

Haddam Killingworth News

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

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March 31, 2022

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Free weekly



BOS Issues Resolution Supporting Effort to Protect Deer Lake

By Clark Judge

The Killingworth Board of Selectmen on Friday, March 18 issued a certified resolution, “strongly supporting” the town’s effort to protect the Deer Lake Scout Reservation from private development and the Trust for Public Land’s action to acquire the property for that purpose.

The 255-acre property is owned by the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts of America, but its board decided last month to sell it to Fortitude Capital LLC, a private developer. However, the Council said it would welcome competing offers until March 31.

According to the Connecticut Yankee Council, Fortitude Capital’s offer of a reported \$4.625 million is one of two it entertained. The other is by TPL, a non-profit which represents Killingworth and put forward a proposal of a reported \$2.5 million.

The wide disparity can be explained by appraisals. The Connecticut Yankee Council had an assessment of \$3.7-4.2 million, nearly twice that of TPL’s \$2-2.4 million. Because TPL is bound to stay within defined boundaries of its appraisal, it cannot budge from its offer.

In accepting Fortitude Capital’s proposal last month, the Connecticut Yankee Council made it clear that the gap between the two offers was too big to ignore. It would choose the higher deal unless another appeared by March 31.

“While we recognize the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts’ rights as landowners to transfer the property to the highest bidder,” Killingworth’s Board of Selectmen wrote Friday, “we ask that they strongly consider the value of conserving the land as was enjoyed by the Boy Scouts for decades. To do otherwise would be disingenuous to the Scouts’ Outdoor Code to do their best to ‘be conservation minded.’”

What impact the declaration will have is unknown, but First Selectwoman Nancy Gorski reported Friday morning that she already heard from U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, an outspoken advocate of retaining Deer Lake as an open space.

“What we needed to do,” Gorski said, “is to confirm our resolution to ensuring that Deer Lake remain open space. Am I confident it’s going to have an impact? At this point, I’m pulling out all the stops. You’re never going to win if you stop trying.”

March 14 BOS Meeting: More Nuclear Waste Coming to Haddam?

By Edward Munster

The regular meeting of Haddam’s Board of Selectmen on March 14 at the Haddam Town Hall was called to order by First Selectman (FS) Bob McGarry at 6:30 p.m. Also in attendance were Selectmen Sean Moriarty and Kate Anderson and Administrative Assistant JoAnn Ricciardelli. Minutes for the regular BOS meeting on February 14, 2022 were unanimously approved.

During Public Comment, Barbara Fernandez of Church Hill Road thanked FS McGarry for closing the upper parking lot for the recreation fields on Jail Hill Road when the facility is not in use, responding to a request she had made. Former Town Clerk Scott Brookes commented that the firm administering the town’s pension plan was quite inefficient. FS McGarry stated that the Town is aware of the problem and is seeking another firm to take on this responsibility.

In his Selectman’s Report to the town, McGarry stated that there has been no change in the status of the Rossi property and that the environmental study should be complete in the next month or two.

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Commissioner has approved the Financial Assistance Proposal for the Scovil Hoe project. The FS and the developer still need to sign it. They are still working on the purchase and sale agreement. McGarry pointed out that all of this, even though it is signed, still needs to go before a town meeting for approval.

Swing Bridge: The bid opening was expected the week of March 14-18. If all goes well, the notice to proceed will be issued June 27, 2022. DOT has requested a meeting with McGarry and East Haddam FS Irene Haines this week to provide a project update. McGarry and Haines are meeting with Commissioner Mark Boughton of the Department of Revenue Services because he is in charge of doling out the federal money coming to the state for infrastructure needs.

Continued on page HK3

In This Issue: • Community Calendar, HK3 • Education News, HK6, HK8 • HK’s Extraordinary Kids, HK4, HK7



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Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater Offers Spring Performing Arts Classes

By Dan Schmidt, Oddfellows Playhouse

Registration is now open for Spring Classes for ages 3 – 20 at Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater in Middletown. Classes start March 26, 2022. All classes will be held in-person at the Playhouse’s facility at 128 Washington Street. The three classrooms and theater in the building have all been upgraded with high volume air purification systems and the Playhouse is following all State and Federal guidelines to ensure safe in-person programs.

For the youngest Oddfellows, Saturday Circrobatics classes are available for ages 3 – 5 and 6 – 8. Circrobatics classes start March 26 and continue through May 21. Circrobatics is a unique combination of circus, acrobatics, games and creative movement.

Most other classes begin the week of March 28 and run for 8 weeks, culminating in an in-class Share for families the week of May 23. All Stage One and Two classes run from 4:45 pm- 5:45 p.m. during the week. Stage One classes for ages 6 – 8 include Introduction to Puppetry (Mondays), Circus I (Tuesdays), Cookie’s Crafts (Wednesdays), and Complete Actor I (Thursdays).

Stage Two classes for ages 9 – 11 include Complete Actor II (Mondays), Magic and Theater (Tuesdays), Circus II (Wednesdays), and Hip-Hop Dance (Thursdays). Hip Hop Dance is open to ages 9 – 14.

Stage Three classes, for ages 12 – 14, include Complete Actor III (Mondays, 4:45 – 6:00 p.m.), Moving Mindfulness (Wednesdays, 4:45 – 6:15 pm) and Hip-Hop Dance (Thursdays, 4:45 – 5:45 p.m. for ages 9 – 14. Additionally, there is a Theater Improvisation class for ages 11 – 14 on Saturdays, noon – 1:30 p.m., starting March 26.

Circophony Teen Circus, open to ages 12 – 20, offers “Spring Circus Training” on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., March 29 – May 24. This is a chance for teens to work on acrobatics, flexibility, juggling, balancing, unicycling and other circus skills in a supportive, non-competitive environment. Prior circus experience is not required.

Adults can join the circus this spring as well, as Circophony director Allison McDermott will be offering “Circus for Adults” in collaboration with ARTFARM this spring. This offers 8 weeks of ensemble circus training – juggling, basic tumbling, partner acrobatics, balance, Chinese stick and other circus skills. No circus experience required, and the



Winter classes at Oddfellows. Photo by Dic Wheeler.

class will meet each student where they are in an inclusive environment.

A special event for kids ages 10 -14 this spring is the opportunity to perform with the renowned Grumbling Gryphons Traveling Children’s Theater in a dual language production of “The Myth of Persephone: The Greek Myth of How the Seasons Came to Be.” The show, performed in spoken English and American Sign Language, will be performed at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 1 at the Playhouse. A special workshop for ages 10 – 14 will be offered from noon to 3:00 p.m. on that day — participants will work with the cast to polish their acting skills, learn some American Sign Language, and perform as the Greek Chorus with the Company. Space is limited to work with one of Connecticut’s most admired Children’s Theater Companies on this unique project which will feature internationally-known deaf actors.

Middletown Public School students may complement their weekday class experience with Oddbridge, an extended-day program which provides transport from Middletown schools to the Playhouse, a snack, and supervised arts activities, games and homework help before classes start. Oddbridge extends through the school year,

providing special programs and field trips on early dismissal days or days when regular Oddfellows classes are not in session.

For more details on times, tuition and class descriptions, please go to www.oddfellows.org. If you have specific questions, email info@oddfellows.org or call (860) 347-6143. Tuition varies from \$140 – \$180 for the eight-week sessions, but financial aid is available for all programs. It is Playhouse policy that the arts should be available to every young person regardless of ability to pay – no one is turned away for lack of funds.

Oddfellows Playhouse, founded in 1975, is Connecticut’s oldest and largest performing arts program for young people. Oddfellows programs are made possible with support from the Middletown Commission on the Arts; Connecticut Office of the Arts/Department of Economic and Community Development; City of Middletown; The Fund for Greater Hartford; American Savings Foundation; State of Connecticut Judicial Branch (Youth Violence Prevention); Middletown Youth Services Bureau; Community Foundation of Middlesex County; Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation; Middlesex United Way; CHEFA Cultural Relief Grant; New England Foundation for the Arts/New England Arts Resilience Fund; George & Grace Long Foundation; CT Humanities Cultural Fund; and many generous individual donors.

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March 14 BOS Meeting: More Nuclear Waste Coming to Haddam?

Continued from page HK1

Haddam will be making a pitch for economic support for the businesses which will be impacted by the bridge project. There was a recent routine inspection of the bridge that found some problems unrelated to the construction project. There will need to be some repairs done to the bridge and the Town is expecting a weight limit of about 21 tons to be imposed on the bridge. This is about the weight of one of the town's fire trucks.

Tylerville: The construction of the roundabouts is still scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2023. The application for the apartment project at 105 Bridge Road has been submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission and is on the agenda for the March 17 meeting.

Personnel issues: Dawn Tarbetsky has been hired as the Assistant Town Clerk and will be starting in 3-4 weeks. In the interim, Deb DeCristoforo, retired assistant town clerk from Westbrook, is helping in the office two days per week because Ann Riebold is out on sick leave. Applications for the Public Works maintainer vacancy closed on March 11. It is expected that a person will be hired soon.

Coronavirus: The coronavirus daily case rate has been decreasing. The mask mandate has been lifted in town buildings.

Other items: Selectman Kate Anderson reported that the Farmers Market is scheduled to begin at the former HES property on June 3, 2022. It will run every Friday into August. The EDC meeting on April 13 will

discuss volunteer planning for town sponsored events. Selectman Sean Moriarty mentioned that discussion on the Connecticut Main Street project, which had been delayed for several months, will be on the agenda next month. There was no report from Board of Education this month. Tax refunds for \$21,938.78 were approved.

Nuclear Waste: The Federal Department of Energy (DOE) on December 21, 2021 issued a Request for Information from the Town of Haddam on the Consent-Based Siting Process for spent nuclear waste. However, the town did not receive notification and the information was due on March 4, which put an enormous strain on town resources. FS McGarry first learned of this when a press release by Congressman Joe Courtney sent to Haddam Killingworth News was published on February 24. McGarry said that he went through all his past emails and written correspondence and could find no communication from the Congressman's office about this. Subsequently the Congressman visited the Town Hall on March 10 to discuss the matter. The actual siting decisions will take about eight years. The crux of this is that the federal government is potentially looking to move more nuclear waste to sites such as the one in Haddam Neck. McGarry stated that he personally would not want this to happen and does not believe the town would favor such a move. In the DOE proposal it is stated that this 'interim' storage could be in place for another 40-100 years.

Please visit www.haddam.org, www.townofkillingworth.com or hk-now.com for the most current information, including cancellations, location changes, time changes. See hk-now.com for more information on calendar items.

Thursday, March 31
Haddam Zoning Board of Appeals 7:00 p.m.

Killingworth Special Board of Finance meeting 7:00 p.m. (remote access).

Friday, April 1
Killingworth Historic Review Committee meeting 11:00 a.m. (remote).

Saturday, April 2
Haddam Inland Wetlands Special meeting 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Saturday Storytime 10:00 a.m. Killingworth Library (Zoom). This week's story: Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert

Monday, April 4
Killingworth Charter Revision meeting 7:00 p.m. (remote).

Tuesday, April 5
Tech Time Tuesday Killingworth Library 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. The one-hour program allows for two single-attendee slots, but we will also

schedule for a mutually convenient day and time as needed. Please register.

Red Cross Blood Drive 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Sign-up online for an appointment to give blood at www.redcrossblood.org Pre-registering is greatly appreciated!

RSD #17 Board of Education meeting 6:30 p.m. HKIMS.

RSD #17 Board of Education Annual meeting 7:00 p.m. HKIMS

RSD #17 BOE Annual Hearing & Special meeting 7:30 p.m. HKIMS cafeteria

BOE adopts 2022/2023 Budget.
Killingworth Special Board of Finance meeting 7:00 p.m. (remote).

Wednesday, April 6
"No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion" 5 Part DVD Series 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Sacred Heart on the Lake 194 Candlewood Hill Rd., Higganum.

Thursday, April 7
Haddam Planning & Zoning Commission meeting 7:00 p.m.
Parmelee Farm Committee meeting 7:00 p.m.

Killingworth Special Board of Finance meeting 7:00 p.m. (remote).

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Running with Purpose: Higganum's Waylon Page Stays the Course

By Meghan Peterson

March is Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. And there is perhaps no one more aware about this than Higganum's own Waylon Page.

Waylon has a rare blood disorder called Qualitative Platelet Dysfunction, which blocks natural blood-clotting processes that are vital for wound recovery. You can read more about Waylon's diagnosis, condition, and the extraordinary ways this young man lives his life at hk-now.com

Although he is unable to participate in "conventional sports" due to his condition, Waylon has a dedicated passion for running. In fact, he is participating in a 7-mile road race in Falmouth, MA this summer (August 21) for an organization called the New England Hemophilia Association (NEHA). According to the NEHA website (newenglandhemophilia.org), the non-profit entity was founded in 1957 and is dedicated "to improving the quality of life of all persons with bleeding disorders and their families through education, support and advocacy in CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT."

After Waylon retired from racing cars several years ago, he decided to continue racing – albeit in a different form: this time, with his feet.

How does this gentleman of 10 years train for a 7-mile race? Well, he practices, of course. Waylon trains two to three times a week. As with every passion and hobby Waylon has, it is consistent participation and focused practice that are hallmarks of his approach. Whether it is playing the snare drum in fife and drum corps, playing the trumpet, or running both in his school's running club and in races, Waylon commits time and his whole self to the process. Why? It is simple: "...running gives me happy feelings that make me want to do this." What is more, Waylon loves being outside. He is an outdoor kid. As such, he thrives on being active in the fresh air world.

His mama, Sarah Page explains that "Waylon has never let his physical limitations hold him down. As his parents, we support him in finding the things 'he can do,' and as a community we all share in nurturing that goal. Waylon has many people who support him, not only here in town, but also the infusion center nurses. They see him walk in with his cowboy boots and hat, and he lights up the room with smiles. He brings his "flair" to everyone he meets. In doing



Photo courtesy of Waylon's parents, Sarah and Chris Page.

this race, it's a way for him to feel good about his own accomplishments and give back to the NEHA community that has given him so much!"

As for the NEHA race in August, Waylon is especially excited. His birthday is on August 29, so he will be running toward his 11th birthday! In addition, he is participating in a muster with the fife and drum corps (Westbrook Junior Colonials) shortly after the race. In other words, it is a busy, festive week for Waylon that combines his love for running, music and life. Waylon puts it this way, "running in the rain is my favorite. It helps to cool you down. But running in the sun is my ultimate favorite."

Cheers to Waylon. Here is to sunshine and fun for your summer race!

For those who are interested in donating to the NEHA event, visit uniteforbleedingdisorders.org or visit hk-now.com for the full link within the article (the direct link for Waylon's fundraising page). All proceeds go to NEHA's outreach and research efforts.

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 17
NOTICE OF
SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING**

The annual budget hearing of Regional School District No. 17 of the State of Connecticut, whose member towns are the towns of Haddam and Killingworth will be held in the Auditorium, of the Haddam-Killingworth High School, 95 Little City Road, Higganum, on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:30 PM.

A copy of the proposed budget recommended by the Superintendent of Schools is on file and available for inspection in the offices of the town clerks of Haddam and Killingworth, and at the office of the Superintendent of Schools at 57 Little City Road, Higganum, CT.

Suzanne Sack, Board Chair
Regional School District No. 17
Board of Education

**LEGAL NOTICE
PLANNING AND ZONING
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Planning and Zoning Commission of Haddam, Connecticut will hold a Public Hearing at the Old Town Hall 30 Field Park Dr Haddam CT on April 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. to act upon the following item(s):

1. Amendment to special permit for The Truck Bar to allow change in business hours to Monday -Thursday 8am-10pm, Friday/Saturday 8am- midnight, Sunday 8am-8pm. The current hours are: Monday-closed, Tuesday-Thursday 1p.m.-10p.m., Friday/Saturday 1p.m.-12a.m. and Sunday 1p.m.-8p.m. Location: 66 Killingworth Rd map 14/lot 29-1 Applicant: Merle McKenzie

Information is on the website at www.haddam.org and at the Land Use Office at the Haddam Town Hall.

Planning and Zoning Commission, Haddam CT

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Deer Lake Sale Threatens One of the Most Resilient Areas in the Northeast

By Clark Judge

If the Deer Lake sale goes through, and the 255-acre property is sold to a private developer, Connecticut loses more than pristine wilderness. It loses one of the areas “most resilient” to climate change in the Northeast corridor.

That is how the region that includes the Deer Lake Scout Reservation is characterized by The Connecticut Nature Conservancy (TNC), a non-profit dedicated to the preservation and care of nature and the environment. With a series of colored maps that appear on its Resilient and Connected Network (Conservation Gateway – Home), TNC lists the region as one of the most valuable sites near the coastline between New York City and Boston.

“Resilient lands not only benefit plants and animals,” said Sarah Pellegrino, the Land Protection and Strategies Manager for the Connecticut Nature Conservancy, “they ensure clean air and water, maximize benefits of forests and wetlands for storing carbon in plants and soils, protect communities from extreme storms and flooding and provide open green spaces. Resilient lands are key to a future where people and nature thrives.”

Yet, this resilient land is in grave danger of being lost. Its owner, the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scouts of America, last month agreed to sell it to Fortitude Capital LLC, a private developer, for \$4.625 million. However, it did not complete the sale – saying it would consider all “superior offers” by March 31.

But there are no superior offers. Not yet, anyway. According to the Connecticut Yankee Council, only one other proposal for the Deer Lake property has been entertained. That is from the Trust for Public Land (TPL, a non-profit designed to protect and preserve land and “strongly supported” by Killingworth’s Board of Selectmen in a resolution last week). TPL has made two offers at an estimated \$2.4 million, with the first rejected by the Council last month.

“I told the Trust for Public Land on numerous occasions that if you’re close we would accept it,” Rudy Escalante, president of the Connecticut Yankee Council’s executive board, said last month. “But if it’s not close, it’s an easy decision. And they weren’t close.”

TPL is handcuffed by an appraisal it commissioned earlier this year, which came in at \$2-2.4 million. As a non-profit, it must base its offer on fair-market value. The Connecticut Yankee Council’s appraisal, meanwhile, was considerably higher, in the \$3.7-4.2-million range. Fortitude Capital LLC reportedly made an initial offer of \$3.875 million for the property before upping it to \$4.625 million.

That puts Deer Lake’s future in peril. While its website (www.scouting.org) defines the Boy Scouts of America as “a leader in conservation and

environmental leadership,” the Connecticut Yankee Council has made it clear that the resource that matters here is revenue.

Meaning? Meaning that unless Fortitude Capital’s offer of \$4.625 million is exceeded by March 31, 255 acres of one the state’s “most resilient” areas could be lost forever.

“This analysis,” said Pellegrino, “(which was) developed over the past 10 years by a team of TNC scientists, highlights lands that will best sustain native plants, animals and natural processes into the future, looking at landscape characteristics and connectedness. These lands have varied elevations, moisture levels and temperatures. This creates diverse micro-climates that support species as they adapt to climate change’s effects on temperature, precipitation and habitat.

“I can’t speak specifically to what the damage would be to the surrounding landscape if the property is developed. But generally, we wish to keep forest as forest, minimize disturbances and prevent fragmentation, loss of connectivity and degradation/loss of wildlife habitat. This is a good-sized parcel for Connecticut.”

It is also one at serious risk. Environmentalists, preservationists, and anyone focused on global climate change are worried. They should be.

“For all of us,” U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said at a January news conference, “(Deer Lake) represents some of the best of Connecticut. It is part of the ecological lifeblood of this region. If we lose it, there is no way to recover. Once it’s lost ... once it’s developed ... once it’s gone ... it’s gone forever.”

HEALTH/WELLNESS

Nathaniel Field Foundation presents Spring Into Hope Happy Hour Fundraising Event: April 22

By Marie and Howie Field, NBFMF

The Nathaniel B. Field Memorial Foundation, Inc. invites our community members to our Spring Into Hope happy hour fundraising event on April 22, 2022 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. This celebration at the Polish Falcons Nest 519 in Middletown, Conn. will feature musician Mark Peryga, free appetizers, silent auction and raffles. Come enjoy the evening with

your friends and family! If you have any questions or would like to donate a raffle prize or food, please contact Marie Field at 860-301-9598 or email NBFMF@comcast.net

The mission of the Nathaniel B. Field Memorial Foundation, Inc. is to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, to reduce the stigma of mental illness, and to provide hope and support. See <https://www.nathanielfield.org> for more information.



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RSD #17 Board of Education: Summary of February 2022

By Shawna Goldfarb, RSD #17 BOE

Cougar Pride: Burr Principal Brianna Whidden presented a number of her 3rd Grade students who presented and read their adaptations of fairy tales. The 3rd graders had just finished their unit on fairy tale writing and each student had to adapt and write a favorite fairy tale in their own words.

Superintendent's Update: Superintendent Wihbey reported on the state-level changes to COVID-19 quarantine restrictions in place at our schools, which included the removal of mandatory masking in the schools. He discussed the pathways, monitoring and mitigation strategies that will remain in place to continue to reduce transmission. Additionally, the District has received a limited supply of COVID testing kits and masks from the state to be used for staff and students. Superintendent Wihbey met with multiple groups, including town leaders and students, to help understand all viewpoints on the decision. After much research and discussion, Superintendent Wihbey adopted a "masks optional" approach for RSD #17 and has assured he will continue, with the help of CDC and DPH guidance, to monitor the data for our region as we move forward.

HK High School: HKHS Principal Donna Hayward presented to the Board her 2021 Graduation Report. She discussed the number of students who applied, were accepted and are now continuing their education via University, College, Community College or other institutions, along with those students who chose to join the military or workforce after graduation.

Principal Hayward also discussed the new Social Studies programming and briefly discussed the new textbook associated with the program.

Pupil Services: Dr. Kris Lindsay-Stevens presented the Board with the 2021-22 Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan. She spoke on three goals: Improve the Mental Wellness of the Students, Improve the Provisions of the Nursing Services, and Continue to make Improvements to the Preschool Program.

Facilities: Peter Sonski, chairman of the Facilities Committee, introduced Justin Hopkins from Tecton Architects. Justin presented his finding from the RSD #17 buildings assessment that had been approved by the Board last fiscal year. Justin discussed Introduction, Scope of Work, Existing Conditions, Order of Magnitude Budget and next steps.

Board Liaisons: Finance and Facilities Chair Peter Sonski reported from Finance, information on COVID Expenditures and the cost of the Emergency Repairs this year are up and are being taken out of the Operations fund. He also reported the price of fuel for the district has increased significantly. Peter reported from Facilities on upcoming Capital Projects along with information regarding the Tecton Assessment. Policy Chair Nelson Rivera updated the Board on their work on the 3000 series. Personnel & Evaluation Chair Suzanne Sack updated the board on Central Office Staffing. Strategic Planning Chair Jennifer Favalora updated the Board regarding the upcoming workshops for the committee that will be happening in February and March. Curriculum Chair Dr. Kathy Zandi recommended to the Board to replace existing Smart Boards with View Boards and to purchase new equipment for the Robotics Program for the HK Middle School. Communication Chair Shawna Goldfarb recommended to the Board to no longer live stream the Board of Education meetings, though they will still be recorded and

posted on the website. Also, she recommended the Board no longer read emails during the Board meetings, however a new email address will be created, boe@rsd17.org, that will be directed to the BOE Chair and Superintendent who will reply to the writer and forward to the rest of the Board. Shawna also updated that there will be a new BOE FAQs document that will be posted on the website.

On our Website: In March, the Board of Education will begin work on the 2022-2023 RSD17 School Budget. All meeting dates, including the Superintendent's March 1st Budget Presentation, can be found on RSD17.org website under "District" -> "Board of Education." Proposed budgets and the budget timeline will be updated as they become available under "District" -> "Budget Information."

HKN

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Purchase Pre-filled Easter Eggs to Support HKHS Chorus Teacher Marcy Webster's Daughter

By Kathy Brown

2022 has been a tumultuous year for the Webster family, and it's only March. Marcy Webster is well known at Haddam Killingworth High School as Chorus teacher for the last 18 years, Head of the Dept. of Fine Arts, and the Director of the school's popular musicals. She has directed 17 musicals and 6 plays at the high school.

"Our 10-year-old daughter, Rachel Joy, was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma on February 8, 2022, just 22 days after her father had emergency, quadruple-bypass, open-heart surgery," explained Marcy. "Rachel's primary tumor is in her left tibia, however, she has secondary spots in her left fibula and heel, and cancerous nodules in her lungs."

According to the Mayo Clinic, Ewing's sarcoma is a rare form of cancer "that occurs in bones or in the soft tissue around bones." It often begins in the legs but can occur in any bone. According to the National Institute of Health, there are about 200 cases per year, affecting mainly people of European descent who are between the ages of 10-15.

Rachel's treatment "will include approximately nine months of chemotherapy, and she will also undergo radiation and surgery to remove what tumor is left after other treatments," said Marcy. "We have opted to begin our treatment at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford. Beginning our care locally allows our family to stay together while our older daughter, Catherine, attends middle school in Wethersfield."

How can the community help? A group of staff at HKHS has set up an Easter Egg fundraiser to support the Webster family. All the money will be donated directly to the Websters to help with expenses. Plastic Easter eggs will be pre-filled with candy by a team of students and staff and ready for pickup on April 13 & 14, so that you can hide them for your children, grandchildren, or neighborhood. You can order 30 eggs for \$20 or 70 eggs for \$40. Orders must be received and paid for by March 29, 2022. To order, contact Nancy McGee, a Special Education teacher at HKHS, at nmcgee@rsd17.org. Checks can be made payable to "HKHS Sunshine Fund." People can also donate funds to help offset the price of the candy.

"We are thankful to our doctors, nurses, and the wonderful communities of Wethersfield, Haddam,



Photos provided by Marcy Webster.

and Killingworth, and our Church family at the Apostolic Fellowship Church in Bloomfield for all the love, support, and generous gifts we have received during this time," said Marcy.

Keep an eye out for more fundraisers throughout the year to help the Webster family with expenses during this time.

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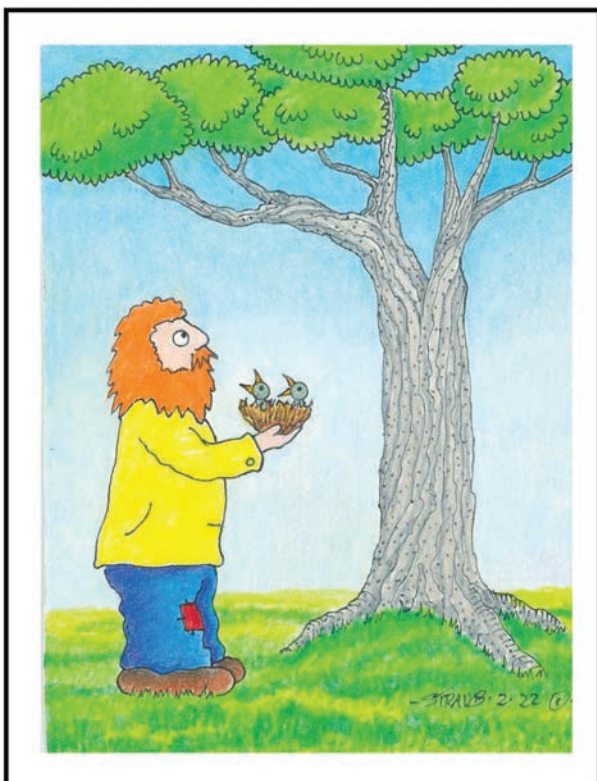
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Parmelee's Sugar House Visited by Lt. Governor and Other Dignitaries



Photos by Clark Judge.

By Clark Judge

It was about three weeks ago, as Tim Gannon tells it, that he heard from the Connecticut State Dept. of Agriculture, notifying him of a proposed visit to Parmelee Farm. Lieutenant Gov. Susan Bysiewicz would be involved. So would Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner of the state's agriculture department. Maybe even state Sen. Christine Cohen and Rep. Christine Goupil, too.

And they'd arrive the morning of St. Patrick's Day. But they wouldn't be there to tour the farm. Nor would they be there to celebrate the Irish. Instead, they wanted to visit its Sugar House, where Gannon and volunteers are in their last week of making maple syrup.

"I was very pleased," said Gannon, "and I was surprised. There are a lot of bigger sugar houses to go to."

But they didn't choose to visit them. They chose Parmelee's Sugar House as part of a kickoff celebration for Maple Weekend when 17 maple-syrup producers across Connecticut – including Parmelee Farm — hold open houses.

"We're here to highlight some of the things about Connecticut," said Bysiewicz, "because Connecticut has some of the best-tasting – no, the best tasting –

maple syrup."

She should know. She and other dignitaries attending Thursday's event, including Killingworth First Selectwoman Nancy Gorski, were given samples of sap and demonstrations of operations before each was handed an 8-ounce bottle of syrup as a parting gift.

Consider them lucky. Parmelee maple syrup is so popular that it's hard to find, and, no, that's not an exaggeration. In each of the past three weekends, the syrup sold out within the first hour of the first day (Saturday). In fact, last weekend all 98 12-ounce bottles and 37 8-ounce bottles sold within the first 22 minutes – and that's with customers limited to two bottles per.

This weekend is expected to be the last time this year the Sugar Shack is open for business, with the syrup capped and bottled Friday and sold on Saturday at 10:00 a.m.

"We're very proud of the syrup we produce," said Gannon. "We wouldn't have this if it weren't for all of our volunteers here. It's a labor of love."

The Sugar House is in its third year of operation, opening in 2019 but forced to close last year because of the COVID pandemic. Its last season was 2020 when volunteers collected 3,000 gallons of sap and produced 51 gallons of syrup. Gannon had hoped

to exceed those numbers – especially with 200 taps on the Parmelee site – and he wasn't disappointed. According to volunteer Dan O'Sullivan, a record-63 gallons of syrup were produced, and 3,600 gallons of sap collected after the Sugar House resumed operations in mid-February.

So that's good. But getting a first-ever visit from state officials, including the Lieutenant Governor? That's better.

"The commissioner (Hurlburt) and I were having a conversation about how every year we look forward to what sugar house we're going to visit," said Bysiewicz, who resides in Middletown. "And he said, 'You know, Susan, there's one in the Middletown area' And I said, 'I would know if there was one.' But I just didn't realize that Parmelee Farm, which I've had the pleasure of driving by, did this."

Hurlburt did. As the former executive director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, he was here two years ago when Parmelee Farm – OK, its Sugar House – hosted the Middlesex Farm Bureau. He liked what he saw, and he vowed to return. On Thursday, he did.

"I thought this would be a great way to highlight the opportunity and the public investment," he said, "recognizing the state's culture and heritage in agriculture. So, get out of the house and sample some of the terrific products."

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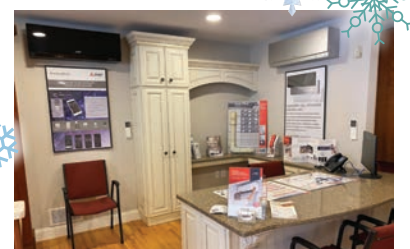
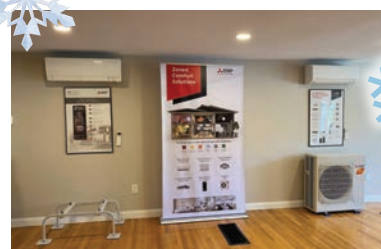
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