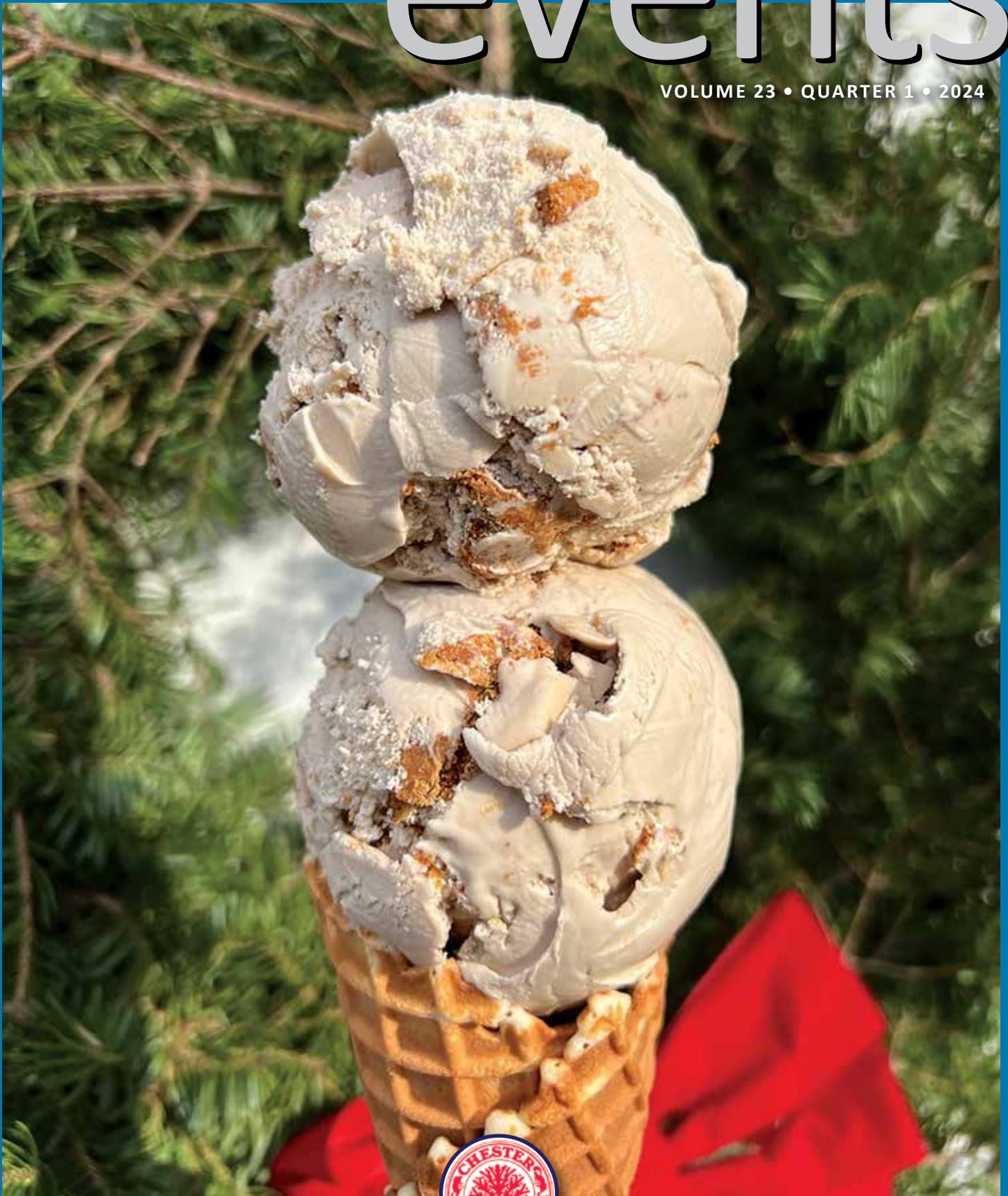


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First Selectwoman's Corner

Our new Board of Selectmen - Pat Bandzes, Paul Radicchi and Cindy Lignar - began our official terms on November 21st, 2023. It's been many years since Chester has experienced a turnover of all three Selectmen at the same time, and we are very honored to be elected!

Because we had already been dedicated volunteers in town, and on regional boards and commissions, working alongside peers and town staff on projects, and have established roots here, our transition into our new roles has been more familiar to us and a continuation of our work at a different level.

I'd like to thank all town staff and partners for their support and assistance during our first few weeks. We have met and will continue to meet with all municipal departments, town engineers, the Region 4 Superintendent, our RiverCOG team, other important organizations, stake holders and legislators.

We are in the process of assigning Selectmen liaisons for our town boards and commissions. This is intended to help improve communications and collaboration across all functions of town government and ensure that we are operating efficiently and effectively. Regardless of

assignment, we are all available at any given time as needed.

In collaboration with all, we are identifying projects to be prioritized and will seek opportunities for funding to help manage expenses. In January we will begin the budget process for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Also, I realize that residents are concerned about the significant increase in real estate assessments due to the surge in home values over the past few years. Connecticut law requires a revaluation every five years and the recent process in Chester resulted in an approximate 35% - 45% increase in residential property. But remember, your tax amount is calculated by multiplying the new assessed value of your property by the new mill rate which will be established in late spring 2024. The mill rate is expected to decrease to



Cindy Lignar
First Selectwoman

continued on page 4



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Selectwoman... continued from page 3



Our new Board of Selectmen:
Pat Bandzes, Cindy Lignar, and Paul Radicchi.

coincide with the new 2024-2025 budget as finalized by the Board of Finance which will be approved at a Town Meeting.

During these first weeks, people in town have been asking me often "Are you OK?" "How are things going?" and "Is the job what you expected?" My answers are "I am just fine," "It's super busy but I like the challenge and love the people," and "Yes, it's exactly what I expected and I enjoy coming to work every day."

Our doors will always be open to you. Please feel free to contact me, Pat Bandzes or Paul Radicchi with questions or concerns. We very much look forward to serving you over the next two years!

Cindy Lignar, First Selectwoman

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Contact the Assessor's Office for applications!

VETERAN EXEMPTION

To qualify, the veteran must be a resident, have served at least 90 days during wartime service and have received an Honorable Discharge. Original Discharge papers (DD-214) must be filed with the Town Clerk prior to October 1.

DISABLED VETERAN

To receive this exemption, the veteran must follow the steps above for the Regular Veteran Exemption as well as provide the Assessor with a disability rating slip prior to October 1.

ADDITIONAL VETERAN EXEMPTION

An additional exemption is available for veterans within certain income limits. Qualified applicants must apply biennially between February 1 and October 1.

Active members of the United States armed forces who have a motor vehicle registered in Chester are eligible to claim a property tax exemption for one (or more) motor vehicle(s). An annual application must be filed no later than December 31.

HOMEOWNERS'-ELDERLY / DISABLED TAX RELIEF

The State provides homeowners who are elderly or totally disabled, and whose annual income do not exceed certain limits, an exemption amount based on a graduated income scale. Applications must be filed biennially between February 1 and May 15.

LOCAL OPTION-PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR THE ELDERLY / DISABLED

Homeowners whose primary domicile is Chester, who have been a Chester taxpayer for at least one year, and who are elderly or totally disabled may qualify for this exemption. Applications must be filed biennially between February 1 and May 15.

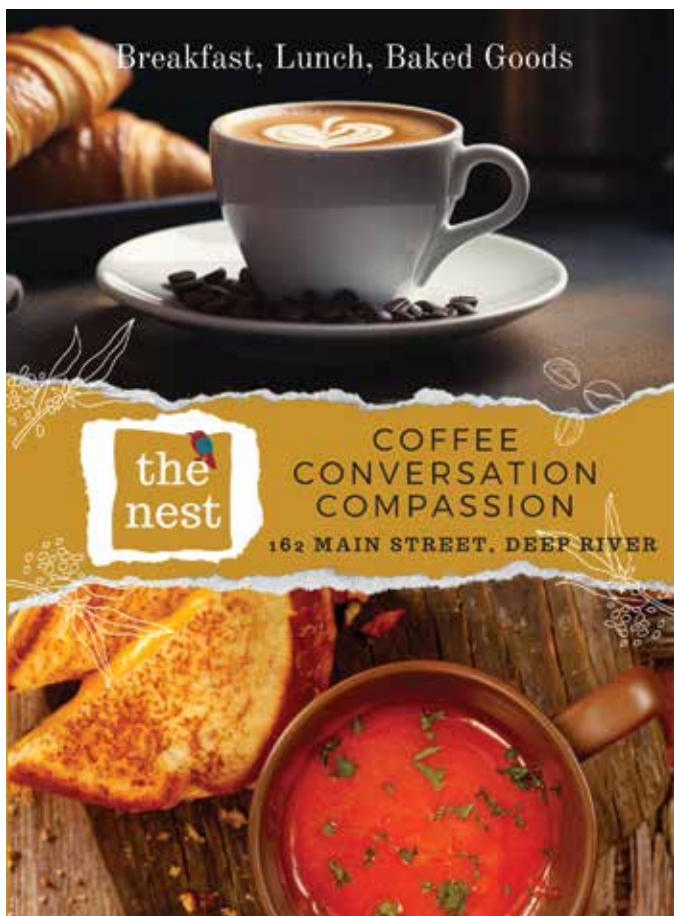
DISABLED TAX RELIEF

Property owners who are totally disabled are eligible for up to a \$1,000 exemption. Applicant must provide proof of total disability to the Assessor's Office prior to October 1.

RENTERS' REBATE

State law provides a reimbursement program for renters who are elderly or totally disabled and whose income do not exceed certain limits.

The rebate amount is based on a graduated income scale and calculates rent and utility payments made in the prior calendar year. An annual application must be filed between April 1 and October 1.



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Chester Tax Collector

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- B BE SURE** to sign your check each time.
- C CAREFULLY LOOK** over your check to make sure you filled in the amount correctly both on the legal line & in the numerical spot. Make sure the amount is accurate and the same in each spot.
- D DON'T POSTDATE** your check, but if you must, be sure to put in a note to us that you need a later date.
- E ENCOURAGE** your family, friends and neighbors to pay their taxes on time.
- F FIND A WAY** to pay early and not to wait until the last week or last day. Emergencies happen that could prevent you from getting to the Tax Office on time.
- G GO ONLINE** to check amount due if you don't have exact amount (if you can't reach the Tax Office).



- H HOPE** that your payment arrives on time so that we do not have to charge you any interest.
- I INCLUDE** a self-addressed stamped envelope & send in all copies of your bill, if you want a receipt.
- J JOYOUS** holiday season & peace on earth to all!

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TC Chester

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News from the Harbor Management Commission

THE 2024 BOATING SEASON IS ALMOST HERE!

It's never too early to submit your Mooring Permit Request. The online form makes the process easy. Access the form on the Town's website at: www.chesterct.org/harbor-management, click on the Mooring Permit tab on the left side of the page.

Complete the form online, print, and remit the form and your check to the HMC. Please feel free to contact the Commission anytime through our new email address: Harborcommission@chesterct.org.

WE WANT TO REMIND YOU TO FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

Chester CT Harbor Management Commission, use this page to access the latest and greatest news, events, and information impacting the Chester boating community.

PARKERS POINT BOAT LAUNCH

As some of you are aware, Parkers Point Boat Launch was closed at the end of September by the towns building official due to liability concerns.

The commission is working diligently with industry experts and town

departments to find the appropriate pathway to reopening the launch. Our hope is the launch will be reopened for the 2024 boating season. The HMC will communicate any updates through our Facebook page and the town's weekly emails as appropriate.

We continue to build relationships with our Marinas and Yacht Clubs and regulatory commissions. Our combined expertise, experiences, knowledge, and challenges have led to great collaboration, and are providing opportunities for the HMC to ensure we are building a safer boating community.

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Email: unitedchester@uccchester.org



UPCOMING EVENTS:

February

Ash Wednesday: February 14th - No service at United Church of Chester services will be conducted at Deep River Congregational Church, 1 Church St., Deep River, CT at 7:00 am and 7:00 pm.

March


Palm Sunday: March 24th at 10:00 am - distribution of palms

Maundy Thursday: March 28th at 7:00 pm

Good Friday: March 29th 12:00 - 3:00 pm - Prayer and meditation. Readings every 30 minutes. Come and go as you need.

Easter Sunday: March 31st - Sunrise service 6:00 am - Fountain Hill Cemetery, Deep River; 10:00 am service - United Church of Chester

Please note that dates and times may change so please confirm on our website at: uccchester.org or by calling the church office at: 860-526-2697 or email us at: unitedchester@uccchester.org.



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Autumn Calendar was a Busy One!

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission had an uncharacteristically busy autumn calendar, which was dominated by the public hearings and consideration of a proposed 36-unit multifamily housing proposal at the former St. Joseph's Parish Center at 47 Middlesex Avenue.

The project was proposed by a development team of Vesta and Honeycomb Real Estate Partners, and included "affordable housing" restrictions on every apartment unit, qualifying the project for consideration under Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. The application hearing and review process took place between early September and late November, spanning five public hearings and seven total meetings. Several hundred Chester residents attended and participated in these hearings.

The development proposal underwent several design changes, reducing the overall unit number from 40 to 36 apartments and revamping the stormwater management system.

At its November 20, 2023 Special Meeting, the Planning &

Zoning Commission voted to approve the application, with numerous conditions, by a vote of 6-3.

The details of the conditions, motion, and vote may all be found on the Agendas and Minutes section of the Town's website. As is required by State Statute, the legal notice of this decision was posted in the Hartford Courant on Friday, November 24th, setting in motion a 15-day legal appeal period, which expired on Saturday, December 9, at which point the approval would be final.

A LEGAL APPEAL

Just moments before the Town Hall was set to close at noon-time on Friday, December 8th, a legal appeal to the District Superior Court was filed against the applicants and the Planning & Zoning Commission, claiming that the decision had been made incorrectly.

This appeal sets in motion a schedule of legal filings, argument briefings, and judicial review that may take many months. The Town and the applicants will jointly defend the

continued on page 10

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ASSISTANT ASSESSOR	512	
BUILDING OFFICIAL Richard Leighton	207	BldgOfficial@chesterct.org
CHESTER ROTARY		ChesterRotary.org
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ACCOUNTS CLERK Sharon Echtman	216	
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT Ray Guasp	202	EmergencyServices@chesterct.org
FINANCE/TREASURER	215	Treasurer@chesterct.org
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FIRST SELECTWOMAN Cindy Lignar	202	FirstSelectman@chesterct.org
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Planning & Zoning... *continued from page 9*

Commission's approval action under the terms of Section 8-30g. More information about this process may be obtained from the Zoning Compliance Officer, but for the most part, the Planning & Zoning Commission will not be involved directly in the appeal process. The Commission anticipates returning to business as usual in the new year.

The Chester PZC meets on the second Thursday of each month and it is holding in-person meetings at Town Hall as well as a virtual option as needed. The Zoning Officer holds regular office hours at Town Hall on Monday afternoons and Thursday mornings, and you can reach the office by emailing us at: zoningofficial@chesterct.org.



Brazilian and American Youth Cultural Exchange

New Website & Social Media Coordinator

Based in Rio de Janeiro, BRAYCE (*Brazilian and American Youth Cultural Exchange*) recruits motivated, high-school age youngsters from Favela (slum) communities with functional English, to participate in a leadership Training Program at Camp Hazen YMCA in Chester, CT. Here they acquire many new life/Leadership skills, confidence, self-esteem, and fluency in English. In addition, with a conviction that by continuing their education, with perseverance and determination, like their American friends, they can expect and plan a future.



Jane S Raunika, BRAYCE Website and Social Media Coordinator

BRAYCE recently added Jane Raunika as the Website and Social Media Coordinator. A lifetime resident of the Connecticut River Valley, Raunika brings extensive marketing and communication experience in both non-profit and for-profit enterprises, having served most recently as Director of Marketing and Communications at The Connecticut River Museum. The sole marketer on staff, Raunika maintained the company

website, wrote, and sent a bi-weekly email newsletter to subscribers, curated and scheduled web and social media content, and ran all communication and press outreach. Raunika commented, "I am so pleased to join this group! The opportunity that BRAYCE offers these students is life changing. Returning to Brazil, the youngsters continue their education and become inspirational role-models for their peers and younger siblings, significantly contributing to the enrichment of community life."

With a background in the creation and management of project plans, Raunika will work to maintain the current digital footprint while ensuring a smooth transition to the new BRAYCE digital era.

Raunika's first task is to oversee the creation of a new website for the organization. Duties will include curating content for the new site as well as leveraging other content channels to share the positive impact of the cultural exchange program.

Raunika hopes to maintain connectivity with new and prospective donors, while increasing the pool of volunteers, sponsors, and partners through enhanced outreach to the local community.



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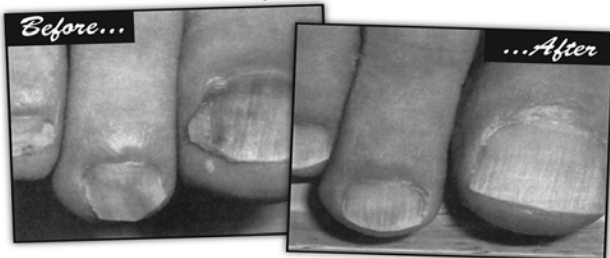
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Chester Fife and Drum Corps

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We are a volunteer organization, comprised of members young and old from throughout the state and we even have a member from Provincetown, MA. In 2023 we participated in numerous parades, musters, and special events.

We practice on Thursday nights (6:30 - 8:00 pm) from March to December and would love for you to join us.

We need fifers, snare drummers, bass drummers and color guard members. We provide lessons, a uniform, camaraderie, and lots of fun!

No matter your age, please consider joining the Chester Fife and Drum Corps. You may contact us at: chesterfd1868@gmail.com or feel free to come to a rehearsal! You can also find us on Facebook!

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For the Third Year In a Row, Three Valley Regional HS Students Receive Yale Book Award

For the third time in as many years, three students from Valley Regional High School have been honored with the Yale Book Award. This year's recipients are Mia Bibbiani of Chester, Mikaela Carlin of Deep River, and Lucas Silva of Essex. Including this year's recipients, nine students from Valley Regional High School have been recognized with the Yale Book Award since 2021.

The Yale Book Award is conferred upon students in their junior year of high school for showing outstanding personal character and intellectual promise. Students throughout the US and internationally may be considered for the award, which is presented in partnership between Yale's alumni communities and schools within those communities. While multiple students from the same school may receive the award in the same year, it is rare for a school to achieve this kind of recognition for its students.

This year's three award recipients from VRHS – one from each of Chester, Deep River, and Essex – were recognized at the school's annual awards assembly in May. The book awards chosen for these students reflect each recipient's interests and possible future aspirations. Mia Bibbiani received a copy of *"Long Day's Journey*

into Night" by Connecticut's Eugene O'Neill. Mikaela Carlin was presented with *"Accidental Conflict"* by Senior Yale Fellow Stephen Roach. And Lucas Silva was recognized with *"Interaction of Color"* by Josef Albers, the former Chair of the Department of Design at the Yale School of Art. Each book includes a bookplate inscribed with the student's name and recognizing the student's achievement as a Yale Book Award recipient.

Bradford Galiette of Essex, Secretary for the Yale College Class of 2008 and a former member of the Yale Alumni Association Board of Governors, remarked, "It's thrilling to see this year's awarded students exhibit the kind of intellectual curiosity, creativity, leadership, and strength of character that are so very much needed both here in our towns and in communities around the world. I'm grateful we find students as talented as Mia, Mikaela, and Lucas among us in our corner of Connecticut, and may we continue to wholeheartedly celebrate and encourage them and their classmates as they get ready to take their next steps."

Details about and comments from each of this year's recognized students follow.

continued on page 14

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Yale Book Award... *continued from page 13*



MIA BIBBIANI (Chester)

"The Yale Book Award represents a combination of kindness and community with strong academic performance, ideals that I strive to achieve, which is why being recognized with this award was a wonderful experience for me. I have a strong interest in humanity, specifically

the way we humans engage with each other and with the world. This interest has led me to be most intrigued by subjects such as English, Psychology, and History, with a focus on media forms such as films, books, and plays, and how we represent and interpret humanity through them. Because of this, the critical edition of *'Long Day's Journey Into Night'* by Eugene O'Neill, which contains the full play script and an analysis of said script, is perfect for me. I am very thankful to the Yale alumni community for choosing this book for me, and I am excited to read it.

"Since I was a child, I have always wanted to experience it all, never content with the idea of leaving the world having only done one main thing. I have wanted to be a lawyer, a writer, a chef, bakery owner, artist, museum curator, and historian. Today, I still love books, food, art, and of course, history, but my desire for my future is to be a filmmaker. I want to surround myself with the creative arts, and my passions for writing, visuals, and media have led me to this conclusion. I plan on attending a filmmaking program in New York City this summer, and I would like to major in film studies and production in college."



MIKAELA CARLIN (Deep River)

"I would like to wholeheartedly thank the Yale alumni community for presenting me with the 2023 Yale Book Award. Peeling off the wrapping paper of the award, I was elated to find that the book, *'Accidental Conflict'* by Stephen Roach, appeals directly to my interests in

political science and international relations. Around the dinner table, politics has always been at the forefront of the conversations among my family members. Listening to discussions of policy decisions, elections, and relations with governments around the globe has inspired me to pursue this topic in my studies.

I am a student in the IB diploma program, and am currently taking a course called Global Politics, which has fostered this inspiration greatly. I intend to study international relations and law in my higher education. This award means a great deal to me, not only because of what it represents, but also because the book I was awarded perfectly aligns with my interests. Thank you to Stephen Roach himself and, once again, to all of those involved in the presentation of this award!"



LUCAS SILVA (Essex)

"The Yale Book Award recognizes and embraces the efforts I put, as a student, into everything at school. A sense of gratification and excitement fills me every time I look at my book, a reminder to strive for academic perfection and character development. And as I flip

through my book, Josef Albers's *'Interaction of Color,'* the more grateful I am of achieving this honor.

The Yale Book Award adds momentum to what I want to accomplish in the future, the study of biochemistry and international relations. I wish to promote connections between the two interdisciplinary areas and advocate for global health policies and science diplomacy. Here, The Yale Book Award serves as a metaphor for this endeavor, evoking ambitious goals and tenacious efforts."

Photos courtesy of each student.



PETER H. CHARBONNIER

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"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."

– Albert Einstein

Opportunities abound in our town for being around the sounds and grounds of nature. North Quarter Park recently provided the following bird songs to a resident birdwatcher: White Throated Sparrow, Carolina Wren, Blue Jay, American Robin, Red-bellied Woodpecker, House Finch, Northern Cardinal, Gold-crowned Kinglet, and Dark-eyed Junco. Take a detour from routines and walk through the park; you might discover some new sounds or see a new point of view.

LOOKING FOR MORE BIRDS, NATURE, AND PEACE?

Check out our beautiful open spaces in town: Pelletier Park (Cedar Lake), Lakeview Park (Corner of Lakeview Ave and Cedar Lake Rd), the Fields at Chester Elementary School (23 Bates Rd), L'Hommedieu Park (Corner of Spring and Straits Rd), Chester Creek Overlook (end of Railroad Ave), and Parker's Point Picnic Area (Parker's Point Rd).



NEW MULCH IN OUR PLAYScape AREA AT NORTH QUARTER PARK.

Chester residents stepped up to volunteer their tools and time: Roger, Bob, Ruth, Brittany, Bryce, Will, Zach, and Region 4's Transition Academy. Special thanks to Fire Chief James Grzybowski for use of his tractor and Department of Public Works superstars Josh and Ryan for their expertise and time.

***Cold and wanting to think about warm things?
How about laying out on the beach at Cedar Lake!***

CEDAR LAKE SUMMER 2024 INFO

Pelletier Park Beach on Cedar Lake is scheduled to be staffed for the 2024 season from June 6 through August 18, daily from 10:00 am until 5:00 pm. Hours may vary according to staff availability, training, weather, or special programs.



Lakeview Park October 2023. Some call this the "Side Beach."

Access to the beaches on Cedar Lake at Lakeview Park and Pelletier Park is by permit only. Let your local area friends and family know that non-resident passes are available at: <http://chester.recdesk.com> and at Pelletier Park during operating hours for \$120 per household. Chester residents may enter staffed facilities by showing a driver's license, or other proof of residency or taxpayer status with identification. Groups of 10 or more must make reservations in advance and provide a certificate of liability insurance.

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The Chester Hose Company

Another Season of Change is Upon Us!

Much like the new leadership that Chester saw in the Town Elections, the following officers and executive positions that were elected on July 3, have settled into their roles with The Chester Hose Company:

Chief	James Grzybowski	Lieutenant	Aidan Bahner
Deputy Chief	Charles Greeney Jr.	Medical Coordinator	Sara Blaschik
Deputy EMS Chief	Geoffrey Vincelette	President	Richard Tsou
Assistant Chief	Dylan Grzybowski	Secretary	Paige McBrayer
Assistant EMS Chief	Parker Divis	Treasurer	Avery Johnson
Battalion Chief	Benjamin Belisle	Trustee (2-year term)	John Divis Jr
Captain	James Schaefer	Trustee (3-year term)	Susan Currier

We thank the following past members who served their positions with dedication and were devoted to paving the way for the next generation of members who stepped forward: Medical Coordinator Susan Currier, Secretary Karen Schaefer, and Trustees Vincent Germini and Denise Sypher.

The Department has been quite busy for the first half of the year, responding to date to 393 calls, putting it on course to meet last year's total call volume of over 900. Quite active in the community as well, members took part in supplying EMS coverage for the 4 on the 4th Road Race and Chester Fair, while hosted The Fall-Back Spring Ahead Craft Fair and Santa Comes to Town by Fire Truck. They also presented at Chester Elementary School during Fire Prevention Week, teaching cooking and stove safety.

In September, The Hose Company put into service its newest piece of apparatus, a 26-foot-long Landing craft Fire/Rescue boat with an enclosed cabin. Built locally by Chester Boat Works in Deep River,

CT, the fabricators took meticulous care and worked with precision while manufacturing such an integral piece of equipment. The boat remained in the water into December, was put into drydock, and will be placed back in the water for service in March. Chief Grzybowski thanks the residents of Chester, elected officials, and the marinas for their support of the department's mission. "This boat was built for the future and will protect people for twenty-plus years to come. It is an honor to work for a town that puts safety first in all elements."

Lastly in December, a Holiday Appreciation Dinner was held to recognize the efforts of the members and their service throughout the year. Members were honored for their years of service, top responders to calls, Member of the Year and Chief's Award, as well as thanking past officers and elected positions.

The Following Members were Awarded:

5 years of service:	Joseph Calamari, Ray Guasp, Richard Tsou
10 years of service	Benjamin Belisle, Dylan Grzybowski, Scot Mills
15 years of service	Sylvia Miksa, Denise Sypher
20 years of service:	Allen Alonzo, Robert Wachtarz
25 years of service	James Skeffington

Top Responding Member:	Aaron Mangan
2nd Top Responding Member:	Paige McBrayer
3rd Top Responding Member:	Thomas Miksa

Top Responding Officer:	Parker Divis
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Chester - Community Listings

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Chester Land Trust..... info@chesterlandtrust.org
Chester Fair (860) 526-5947
Chester Democratic Town Committee
.....chesterct.democrats@gmail.com
Chester Republican Town Committee (860) 398-0690
Chester Garden Club (860) 526-2998
Chester Historical Society..... (860) 526-5781
Chester Merchants Association..... www.visitchester.com
Lions Club..... deepriverchesterct.lionwap.org
Deep River and Chester VFW..... (860) 526-3521
Tri Town Youth Services Bureau (860) 526-3600
Chester Meeting House..... (860) 526-0013
Chester Rotary rotaryclubchester@gmail.com

LIBRARY

Chester Public Library (860) 526-0018

USEFUL NUMBERS

Consumer Protection (860) 566-2294
Community Foundation of Middlesex County (860) 347-0025

POST OFFICE

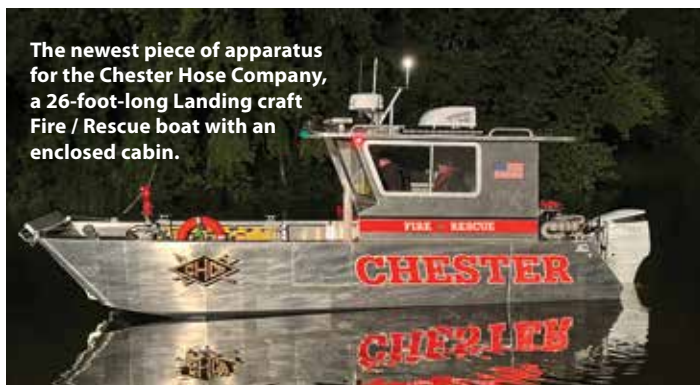
Chester Post Office (860) 526-2780

SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools District 4 (860) 526-2417
Chester Elementary School (860) 526-5797
John Winthrop Middle School..... (860) 526-9546
Valley Regional High School (860) 526-5328

WORSHIP SERVICES

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (860) 526-5495
Congregation Beth Shalom - Temple (860) 526-8920
United Church of Chester (860) 526-2697



The newest piece of apparatus for the Chester Hose Company, a 26-foot-long Landing craft Fire / Rescue boat with an enclosed cabin.

Member of the Year: Brian Zanardi
(chosen by membership)
Chief's Award: Joseph Calamari

We remind the residents and businesses that volunteers are the backbone of our community-to help us better serve you ahead of your time of need, we ask that you sign up for Community Connect by visiting: www.communityconnect.io/info/ct-chester.

We wish you all a safe and healthy new year in 2024 and look forward to seeing you at our Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 30 promptly at the noon fire whistle!

James Grzybowski, Chief,
The Chester Hose Company



Chester Historical Society 11th Challenge in March

*Today is
Tomorrow's History*

Twenty years ago, in 2004, the Chester Historical Society held its first **Creative Challenge**, an opportunity for artists and creators to make pieces of art from antique artifacts. Ten more Challenges fol-

lowed. The artifacts often came from early Chester manufacturers, such as Brooks and Bates. Sometimes, though, they were "found" in Chester, such as the perforated metal building squares discovered at an old Chester farm.

This spring's item came to Chester as a

donation from a Rhode Island antiques dealer who had heard the story of the Creative Challenge from a Society board member. When that dealer acquired an 1880s jeweler's chest filled with hundreds of antique "glasses" for pocket watches,

continued on page 18



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Historical Society... *continued from page 17*

he gave them to the Society. Sosse Baker and her committee immediately loved these watch glasses and is planning the upcoming **“Watch Out!” Challenge**.

Come see these watch glasses at the Chester Museum during the town’s Literary & Arts Festival, on the weekend of February 10-11. How would you incorporate them into a creation for the “Watch Out!” Challenge?

That same weekend, we’ll have a special exhibit of favorite pieces from past Challenges. We know you’ll be impressed!

The “Watch Out!” Challenge will culminate in a reception and silent auction at the Chester Meeting House on Saturday, March 23, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

Tickets will be available beginning February 10. All proceeds will benefit the programs of the Chester Historical

Society. More information is on the website at: chesterhistoricalsociety.org, or by calling: 860-558-4701.

Postage Stamp for Constance Motley

Please read our separate article, below, about the new first-class stamp in honor of Constance Baker Motley.

Chester Films for Watching at Home

While the Chester Museum is closed for the winter, we hope you take the opportunity to watch Chester history at home through the 30+ YouTube films on our website at: chesterhistoricalsociety.org. The most recent film is the very funny story of the 1983 Sewer Parade.

Old Chester Homes

We’re beginning to sound like a broken record! We have said for over a year that we’re updating our *“Homes & History of Chester”* book, which was published 40 years ago. But did you know there are 300+ houses in Chester that were built

before 1901? That’s a wealth of history - something our town should be very proud of - but compiling the history of each house is a huge job. If you own one of these old homes and want to help or if you have any questions, please email us at: chesterchhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or call Rob Miceli at: 860-526-9245 or Cary Hull at: 860-558-4701.

HOW TO FIND US

Website:

chesterhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/ChesterCTHistoricalSociety

Email:

chesterchhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Phone:

860-558-4701

(Cary Hull, president) or

860-526-2443

(Diane Lindsay, curator)

First Class Stamp Honors Chester Resident

CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY

Constance Baker Motley (1921-2005), long-time Chester resident and a founding Trustee of the Chester Historical Society, will be honored with a first class, “Forever” stamp in the Black Heritage series by the US Postal Service. Available February 1st at post offices nationwide, Motley’s stamp joins those of Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and John Lewis.

For 40 years, Motley maintained a seasonal home in Chester on Cedar Lake Rd (1965-2005). She came to town after a pioneering 15-year career as a civil rights attorney who led the effort to desegregate public schools in the Deep South following the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, which she helped to win.

She went on to become New York’s first Black female State Senator, as well as Manhattan Borough President. In 1966, President Johnson appointed her to the federal bench, another historic first.



Judge Motley was well-known locally and actively supported Chester events. She and husband Joel Motley patronized local restaurants, especially the Janeceks’ “Lunch Box,” as well as art galleries, particularly with shows mounted by Jack and Sosse Baker. Her close friendship with Barbara Delaney led to her role as a founding Trustee of the Chester Historical Society in 1970.

Judge Motley’s stamp will be unveiled at a US Postal Service ceremony on Jan. 31st at the Constance Baker Motley Recreation Center in Manhattan.

Another celebration organized by the NAACP will be held Feb. 1st in New Haven, where Motley was born and raised.

A Chester party is planned by the Chester Historical Society and the Chester Land Trust, with date and details to be announced.

For more information about Judge Motley in Chester, go to: www.chesterhistoricalsociety.org.

Invasive Plant Species in Chester: Garlic Mustard

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) was introduced from Europe during the 1800s as a culinary herb. The leaves are edible and, as its name suggests, impart a garlic flavor and odor though it is a member of the mustard family. Garlic mustard is a biennial herb (takes two years to mature and set seed) found in shady woodlands and along roadsides. It thrives in rich, moist soil, where it can divert water and nutrients from native species that grow in similar understory conditions. This aggressive invader spreads prolifically by seed, allowing it to outcompete native wildflowers and decrease biodiversity. This in turn threatens native insect populations, including butterflies and other pollinators.

IDENTIFICATION

First year – The first year plant develops as a basal rosette of leaves around a central tap root. The variable –sized leaves are kidney bean shaped with rounded teeth. The low growing rosette persists through winter.

Second year – The plant grows quickly the following spring reaching two to four feet in height. Small, white, four-petaled flowers bloom in clusters from late April through June. Second year leaves are more heart shaped and the teeth more pointed. As the flowers die back later in summer, they are replaced by long slender seed pods called siliques. By August, mature seeds disperse, and the entire plant dies. Its seeds will germinate the next spring, and the cycle continues. A single plant can produce 600 to 7,500 seeds.

CONTROL

Management options include hand pulling, cutting, and herbicide application. Hand pulling is an effective way to remove small populations because the plants pull up easily. If the plants have set seed, they should be bagged and removed to prevent seed dispersal. Try to disturb the soil as little as possible as disturbance will bring buried seeds to the soil surface and may allow them to sprout. Firmly tamp down any disturbed soil after removing the plants. For larger populations, cutting the stems to ground level with clippers, scythe, or a motorized string trimmer is effective. Cut during late spring or early summer when the plants are in flower. If there are any viable seeds, bag and remove cut stems. Continue to cut annually until the seedbank is depleted. Hand pulling and cutting are the most environmentally friendly removal practices and are preferred. However, herbicides, such as glyphosate or potassium salt-based products are also effective, especially as a spot treatment during the first year of ground level growth. Note that herbicides will not affect subsequent seedling emergence.

References: Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station, Penn State Extension, CT Invasive Plant Work Group



Garlic Mustard Pesto

There are many recipes on the web; below is one from Reformation Acres.

- 4 cups garlic mustard greens (best in spring), washed and patted dry
- ½ cup parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt & black pepper
- ½ cup toasted walnuts or other nuts
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Process the garlic mustard, walnuts, cheese, seasonings, and lemon juice in a food processor until well ground. Slowly pour in the olive oil and process until fully combined. Taste and adjust seasonings. The pesto may be frozen to preserve it for later use.

Image above: Garlic mustard flowers, leaves and developing seeds. Photo by: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Univ. of Conn.



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Chester Attains Silver Certification from Sustainable CT



In October of 2023, Chester was awarded Silver Certification by Sustainable CT, a statewide initiative that inspires and supports communities to become more efficient, resilient, and inclusive. Chester demonstrated achievement in 12 sustainable impact

areas ranging from vibrant arts and culture and well-steward-ed lands to inclusive community building and thriving local economies.

Chester was able to document accomplishments related to its historical, cultural, natural and business resources with the input of many organizations including: Chester Sustainability Team (SuChest), Chester Historical Society, Chester Merchants and Tourism Liaison, Chester Public Library, Chester Land Trust, Chester Cemetery Association, Conservation Commission, Public Works Department, Cedar Lake Watershed Commission, Chester Rotary and many others. Below are just a few actions that demonstrate Chester's sustainability:

Arts and Culture

With its amazing array of art galleries and artisan shops, offerings at the Chester Public Library such as the "Cosmic Watercolor Workshop" and "What to Do With a Blank Page", high quality programs at the Historical Society, musical entertainment at the Sunday Farmers Market, summer concerts at Cedar Lake, movies at the Meetinghouse, and a brilliant seasonal starry night, Chester continues to be a regional center for arts and culture.

Town-wide Earth Day Celebration 2023

Chester Land Trust coordinated its annual town-wide clean-up, collecting a record-breaking 54 bags of garbage and 18 bags of recyclables. The Conservation Commission and Chester Rotary held a pollinator plant promotion and giveaway at the town pollinator garden, while the Chester Library, Historical Society, merchants and local farmers hosted events downtown including an artful chalk drawing event for kids and adults.

Chester Fair Zero Waste Program

Chester is a national leader in its effort to create a zero-waste country fair. Building on success in 2022 with a 47% diversion of recyclables and compostables from the traditional waste stream, the rate improved to 59% in 2023. With the cooperation and support of fairgoers, the collection of food scraps, recyclables (plastic and aluminum cans and bottles, corrugated boxes and other items) continues to improve, moving us



Recyclable waste collected at the 2023 Chester Fair.

toward the ultimate goal of Zero Waste! A new feature at the 2023 fair was a six-spouted "Water Monster" (water dispenser) that was in almost constant use refilling water bottles and compostable cups.

Electronics Recycling

Two collection events at the United Church of Chester parking lot in 2023 resulted in the collection of more than 800 pounds of e-waste in April and 3,000 pounds in October.



New recycling container downtown Chester.

Bringing Recycling to Downtown

Starting with two beautifully refurbished garbage cans from Chester Public Works for bottles and cans, and a large plastic container for empty pizza boxes, courtesy of Little House Brewing.

Chester began a pilot program for collecting recyclables downtown in early September. SuChest volunteers stood by recycling stations during Sunday Farmers Markets to encourage and guide people to recycle properly.

Region 4 Food Scraps Program

Chester Elementary, Essex Elementary, Deep River Elementary, John Winthrop Middle and Valley Regional High Schools initiated a food scrap collection program this school year. With financial support from the towns, local citizens and a generous match from Sustainable CT, students in Region 4 recently began separating food scraps and plain paper into bins provided by Blue Earth. Blue Earth picks up the bins weekly and takes them to their facility where the waste is turned into compost and energy.

Tackling Invasive Plants

In the fall of 2022 and with funding from several grants, Chester Land Trust initiated a Japanese knotweed control and native plant restoration program at its Carini Preserve, coupled with educational programs, articles and posters. The Conservation Commission

continues to educate citizens with fact sheets on its website and periodic articles in Chester Events.

Kudos to all of the people and organizations who contributed to Chester's Silver Certification, and especially to Cindy Lignar who chaired the Sustainability

Team and submitted most of the documentation for the certification process. As Cindy takes on her new role in town government, we hope to build on the groundwork that has been laid to envision, encourage and enact more sustainability programs in our community.



Chester Library

**21 West Main Street
Chester, CT 06412**

860-526-0018

www.chesterctlibrary.com

Library Events - Adults

Jan. 21 - Mark Borton,

Moondoggle: Franklin Roosevelt and the fight for tidal-electric power at Passamaquoddy Bay. Spend a Sunday afternoon listening to local author and Chester resident, Mark Borton, discuss his new book *Moondoggle*. *Moondoggle* is a dramatic tale about the appeal of tidal power, the difficulties in realizing its potential, and the engineers and three U.S. Presidents (Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy) who tried to make clean and renewable tidal power a reality. Now on the 100th anniversary of the "Passamaquoddy Project's" conception (1920-2020), *Moondoggle*—the only book on the project—explores what almost was, and what could be. This talk will take place at Masonicare (Chester Village West) at 4:00 pm.

Jan. 23 - Rajiv Nagainch, Your Retirement: Dream or Disaster?

How to Avoid the Hidden Traps in Retirement Planning Advice. Start your New Year off right and learn how to avoid the hidden traps in retirement planning advice! Over his 20-plus years of experience in United States elder law, Rajiv has developed a step-by-step guide to retirement planning by connecting the various dots of the retirement planning process. The LifePlanning approach is a system that brings together legal, financial, and housing issues into a coordinated effort that can work to make sure you don't end up being forced into institutionalized care, going broke, and being a burden on your family. In this enlightening and informative webinar, Rajiv explains why "retirement plan failure" happens and how you can keep it from happening to you. To avoid the hidden traps in retirement planning, register now at: <https://library.org/chesterctlibrary/upcoming>.

Jan. 30 - Dr. Robert Lustig,

Metabolical: The Lure and the Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine. Launch your New Year healthy with Dr. Robert Lustig, a pediatric neuroendocrinologist who has long been on the cutting edge of medicine and science. Dr. Lustig's book, *Metabolical: The Lure and the Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine*, weaves the interconnected strands of nutrition,

health/disease, medicine, environment, and society into a completely new fabric by proving on a scientific basis a series of iconoclastic revelations. His book and this webinar explain what's needed to fix all three. Dr. Lustig offers a doable plan for us to heal and restore our health and well-being with real food and, in the process, boost our immunity to viruses like COVID-19.

Register now at: <https://library.org/chesterctlibrary/upcoming>.

continued on page 22



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Chester Library... *cont'd from page 21*

Library Events - Children

Feb. 3 - Take Your Child to the Library

Children's librarian Miss Emma is currently planning fun and exciting things to do for this event so remember to keep checking our website for updates.

Feb. 27 - All About Owls

One of our most unique and mysterious family of birds, owls are most active when the rest of us are settling down for the night. In this presentation, participants will learn about the owl species of Connecticut and how to identify them by sight and sound! Presented by the CT Audubon Society, this program will take place at Chester Town Hall, 6:30 pm.

Mar. 12 - Backyard Birding

In this presentation, participants will learn what birds you can expect to see in your backyard this time of year, how to make your yard a bird-friendly habitat, plus tips, tricks, and everything you need for making the most

of your backyard birding! Presented by the CT Audubon Society, this program will take place at Chester Town Hall, 6:30 pm.

MORNING MEDITATION with Caryl Horner.

A weekly open meditation group will begin starting January 8, 2024. Please come and join us at the Chester Meeting House on Monday mornings at 9:30 am. Regular meditation has been shown to have significant health and emotional benefits. It calms our mind, centers, and grounds us, reduces stress and "awakens" us, beyond conditioned & habitual thinking. If you have never meditated, then the instructor can show you how to meditate individually. Together we will also experience some "sound healing" meditation, guided meditations and more. We will meet for 40 minutes. Wear comfortable clothing. Chairs will be provided, or you can bring your own meditation cushions if you wish.

Instructor-Caryl Horner is a Meditation Coach and has worked in healthcare for



The snowy owl can sometimes be seen as far south as Connecticut.

decades and is adept in multiple meditation modalities.

STORY TIME
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chesterclibrary.com for updates on events.

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