointment. Appointments will begin at 10 am.

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 beginning in February. Taxpayers with low to moderate income, older adults, people

with disabilities, or those with limited English have options to complete 2023 tax returns. Call Woodbridge Human Services (203) 389-3429 for a list of required documents and to schedule an appointment.

Energy Assistance Program

Human Services accepts appointments for residents to apply for the 2023-2024 CT Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, INC. Income eligibility requirements must be met. For information, or to schedule an appointment, call Social Worker Judi Young at 203-389-3429.

Emergency Preparedness

Older residents and those with disabilities are encouraged to register for the Human Services Emergency Call List by calling 203-389-3429. The department provides outreach to those on the list prior to extreme weather events or potential power outages.

Needed! Medical Loan Closet

Transport chairs and regular wheelchairs, in good working order, are need-

ed for the Medical Loan Closet. Please contact Human Services to donate.

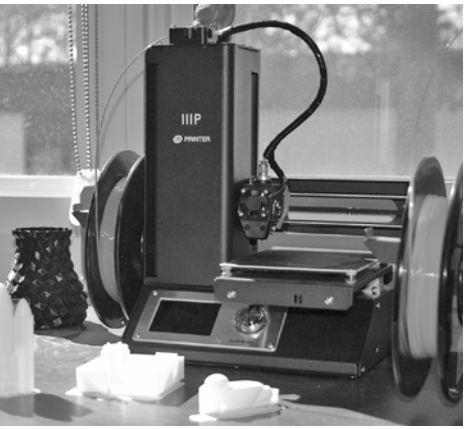
Opportunity For Giving Back to The Community!

The First Church of Christ will hold a drive-through Household Product donation collection on Saturday, December 16 between 10 am and 2 pm at 5 Meetinghouse Lane in Woodbridge. Contributions will benefit the Woodbridge Food Pantry.

Food Pantry

Residents in need may call for access to non-perishable food each month. For others who are interested in donating, the food pantry needs dish soap, cleaning products, laundry soap, peanut butter and jams/jellies, coffee (both ground and instant), shelf stable milk, canola and olive oil, condiments-especially ketchup-canned chicken, oatmeal, pasta sauce, snack foods, canned fruit, and personal hygiene products such as deodorant, toothpaste, razors, and shampoo.

Call 203-389-3429 or email humanservices@woodbridgect.org for more information.



Left to right: 1.) Kindergarten students and their teacher, Jackie Scalia, practice counting. 2.) From left, School Supt. Vonda Tencza, IT Manager Anthony Billings, Principal Analisa Sherman, and Technology specialists Jeanne Ciarleglio and Rachel Robinson hold up a plaque. 3.) Former computer and media teacher Rick Wood was invited to be part of the celebration. He took a tour of the school and engaged students at work. 4.) The PTO donated 3D printers as part of its 50th anniversary.

“School” From Page 1

with Rachel Robinson had put the application together.

Snippets of that application are available to view on the district website, showing interviews with administrators, teachers and students who talk about how technology enriches their teaching and learning. The guests to the celebration were invited to take a tour of the building, visit classrooms and watch students engage with the technology.

Art teacher Lucille Gomes demonstrated how iPads allow students to research jungle animals before they set out to paint them. Along the way they learn about painters Henri Rousseau and Vincent Van Gogh; they can take tours on museum websites and manipulate the picture to let them see the thickness of the paint. They can learn to mix colors – and all that information culminates in putting together an impressive mural.

Rick Wood was excited to see this work happening. “Students have a choice,” he said. “This is exciting to me to see.” And indeed, in one of the clips on the school’s website, it is pointed out how students thrive on that autonomy.

“The class is buzzing with students at work,” said one teacher.

In the Library Media Center, a Kindergarten class was using the Osmo platform to practice counting up to 20, while others were matching geometric shapes. “This to me is the best of

all worlds,” said Apple representative Norma Jean Loftus. The children were using a gaming platform to practice addition and subtraction, while the teacher was assisting where needed.

In Grade 3 they were working on a Thankfulness Project, with the parameters spelled out on the Smartboard. Students can share their work by displaying several slides simultaneously on the Smartboard.

This is a 1-to-1 environment, where every student, starting in second grade, has their own iPad. The devices are kept in the classroom on carts, they do not go home. In Kindergarten and first grade the devices are shared.

It is not technology for its own sake. Rather, it has to support learning. Some things will not sustain, Ciarleglio said. “Technology has been a part of the Beecher culture for a long time,” she said. “It has the support of the administration and the Board of Education. It’s a very special place.”

Rick Wood, who helped build the technology program, said the real game changer came when then-superintendent Alex Warren funded the first 48 laptops. That was back in the 1980s.

One of the most visible programs is the BRS Newscast – written, filmed and presented by sixth grade students. They have to do research, organize interviews, and finally, put it all together. There is quite a bit of time that goes into putting it all together, but “we have to finish our school work first,” said one of the students busy at work.



Trip participants enjoy lunch at Carmines di Vega before attending the sold out Barbara Streisand and Frank Sinatra Holiday Show at Nelson Hall in Cheshire

“Woodbridge Center” From Page 12

Painting for Pleasure
Art Class with local
artist Carole Abbate

Mondays, 10 am – 12 pm

The Center Cafe

Create paintings of your choice as Carole helps inspire beginners to intermediates to paint with acrylics or watercolors. Bring in a picture or a photo for inspiration. No experience is necessary. Call to sign-up for this 6-week, \$36 class. Sessions run concurrently with classes prorated if applicable. Join anytime. Please call to register.

Pinochle

Thursdays, 1:30-4 pm

The Center Lounge

Anyone interested in playing pinochle, or learning to play pinochle, is invited to join the pinochle group on Thursdays from 1:30-4 pm in the Center Lounge. Please call The Center prior to first attendance.

Stitch Craft

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
10 am – 12 pm

The Center Lounge

Bring your current knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, or other craft project to work on while having an enjoyable time socializing.

Services Offered
Ask the Nurse
Program with OVNA

Second Tuesday of the
month, 11 am – 12 pm

The Center Consultation
Office in The Center Café

A registered nurse from Orange Visiting Nurse Association (OVNA) will be available to monitor your blood pressure, check your weight, and answer questions to help guide your health and wellness during the second Tuesday of each month.

Ask a Cardiology PA
(Physician’s Assistant)
Program with Becket
Greten-Harrison

Fourth Thursday of the
month, 11 am – 12 pm

The Center Consultation
Office in The Center Café

Becket Greten-Harrison, PA and founder of Hearts at Home, will be available during the 4th Thursday of each month to help answer questions and concerns about your health, check vital signs, including blood pressure,

and perform a brief exam upon request. EKG monitoring is also available. Consultations are private, informal, and strictly confidential. No notes or other personal information will be saved.

Computer Lab

Computers and laptops are available for use in room 11 of the Center Building Human Services corridor, Monday through Friday, 10 am - 2 pm. Printing is available (first 5 pages free).

Transportation (Woodbridge residents only)

Those individuals 60 years of age and older, or who are temporarily or permanently disabled, may call to arrange car or wheelchair accessible van transportation to medical appointments to 17 surrounding towns, local grocery shopping, banking, pharmacy pick-up, and social engagements. This service is provided Monday - Friday from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm based on availability. Appointments may be made up to three months in advance. Vehicles are cleaned between each use.

Delivered Meals

(Woodbridge residents only)

Healthy, well balanced, flash frozen meals for \$5.25/meal are available for delivery. Order by noon on Monday for delivery to your home during the same week. Choose from a wide variety of options including vegetable lasagna, eggplant rollatini, stuffed peppers, beef stew, chicken marsala, lemon, dill cod, and many more. Meals include a roll, fresh fruit, and dessert. Two meal minimum. Soups are available for \$1.50 each and include chicken & rice, Italian wedding, hearty vegetable, and matzo ball.

Friendly Visitor Program

(Woodbridge residents only)

Call the Human Services Social Worker at 203-389-3429 to arrange for a friendly visitor.

Medical Loan Closet

(Woodbridge residents only)

Durable medical equipment, including walkers, wheelchairs, knee rollers, shower chairs, and more, is available for lending. Donations of transport chairs are needed. Call for details.

Job Bank

(Woodbridge residents only)

Residents may call Nancy Pfund, Youth Services Director, at 203-389-3429, to hire a student worker. Schedule now for snow shoveling, party assistance, baby-sitting, and more.

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HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS



Temple Emanuel Donates 125 Turkeys to Soup Kitchen

Jeffrey Levison, chair of Temple Emanuel of Greater New Haven’s annual turkey collection program, stands among the turkeys being gathered by Temple members. This is the 22nd year for the turkey drive. Last year, the temple donated 93 turkeys to New Haven’s Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen. This year, 125 turkeys were sent to New Haven, along with fixings donated by some temple members.

Temple Emanuel, in Orange, is a small, but growing, Reform synagogue with members from many parts of the New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley.



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. Kid’s Church every Sunday morning at 10:10

Interim Minister

The Rev. Susan Murtha is the Interim Minister at FCCW and has made quite an impact. Plan a visit to see what is “happening.” You can also read about her on our website. We are honored to have such an extraordinary individual here with us at First Church!

Kid’s Church at First Church!

Families meet at the church at 10:00 and at 10:10 the children are walked over to the Parish House for Kid’s Church by Forest Vandeflor, our project leader for children’s ministries, along with an adult volunteer. This is a great time for the children while their parents are at the worship service! We’ve also added a fabulous new program: Picture the Bible that has already been a great success here at First Church!

Weekly Bible Study

Bible Study meets at the Parish House each Wednesday, 10:30 am. All are invited!

Scout Troop 907 News

Troop 907 is a diverse youth-led troop with scouts from Woodbridge and area towns. It is chartered by the First Church and is active and vibrant. Always welcoming new scouts, feel free to stop by the usual troop meetings at the First Church Parish House, rear entrance, on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. Meet scoutmaster Tom Luciani, assistant scoutmasters, and youth leadership and learn about upcoming adventures. More at troop907.org.
Rich Forselius, Troop 907 Committee Chair

Junior Girl Scout Troop 60163

Troop 60163 was very busy our first few months as Juniors! We completed the Outdoor Journey! Camping, cooking, hiking, studying wildlife and creating epic outdoor fires (while reviewing fire safety). As part of the Journey, we are tasked with creating a Take Action project-to make the world a better place by educating others. Our Take Action project was to educate our community on ways to save the bees. We made bee fountains and handed them out at the “Woodbridge Like Me” event and spoke to families about the importance of bees. The end of October found us celebrating our founder, Juliette Gordon Low, whose birthday is October 31st. We provided a service to First Church-helping with the decorations for their Halloween event. Followed by a party with games and treats. The girls have had their first cookie booth of the season but do not worry if you missed it, cookie season officially starts at the end of January! Finally, we completed the Girl Scout Wellness mind, body and spirit Patch! Some of the requirements included being mindful and full of gratitude, new breathing techniques and how to make delicious banana “ice cream”. We are wrapping up 2023 with a yummy cookie swap (we really do love cookies). And are so very excited for the new year! Yours in Scouting, Tamara Lyhne, Troop Leader 60163

Upcoming Events Holiday Family Fun

December 16th 10:00- 11:30AM @ Parish Hall, 5 Meetinghouse Lane
Cookie decorating, ornament making, all family sing-along with Christina. Check around the Parish House for More updates closer to the date!

You're invited!

DECEMBER 24

10:30AM AND 5:00PM

Christmas Eve

AT TRINITY CHURCH

Trinity Church Christmas Eve Services

All are welcome to attend our Christmas Eve services on Sunday, December 24th, at 10:30am and 5:00pm! Our morning service will offer nursery care and Children’s Church available for babies through 6th grade. Our evening service will be a family-friendly service and include a children’s book reading, a brief message, and Christmas songs for the whole family. Please join us this Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of Jesus!

Trinity Church is located at 33 Center Road. If you have any questions, please call 203-387-4711 x11 or email trinityoffice@trinityefc.com. You can also connect with us trinityefc.com and facebook.com/trinitychurchwoodbridge.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP EVENTS

Congregation Beth El – Keser Israel Events

Light Movies for Dark Nights

Through the month of January, BEKI will show a series of weekend Jewish films—both classics and more recent films—on the big cinema screen in the social hall. All of the movies include some comedy, and all are free. Refreshments will be served. Details at beki.org.

Trauma in Israel & Palestine

Dr. Ilan Harpaz-Rotem will speak Saturday, January 13 on the topic “Intergeneration and current trauma:



The complexity of trauma in the context of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine.”

A Professor of Psychiatry and of Psychology at Yale, Dr. Harpaz-Rotem is an investigator at the National Center for PTSD and directs the evaluation of PTSD treatment programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Details at beki.org.

Climate Talk

“We are All Climate Hypocrites Now” is the topic for a Zoom Schmooze on Tuesday, January 16 at 7:30 pm. Environmental



writer Sami Grover, who has written a book with that title, is the featured speaker at this event, organized by

BEKI’s Green Team. Grover approaches the climate crisis with urgency, moral righteousness, and practicality. The conversation will focus on thinking both individually and collectively about

the imperative to protect our planet. To request the Zoom link, email office@beki.org or call 203.389.2108 x 114.

Tu Bishvat Seder

Celebrate the New Year of Trees at a Tu Bishvat Seder, a dessert Seder for adults, on Wednesday, January 24. RSVP to office@beki.org.

Shabbat Shirah

In honor of the “Sabbath of Song,” BEKI will offer a Singing Schmooze on



Saturday, January 27. Come learn and sing Jewish music with Max DuBoff and other community members.

Details at beki.org.

Children’s Programs

Children’s Havura, K-2 Kehila, and Junior Congregation, all led by parent or grandparent volunteers, meet each Saturday. For more information, consult Education Director Annie Norman-Schiff at anormanschiff@beki.org.



Learn with the Rabbi

Rabbi Eric Woodward leads a discussion of the weekly Torah portion on Thursdays. Talmud class meets Sunday, December 17 and other select Sundays. Details at beki.org.



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



Gospel Shabbat Service & Concert

CELEBRATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Congregation B’nai Jacob, along with First Church of Christ, Woodbridge; the Greater New Haven African American Historical Society; the JEDI Taskforce of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven; Shoreline Soul; The Towers of New Haven; Valley Soul; and the Woodbridge DEI Committee are pleased to be celebrating the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. together at the 3rd Annual Gospel Shabbat service, concert and dinner on Friday evening, January 12, 2024.

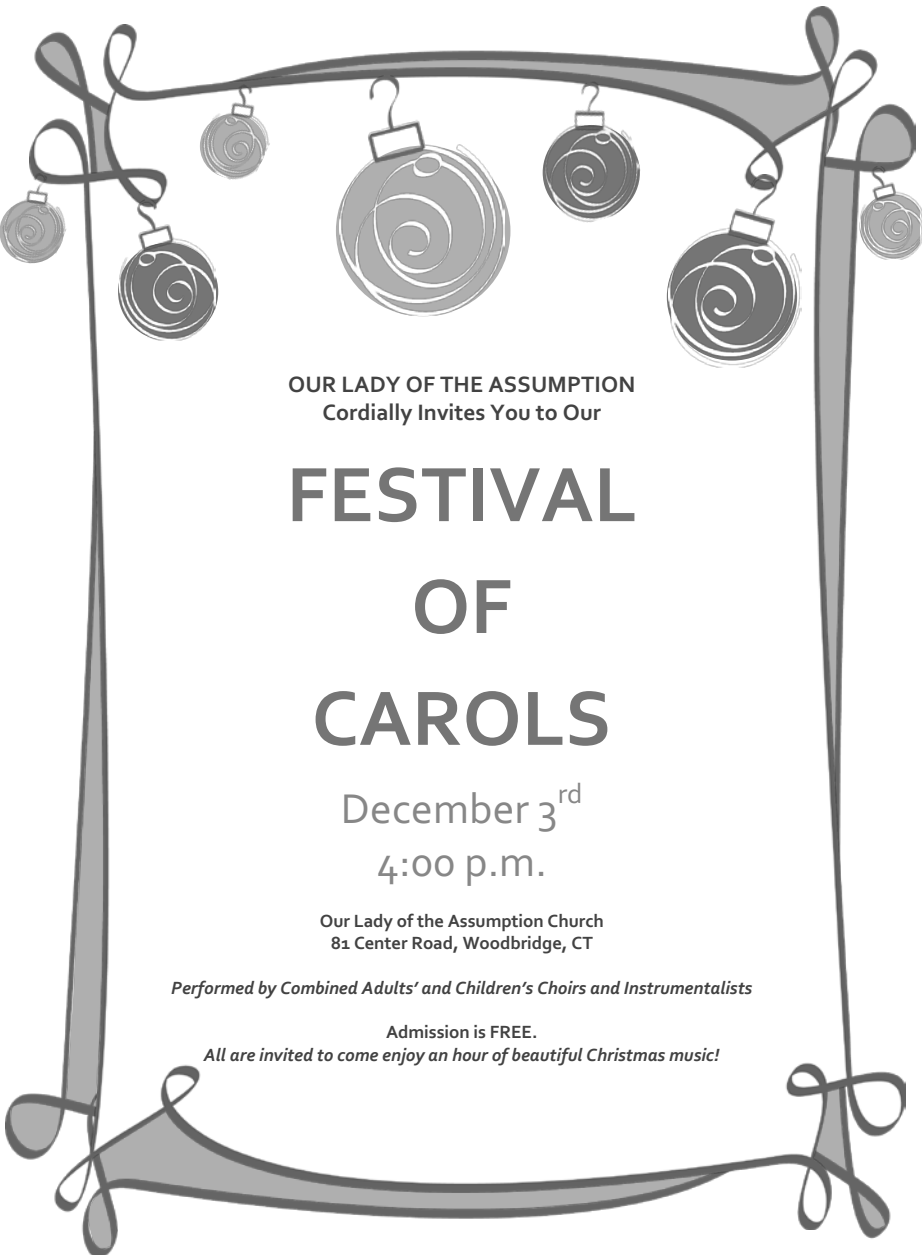
The choir, under the direction of professional singer and choir director Angela Clemmons, will be comprised of members from the various organizations and community. The energetic

and charismatic Clemmons has worked as a professional singer for over 35 years, including as a background singer with Aretha Franklin, Justin Timberlake, Celine Dion, Elton John and many others. Join in what promises to be an uplifting, spiritual community event.

The service and concert are open to the public and free of charge. The Shabbat dinner that follows requires registration and payment in advance.

For more information and to register, visit www.bnaijacob.org. Congregation B’nai Jacob is located at 75 Rimmon Road, Woodbridge, CT.

This program has been made possible, in part, through a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.



OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION
Cordially Invites You to Our

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

December 3rd
4:00 p.m.

Our Lady of the Assumption Church
81 Center Road, Woodbridge, CT

Performed by Combined Adults' and Children's Choirs and Instrumentalists

Admission is FREE.
All are invited to come enjoy an hour of beautiful Christmas music!

Woodbridge Town News

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Woodbridge Town News

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DEATH NOTICES



Diana Elizabeth Edelman Kleiner

Diana Elizabeth Edelman Kleiner, affectionally “DEEK”, passed away peacefully on November 12 at the age of 76. She was an art historian known worldwide for her expertise on the art and architecture of the ancient Romans.

Diana was the Dunham Professor of History of Art and Classics at Yale University, where she taught from 1980 to 2020. She loved her subject and her students. In the classroom, she was known for her dynamic lectures and colorful wardrobes. As the Founding Director of Open Yale Courses, she trailblazed new methods of teaching online. In the early 2000s, at a time

when most were scared to share their scholarly work online, she dared to be different and created beautiful digital courses that touched countless students far beyond Yale. Through her immortal online lectures, she left a permanent legacy across the globe.

Her online students frequently sang her praises. Learners sometimes logged on from remote villages with limited internet connectivity. She stayed up late on most nights chatting in online message boards and building personal relationships with admiring students.

Diana loved to travel, especially to Rome, and encouraged her students to go as well. She believed that learning should be hybrid—both in-person and online—many years before the world discovered it. Her excursions were not just about the obvious tourist sights. They were about experiencing all the nooks and crannies of both the ancient and modern city of Rome. She proudly guided students not only to the Top 10 Monuments, but also to the Top 10 Gelaterias.

Diana dedicated much of her scholarly life to and completed seminal work on Roman women, including the ground-breaking exhibition “I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome.” She is also

See “Death Notices” On Page 21

HEALTH & FITNESS

Proprioception: The 6th Sense of the Body

By KYLE BRANDAY MSPT

Balance is a complex thing in life, but in the body, it takes on a whole different meaning. Internally, we have to balance our heart rate, blood pressure, cholesterol, breathing, and digestion. The most critical thing to balance our body functionally is something most people don’t even sense. It’s called Proprioception.

Proprioception is our body’s innate ability to know where it is in space. Meaning, that our body can sense its own positioning. Seems simple right? It is, until our body experiences trauma, strain, or, forbid, a debilitating event such as a stroke or surgery.

Our body’s 6th Sense is much more complex in how it operates. Ask yourself a question, How do you know your foot hit the ground when you walk? Now take it further. How do you know you landed in a stable position which will allow you to absorb the impact, assess the change of ground surface under your foot, and know it’s safe to load that leg and take your next step? Not so easy is it?

Proprioception works based on our nervous system being able to instantaneously uptake and interpret information and fire a signal back to your muscles with how to respond. Think of how quickly you can walk, run, jump, or climb. Your body has to respond even quicker to create the right response to the ever-changing conditions around you. This is what makes proprioception truly our body’s 6th sense.

But proprioception isn’t just about signals coming from your feet up. It’s also about total body position. How do we know that we are slouching at our desk? What about sensing where your arm is when you’re reaching to get the plate out of the upper cabinet?

Our 6th sense has so many far-reaching implications that we cannot function properly without it. Where we see it be the most integral, though, is in our balance. We walk fast, slow, sideways, backwards, and every way in between. But none of that can occur without proprioception.

Now that we know why it’s so important, let’s look at what affects proprioception. Orthopedic injuries such as sprains, strains, tears, and broken bones can negatively affect this sense. By changing the length tension relationship of different muscles, it creates an opening for muscles to lag in their ability to sustain and create a contraction to stabilize. Ligaments which have been over stretched cannot provide the natural input back to the brain to then engage stabilizing muscles when the joint moves outside of its normal pattern.

Proprioception is also affected by the combined input of our vestibular system,



Kyle Brandy

stretch receptors within the muscles, and our nerves running between our thighs, calves, and ankles/feet. This combined input creates movement strategies to overcome a disturbance in our balance.

Ankle-Knee-Hip Strategy is the way in which our lower body coordinates functional movement of what muscles contract at what time. The old saying “Timing is everything” certainly applies to the way in which our muscles work together to create motion. If your thigh muscles (quadriceps and hamstrings) fire too early, it could lead to our toes dragging across the ground and tripping.

Whether you are 1 year old, 21 years old, or 91 years old, proprioception can make or break our ability to move and function. High level athletes need it to stabilize their movement so they can wow us with their athletic prowess. But all of us need it to make sure we don’t end up falling over ourselves.

Want to get your proprioception “balanced”...you have to start with finding out why it’s not working properly. That’s where we come in. A full head to toe assessment to determine the proper treatment path is the first step. From there, progression of balance related exercises to increase stability will help restore your function and confidence.

For more information or to speak with a therapist about the next step to rebalance your body, call (203) 389-4593. Tap into your 6th sense today!

Kyle Brandy, MSPT, is a Physical Therapist and Partner working in the Woodbridge, CT office at 1 Bradley Road. A graduate of Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT, Kyle specializes in the treatment of orthopedic and neurological injuries and dysfunction. With over 17 years of experience working with patients from infants and kids to geriatrics and professional athletes, Kyle’s approach to treatment is to maximize a person’s physical potential through functional evaluation and find the root cause of their dysfunction. He can be reached directly at (203) 389-4593 or visit www.amitypt.com/appointments/ to schedule your evaluation.

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE

WOODBRIDGE TAX NOTICE

THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF THE WOODBRIDGE REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MOTOR VEHICLE BILLS BECOME DUE AND PAYABLE ON MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2024. YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A BILL FOR JANUARY - ONLY THIS REMINDER - THE BILL YOU RECEIVED IN JULY INCLUDED YOUR JANUARY INVOICE. YOU MAY IGNORE THIS NOTICE IF YOU ESCROW YOUR TAXES WITH YOUR MORTGAGE COMPANY.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024 IS THE LAST DAY TO PAY SAID TAXES WITHOUT INTEREST. INTEREST WILL BE CALCULATED FROM THE DUE DATE OF JANUARY 1, 2024 AT THE RATE OF 1.5 PERCENT PER MONTH OR 18 PERCENT PER ANNUM. MINIMUM INTEREST CHARGE IS \$2.00. IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE STATUTE SEC. 12-130, FAILURE TO RECEIVE A BILL DOES NOT EXEMPT YOU FROM PAYMENT OF TAXES, INTEREST CHARGES AND FEES.

THE WOODBRIDGE TAX OFFICE IS OPEN MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 8:30 AM TO 4:30 PM. (CLOSED JANUARY 1ST AND JANUARY 15TH).

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, THE TAX OFFICE WILL ALSO BE OPEN SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH FROM 9:00 AM TO 12 NOON AND THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024, THE LAST DAY TO PAY WITHOUT PENALTY, FROM 8:30 AM TO 7:00 PM. PLEASE TAKE THE WEATHER INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN PAYING AT THE LAST MINUTE.

CHECKS AND APPROPRIATE BILLS MAY BE MAILED TO: TAX COLLECTOR, WOODBRIDGE TOWN HALL, 11 MEETINGHOUSE LANE, WOODBRIDGE, CT 06525. THE PAYMENT MUST BE POSTMARKED AT A UNITED STATES POST OFFICE BY FEBRUARY 1, 2024 TO BE CONSIDERED ON TIME. IF A RECEIPT IS DESIRED, PLEASE ENCLOSE THE CORRECT BILL AND A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS MAY NOW BE MADE ONLINE (ONLY) AT woodbridgect.org. THERE IS A FEE INVOLVED WITH USING THIS SERVICE, BE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE FEE BEFORE YOU FINISH THE TRANSACTION.

PAT CRISCO, CCMC
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SERVICE DIRECTORY



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“Death Notices” From Page 20

the author of Cleopatra and Rome, which opened a new perspective on one of the most intriguing women who ever lived. In dedicating her life to an ancient society ruled by male emperors, she gave a voice to Roman women and introduced them to the world.

Her accomplishments are too many to list, but there are several more that deserve mention. She is the author of numerous books and articles on Roman art in its political and social context, including Roman Sculpture (1992), which remains the fundamental reference on the subject. In 2014, she created the magical, interactive e-book, Roman Architecture: A Visual Guide, which includes maps, geolocation links, and more than 250 photographs, most of them taken on her

own trips to Europe. Diana was the first woman to chair Yale’s Classics Department; the first female Head of Pierson College; and from 1995 to 2003, Deputy Provost for the Arts with responsibility for arts, divinity, and new media.

Diana earned her B.A. at Smith College in 1969, and her M.A., M. Phil., and Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1970, 1974, and 1976.

She is the daughter of Hilda and Morton Edelman, whom she loved dearly. She is survived by her husband Fred, son Alex, and grandchildren Teddy and Samantha. She was a devoted mother who put her son above anything else and taught him that hard work and creativity can be an unstoppable combination.

Funeral services are private. The Wakelee Memorial Funeral Home, 167

Wakelee Avenue, Ansonia is in care of the arrangements. Online condolences may be made at www.wakeleememorial.com.

Paul DeCoster

Paul Howard DeCoster, of Woodbridge, 89, died November 1, at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Born November 8, 1933, in South Paris, Maine, and raised in Laconia, New Hampshire, Paul was a graduate of Yale University and Law School and practiced law in New York City for 42 years before retiring to Woodbridge with his wife, Judy, in 1999.

In retirement, Paul dedicated himself to community service and local causes, such as the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society and Massaro Farm. A life-long student, he took courses in mathematics, statistics and history at Southern Connecticut State University for 15 years. He also was a patron and appreciator of the arts, particularly

music. Finally, Paul was a life-long servant of the Democratic Party, an institution he was dedicated to and, invariably, disappointed by.

In addition to Judy, his wife of 65 years, Paul is survived by his sister, Carol Innes, his three children, Emily, Paul and Matthew, his daughters-in-law, Raquel and Erika, and his sole grandchild, Jesse Durbin.

A memorial service was planned at the First Church of Christ, Woodbridge, on December 10. To share memories of Paul, visit paul-howard-decoster.forevermissed.com.

The family kindly requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to organizations that Paul was dedicated to: The Massaro Community Farm Legacy Fund, established by Paul and Judith DeCoster, <https://www.valleyfoundation.org/articles/massaro-farm-legacy-fund>, or to the The Amity and Woodbridge Historical Society (woodbridgehistory.org).

DEATH NOTICES

The Woodbridge Town News will publish Death Notices for Woodbridge and Bethany families free of charge as a service to our readers. Family members please email notice (limit 250 words, please) to: edit@woodbridgetownnews.com

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“First Church” From Page 18

Drive Through Home Goods Drive

December 16th 10:00-11:30AM @ Parish Hall, 5 Meetinghouse Lane

Bring soap, detergent, toiletries. Things that food banks need but aren't often donated. Drive through our area for drop off with a volunteer.

All Ages Christmas Eve Service

December 24th 3:30pm @ Sanctuary 5 Meetinghouse Lane

We will be hosting a carols and lessons service on Christmas Eve. This will take the place of the 10am Worship Service. Our collection will go to IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) in New Haven.



Aging as a Spiritual Journey—A Special Six Week Program

January 22nd, February 12th and March 4th 2024 - 11:30, Parish Hall, 5 Meetinghouse Lane

IRIS Furniture Collection

IRIS is collecting furniture to help furnish 40 apartments in the metropolitan area. If you have: Tall Dressers, Sofa, Rugs, Full dish Sets, Dining Room Tables+ Chairs, End Tables, Pots, Pans or glasses to donate contact the Office.

Zoom Option

The option to attend Sunday Service via Zoom continues to be available. 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.

*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 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Join the FCCW Choir!

New members are always welcome. Join us for rehearsals each Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

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!

First Church of Christ is located at 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge, CT 06525 • 203-389-2119 • office@uccw.org • www.uccw.org • www.facebook.com/uccwoodbridge



Local Dancers Perform in The Varsity Spirit Spectacular

Abby Blair, Taraji Carter-Gore, Sophie Glassman, and Makenzie Rowland from Amity High School in Woodbridge, CT are four of more than 800 high school cheerleaders and dancers from across the country that represented the camp brands of Varsity Spirit in the Varsity Spirit Spectacular at the Walt Disney World® Resort in Orlando, Florida from November 17 - November 20, 2023. The individuals invited to perform are part of a select group of captains, co-captains, officers and seniors who attended a Varsity Spirit summer camp this summer hosted by Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA), Universal Dance Association (UDA), National Cheerleaders Association (NCA), National Dance Alliance (NDA), United Spirit Association (USA) and Urban Cheerleading Experience (UCE). Abby, Taraji, Sophie, and Makenzie performed in an exclusive performance at Disney's Magic Kingdom Park before of hundreds of fans. Besides enjoying a sunny trip to Orlando, performers had

the opportunity to meet cheerleaders and dancers from across the nation and enjoy a magical holiday season at Walt Disney World® Resort parks. For more information, visit www.varsity.com or contact John Calitri at 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.

Spartans 9U Football Team Headed to Pop Warner Nationals

After winning the Northern Connecticut Pop Warner and New England Regional Championships, the 21 players from Woodbridge, Bethany, and Orange are heading to the Pop Warner Super Bowl Nationals being held De-

cember 2-8, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. This is the first Amity Pop Warner football team to ever make it this far in the championships and the first year that any 9u football teams have been invited to compete in the Nationals.

Amity Youth Lacrosse: Register Now for 2024!

Amity Youth Lacrosse has opened registration for our 2024 Winter Clinic and 2024 Spring Season. The mission of Amity Youth Lacrosse is to develop an understanding of the sport of lacrosse and promote physical fitness and a sense of pride through teamwork,

team spirit, strong sportsmanship, and community representation through service and example. The program supports boys in grades K thru 8th residing in Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge, CT. More information is available on our website, amityyouthlacrosse.org.



Change of Season Good Time to Change Landscape

BY ANDREW DANZIG
WOODBRIDGE TRAILMASTER

With Thanksgiving behind us, the feel of winter is in the air. Most trees have dropped their leaves and the landscape looks stark. Before you bring out snow shovels, sleds and skis, this is a good time to take stock of your home landscape with an eye to compatibility with native habitat. Our 1+ acre lots are not islands unto themselves, but part of a greater whole within southern New England. With proper planning and intention, each property can include habitat that supports wildlife and ecological health while being aesthetically pleasing. We face many challenges to achieving this. The Emerald Ash Borer has killed virtually every ash tree in the area, if not the whole state. Beech trees are being threatened by a tiny nematode in the leaves. Climate change is altering the type of plants that grow in this region. The 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the US released last month shows a dramatic shift in Connecticut. The zones are based on the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature. While previously Woodbridge was in zone 6b (-5 to 0°F), we now straddle zones 7a (0 to 5°F) and 7b (5 to 10°F), which is new to CT. While these issues are beyond our control, there is a major ecological threat that resides in virtually every parcel in town that individuals can control, with effort. That is, invasive plants.

Invasives are non-native exotic plants that may have been planted intentionally years ago for their ornamental appeal, or accidentally when

seeds hitchhiked with other products or people. With no local natural enemies, they thrive in our hospitable environment. They produce prodigious amount of seeds or fruit, which are dispersed by wind or animals, allowing them to spread rapidly. They are very harmful to our local ecology because they crowd out native plants, reduce biological diversity, and can threaten endangered species. As described below, one type of invasive plant helps spread Lyme Disease. That is just one way invasive plants can be a nuisance to individual property owners.

Now it's time to take a survey of what is growing in your own yards. Are there shrubs still holding on to small red leaves that were on full display a month ago? Look closely at the stems. Do you see corky ridges on each side? Are they holding small red berries? These are *Euonymus alatus*, aka Burning Bush. Are there vines winding around trees and branches? They can climb quite high and grow large enough to actually bring down seemingly strong trees. These vines, known as *Celastrus orbiculatus*, Oriental Bittersweet, produce clumps of reddish-orange berries and can be identified by their orange-colored roots. Another plant that may be climbing up your trees or spreading its canes in broad mounds is *Rosa multiflora* or Multiflora Rose. This thorny bush may still be loaded with lots of red berries. A smaller bush, with lots of sharp spines and red berries is *Berberis thunbergii*, Japanese Barberry. This plant is identifiable by the yellow pith wood under the bark layer. Barberry

is a particularly bad actor because it provides shelter for mice which carry deer ticks. Controlling Barberry helps to control the spread of Lyme disease.

What do all of these invasive plants have in common? They have spread to nearby woodlands and fields. You will be hard pressed to find any area traversed by the 35 miles of public trails in Woodbridge that aren't overrun by one or more species of these and other invasive plants. (This problem extends far beyond Woodbridge to our State Parks, local Land Trusts, the Appalachian Trail and other areas.)

There are several things each of us can do to attack this formidable problem:

1. Identify and remove all invasive plants from your property. For plants that still have berries, this is especially important to do now before birds feed on them during the winter and spread seeds around your property and beyond. This step requires constant vigilance as seeds already in the ground will sprout new plants next year. Fortunately, young sprouts are much easier to remove than mature plants.
2. Replace invasives with native plants. While plants like Burning Bush and Barberry may have been planted years ago for their leaf color or other features, there are wonderful native alternatives that have similar characteristics. Make a plan or work with a landscape designer to help create a plan. As long as the ground is not frozen, now is an excellent time to plant. You need not wait until Spring as you may be able to

find some great end of season sales at nearby nurseries.

3. Volunteer to clear invasives in our area. Join our monthly trail events where you will be able to learn how to identify and properly remove invasive plants while making new friends with other volunteers from our community. (Other trail maintenance tasks performed include clearing fallen trees and limbs, cutting back growth that is encroaching on the paths, and other ways to make our trails as user-friendly as possible.) There are also opportunities to work with groups such as the Woodbridge Land Trust, Woodbridge Parks Association and Friends of Sleeping Giant State Park.

Feel free to contact me at trailmaster@woodbridgect.org for help with any of these recommendations. I have presented here only a small sample of some of the most prevalent nuisance plants in our area. Your property may already be afflicted by a dozen or more other invasive plant species. By being mindful of which plants in your landscape are invasive or not, you can make modifications that enhance your outdoor space in ways that are both aesthetically pleasing, enhance biodiversity, and provide habitat to beneficial insects, birds and other animals. Encourage your neighbors to do the same to enlarge the area connected to our native environment.

Andrew Danzig is the Woodbridge Trailmaster and a UConn certified Advanced Master Gardener.

HOLIDAY CHEER BEGINS HERE!



Free Hot Cocoa & Free 2-Hour Parking

- November 24 – December 24

Present a same-day receipt from a participating retailer for \$50 or more at Claire's Corner Copia or Common Grounds for a free hot cocoa. Visit our website for details.

Storytelling & Selfies with Santa & Mrs. Claus

- Saturdays, November 25, December 2, 9, 16 & 23 1:00-3:00pm
B Natural Kitchen, 260 College Street
- Sundays, November 26, December 3, 10 & 17, 1:00-3:00pm
Barnes & Noble/The Yale Bookstore, 77 Broadway (lower level)

Chapel Street Ice Carving Demonstrations

- Saturdays, November 25, December 2, 9, 16 & 23, 1:00-3:00pm
On the sidewalk in front of Üni-Home Life, 1046 Chapel Street

Strolling Yuletide Carolers

- Chapel Street, Saturdays, November 25, December 2, 9, 16 & 23,
12:00-3:00pm
- Broadway District, Sundays, November 26, December 3, 10 & 17,
12:00-3:00pm

Andy Wolf Holiday Tubulation Series

- Saturdays, November 25, December 2, 16 & 23, 1:00-4:00pm
Broadway Island, across from J.Crew/Apple/lululemon
- Sundays, November 27, December 3, 10 & 17, 1:00-4:00pm
Chapel Street, in front of Union League Café

Free Cupcake or Hot Cocoa and Strolling Carolers

- Saturdays, November 25, December 2, 9, 16 & 23, 1:00-3:00pm
in the Whitney-Audubon District
Present a same-day receipt from a participating retailer for \$25 or more for a free cupcake at Katalina's or hot cocoa at Willoughby's Coffee & Tea. Visit our website for a list of participating retailers TheShopsatYale.com/WhitneyAudubon.



The Shops at Yale.com/Holiday

A unique collection of more than 65 local boutiques, national brands, cafes, restaurants & attractions with convenient parking in historic downtown New Haven. Plan your visit at TheShopsatYale.com.