

# Haddam Killingworth News

AN INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER COVERING HADDAM, HIGGANUM, HADDAM NECK AND KILLINGWORTH

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September 10, 2020

For breaking news go to [HK-Now.com](http://HK-Now.com) every day

Free weekly

## H-K welcomes students and staff back to school

By Holly Hageman,  
Superintendent, RSD #17

The Board of Education, administration, teachers and staff were very happy to welcome students to the 2020-21 school year. After a long period of in-person closure and remote learning, followed by summer, the time had finally come for the learning community to be back together. After months and months of intensive planning, acquisition of technology resources and personal protective equipment, human resource management, curriculum and professional development, we were ready to open up the doors and have students come streaming through.



Becky Harkin's BES class. Photos courtesy of RSD #17.

These first few days have been a delight. Having students be able to return to the routine of school, meeting

their teachers and classmates, and getting into their school work is just so natural. It is almost remarkable how wearing masks just doesn't seem that unusual already. We are incredibly pleased that all students came prepared with their masks, and we are also grateful to community members that sewed cloth masks so that every student and staff member received a washable mask from the school district. The next batch of masks are expected any day now, so that each student will have a second mask provided.

The hybrid reopening has been designed and intended to allow schools to reopen in a controlled manner so that new safety routines could be effectively implemented and relationships could be formed quickly between teachers and students. The district is grateful to parents for their patience with this approach. This model is in place until September 25th, and we will re-evaluate during the month of September with the aim to reopen as fully as possible thereafter. The remote learning option will continue to be available to students in any model.

Approximately 87% of students are

*Continued on Page H2*

## Twins climb top New England peaks

By Nicole Stevens

Jagger and Cody Stevens, nine-year-old twin brothers from Haddam, have been hiking in some capacity ever since they were born. As babies, the boys came along in backpack carriers wherever their parents hiked, and began following the trails on foot as soon as they could walk. They started with simple rambles on blazed trails, and by the age of four, the twins had accomplished their first



*Continued on Page Hx* Jagger (l) and Cody (r) Stevens. Photo courtesy of Nicole Stevens.

## Helping Hands Food Pantry of Killingworth adds hours for food pickup

By Genie Dethloff, Chair of Publicity,  
Killingworth Women's Organization

The Helping Hands Food Pantry is glad to announce that it has added set hours for food pickup by Killingworth residents on Thursdays from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm and Saturdays from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Food pickup is curbside at 242 Route 81. Pantry food is available for weekly pickup, if needed. Currently only nonperishable foods are available.



Please call 860 663-1765 ext. 401 or email [helpinghands@kwoc.org](mailto:helpinghands@kwoc.org) to let the pantry know you are coming during these hours. You can order your food by phone, email or pick up an order form outside the pantry. If you can't make the designated hours, food pickup is still available by appointment - leave a phone message or email. All information is confidential.

The pantry is now managed by the Killingworth Women's Organization (KWO), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. To learn more about the KWO see their website [www.kwoc.org](http://www.kwoc.org)

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## H-K welcomes students and staff back to school

*Continued from page H1*  
 participating in the hybrid learning model and 11% are in the full remote option. There has been a larger than usual number of students who are homeschooling or opting for private school this year due to COVID-19. To start the year, fewer students are riding the school buses by parent choice and schools have implemented more expansive parent drop off procedures than is needed typically. Districts within our region appear to have similar statistics in all of these areas.

Some things are certainly different this year including mask wearing, social distancing, plexiglass barriers at reception areas and other spaces where advised, and signage as reminders. What is especially different is how teachers are coordinating the simultaneous teaching of students in-person and students learning from home. This has been one of the biggest changes, challenges and lifts for the district. RSD17 teachers have done an outstanding job taking advantage of the professional development



Elementary school gym class.

provided and giving input to the leadership as to how to logistically make this possible. Students are adapting extremely well, engaging, self-advocating, and demonstrating great problem-solving skills. What is clear to see is that everyone is very happy to be back together and all are adjusting effectively to this new way of providing education.

Our staff has done an amazing job with having

students feel welcomed back and ready to jump into learning. The following are quotes from each principal, summarizing their observations from this first week:

Brienne Whidden, BES: "The first week of school at Burr has been amazing! We were excited to welcome back all of our students both in person and virtually. Teachers did an incredible job of simultaneously teaching in person and remote students and making both groups feel equally included and welcome. The students have been equally as incredible at adapting to new routines and procedures in school and thinking flexibly when live streaming with teachers from home. We are excited to continue building our classroom communities

and diving into new learning."

Dennis Reed, KES: "I am incredibly impressed and amazed with how our school community has performed during this school reopening. Our staff has embraced the reality and challenge of having students in both physical and virtual environments;

*Continued on page H3*



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## Haddam twins climb highest summit in each New England state

Continued from page H1

“big hike.” That was the year they climbed Mount Megunticook in Maine, traversing over three miles with 1,000 feet of elevation gain. They doubled that feat the following year, climbing Mount Ascutney in Vermont at age five, covering over six miles with 2,300 feet of elevation gain.

“Being so little and completing these big hikes, they always receive lots of positive feedback from the mostly adult hikers who are impressed with such little kids being able to make these climbs, many being rugged hikes with rock scrambles. We always joke that the boys are part mountain goat,” says their mother, Nicole Stevens. Given their natural enjoyment of climbing, the family decided together to set a goal of climbing the highest summit in every New England State. When Jagger and Cody were six, the Stevens’ climbed Bear Mountain in Connecticut, and just this August completed their mission by climbing

Mt. Kathadin in Maine.

The twins’ father, Jeb Stevens, has always had a passion for the outdoors, and has certainly instilled the thirst for adventure in Jagger and Cody. Not only is he in charge of planning his family’s adventures, he also helps his sons train so they are able to complete these major hikes with ease. Watching his children become more fit and capable hikers and athletes is what inspired Jeb to open a unique outdoor fitness coaching business called Wild Spirit Fitness. Based out of Haddam, Jeb’s goal with Wild Spirit Fitness is to help people improve their physical vitality through cardiovascular and strength training in natural settings.

Jeb has often been sought out for advice on how parents can get their own children more interested in the outdoors, what gear they need for a camping trip, or how to organize a wilderness backpacking excursion. So now Wild Spirit Fitness has expanded

to offer assistance with every aspect of adventure planning. Individuals, families, or groups can strike out into nature with confidence, and enjoy a personalized, worry-free outdoor experience of their own.

And now that Jagger and Cody have successfully completed their goal of climbing to the highest summit in each New England state (Bear Mountain in CT, Mount Mansfield in VT, Jerimoth Hill in RI, Mount Washington in NH, Mount Greylock in MA, and Mount Katahdin in Maine), they eagerly set a new goal for themselves. They plan to hike all the Presidentials in the White Mountains, as well as New England’s “Fifty Finest,” which consists of the 50 most prominent peaks in New England. The boys have already checked off several from the list, and they show no signs of slowing down. They are already asking if someday they can hike Mount Everest. Jagger and Cody may be small, but they have big goals and the drive to achieve them.

## H-K welcomes students and staff back to school

Continued from page H2

teaching across both domains simultaneously and engaging with all students. Whether they are at home or in the class, we are building a cohesive community. It is remarkable to witness! Our students are equally remarkable. They have adapted very effectively to mask wearing and have learned very quickly how to maintain social distance spacing while still enjoying each other’s company.”

Eric Larson, HKIS: “The fourth and fifth grade students were all ‘eye-smiles’ upon their return to Haddam-Killingworth Intermediate School. The HKIMS PTO set out blue and gold balloons and had bubble machines filling the air with soapy excitement. The kids have done an outstanding job learning the new safety procedures and finding new ways to play and interact together. Our teachers have welcomed the students that are at home and those within the classroom with daily meetings and lessons. We are all getting to know each other as we are building a community of learners.”

Dolores Bates, HKMS: “It has been exciting to have the HKMS building bustling with staff and students again! Students were welcomed back with balloons and bubbles provided by the HKIMS PTO. Students transitioned back to school in smaller cohorts, meeting their remote classmates through virtual live sessions. They are showing great independence and teachers are making connections with both in-school and remote learners. I am really

impressed with how everyone is managing all of the new health and safety protocols, especially with mask-wearing and social distancing.”

Donna Hayward, HKHS: “The best part of the first days at HKHS has been how happy the school community is to see each other. Students have been incredibly positive about the safety measures in place to keep our school open. Despite the “distance,” Cougars are reconnecting and already settling in to learn.”

### HADDAM FAITH / COMMUNITY

#### HNCC to hold Take Out Turkey Dinner: September 26

By Melissa Olson Pionzio

Haddam Neck Congregational Church Ladies Aid will hold a Fall Take Out Turkey Dinner on Sept. 26. Dinner with all the fixings and homemade des-

sert will be available for pick up at the Haddam Neck Congregational Church School Parish House Building starting at 5:00 p.m. (Please note this event will be held in place of our regular turkey dinner that is always held in October.) Cost is \$15.

To order, Sue Olsen, 860-267-2848 or Helen Peron, 860-467-6662. [www.haddamneckcongregation-church.org](http://www.haddamneckcongregation-church.org)

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# Absentee voting schedule for November 3 election

Press release from the  
Town of Haddam Registrar of Voters

TOWN OF HADDAM REGISTRAR OF VOTERS  
30 Field Park Drive  
Haddam, CT 06438  
860-345-0979  
registrar@haddam.org

ATTENTION HADDAM VOTERS:

The Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State

will be sending out applications for absentee ballots to all eligible (active, registered) voters between Sept. 8 and Sept. 11.

All voters are eligible to vote by absentee ballot for the 2020 election by checking COVID-19 excuse on the application.

If you choose to vote by absentee ballot, please return your application as soon as you can. By law, the ballots themselves cannot be mailed out before Oct. 2, 2020, so please return them as soon as possi-

ble as they must be received by 8:00pm on Election Day, Nov. 3, 2020.

The Haddam Town Clerk will collect the ballots daily from the secure ballot drop box which is outside of Haddam Town Hall. Therefore, it might be best to use the drop box to ensure that all ballots are received on time.

Raymond Skarsten  
Saralyn D'Amato

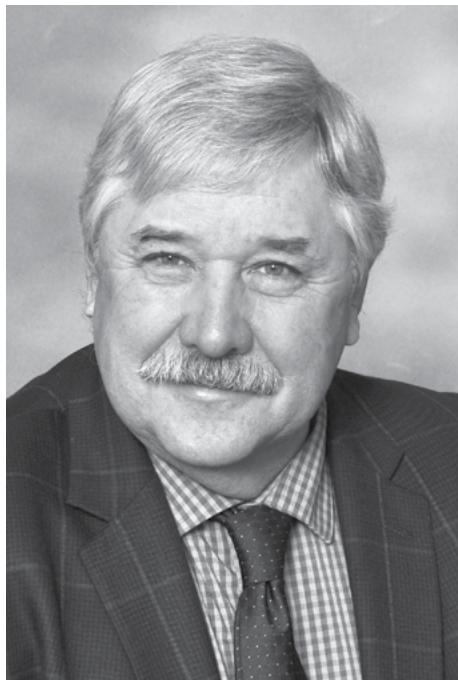
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# Westbrook selectman enters 35th District State Rep. race

By Sharon Challenger

After learning that incumbent Republican state representative Jesse MacLachlan (35th District) was dropping out of the race, Westbrook Selectman, John Hall III decided to run for the office. Hall, a lifelong resident of Westbrook has served as Selectman on the Board of Selectmen in Westbrook since 2009. Additional experiences include serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals as Chairman from 1983 -2009, serving the Westbrook Foundation from 1997 – 2007, taking on the role of Chairman on Westbrook Foundation 2001- 2007, acting as Moderator for the Westbrook Congregational Church 2007-2015, President of Artech Water Systems, and serving on the Connecticut Farm Bureau Middlesex County Board of Directors.

In addition to his passion for helping his community, he and his wife



John Hall III.

Bonnie own and operate Maple Breeze Farm on East Pond Meadow Rd. in

Westbrook. The farmland was granted by the King of England in 1635 and has been farmed ever since then. In the summers you will find them serving customers at the Lyme Farmer's Market on Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and in Chester, CT on Sundays 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

John's passion for farming is evident in his service to the CT Farm Bureau where he has worked helping to elevate the stature of agriculture in CT. He is committed to the environment and farm sustainability. The Bureau's mission is to increase farm income and improve the quality of life for Connecticut farmers and their consumers. Each summer the eight county farm bureaus hold policy development meetings where they share concerns and ideas with one another. Through the years many policy changes have come about. In the 1970's and 1980's farms could not sell their goods openly like they do now. Thanks to the efforts of Farm Bureaus and leaders like John Hall III, laws have changed, and we are now able to enjoy Farmer's Markets all across our state.

Why the decision to run for the position of State Representative now? He has a strong interest in the legislative process and feels that the time is right.

His years of experience in government have prepared him to take on the role and he is eager to work to help Connecticut improve our financial situation.

When asked if he would continue to serve as Selectman for Westbrook should he win in the November election, he said he would step down and focus on his responsibilities as a State Representative. He feels the problems the State faces will need a lot of attention and he wants to dedicate his time to those responsibilities.

A fiscal conservative, John wants to work towards restoring fiscal order in Connecticut. Having served as Selectman in Westbrook for 11 years he has helped keep tax increases under control during his tenure. While he realizes that the problems Connecticut faces are quite serious, he would like to work towards getting the state out of the situation we are currently in. He is realistic however and knows it will not happen overnight.

In the November 2020 election, Hall will face Democratic nominee Christine Goupil who is currently on the Clinton Town Council. The 35th District serves northern Westbrook, Killingworth, and Clinton.



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## Fender Bender or Worse: Should I Call the Police?

By Attorney AnnMarie Cienava Rocco

If you're involved in a motor vehicle collision, one of the first things you should do is call the local police who can be an invaluable source of information in such a difficult situation. The officer can:

- provide or call for emergency medical care (of course, if there are serious injuries, someone should call 911 immediately, before calling the police),
- secure the collision scene,
- investigate the potential cause of the accident, and
- document important information.

The officer will prepare a police report in connection with the crash. The report should be available in about a week, but it may take much longer depending on the seriousness of any resulting injuries or death. At the scene, however, the officer should provide you with a copy of an Accident Information Summary (AIS), which will be helpful when requesting a full report. The AIS is also useful when beginning the process of getting any damages to your vehicle repaired, or having it declared a total loss. This AIS provides the names of the parties involved, their insurance information, the collision location, date and time, and a Case Number that will correspond to the number assigned to the full report. The full report is a critical document which is relied upon fairly heavily by everyone involved in the car insurance claim or car accident lawsuit process.

Even if you have a "fender bender", and don't believe you have injuries, you should still call the police. Many times, injuries arise several days after the initial collision, and minor damage to your vehicle does not always equate with no injuries.

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# HADDAM-KILLINGWORTH TOWN & COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please visit [www.haddam.org](http://www.haddam.org), [www.townofkillingworth.com](http://www.townofkillingworth.com) or [hk-now.com](http://hk-now.com) for the most current information, including cancellations, location changes, time changes.

## Thursday, September 10

Haddam Park & Recreation meeting, remote access only, 7:30 p.m.

## Friday, September 11

Higganum Farmer's Market, HES, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

The market will be hosted every Friday at the Haddam Elementary School grounds, rain\*\* or shine. (\*\*May be cancelled if weather predictions call for severe conditions)

A variety of vendors will be available every week. This is the perfect opportunity to stock up on fresh produce, tasty dinner foods, homemade goods, and other treats! Regular vendors will include Bittersweet Farm, Wellstone Farm, Biscotti and Beyond, bread from the Bread Ministry at the First Congregational Church of Haddam, Cold Goats Farm, Auntie Arwen's Spices, MJ Jewelry, Yalla Organic, Oh, Fudge! and more, Hackmatack Maple Syrup, and 7 Falls Mush-

rooms. Pizzeria Da Vinci will be on-site every week, and food trucks such as Rogue Coffee, G-Monkey, and Flaco's Tacos will join us throughout the season.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HigganumFarmersMarket/](http://www.facebook.com/HigganumFarmersMarket/)

## Saturday, September 12

Haddam Scouts BSA Can & Bottle Drive, Community Center in Higganum, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Haddam Scouts BSA Troops #44 & #44G will be collecting returnable cans and bottles at the Community Center at 9 Candlewood Hill Road in Higganum Center. The money raised supports the troop activities such as trips, campouts, and outings. Due to COVID-19, if you could pre-sort your donations into plastic, glass, and aluminum, that would be very helpful to the Scouts. Thank you for your donation!

Super Saturday Storytime, Killingworth Library, 10:30-11:00 a.m.

Weekly family fun for kids of all ages! Drop-in format, no registration necessary. Adult must accompany child.

Stop the Bleed Class, Killingworth Ambulance Association HQ, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

The Killingworth Ambulance Association will hold its first "Stop the Bleed" class of 2020 at the KAA's Route 81 headquarters. The course begins at 11:00 a.m. and is free and open to persons ages 12 years and older.

Those who attend are required to wear protective face masks. For more information, contact the Killingworth Ambulance Association at (860) 663-2450 or log on to [killingworthambulance.org](http://killingworthambulance.org)

Pizza Night- DaVinci's benefit for HKYFS, 4-8 p.m.

Place your order with Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-663-2256) Killingworth or Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-345-2251) Higganum/Haddam. We will deliver your order to your door for a \$5.00 delivery fee. Delivery and tips benefit Youth & Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth.

## Monday, September 14

Haddam BOS Meeting, remote access only, 6:30 p.m.

Killingworth BOS Meeting, remote access only, 7:00 p.m.

Killingworth Park & Recreation Meeting, remote access only, 7:30 p.m.

## Tuesday, September 15

Killingworth P&Z Meeting, remote access only, 7:00 p.m.

RSD17 BOE meeting, remote access only, 7:00 p.m.

## Thursday, September 17

Mystery Book Club, Killingworth Library, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join us as we discuss *The Scarecrow* by Michael Connelly. Please note, weather permitting this discussion will be held at Parmelee Farm near or under the pavilion. Bring a chair. If the weather does not cooperate, you will be invited to join the zoom session. We will make that decision before noon that morning. In either case, the meeting will begin at the usual 6:30. Books will be available at the circulation desk.

"Forced out of the Los Angeles Times amid the latest budget cuts, newspaperman Jack McEvoy decides to go out with a bang, using his final days at the paper to write the definitive murder story of his career. He focuses on Alonzo Winslow, a 16-year-old drug dealer in jail after confessing to a brutal murder. But as he delves into the story, Jack realizes that Winslow's so-called confession is bogus. The kid might actually be innocent. Jack is soon running with his biggest story since The Poet made his career years ago. He is tracking a killer who operates completely below police radar — and with perfect knowledge of any move against him."

Haddam P&Z Meeting, remote access only, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

## HKYFS to hold pizza delivery night: September 12

By Laura Shipman, HKYFS

Youth & Family Services of Haddam Killingworth will be holding a pizza delivery night on Saturday, Sept. 12.

Place your order with Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-663-2256) Killingworth or Pizzeria Da Vinci (860-345-2251) Higganum/Haddam between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. and we will deliver your order to your door for a \$5 delivery fee. Delivery and (tips) will benefit Youth & Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth.

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Winner will be chosen on September 20th.

# Haddam Meadows cleanups to take place Sept. 26, Oct. 10

By Cherry Czuba

Come save some trees and/or pick up litter at one of our favorite state parks. Our fall invasive plant cleanups will be held on Saturday, Sept. 26, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon (rain date: Oct. 3) and Saturday, Oct. 10 (rain date: Oct. 17) at Haddam Meadows State Park. The September event will be held in conjunction with the CT River Conservancy's Source to Sea annual cleanup.

As required by the state and CT DEEP, those attending must register ahead of time. Attendees shall remain six feet apart, including family members, caretakers and household members. Masks shall be worn within six feet of those not in the same household.

Participants are asked to meet in the middle picnic area. Adults and youths, under 16 years of age accompanied by an adult, are encouraged to participate in removing oriental bittersweet and other invasives and/or picking up litter. Please dress for the

weather, wear waterproof boots, bring garden loppers or saw, insect repellent, sunscreen, water, snacks and first aid supplies. Snacks will not be provided. Do not bring pets. Volunteers with dump trucks and Haddam Transfer Station stickers are needed.

The event is being planned by CT DEEP Adopt-a-Park volunteers, Jamie Burgess, Cherry Czuba, Joanne DelCioppo-Mchugh, Mary Lou Heger, and David Stiles. Please register by emailing Cherry Czuba at [cherylczuba@comcast.net](mailto:cherylczuba@comcast.net)

## HADDAM NECK FAIR

### 2020 Haddam Neck Fair Book available soon

By Dianne McHutchison

In May 2020 the Haddam Neck Fair was cancelled for this year, as were most of the other major agricultural fairs in Connecticut. None the less, the Haddam Neck Fair Association is publishing a fair book this year for "The Fair That Wasn't" in order to maintain

continuity. The 2020 fair book will feature a historic timeline over the Fair's 109 years, interviews with volunteers who have spent years working at the Fair and many historical items of interest, including photos.

Although the Fair was cancelled this year, the grounds are being maintained and work nights, scheduled on Wednesdays, are being held and projects are being completed.

We expect the fair books to arrive from the printer during the week of Aug. 31 and they will be available at the Haddam Town Hall.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**Hidden Lake Neighborhood Tag Sale,** Saturday, Sept. 12, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 109 East Shore Drive, Higganum. Masks and social distancing required.

The Hidden Lake Beautification Committee will be hosting a tag sale on Saturday, September 12, for lake-related environmental and beautification enhancements along the beaches and entrance areas.

Along with the usual tag sale items you will find some old books, furniture, kids games, houseware items, jewelry, and more. Look for the signs off of Route 81.

In order to enter the tag sale area you must be wearing a mask and agree to participate in social distancing. All items must go.

**Moving Sale,** Friday and Saturday, Sept. 12 and 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (rain or shine), 64 Parker Hill Road Killingworth. Lawn equipment, household items, lots of décor pieces for your home, power tools, holiday items, some antiques, wreaths, everything in good shape — something for everyone.

## KILLINGWORTH COMMUNITY

# Stop the Bleed class to be held this month at KAA headquarters

By Clark Judge, KAA

The Killingworth Ambulance Association will hold its first "Stop the Bleed" class of 2020 on Saturday, Sept. 12, at the KAA's Route 81 headquarters. The course begins at 11:00 a.m., and is free and open to

persons ages 12 years and older.

Those who attend are required to wear protective face masks.

"Stop the Bleed" is a nationwide awareness campaign that was launched in 2015 by the White House and Department of Homeland Security. It is

designed to empower bystanders with the training to deal with traumatic events and emergency bleeding situations before emergency help arrives.

For more information, contact the Killingworth Ambulance Association at (860) 663-2450 or log on to [killingworthambulance.org](http://killingworthambulance.org)



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# Valley Railroad chugs steadily along, despite COVID-19

By Kathy Brown

In March, as we all know, many businesses had to shut down due to the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19. Some businesses closed their doors for good, others retooled machines or changed and adapted to stay open, some businesses used the time "off" to improve their business. Valley Railroad, better known to locals as the Essex Steam Train, used their time "off" for many improvements and made some changes to their offerings. "It's been a tough year," said Rob Bradway, VP of Track & Property. "In my 29 years on the railroad I've experienced nothing remotely like this."

They performed upkeep on various engines:

- Steam Engines 40 (which celebrates its 100th birthday this year!) and 3025 received their annual Federal Railroad Administration inspections
- Steam Engine 97 was lifted off its wheels and axles and is undergoing major mechanical rebuilding
- Passenger Coach 602's interior was sanded, repainted in appropriate colors, and the woodwork was stripped and finished.
- Passenger Coach 603 is in the process of receiving the same treatment as 602.
- Vintage diesels 0901 and 0902 received tuning on all their engines (0901 is the front-line diesel for this season, and is believed to be the oldest regularly operating diesel locomotive in the country -- built in 1939).

They also completed some other upkeep:

- The River Valley Junction/Dickinson Bottling Plant building received a new roof
- The Goodspeed Yard Office (which was the original 1871 Chester Sta-

tion building, and believed to be the one remaining building from the original opening of the railroad in 1871) is getting some cosmetic work done on it

- In the Essex Station, all of the restrooms received new touch-less sinks, soap, and towel dispensers in response to COVID-19
- Landscaping and maintenance of all property continued through the pandemic
- New railroad ties were installed in many locations
- The vintage concrete Mile and Whistle Posts along the line are being repainted "so they look sharp"
- In the spring, they performed a major project with the CDOT, resulting in all new signage and LED lighting/gates at the public railroad crossings from Old Saybrook to Haddam, which should enhance safety, giving motorists the most current devices to help them to be safe while crossing the tracks.

Rob explained that they have had to reduce the number of people they normally hire in a season, which was difficult. "With such limited operations, our need for the massive cadre of seasonal employees just has not been there, and that's painful - they are not just employees, they are our friends. The economic toll of the pandemic is impossible to watch, we'll not come close to employee the 450+ people per season that is our norm."

In June, they started running their Rail Bikes. "These have been the Connecticut hit of the summer," said Rob. Seven rail bikes have been operating for 12 hours per day, five days per week. They are on different parts of the track between Deep River and Shailerville, based at their Bridge Road site (behind Goodspeed Station gift shop). "Most of our guests take the

opportunity to shop and dine locally," said Rob. "EDC's from both towns put together a visitation guide to keep folks in the Swing Bridge region and

deeper into Haddam and East Haddam." It's nice to see the Economic Development Commissions in both

*Continued on page H8*

## A Window of Opportunity

By Jennifer Armenia, Marketing Director

If you are considering a senior living community, now is a great window of opportunity. During this uncertain time with Covid-19, a group environment may seem risky. However, if you consider the extra precautions being put in place, it may be just



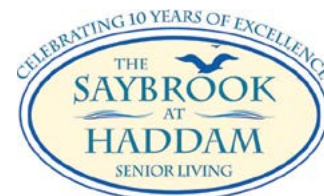
what you need to ensure you receive appropriate support while maintaining your independence. People living at The Saybrook at Haddam enjoy many benefits:

- Social engagement – at a safe distance, of course. Residents are encouraged to meet in public areas with reminders to stay 6 feet apart and wear masks. We help residents stay connected to their families, friends, and more

through the use of technology and safe, in-person visits (currently outdoors).

- Physical exercise – small group exercise classes, a gym, and wide, open spaces (both inside and out) encourage residents to stay active.
- Reliable care – for those who need support, our staff is here 24/7, 365.
- Three meals per day.
- Weekly housekeeping of the apartment.
- Sanitizing of surfaces in public spaces multiple times per day.

During this window of opportunity, while Connecticut's infection rates are lower and routine testing of staff is occurring, families are better able to assist their loved one with a move and can help them transition into a new setting. If you're interested in a carefree lifestyle and senior living, please call to learn how we are keeping our residents safe and happy. We look forward to hearing from you!



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\* paper is affiliated with HK-Now.com and the Haddam Civic League

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## Valley Railroad chugs along despite COVID

Continued from page H7

towns working together to keep tourists here!

In July, VRR started operating a limited Train and Boat schedule. They are selling train and boat combination tickets so that the entire train empties out allowing it to be sanitized prior to the return trip. Speaking of sanitizing, their training and retraining has been "intense and continual," according to Rob. "We have kept our employees safe, and to the best of our knowledge, we can say the same for our guests." According to Rob, "all train and bike seats are sanitized between seatings, hand rails and doorways on the train the same, restroom and park benches sanitized frequently. We are keen to instill a sense of safety in our guests by exceeding sanitization requirements." They hope to expand the train schedule when the foliage season starts.

The Essex Clipper Dinner Train was restarted in mid-July, operating on Saturday nights. They run under half capacity with seating only on the river-side of the train, and have plexiglass dividers between the tables. They are planning on running the Dinner Train twice a day on weekends in October, as well as an adult-gated Dinner Train that will operate mid-November through Christmas.

Their North Pole Express Christmas train, which has been selling out every year, has unfortunately been postponed until 2021 because it wasn't feasible



during a pandemic with so much close contact. However, they will still be celebrating the holiday! "Not to worry, no bah humbugs here," explained Rob. "We have a fantastic event planned for the Essex Station site (Christmas Adventures) that will keep folks safe and still provide the great Holiday Spirit we are known for."

The "Hand on the Throttle" experience is still occurring as well. According to their website, the registrant receives home study materials covering safety, locomotive theory, and operation. When they arrive for their session, they are instructed on locomotive operation

and given a safety test. Then, the student gets to operate a steam locomotive under supervision of the engine crew. The experience is between Deep River and Goodspeed Station in Haddam this year.

Unfortunately, the Lady Katharine cruises are not running at this time because modifications for social distancing weren't feasible for the large vessel explained Rob. They did complete upgrades to its galley and power generation systems though.

"We are taking very prudent and active steps to ensure the Essex Steam Train and Riverboat, and Lady Katharine Cruises, is prepared to weather the length of the pandemic intact," said Rob, "so that when conditions improve, we can ramp back up to previous employment levels and positive economic impact. It's a brave new world."

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