



Totoket Times

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For Our Town From Our Town

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Volume 26 No 5, July 19, 2019



SUNFLOWER PROJECT UPDATE

First, a thank you to all residents who have planted sunflowers in the past month. The response to DESTINATION NORTH BRANFORD - THE SUNFLOWER PROJECT has been amaz-

ing in bringing together age groups from pre-school to senior citizens from packing seeds to planting them. All the schools, many churches, businesses, Town employees and enthusiastic residents have contributed.

A special thank you goes to all the (more than thirty) volunteers who have donated many hours to the Sunflower Project.

SOLD OUT all 5,000 sunflower seed packets that were filled by volunteers from ages 3 - 98, have been distributed to residents, businesses and town properties. Many are now sprouting up.

SUNFLOWER ART SHOW - The sunflower team and EDC announce that a sunflower themed Art Show will open on October 19 through November 16 at the Smith Library from 12-2 and Atwater from 2-4. This will highlight individual photos, paintings, pottery and other art forms related to the North Branford Sunflower Project. Details will follow and we encourage your participation. All entry information will be posted on the Destination North Branford website: www.destinationnorthbranford.com, by mid August.

OTHER ECONOMIC HAPPENINGS - Sunflowers have been planted around Town Hall and other Town buildings by the Public Works Department, following a landscape plan proposed by local resident Donna Christensen (Christensen Landscape Service. Be sure to keep a watch on the front of Town Hall.

Zion Episcopal Church generously invited the Sunflower Project volunteers to a lunch, to recognize their efforts.

Totoket TV, together with volunteer film producer/director Bonnie Symanski filmed a "Destination North Branford video which features a variety of visuals and interviews of community members. It includes the Totoket Historical Society properties including seven farms, skaters at the Ice Pavilion, fishermen and more. The purpose is to promote a business friendly community with appeal that will attract new talent to live, work and play here. We are very excited to let the world know what a gem of a community we have.

Speaker Program (3E The North Branford Community Speakers Program (3E = Engage, Education, Entertain) launched in conjunction with the NB Libraries, will begin on October 20th. Speakers and topics are being planned for all Sundays in the libraries and in fall and winter, when they are open. The kickoff program will be with Amy Paterson, Executive Director of Connecticut Land Conservation Council.

The program was very popular and covered many topics and are announced in this paper and on the library websites. 3E takes place on Sunday afternoon at the libraries. If you have an area of expertise you would like to share with the community and are interested in becoming a guest speaker, please e-mail Lauren Davis Library Director or Roger Salway, EDC coordinator.

Roger Salway, EDC Coordinator redc@townofnorthbranfordct.com

Lauren Davis, Library Director; librarydirector@townofnorthbranfordct.com



**Grand Opening
Chat - n - Chew**

Cone Corral Ice Cream Shop

Festivities begin at 12:30

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

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Chat  Chew

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Publication Date

August 2
August 23
September 6
September 20
October 4
October 18
November 1
November 15

Deadline

July 26
August 16
August 30
September 13
September 27
October 11
October 25
November 7

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totokettimes@comcast.net***

In this issue of the Totoket Times.....

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Totoket Times Summer Dates & Deadlines

Summer creates many diffeernt challenges and needs for our advertisers so we have adjusted some of our deadlines. Please be aware of the following publication dates and deadlines for August and September.

Publication Dates		Deadlines	
August	2	July	26
August	23	August	16
September	6	August	31
September	20	September	13

Please post these somewhere so you are able to get your information or ad needs in on time

“I hope they reconsider”
Dear Editor,
Well, Wells Fargo has done it again. They are closing the branch in Northford at the end of this month. They are the only bank in Northford.
Residents will have to go to other branches in North Haven, Wallingford or where ever. What an inconvenience for businesses, and residents (especially seniors) who have been loyal customers over the years. We have to transfer our valuables to another safe deposit box at another inconvenient location.
The staff has been fantastic and accomodating and I feel for them. What about their careers and futures? There is no empathy for them at the top 1% with the wealth and the “let the people be damned attitude”. Let them “eat cake” as in the French revolution.

I hope they will reconsider their selfish decision and if not, I urge their customers to do business with other banks.
Sincerely,
Pasquale DeLise

Letters to Editor reminder

A reminder that letters to the editor must be typed and in a word document format. They must be as brief as possible and NO PERSONAL ATTACKS.

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State Representative Vincent Candelora

Our New Craft Beer and Wine Laws



This past legislative session we had many dramatic changes to our liquor laws. Over the past decade, Connecticut has seen an increase in the number of craft breweries and farm wineries. This growth had led to requests to “modernize” our laws and allow craft breweries to sell more product

and function as restaurants. Restaurants, package stores and distributors expressed concerns that these businesses were hurting their industry and sought to reign in their operations. When everyone is unhappy, there is opportunity to negotiate, and ultimately, the legislature passed Senate Bill 647, which addresses many requests and concerns of all these industries, and I hope will lead to a prosperous tourism business, especially for the North Branford community.

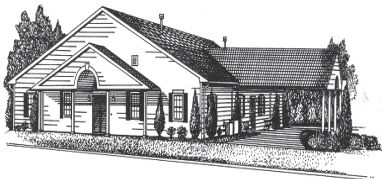
Senate Bill 647 creates new classifications for a wine, cider or mead manufacturers; however, our current farm wineries remain unchanged to protect open space and agriculture by continuing the tradition of requiring these facilities to grow their own product. The law, however, allows for these farm wineries, craft breweries, and farm breweries to sell each other’s product so now if you visit a brewery, you will have an option to purchase a farm winery product and visa versa. The law still prohibits the sale of commercial brand liquor offered in restaurants. If these establishments wish to serve food, they will need to follow the same permit requirements as a restaurant. Finally, craft breweries are allowed to sell up to 9 gallons of product from their facility for home consumption. I believe these changes will keep these businesses operating within their designated areas and prevent unfair competition, essentially everyone is following the same rules.

The bill also consolidates dozens of liquor permits into one classification. These permits had ranged in prices from \$200 to \$1800. When the legislation consolidated these permits, they set the fee at \$2000. Fortunately, the

effective date of these fee

changes doesn’t occur until 2021, and I have received a commitment from the Committee Chairs to address this fee structure. A non-profit club that operates a hall should not be paying the same fee as an airport bar!

Given the developments of several farm wineries and breweries within North Branford and surrounding towns, Senate Bill 647 will go a long way of enhancing these operations and capitalizes on North Branford’s agricultural community.



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Let’s Be “Frank”

It’s not getting any easier brother, but every day is a treasure. As you know, I schedule all my doctors appointments at the end of June because there is little time during the high school baseball season. My entourage of doctors have agreed on several issues.

Let me start by saying all my numbers are good and except for the fact that I feel crappy, I am doing great. As the saying goes. “I’m in great shape for the shape I’m in”. They all agreed that I am overweight. I can go to a family picnic and my sensitive cousins would point that out free of charge. They also all agreed that I am not drinking enough.

I told the diabetic specialist that I would have no problem going from one glass of wine to three but she was not amused. I also told them with what I am drinking I’m up two to three times a night so if I go to a gallon a day (their recommendations) I might as well sleep in the bathroom. That was greeted with less enthusiasm then the wine comment. Am I the only one left with a sense of humor?

Being a great “athletic supporter” I followed the USA women in soccer. It was very entertaining as long as I turned off the voice for the post game interviews. Even you, my liberal brother would have to admit the actions were over the top. Did I mention it was the USA team.

If you are representing the USA and wearing their colors on your chest, then stand up for the Anthem, our kids don’t have to hear your disgusting language and by all means, the symbol of our freedom, does not belong on the ground. Some might say it was an oversight, but those kind of oversights should not be tolerated. The White House is a symbol of our country, you should be honored to go there regardless of whether or not you like the president. If you want to protest for equal pay that’s all well and good but to do it in that fashion was a disgrace. Remember, the pay is governed by revenue brought in by the events. There is no argument about how hard they work. However, spectators and advertisers are not equal to the men’s game, generating far less revenue, generating far less ability to pay out. Did I mention they were the USA team and an embarrassing representation.

On the local front, our Director of Parks and Recreation quietly “left the building” with little efforts to keep her. Those aren’t my words but my source was reliable. We make a big deal out of high school scoreboards, Potato & Corn Festivals that bring no money to the town, where the parade should be and a host of other things. But we let this issue go quietly into the night. The priorities seem to be a bit misguided and that should be the main focus of our next “executive session”, as well as our next election.

I’m sure you and daddy are enjoying the Yankees. I can hear dad yelling that even though they have the best record in baseball, the Italian coaches (Torre, Girardi and Martin) are still better than this Boone guy. “Give him a surf board and let him surf back to California”, I can almost hear the old man.

I can also hear the discussion about removing the Kate Smith version of God Bless America during the seventh inning stretch. In her career, the “late great” sang some lyrics that are not appropriate to TODAY’S standards,. However, not against the standards of yesteryear.

Do me a favor, give our sister a kiss for me. As you read this letter, we will be at a special Mass remembering her life, on the second anniversary of her death.

Mary was a special person. She gave and gave of herself until she had nothing left to give. She wasn’t as noisy as you and I but in her own way, she carried out a mission to do what ever she could for people. She had no kids but she was at home with a baby in her arms. She was at home with family and friends and she was always the first one to the party and the last one to leave. She loved life so much, she neglected her own. She tried so hard to make others smile that as time went on, she lost her own. She was definitely her mother’s daughter. She’s with you now. Your gain, our loss.

As the time passes, I miss her more than ever. I am lost on family history without the two of you. I don’t have anyone to set me straight on the right way to do things (although my kids and now even my grandsons are helping me in that area). Most of all I have one less person to annoy. She was really easy to get on April Fools, Halloween and other practical joke days which could almost be any day when she was around.

Well take care. Give my best to all. I’ll see you soon. Maybe sooner than everyone thinks.

Letters to the editor...

This paper encourages all readers to voice their opinions and comments.

The Totoket Times is not responsible for erroneous information or statements in letters to the editor. Letters should be as brief as possible.

All letters must be signed. A telephone number should be included and no personal attacks.

This paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

All letters should be addressed to :

The Editor

P.O. Box 313, Northford, CT 06472



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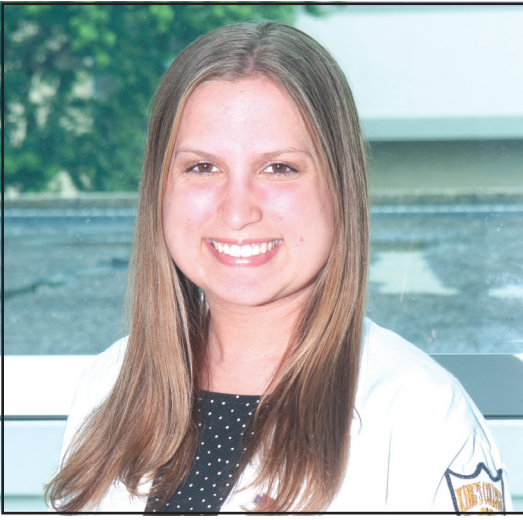
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The publisher assumes no responsibility for typographical errors. In the event of an error, the publisher will issue a credit adjustment on only the incorrect portion of the advertisement, as well as a retraction in the next issue.

North Branford Resident Begins Clinical Rotations



Ashley McManus, a resident of North Branford, Conn., and a student at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., recently began her final year of study as part of the Physician Assistant master's degree program.

Her final year of study will consist of a series of clinical rotations. A twelve-week rotation in family medicine and separate six-week rotations in medical specialties including emergency medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and general surgery will conclude with her graduation from the program in August 2020. Students will be completing rotations in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, South Carolina, Illinois, Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Maryland, and Wisconsin.



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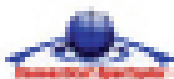
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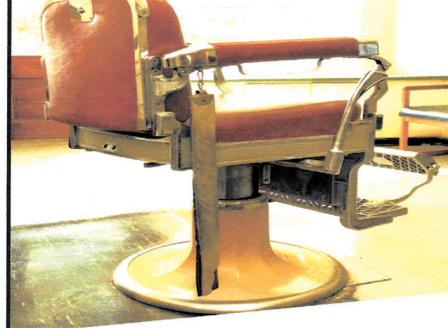


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2005 Honda Civic SDN. LX AT	\$3,995
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2004 Chevy Tahoe 4DR 1500 4WD LT	\$7,995
2012 Honda Civic Sedan EX PZEV	\$7,995
2009 Toyota Sienna 4WD 5SPD	\$7,995
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2012 Honda Civic SDN EX PZEV	\$8,995
2004 Lexus LS 430 4WD 6SPD	\$10,995
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2008 Ford f 150 4x4 quad Cab 119K	\$10,995
2011 Toyota Sienna 5DR 7 Pass Van V-6	\$10,995
2008 Ford F-150 SuperCrew 139" XLT	\$10,995
2015 KIA Optima 4DR SDN EX	\$11,995
2011 Ram 1500 4WD Quad Cab 140.5"	\$11,995
2013 Harley Davidson FLHX Y	\$15,995
2004 Pontiac GTO 2Dr. Cpe.	\$24,995



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Knights of Columbus Council 6801



Mets vs Nationals



Sunday August 11, 2019.

Leaving at 10:30am, game starts at 1:10pm.

Tickets are \$72.00, included is bus transportation.

For tickets or questions please call:

Wayne – 203-410-3885 or Damian – 203-215-7699



Wee Care of North Branford, Inc. Daycare and Preschool

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Thursday, August 1st 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Potato Fest Site - 290 Forest Rd. Northford

Don't miss the premier of the "Destination North Branford" Video!

The North Branford Economic Development Commission and the North Branford Potato & Corn Festival are hosting this year's Business Under the Big Tent: A Taste of North Branford to celebrate some of our town's best eats, locally made drinks, and mingling with town business owners and the wonderful sponsors of the PoCo Fest.

RSVP to Gina Cox: executivesecretary@townofnorthbranfordct.com (203) 484-6000 or Roger Salway: edc@townofnorthbranfordct.com by July 26



Presented By:



A big **THANK YOU**



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SAIL AWAY ARGIA Monday, August 12th

Cost: \$110 resident / \$115 non-resident



Board the 81 foot Schooner Argia for a narrated sightseeing cruise. You will hear about the rich maritime history of the area. After the cruise enjoy lunch at Steak Loft then have some time on your own in Olde Mistick Village. Please give your meal choice at time of registration.

ACTIVITIES

ADVENTURELAND

Who: Ages 3 - 7
When: August 6, 13, 20
Time: Tuesday, 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
Where: STW Community Center
Fee: \$55 res / \$60 non-res
Instructor: Kidscapades
Description: Each day will be focused on fantastic adventures! Children will transform themselves into pirates as they go in search of treasures, fairies as they create beautiful fairy houses, become rock stars, and of course paleontologists and dig for dinosaur fossils. Join us for adventures of epic proportions!

DISNEY PRINCESS DAYS

Who: Ages 3 - 7
When: August 6, 13, 20
Time: Tuesday, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Where: STW Community Center
Fee: \$55 res / \$60 non-res
Instructor: Kidscapades
Description: Each day a different Disney Princess will be explored inside our castle walls. Everything princess from art projects to games. If your child loves princesses, this is the perfect program choice!

KIDS HULA HOOP STAR

Who: Ages 6 - 12
When: August 5 - August 25
Time: Monday, 5:00 - 5:45 p.m.
Where: STW Community Center
Fee: \$60 res / \$65 non-res (*Hoops are provided*)
Instructor: Kailey, Owner of Hipnotic Hoopla
Description: Join Kailey for an exciting hula hoop class! We will explore the world of hooping through play and movement. Learn how to hoop, play interactive games, and have fun. This class will foster creativity, improve balance, social skills, motor skills, and coordination.

ADULT HOOP DANCE FIT

Who: Ages 13+
When: August 5 - August 25
Time: Monday, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Where: STW Community Center
Fee: \$60 res / \$65 non-res (*Hoops are provided*)
Instructor: Kailey, Owner of Hipnotic Hoopla
Description: Hoop dance is a fun low impact, total body workout and anyone can do it! Not to mention you burn 7 calories per minute. We will focus on the basics of hula hooping through mix of fitness and dance. No experience is needed.

SELF DEFENSE TRAINING - KRAV KEMPO-JITSU

Students will be taught modern self-defense techniques and will work fun fitness and coordination drills in this well rounded martial arts program of Krav Kempo Jitsu. Classes are professionally taught in a friendly environment and strive to instill respect and determination.

PRE SCHOOL KKJ	CHILD KKJ	YOUTH KKJ
Who: Ages 3-4	Who: Ages 5 - 6	Who: Ages 7 - 12
When: August 15 - Sept 5	When: August 10 - August 31	When: August 10 - August 31
Time: Thurs. 3:00 - 3:30	Time: Saturday 12:30 - 1:00	Time: Saturday 10:50 - 11:30
Fee: \$45 res	Fee: \$45 res	Fee: \$45 res

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Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a style of martial arts that focuses on grappling and ground fighting. Students will learn this style in a safe and supportive environment which fosters respect for self and others. Brazilian JiuJitsu is not solely a martial art, it is also a sport; a method for promoting physical fitness, building character, and a way of life.

YOUTH BRAZILIAN JIUJITSU	ADULT BRAZILIAN JIUJITSU
When: August 14 - September 4	Who: Ages 16+
Who: Ages 7 - 9	When: August 13 - September 5
Time: Wednesday, 4:30 - 5:10	Time: Tuesday, 8:05 - 9:15
Who: Ages 10 - 15	OR Thursday, 7:00 - 8:15
Time: Wednesday, 5:10 - 5:50	Fee: \$45 res
Fee: \$45 res	

North Branford Senior Center

8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Senior Hot Lunch available - \$3 - Monday – Friday, 12:00 p.m.

Check out the menu at www.nbparkrec.com

Lunch orders need to be placed by 10:00 am

Weekly grocery shopping trip on Tuesdays at 12:30.

Never miss a monthly newsletter and sign up for email or snail mail delivery (snail mail \$8 for the year).

Weekday transportation to the Center available to town Residents

Please call by 9am

BUS TRIPS

Essex Steam Train & Riverboat Pirate Adventure Cruise/Lenny and Joe's, Wednesday, August 7, Departs 8 :15 a.m. \$35 res / \$40 nr

Hop on board The Essex Steam Train as it heads to Deep River Landing to Meet the riverboat, Becky Thatcher. The commander of the "ship" Captain Molly Bones - known as the gem of the high seas - will take you on a fully immersive, one-of-a-kind Treasure Hunt on the Connecticut River! We will then head to Lenny and Joe's for lunch on your own.

Aqua Turf/Song, Dance & Romance, August 13, Departs 10:30 a.m. \$45 res / \$50 nr

- A musical journey of great songs all designed with the dancing romantic in mind! Richie and hos entourage will bring the songs from yester-year as well as favorites from today. Your meal will be salad. Pasta ala Norma, chicken Kathryn, sliced roast pork loin, vegetable, potato and dessert.

Aqua Harkness Park & Lunch, Friday, September 6, Departs 10:30 a.m. FREE/ \$5 non res

Enjoy the panoramic views of Long Island Sound, the sweeping lawns, the stately trees and spectacular gardens set on over 230 seaside acres. Includes a stop at the fabulous Captain Scott's Lobster Dock for lunch on your own.

ACTIVITIES

Aldi, Monday, July 22, 12:30 p.m., FREE

Let's take a trip over to Aldi after lunch! Don't forget your reusable shopping bags & a quarter for a cart!

***NEW* - Introducing Open Bocce! Monday, July 29th at 12:45**

Let's check out our new Bocce courts!

SENIOR APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Wednesday, August 21st, 12:00 noon

STW Community Center

For those 55 and over, join us for a luncheon to say **THANK YOU** for all you do and bring to our community. Enjoy a delicious meal with friends and entertainment.

This event fills quickly

Please register by Wednesday, August 14th



Volunteers for Potato Wrapping

We are seeking a few good volunteers to help wrap potatoes for the annual Potato & Corn Festival on:

Tuesday, July 30

Wednesday, July 31

We will be working in 2 hour shifts for easy sign up.

From 10:00-12:00 & 12:30-2:30

at the STW Community Center 1332 Middletown Ave.

A complimentary lunch will be provided at 12 p.m. (*Sign up is required for lunch*). Please wear comfortable shoes and clothing and come prepared to have fun!

To sign up for a shift, please visit the front desk. For more information or questions, please contact Kathy or Kerry (203) 484-6017



**18th Annual
Potato & Corn Festival
August, 2, 3, & 4!
290 Forest Rd. Northford**

July Events at Northford Congregational Church

The last two weekends in July will be busy ones outdoors for the historic Northford Congregational Church, “A Little Church with a Big Heart.”

An outdoor tag sale on the lawn **Sat., July 20** (rain date July 27) from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., 4 Old Post Rd., Northford, will benefit the church. There will be tables of items from various vendors and local people in addition to the church tables. A few spaces are still available for \$20 (non-refundable). Set-up begins at 7:30 a.m. Bring your own table and chairs. Contact Aloha at (203) 484-0794 for information and to reserve a space.

On **Sun., July 28**, at 10 a.m., local residents are invited by the church and Rev. Robin Blundon to participate in a community and family worship service as everyone gathers at the Farm River in Northford. The location is behind the municipal buildings and ball field at Totoket Park. Bring a lawn chair or picnic blanket, bug repellent (and boots if it has rained).

The historic Northford Congregational Church (203-484-0795) is located at 4 Old Post Road at the corner of Route 22 and Route 17 in the Northford village in North Branford. Office hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday and other days by appointment. Website: www.northfordcongregational.church. Email address: ncchurch@snet.net. Like us on Facebook.

Ice Cream Socials at St. Andrew’s

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, the White Church on the Hill in the Heart of Northford, 1382 Middletown Avenue, will be celebrating summer again with Ice Cream Socials. Come join us to make your own sundaes and visit with friends. We have many, many flavors of ice cream, and an enormous variety of toppings. Dates for Ice Cream Socials are Wednesdays, June 26, July 24, and August 21. 6 - 8 p.m. Cost is \$3.50 per person. Any questions please call Nan Monde at 203-710-70.

Evergreen Woods Annual Holiday Fair

Evergreen Woods will hold their 25th annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, November 9, 2019 from 9am to 2pm. This fair is one of the most popular fairs on the shoreline, featuring works of aspiring artists and local craftsmen. It is a great place to do all your holiday shopping. All proceeds this year from the vendor registration fees, raffles, food court, cookie walk and white elephant sale will go to Colin’s Crew and The Yale New Haven Hospital Toy Closet! Evergreen Woods is located at 88 Notch Hill Road in North Branford. If you are an interested vendor please contact Jaclyn Martinelli at 483.3231 or email jmartinelli@evergreen-woods.com

Recycling News

HazWaste Central is open for the season

Located right behind the Regional Water Authority’s headquarters,
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven

Hours are 9am to noon - Saturdays through October 26th, 2019

Note: Center is closed for the Labor Day holiday weekend.

All users must fill out a registration form.

To save time, visit the Hazwaste Central page:

<https://www.rwater.com/in-the-community/hazwaste-central>

and complete an electronic form or download and fill out the user registration form

prior to dropping off your household hazardous waste.

You can also click on a list for acceptable household waste.

Want to volunteer?

Call 203-401-2712 or email ask.hazwaste@rwater.com for information to become a HazWaste Central Volunteer

Keep Your Neighborhood Cleaner and Safer

Please store totes away from street and sidewalks after pickup.

Unacceptable Curbside Waste Reminder

Construction debris (such as toilets, concrete blocks, roofing material), propane tanks, TVs, monitors, printers, home cleanouts may not be placed curbside.

These items will not get picked up; please dispose/recycle properly.

Enjoy this year’s Potato and Corn Festival

(PoCo Fest) August 2nd to August 4th

For a cleaner, greener festival please place trash and recyclables in the appropriate bins.

Thank you for recycling responsibly!

It’s About the Land

It’s unfortunate we don’t have a motion picture with sound which records the construction of the Lake Gaillard dam and water tunnels. Although motion pictures with sound began to appear in theatres in the 1920’s, I’m not aware of any having been produced for this project. Yes, there are plenty of photographs, but missing are the sounds and even beyond what a movie might capture, the odors of construction of that bygone era. My age has allowed me to see and hear the sounds of late steam-era construction equipment and the fragrance of steam meeting piston lubricating oil. Other sounds and odors associated with the project I can only suggest, such as Blakeslee’s workmen’s camps one of which included a large segregated African-American camp. C. W. Blakeslee had won the contract to build the project without bidding having earned the confidence of water company officials thru stellar performance on previous water company construction projects.

To start the project, land was cleared of trees and undergrowth where the dam was to be built and the reservoir flooded. Instead of chainsaws noisily breaking into that peaceful landscape, you would have heard the chopping sound of woodsmen’s axes cutting down smaller trees. Larger trees would be felled by men working large two-man cross-cut saws sometimes referred to as “misery whips”. They created a rhythmical swishing sound as the saw bit deeply into wood followed by the crash of the falling tree. And there would be the sight and smell of smoke rising from the fires lit to burn the piles of brush and tree tops.

From the Branford Steam Railroad line near the New Haven Trap Rock quarry (today’s Tilcon) a Blakeslee crew constructed a spur railroad to bring processed stone directly to a concrete mixing plant at the site of the dam. Building the spur railroad produced the sounds of steel meeting steel as men pounded large spikes to connect steel rails to wooden sleepers (railroad ties) on which the rails rested. When the railroad spur was completed, a steam locomotive pulled several cars loaded with processed stone to the concrete mixing plant. The shriek of the locomotive’s steam whistle, the chuffing sound of the engine as it labored to bring the loaded cars to the mixing plant would be followed by the clanking of engine side rods as the empty cars were returned to the quarry. These are sounds of a 1920’s large construction project. Today, long after the project was completed, there are just a few places on the slope of Great Hill and a ravine leading to the reservoir where any trace of the railroad spur can be found.

Absent in the 1920’s would have been the sound of roaring diesel engines powering excavating equipment and generators of today’s construction environment. To prepare the base of the dam for its first pour of concrete, steam shovels removed loose bedrock down to solid stone. Steam shovels were relatively quiet machines. But their heavy steel tracks made a clanking sound when they moved over bedrock, and a disquieting, screeching sound as the steel shovel scraped against the bedrock. Operation of the shovels required a skilled operator and a fireman who kept the steam up by shoveling coal into the fire box. The excavation formed a channel deep below the surface of the ground. Engineers inspected the rock to determine its suitability as a foundation to carry the weight of all the concrete that was to be poured. Grout, under 100 psi pressure driven most likely by steam, was forced into holes drilled deep to intersect with seams within the bedrock beneath the dam’s foundation. Doing so would help to seal off any leakage of water from the future reservoir as it filled behind the dam.

Constructing the forms to hold the concrete in place above the foundation produced a cacophony of hammers pounding away, never in unison, as men spiked or bolted together large dimension southern yellow pine or freshly sawn oak timbers. And there would be the voices of foremen directing their men using choice words seldom heard when women were present. Hard hats, safety boots, safety goggles, and OSHA regulated scaffolding would be absent. OSHA and safety regulations would not come into the picture for at least another 50 years. It would also be the last major construction project by Blakeslee where large numbers of horses were used. Gone would be the “clip-clop” sound of hooves and the distinctive odor of working horses. Horse drawn carts moved just a few yards of earth at a time. Progress reports complained about the slow pace of placing backfill against the face of the dam and the dike’s core wall. It doomed the use of horses on future major projects. Horses and steam shovels would eventually be replaced with heavy duty, diesel powered earth movers, with the sights, sounds and acrid odor of diesel exhaust more familiar to us today. By July 1927, most of the work on the main dam had been completed. Work on the dike and the reservoir’s spillway would not be completed until November 1928.

Next month, to complete the “saga” of Lake Gaillard, we will learn more about the tunnels bringing water to the reservoir, the men who built them, the long period of filling the reservoir, and forestry operations on the reservoir’s immediate watershed.

Otto Schaefer;

Member, North Branford Land Conservation Trust, Inc

