

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

SPRING 2019

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

With the holidays and winter behind us, we are all looking forward to a bright spring season. It has been a relatively mild winter with our crew logging 9 storms and, as always, doing an outstanding job keeping our roadways safe and passable. We have made tree trimming a priority and have worked hard through the winter months to take down dead and dying trees, along with Eversource and the State.

Our new Governor, Ned Lamont, has taken office along with a new State Representative for North Stonington Kate Rotella, with the retirement of Diana Urban. Thank you, Diana, for all your years of hard work on behalf of North Stonington! We also welcome back Senator Heather Somers as our local Senator. It is clear there are many challenges at the State level, but we look forward to new ideas and perspective to help solve these issues regionally and locally. We are thankful for our local leadership representing our best interests.

The new Wheeler Middle School/High School is complete! Grades 7-12 started in their new home on March 18<sup>th</sup>. We must commend our School Modernization Committee and Chairwoman Pam Potemri for their hard work getting the school open in only one year. Special thanks to Downes Construction, our Construction Manager, Quisenberry Arcari Malik (our Architectural firm), the Board of Education for their support and, most importantly, the staff and students in the school for their flexibility throughout this process. It has not been easy but it is fulfilling. We now move full swing into the Elementary School renovation. Congrats to all!



First Selectman Mike Urgo,  
School Modernization Chair Pam Potemri  
& Superintendent Peter Nero

In October 2017 it was decided by the town to demolish the old Green Gables house at Hewitt Farm, as it was in total disrepair. This work was completed in the fall of 2018, with the exception of grading the land. The property was professionally abated of hazardous materials and once this was completed our highway crew performed the demo work. “Great job” to the highway team for their work on this, especially Steve Greene for operating the machine and safely taking care of this large project. Having our crew do the demolition on this project saved the town substantial funds vs hiring a contractor.

The Selectmen have been working closely with our emergency services partners at the Volunteer Fire Company and Ambulance Association in our new Center for Emergency Services. We took delivery of a new ambulance, replacing the 1998 Ambulance from service. We continue to be extremely thankful for their dedication and service to our community.

We have continued to work with our neighbors in Stonington signing an inter-municipal agreement to shelter dogs and cats while we work on a local solution to our aged shelter. We are also discussing sewer usage with the Stonington WPCA in order to continue our efforts to promote new businesses in town and protect our precious aquifer in the Rt 2/Rt 49 areas.

Finally, we are in the throws of finalizing a budget which will be presented at an upcoming town meeting in May. Please feel free to look at the “opengov” portal on the town website to view financial information for the town. We hope to see everyone at the upcoming public hearing and town meeting.

Please continue to follow town events and updates at [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov). or on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook #mynosto .

MIKE URGO, NITA KINCAID & BOB CARLSON

SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV

## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL



We're in the new building! On behalf of the entire Wheeler family, we cannot thank the town enough for continuing to support us throughout the building project. Our new building is absolutely spectacular and our staff is so grateful to be in our new space. As we continue to transition into our new surroundings, school safety will remain a priority and we will work hard to ensure the welfare of the entire school community.

The remainder of the school year is packed with events. Just recently, Wheeler inducted its newest members into the National Honor Society and celebrated our middle and winter sport programs. Spring sports are underway and sports schedules are posted online.

In the upcoming weeks and months, middle school and high school students will take their

annual standardized tests – SAT, SBAC, SAT and AP to name a few. These important assessments are all crucial elements of the state's Accountability Index, which rates public schools across the State of Connecticut.

Once again, thank you all so much for supporting Wheeler. A special shout out to our seniors and Interact/Give Back students for their help during the move. We are extremely fortunate to work in such a supportive community.

KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

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## TAX COLLECTOR

Tax bills will be mailed out at the end of June. These bills will include both the July and January installments of taxes. This will be the only bill you receive, unless there is an unexpected supplemental tax bill required. You WILL NOT receive another bill for the January installment, so if you do not pay both installments in July, please keep your tax bill in a safe place and put a reminder in your calendar to pay your January tax installment. **The last day to pay the July tax installment without interest being charged is August 1, 2019.**

For your convenience, payments may be made in the Tax Office at Town Hall. The best way to avoid the crowds is to pay by mail. Please make checks payable to "North Stonington Tax Collector". If you would like a receipt, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. You may also find out how much you owe and make payments online by going to [www.northstoningtonct.gov/payonline](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov/payonline). Service fees for on-line payments are as follows: E-check \$2.00, Visa Debit \$3.95, all other debit or credit transactions 2.5% of payment amount. Credit card payments will NOT be accepted over the phone.

Failure to receive a tax bill does not invalidate the tax or interest. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to call the tax office if you did not receive a bill.

KAREN JOYAL, TAX COLLECTOR

860-535-2877 EXT 20

## BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance over the last 30 days has received information and presentations from departments and commissions on budget submissions for the fiscal year 2019-2020. Review of this data, along with projected revenue estimates and alignment to priorities of the Plan of Conservation and Development, will define the fiscal plan for the upcoming year to support services and capital projects for the Town of North Stonington.

The development of the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget will be brought to a Public Hearing in the April timeframe so that the taxpayers gain an understanding of what is represented in the budget and for them to have an opportunity for public input. This will then determine the final budget proposal as it is brought to a Town Annual Meeting prior to a referendum.



Board of Finance

Board of Finance meetings are scheduled Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm at the New Town Hall. The public is encouraged to attend. Please review the calendar on the Town website to confirm dates.

DAN SPRING, CHAIRMAN

### THE 2019/2020 TOWN BUDGET WILL SOON BE PRESENTED!

The 2018/2019 fiscal year ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. During the past few months Town Boards, Commissions, Committees and Departments have been providing input about expected revenues and expenses to be included in the upcoming North Stonington Budget. Reviews by the Board of Finance are well underway.

**All involved are looking forward to bringing the results to the town in the following manner:**

1. A **Public Hearing** led by the Board of Finance will present the budget contents. This is an important step, which allows taxpayers to gain understanding of what is in the budget and to ask questions of those who have prepared it. Following the public input, any necessary changes can be made before the Annual Town Meeting .
2. Next the **Annual Town Meeting** will be held. All residents are encouraged to attend. The final budget will be presented and will subsequently be voted upon at a referendum. The 2019 Annual Town Meeting participants will also share an overview of accomplishments and future goals, highlighting the progress that's been made in executing the Plan of Conservation and Development.
3. Not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days after the town meeting, the **Referendum** to vote on the budget will be held at the North Stonington Town Hall between 6 am and 8 pm.

The dates for these three events are not yet available, but the goal is to complete all the above events prior to the end of June. The town will publicize the dates as soon as they are set. If you are not already signed up to receive “**News & Announcements**”, go to the Town website at [www.northstonington.gov](http://www.northstonington.gov) and you will find the Citizen Action Center on the home page with a button to “Sign up for News”!

## BOY SCOUT TROOP 71

Boy Scout Troop 71 would like to thank everyone who came out to enjoy and support our Pancake Breakfast that was held in February. It was a successful event.

Our Court of Honor was held in February. There were 10 Webelos who crossed over into Boy Scouts. Following the crossover, there were 3 scout advancements in rank, and 1 merit badge earned. In March, the boys attended the Curling Club on Cape Cod, for a lesson in Curling, which was followed by a campout. Look for our Scouts in May, marching in the Memorial Day Parade. To end our scouting year, the boys will be attending JN Webster Camp the last week in June - a great experience to meet fellow Scouts, earn merit badges and advancement, as well as just to be with friends.



For more information related to Scouting and Troop 71, please contact Scout Master Doug Spracklin at [sprack1@comcast.net](mailto:sprack1@comcast.net).

KIYA LAMPHERE

TROOP 71 COMMITTEE MEMBER

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## NORTH STONINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC.

As of the writing of this article, the Town continues to work through the 2019/2020 budget process.

The Fire Company has published repeated requests identifying the need for daytime volunteers with little improvement. This need affects every person in Town. Currently, volunteer emergency responders make up approximately 1% of our population. Of that, a majority work outside the community, leaving the available number significantly less. Of those remaining, some are retirees who have decades of service.

As populations have changed, the available free time to train and respond has diminished in today's society. A new recruit is required to undergo almost six months of fire related training before they are permitted to be utilized as a firefighter.

After investigating other bedroom communities in our area who are experiencing the same problem, the Fire Company felt it reasonable to request funding for two per diem firefighters during the weekday hours from 6AM – 4PM.

At this time the Board of Selectmen opted not to include funding for per-diem fire fighters in this year's proposed budget. As an alternate, the Town will help in publicizing the need for daytime volunteers. If recruiting continues to be unsuccessful, a study will be initiated to address the problem.

As a rural community, we rely heavily on standing water supplies for firefighting. If you have a pond or larger stream on your property that could be used for firefighting, please make sure an area is cleared enough so that it can be accessed. While we are aware of areas visible from the road, if your water supply is unseen, please leave the Fire Company a message (860-535-0937) so that we can contact you, inspect it to see it's a viable source, and make suggestions to better help us utilize it in an emergency.

Please do not hesitate to visit us on our Facebook site to see what's occurring in the fire service in Town, and around us.

CHARLES STEINHART V, CHIEF

KYLE BERGEL, PRESIDENT

## **NORTH STONINGTON LIONS CLUB**

The North Stonington Lions are pleased to be sponsoring our traditional Memorial Day Parade on May 27<sup>th</sup>. This year we will be particularly fortunate to be parading through the village behind Grand Marshall Linda Schwartz. And once again this year, we will be sponsoring a NS Little League team.

This spring we will be organizing a new event - a Pancake Breakfast, to be prepared and served by Lions and offered to our friends and neighbors in town. This, we believe, will be a fine way to have an informal meal and meet some of the local folks. More details are forthcoming.

Also on this April 27<sup>th</sup>, our Lions will be participating in a 5K Walk and Eyeglass Extravaganza. If you would like to sponsor a walker or donate used eye glasses, email Jim Nestor ([jrnestor@comcast.net](mailto:jrnestor@comcast.net)) or Eleanor McClelland ([elmac24-7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elmac24-7@sbcglobal.net))

Here is something else new- hand-carved miniature folk art Swans for Sight, uniquely crafted by master carver and Lions Club member, Hilaire Cote. These elegant birds are on display and may be purchased (to benefit Lions charities) for \$20 each at Wheeler Library, Jake's Restaurant, Press On Restaurant or at one of our events.



The charitable work of the Lions depends on contributions from people we know, or who know of us and our work. We need to ask, continuously, for your donations. We cannot proceed otherwise. Everyone in town has received, or will soon receive, a letter asking for a donation and describing what we will do with your money. Please be generous. Whatever you give is fully tax deductible. You can respond by mail or donate on-line by searching for us at [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com) or [Facebook.com](http://Facebook.com).

JIM NESTOR, CLUB PRESIDENT

860-535-9966

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## **NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The North Stonington Education Foundation continues to raise money to redistribute in grants, primarily but not exclusively to teachers, that help North Stonington students. More than \$160,000 has been so raised and granted in the eleven-year history of the NSEF, to include a jogging trail behind the elementary school, a climbing wall at the gymnasium and bringing a famous Australian artist to the schools to advise and teach art students.

The NSEF held its largest annual Trivia Contest ever at the Stonington VFW hall on February 2<sup>nd</sup> with 17 tables of contestants present. It was a fun-filled evening, featuring a very close contest between the 5-time winner and defending champions - the "Italian Stallions" - and (even sitting next to them!) the "PyeongChang Gang". The contest was not settled until the 10th and last round of 10 questions, when the Italian Stallions were defeated by one question!

The next major NSEF event is the annual Memorial Day "Runners and Walkers in Support of Education" road race on Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at the North Stonington Grange. Check-in is at 8:30, with the fitness walk kicking off at 9:45 and the runners at 10:00. Participants can register on-line at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) or receive more information from Mark Tardiff, race coordinator, at [tardiffm@northstonington.k12.ct.us](mailto:tardiffm@northstonington.k12.ct.us).

JIM PATTON [jhpattton@concentric.net](mailto:jhpattton@concentric.net) & BERNARD "BING" BARTICK [bbesail@aol.com](mailto:bbesail@aol.com)

## NORTH STONINGTON SENIOR CENTER

The Senior Center, located behind Holly Green, is open Monday through Friday, 9:30am-2:00pm, or by appointment. It offers many programs and activities. Lunches are available the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays; reservations must be made by the Friday prior. A registered nurse is available on the first Wednesday of the month from 11:30-12:30, followed by the monthly Golden Agers meeting. Tai Chi, Chair Yoga, quilting and painting instruction are also offered.

**The AARP Safe Driving class will be held on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.** Day Trips are being planned, and under consideration is one to Nantucket! Our bus is handicap accessible. A wheel chair can be accommodated as long as the occupant is accompanied by a care giver.

Teresa Pensis is the Center Director and Agent for the Elderly. Call 860-535-8188 for program information and reservations.

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## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

The North Stonington Garden Club hosts our Annual Plant Sale every spring, and each year it gets better and better. This year is no exception! The Plant Sale will be held on **Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm**. Come join us at our new location, just across Route 2, at the North Stonington Schools Central Office Building (the old WHS/MS). Knowledgeable volunteers and an abundance of plants and flowers will be on hand to greet you.



If you're looking for plants that have withstood the test of time in our area, or simply want to add to your landscape, this is the place to be. Get there early to find the best selection of herbs, vegetables, hanging baskets, Mother's Day gifts, shrubs, annuals and perennials from local nurseries and from the gardens of club members.

URI Master Gardeners will also be there to answer your questions and provide free soil testing, so be sure to bring a sample from your garden.

Strawberry trays are provided for your plant selections. There are also a limited number of carts, but these are always in high demand, so consider bringing your own wagon so you can scoop up the best deals. To make things even easier, **all major credit cards will be accepted this year**; so you can shop to your heart's content!

We look forward to seeing you on May 11<sup>th</sup>, rain or shine! For more information, please visit us on Facebook or email us at [infor@nsgardenclub](mailto:infor@nsgardenclub) to get pre-sale tips and directions directly to your inbox.

ELLEN SPRING, GARDEN CLUB MEMBER

## **NORTH STONINGTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

The North Stonington Recreation Commission would like to remind everyone of the following Spring programs being offered: *Art Expressions* (Saturday mornings in April); *Green Thumb Gardening Club*, an after-school activity for kids (Fridays in April/May/June); *Youth Tennis Lessons* (TBA Saturday mornings in April/May) and *Youth Golf Lessons* TBA.

**Our annual *Easter Egg Hunt* will be held at the Recreation Field on Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.**

Watch for our Summer-activities that will soon be added to our Recreation website [www.northstoningtonrec.com](http://www.northstoningtonrec.com).

THOMAS FABIAN, DIRECTOR

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## **HEWITT FARM**

2019 marks the 7<sup>th</sup> year for the planting of the Community Garden area, which is located near the Route 2 entrance at the farm. All plots have been rented for the upcoming season. To start the season, the gardeners will organize a work party to get the garden in shape for planting.

The Hewitt Farm Committee has completed the foundation for a covered pavilion on the Green, across from the 1750 Farm House. A design has been selected and fund raising is ongoing. Most recently, a grant application was submitted to Walmart requesting \$5000 toward construction of the pavilion.



Jim Cowen, a soil and wetlands scientist, submitted a project proposal to the committee that would create a Monarch butterfly waystation along with a meadow enhancement with educational signs. Jim is working on the project with Heather, a senior at Stonington High School. He has identified locations on the farm where a suitable Monarch Waystation habitat could be established and the planting will begin soon.

Hewitt Farm is open daily from dawn to dusk. It's free, easy to get to, right near the village and Holly Green. Park just inside the Hewitt Road entrance off Route 2 or at the parking area ¼ mile down Hewitt Road from Ryder Road. Download the Hewitt Farm Trail Map from the town website ([www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov)) or pick one up at any of the trailheads.

ED HARASIMOWITZ

CHAIRMAN

860-204-7439

## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

As I am looking out the window, I see a snowy landscape, but hopefully by the time you read this, there will be colorful flowers popping out of the ground! Spring brings the beginning of fishing season. The Town Clerk's Office sells sporting licenses, as well as providing Angler's, Hunting and Trapping, and Boater's Guides for up-to-date information. Sporting licenses can also be purchased online at [www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep). The spring season also brings an increase in weddings. If you plan on being married in North Stonington, a marriage license must be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office.

Dog licensing for the new dog licensing year will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup>. A Rabies Clinic is being held on June 1<sup>st</sup> from 10:00am until 12:00 noon, at which time the office will also be providing dog licenses for dogs belonging to North Stonington residents. The fee for the Rabies Clinic is \$15.00 cash per animal. I am also a Notary Public, so if you need notarial services, please come and see me.

The Town Clerk's Office is open on Monday through Friday from 8:00am until 4:00pm, except on legal holidays. Please contact me at (860) 535-2877 Ext. 21 and at [townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:townclerk@northstoningtonct.gov).

ANTOINETTE PANCARO, CMC, CCTC

TOWN CLERK

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## NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

North Stonington Elementary School has many changes ahead with our move to the former Wheeler MS/HS. Thank you to Sue Starr for the magical paintings of animals, story book characters, and positive sayings that she created all over the school to make our students feel welcome.

The last weeks at the elementary school were a whirlwind of events including the very successful Drama Club presentation of Disney's *Peter Pan Jr.* We are so proud of our talented students and we thank our producer and director, Mrs. Gonzalez, and the musical director, Mr. Noonan, as well as the many, many parents for their support!

Our "Spring" concerts were held on March 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Each grade level presented a delightful musical program about themselves and their world.

Thank you also to the many parents/guardians who attended the Parent-Teacher Conferences. If you were unable to meet with your child's teacher and would like to set up a conference, please call the school at 860-535-2805.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, kindergarten registration will take place from 1:30 – 3:00 and again at 5:00 – 7:00pm. Please call the school (860-535-2805) for more information if you have a child who will turn 5 years old on or before January 1, 2020.

With the continuation of the building project now at the Elementary School and the move, there will be many exciting changes in the future. Our Band Concert, on May 21<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus Concert, on May 30<sup>th</sup> will be held in the newly renovated gymnasium. As always, we thank all NSES community members for your patience during this time and thank you for allowing us to educate your child each day!

VERONICA WILKISON, PRINCIPAL





## LAND USE OFFICE

The first quarter of 2019 has been filled with activity and a staff change! Earl Dean was hired as the new Building Official and will be available Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 8am and 2pm. Earl brings 45 years of experience in construction. The Building Department processed 60 Building Permits with an estimated \$1,209,335.65 in associated construction cost.

The Land Use Department processed 19 Zoning Permits representing nearly 10,000sf and just over 5,000sf in new residential and commercial construction respectively. Among the applications received were 2 new houses, an Auto Repair/Machine Shop (recently approved), a gas station/convenience store, a new farm, a home occupation/medical office and a text amendment having to do with changing the type of review required for accessory agricultural uses.

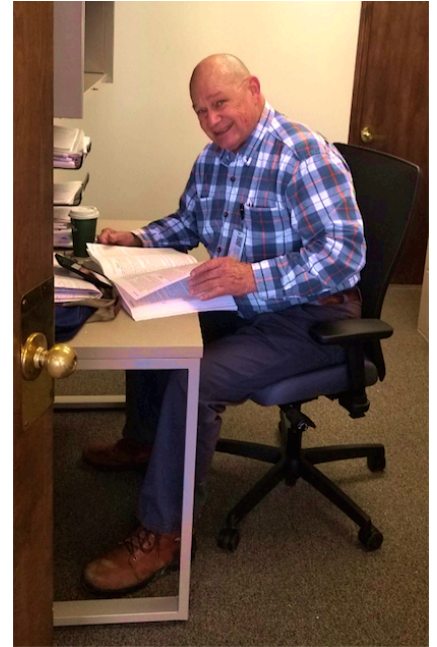
The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) approved its first Micro-Assisted Living Facility on Wyassup Rd. since the adoption of the regulation last fall. The Commission reviewed a request to sell the 3 Town-owned parcels within the Village at the request of the Selectmen, but recommended against the sale. The PZC did vote to continue working on the design of the possible housing development on a portion of the town's Wintechog Hill property.

### Stay tuned for exciting new projects in the pipeline!!

On the regional front, staff continues to work with Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) and Southeastern CT Council of Government (SCCOG) on implementing the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD), which includes a collaborative effort to help prepare for the anticipated needs of Electric Boat with respect to housing and workforce development and supply chain businesses.

JULIET HODGE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & ZONING OFFICIAL [jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov)

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Earl Dean, Building Official

## WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

The WPCA, with the help of the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman and the PDZO, is making some progress with Weston & Sampson on the water and sewer infrastructure plans for the Industrial Zone and EDD Zone. Initial cost estimates for tying in to Stonington versus building our own treatment plant have been completed. Initial Hydraulic testing has been done for the water line extension project to the KOA Campgrounds.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The EDC approved a new logo design submitted by First Selectman, Mike Urgo "North Stonington -The Heart of Southeastern Connecticut." This will be used in new marketing material to be created primarily for use on the website and social media. Other marketing efforts include finishing the Map Project initiated last year. The EDC hopes to complete the project this Spring. The Commission also plans to roll out its Business Visitation Program and Beautification Program this spring. In addition to the above initiatives, funds were budgeted for several events including Business Open Houses and networking events, promotional material for branding, and boosting Facebook advertisement.

JULIET HODGE, PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & ZONING OFFICIAL [jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov](mailto:jhodge@northstoningtonct.gov)

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Food for thought: Does more land in conservation mean more taxes for the remaining landowners?

It's often thought that the more properties that become tax-exempt, the more the burden falls to the remaining taxpayers; our Conservation Commission has researched over 70 studies that contradict that notion. Nearly 50 of those studies speak to the belief that open space adds to the worth of a community. This supports the 87% of North Stonington residents who stated that they cherish the open space and feel it is important in preserving our rural character.

Open space and parks often increase the property values while avoiding the expense of increasing municipal services necessary for development. Connecticut has set a goal of preserving 21% of our land by 2023 in their "Green Plan". Currently 3,596 of our 35,179 acres (10 %) are permanently preserved in conservation including open space, conservation easements, municipal land, and school properties. An additional 4,822 is temporarily preserved in Pachaug Forest.

Few of us question the need for preserving biodiversity, minimizing the effects of climate change, protecting plant & animal habitat, stream flow, food control, and our water supply protection, while providing educational opportunities, recreation, and scenic beauty.

Open space provides a natural landscape for the harvest of farm & forest products and plays an important role in our economic future and quality of life.

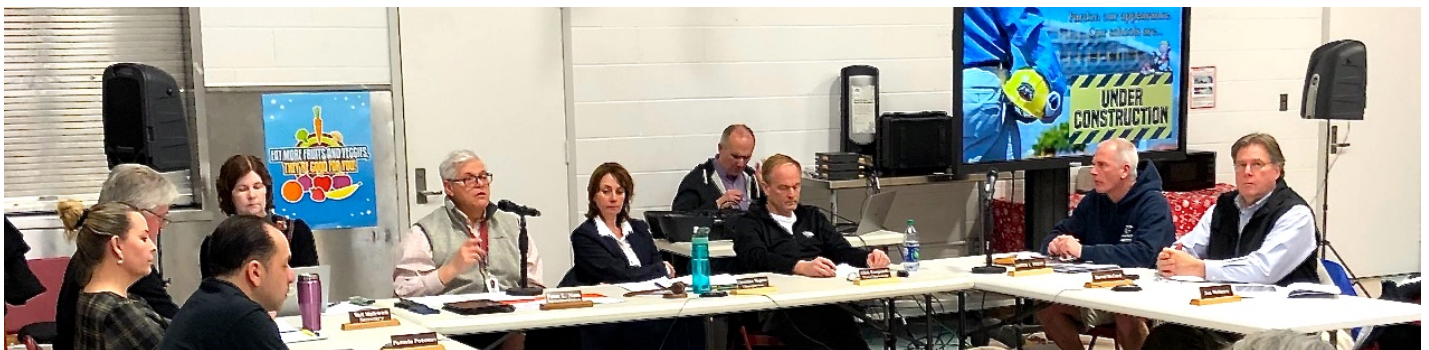
WILLIAM RICKER                      CHAIRMAN                      WILLIAMRICKER@COMCAST.NET    860-535-2426

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION

As we entered spring we were excited to see the first phase of the School Modernization come to a close. The Middle and High School students returned to a new school on March 18<sup>th</sup> and our elementary students moved into their temporary home on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Everyone has been working very hard to make this a reality and we would like to thank all of the volunteers on the School Modernization Committee who have put in endless hours to pull this all together. Our teachers and administrators have been hard at work packing boxes, moving classrooms and preparing for their new locations.

The BOE had its first State of the District meeting in February and it was well attended. We are hoping to continue to have these types of meetings on a more regular basis. We were able to give a brief highlight of some of our initiatives which include our strategic plan work and healthier school start times.



Budget season is upon us and we are hoping to be able to bring a finalized budget forward soon. As always, we welcome the community's feedback and encourage your attendance at our meetings. We try to meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month and our schedule of meetings is posted on our website.

CHRISTINE WAGNER, CHAIRMAN                      wagnerc@northstonington.k12.ct.us

## **NORTH STONINGTON COMMUNITY GRANGE #138**

When the North Stonington Community Grange #138 meets, we discuss and act upon not only our Grange needs, but also the needs of our community. We also have an informational program. **All are welcome** to come and have some fun with us, and your input as to our community needs would be greatly appreciated.

Our winter schedule is slower, with a lot of fun to ease the “winter blues”. This year’s theme is transportation and, in January, we learned about two-wheeled vehicles - from bicycles to motorcycles. In February we learned about escalators, lifts, and elevators in a Jeopardy-style program. The first meeting in March taught us more about the meaning of the Grange, and our second meeting was the State Lecturer’s contest entry “It happened in America”, and how rafts, canoes, riverboats and the like enabled exploration of our Western lands.

Our upcoming schedule on April 13<sup>th</sup> is titled “Sailing, Sailing, Over the Bounding Main”. April 26<sup>th</sup> we’ll honor our long-term members and present our Community Citizen Award. May 10<sup>th</sup> is titled “Unsinkable” (steam ships to ocean liners). Our Memorial program is on May 24<sup>th</sup>. June 14<sup>th</sup> is our election of officers for the new year, with a short program on busses. June 28<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Pot-luck Picnic and games. All meetings are at 8:00pm except the picnic, which begins at 6:30. Come enjoy.

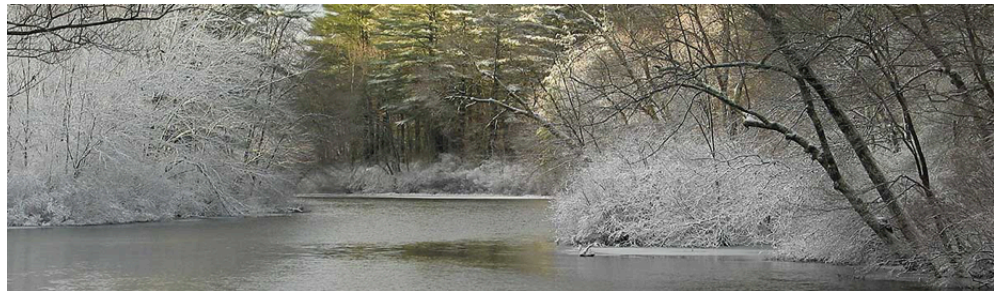
SUE PIANKA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

860-599-4528

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## **WOOD-PAWCATUCK WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS**

*Jubilation!* On March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, we learned that The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed’s mighty effort, over ten years to earn federal environmental protection for its seven RI/CT rivers that flow through the watershed, was approved by the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the President.



The Pawcatuck River and its river tributaries have now become a part of the Interior Department’s Park Service National Wild and Scenic Rivers System! With the Pawcatuck are the Beaver, Chippuxet, Green Fall-Ashaway, Queen-Usquepaugh, Shunock, and Wood Rivers and their tributaries. Wild and Scenic is non-regulatory for each of the rivers’ 12 towns, of which North Stonington is one, with each town’s own set of regulations as its guide, secure from Federal controls and intrusions.

Last December, the 12 river towns, each with 2 representatives, and as a result of their three years of research-study meetings, completed the required Stewardship Study for the earned 2019 Congressional approval. A new Council, with a new project coordinator, Kassi Archambault, and with one town representative and alternate from each town, will meet for the first time in April. North Stonington will send Madeline Jeffery and Richard Seager as its representatives. There will be much to do.

We hope to keep in good contact with our North Stonington Town Hall Commissions, Departments, non profits, and townspeople. For now, there is the excellent and full WEB page: [WPwildrivers.org](http://WPwildrivers.org), in which you can also read the 4/c Stewardship Plan.

MADELINE JEFFERY [mjeffery211@gmail.com](mailto:mjeffery211@gmail.com)

RICHARD SEAGER

## ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The Assessor's Office is taking applications until May 15<sup>th</sup> for the State of Connecticut **Elderly Homeowners program**. The Homeowners Program is for low income homeowners who are 65 years old or older and/or a homeowner who has been awarded a disability classification. They can receive a reduction on their real estate taxes. The amount is based on your total income. Low income is defined as below \$43,000 for a married couple or \$36,000 for a single person. In addition, a veteran who qualifies for the Homeowners Program may also qualify for an increase in their town veteran benefits.

Homeowners need to bring in to the Assessor's Office their completed IRS Form 1040 and their 1099 Social Security income statements. If you did not need to file with the IRS, we will need to see statements of all income plus your Social Security income statements. Office personnel will help you complete the application. The application period ends on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

The next program that the Assessor's Office will administer is the **Renters Program**. We need to see the same information as required for the Homeowners Program. The application period ends September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Motor Vehicle Taxes:** As a reminder, if you buy a new motor vehicle and use different plates, you need to prove that you traded or sold your old car for tax credit. Using the same plate, the credit is automatic and you do not need to do anything.

The last reminder that I have is for those looking to apply for the **Farm and Forestry Program**. Your application period begins on September 1<sup>st</sup> and must be completed by October 31, 2019.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, CCMA II                      ASSESSOR                      860-535-2877 ext. 23 or 24

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## NORTH STONINGTON LAND ALLIANCE

### Explore Fowler-Grindstone Preserve, a Deep Green Beauty ~ All Are Welcome!

As part of the yearly CT Trails Day sponsored across the State by CT Forest and Park, The Land Alliance will be holding an early summer hike within the woods of our Fowler-Grindstone Preserve.

**The date is June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 - Saturday morning, at 10:00 am.**

Explore this 75-acre forest with its rows of ancient stone walls, 2 enormous glacial erratics (one of them has a stairway to the top), the confluence of Pendleton Hill and Hetchel Swamp Brooks, both of which are now part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (!), narrow foot paths winding through deep forests, rocky outcroppings, and an old logging road born of another era. Native American ceremonial stone work has been discovered and photographed within the preserve.



Tim Crandall and Bill Hixson, who designed and built the trail patterns many years ago, will be the leaders for the approximate 2-mile walk. Meet at Fowler Road in North Stonington. Look for the "Upper Trail" sign on the right side of road and park either within the drive or along the roadside.

Dogs with leashes are welcome. Rain cancels. Pre-registration is not necessary. Call: 860-245-4340 or 860-599-5731 with your questions.

TIM CRANDALL & BILL HIXSON

## SCHOOL MODERNIZATION BUILDING COMMITTEE

Happy Spring from the SMBC! We are very excited to report that thankfully the winter was mild, and although the work was intense, we opened our new Middle/High School on time. It would not have been possible without the help of everyone involved, so thank you to all for making this phase of construction such a success! We are looking forward to the community seeing all of the detail that went into creating a state-of-the-art facility our town can be proud of!

The next phase of construction is focused on the elementary school. Everything has been emptied out of the building and teachers are busy setting up their new spaces in the BOE building. The elementary school is a “renovate as new” project, which means that although there are some outside changes to the building, much of the work will be done inside to address health and safety issues and to create new instructional spaces that support teaching and learning.

As the weather improves, we look forward to the landscape work beginning, the elementary school progressing, and everyone settling into the next stretch of construction. The Committee has added an extra meeting each month to allow people more opportunity to hear about our progress and provide feedback, so please join us! As always, we thank you for your support and will continue to work hard to ensure we are meeting timelines, managing our budget, and keeping everyone well informed.

PAMELA POTESMARI, CHAIRMAN

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## WHEELER LIBRARY

Wheeler Library’s Event Calendar is filling up and we’re sure you’ll find something that interests you. Along with our special events, we’ve started a Drawing Group that meets on Thursday evenings. Drop in anytime between 6 and 7:45pm with your supplies and work alongside other local artists – beginners welcome. Our new Cookbook Club meets one Thursday a month; we make and share recipes from a different cookbook each month. Come in for more details.

The NSQ calendar includes a list of our plans so far, including programs on Mushrooms; Getting Organized and an author visit. In late April, we’ve scheduled a walk in the woods with Mark Starr to see ceremonial stonework. We are adding events all the time, so please check our website ([wheelerlibrary.org](http://wheelerlibrary.org)) or get on our email list to find out about everything going on at your library. Other ongoing programs include kids yoga and story times; we’re planning our popular Summer Reading program, which begins in late June. Need a special gift made here in North Stonington? Shop at the library for local maple syrup, beautiful greeting cards, knitted goods, ghee, and more.

AMY KENNEDY 860-535-0383

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## THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

Make a difference this spring in our Senior Communities and Veteran Coffeehouses sharing your talents, creativity, community outreach and individual interests! Lives are being changed significantly by volunteers 55+ offering time, commitment, and friendships. Seniors are hospitalized less; families feel less stress, elderly parents are checked regularly; Veterans and their families have information that improves their lives. A few hours a month can make a difference.

Our Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) assists community members with in-home visiting, grocery shopping and Meals on Wheels delivery. RSVP also hosts Veterans Coffeehouses in Norwich, Groton, New London, Mystic and Pawcatuck. The veteran coffeehouses are a comfortable location for veterans to meet, socialize and receive information regarding veteran benefits and services through state and federal agencies and programs. For more information, contact RSVP Director Gina King at 860-425-6617.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hello, neighbors! Well, this quarter's weather issues (and other town-impacted emergencies, in general) have been relatively benign, and that's a "very good thing".

One of the more significant incidents this reporting quarter was a tree down on wires on Mystic Road that knocked out power during freezing temperatures, affecting over 500 residents in the Meadowwood and Kingswood neighborhoods. Thankfully, Eversource responded quickly and power was restored within hours.

It is a small miracle that we have not experienced more power outages this season. Kudos to our Town's Highway Department and CT State highway crews for their ongoing tree trimming initiatives - looks like it's paying off.

Also, our North Stonington highway crew did a phenomenal job in clearing snow/ice-covered roads throughout our town during periods of inclement weather this quarter. This is so important to not only our residents, but to facilitate emergency response accesses by our fire and ambulance apparatus.

Additionally, our emergency service first responders (NSVFC, NSAA and our resident CT State Troopers) did a tremendous job while responding to and managing an unfortunate structure fire at 254 Pendleton Hill Road. This fire could easily have spread, but was quickly contained. I'm continually impressed by our firefighters' professionalism. Well done!

Emergencies can and do happen, without rhyme, reason and without any regard to the time of day or the season, during which they occur. We, individually, all need to stay prepared for any emergency that can (and will) confront us. I can't stress this point enough. Stay prepared to persevere and survive.

Personally, I'm very proud of our Town's emergency response network, and I'd like all North Stonington residents to know that they are well protected by these professionals. We all work together seamlessly as a cohesive and dedicated group, to provide our town with the emergency services they deserve and expect, when called upon.

GARY BARON          DIRECTOR          860-912-0004

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## NORTH STONINGTON CEMETERY COMMISSION

The Cemetery Commission met in January and February of 2019. The commission added new members Diane Preston, David Fede and Mac Gray to the group that has been involved for a number of years: Paul Ames, Geoffrey Barnes, Mike Dibble and Bill Peterson. Our town has over 120 cemeteries and the town cares for a number of them.

Prior to Memorial Day, the members will be placing flags on the grave sites of our North Stonington veterans. We do not want to overlook any of our veterans. Please contact us with the burial site details so that we can honor each and every one.

The Commission would like to extend an invitation to residents of our town to participate in maintaining our many cemeteries on a volunteer basis. If you are interested, please contact Robin Roohr at Town Hall, 860-535-2877 ext. 10.

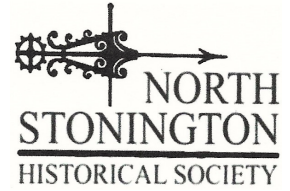


Union Cemetery

DIANE PRESTON, CHAIRPERSON          stanpreston@sbcglobal.net

## NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Your historical society has presentations, resources, and events to highlight the history of our town and region. The Morgan A. Stewart Library is within the Stephen Main Homestead in the middle of the village. Its treasure trove of genealogical material is available for your research, open on Tuesday afternoons or by arrangement. You may phone Gladys Chase at the Stephen Main Homestead, 860-535-9448 or email [gchase1@comcast.net](mailto:gchase1@comcast.net).



May 1<sup>st</sup> we welcome Don Sinetti, a major illustrator of marine mammals and an accomplished musician and shantyman. His “Whales Tales and Whale Tails” looks at the natural history of whales, dolphins, and porpoises and our relationship with them. His artwork and songs will cover the days of Yankee whalers or the Save the Whales movement.

Look for announcements of new programs in our concert series and other programs, and like us on Facebook. The annual meeting and potluck supper in June is open to all. For more information on the society and/or membership, contact us at 860-535-9448.

WILLIAM DOUGLASS, PRESIDENT

[whdouglass@comcast.net](mailto:whdouglass@comcast.net)

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## KEEPING NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE, INC.



The State of Connecticut’s Director of the Department of Housing, Michael Santoro, will be speaking on the “Development of Community-Themed Housing in North Stonington: Where we are and Future Plans” on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 6pm, at Hewitt Hall in the North Stonington Congregational Church. Keeping North Stonington Affordable, Inc. (KNSA) and the North Stonington Affordable Housing Committee are sponsoring this event with the generous contribution of the Hewitt Hall by the Congregational Church.

This program will help us all understand affordable housing. Community-themed housing is the focus of the State’s programs to provide housing for individuals and families that reflect the communities in which they are placed. This means housing for those who can afford market based housing as well as those who cannot. It includes the elderly, those with disabilities, veterans, school teachers, first responders, students, etc. In other words, all of us.

**Please be a part of this conversation on April 30 at 6pm. Hewitt Hall, NS Congregational Church, Main St.**

Yes, there will be pie!

KNSA held a successful fundraising gala on January 20<sup>th</sup> at the Wheeler Library- many thanks to the generosity of the people who ventured out on a stormy day to support our event and our efforts to provide affordable housing in town.

MARY ANN RICKER, PRESIDENT

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## AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY

Have you seen the new logo? Avalonia has evolved to do more than just protect open space. We engage in education, wildlife & watershed protection, public recreation and more. To understand the rationale and creation of the logo and to find trail maps and activities, visit the website [www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org)



You can get out on our trails on your own or join one of our guided walks. Bruce Fellman is leading a walk seeking out signs of spring on the Benedict Benson Preserve this month. In May, join in for family fun with Hide and Seek, a nature scavenger hunt, in the Babcock and Henne preserves. Bring a smart phone. Cameras are suggested. For CT Trails Days on June 1 and 2, Sue Sutherland will lead a hike on TriTown Forest Preserve June 1<sup>st</sup>, and Bruce Fellman will guide a drawing and photography investigation of nature on Tefftweald Woodland on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

PAT TURNER

[jmt.pst@gmail.com](mailto:jmt.pst@gmail.com).

## **NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

By the time that you read this article, teaching and learning will be taking place at the New Wheeler Middle/High School! It has been a long journey from twelve-years ago when the discussion began about modernizing our schools. It was only last February that the town overwhelmingly supported the referendum to move forward with the construction and renovation projects and thirteen months later, the project is complete. Since last summer, we had already begun to schedule events for the spring in the new facility.

Before we move on to the next phase of the project, the “Renovate as New” of the elementary school, I want to professionally and personally express my gratitude and that of the district to the School Modernization Committee, the town boards & commissions, Quisenberry Arcari & Malik, LLC, Architecture, Downes Construction, the town highway and technology departments, and especially the district’s technology staff, custodial & maintenance staff, our teachers, staff and administrators for all their hard work and positive energies that helped to make this possible. We will be working with the School Modernization Committee to set a date for an open house so the public can tour our beautiful new school.

Now, onto the spring: The end of the school year also brings the busiest time for the district. A focus is on the budgetary process as the Board of Education (BOE) passes its budget into the hands of the Board of Finance, prior to going to the town. A quote used in the Superintendent’s and BOE’s budget comes from President Lyndon Johnson, “We believe, that is, you and I, that education is not an expense. We believe it is an investment.” A recent Day article pointed out that North Stonington Public Schools rank as one of the top five schools in the region.

The athletic department is presently gearing up for a full spring schedule. So if you pass by the athletic fields and see a baseball, softball or lacrosse game taking place, please stop by and cheer on the Wheeler Lions!

Finally, we will be having a number of award and promotion ceremonies this spring. While the date for graduation will not be set until April, the traditional Wheeler graduation will take place on the Wheeler Library lawn. The ceremony on the lawn is open to the public.

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

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## **NORTH STONINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIR**

Happy Spring! The Fair committee has been very busy planning events for 2019 and we are excited with some schedule changes that haven’t been done in years. Be sure to check the website and Facebook to see when your favorite event will be held, especially the motorized sports. This year’s Goat Race will bring in some new fun. Along with obstacle courses being added, be ready to participate in some Goat YOGA! Bring your Yoga mat with you on Thursday and take part in this fun event.

We are excited to be bringing North Stonington’s Nick Bosse and the Northern Roots Band back to the stage on Thursday night; come out and join the Bosse Posse! Friday will feature hip-hop, soul, R&B, funk and disco band Sugar...put on your dancing shoes. Saturday we welcome back country music artist Katie Perkins. Be sure to check the website for the 2019 Baking Contest recipes and try your hand at making it to the State level competition. All information on events, contests, entertainment, etc. can be found on our website at [www.northstoningtonfair.com](http://www.northstoningtonfair.com) or visit us on Facebook: North Stonington Agricultural Fair, Inc.



**Mark your calendar: July 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019!**

JODY WHIPPLE

PINENEEDLHOMESTEAD@SBCGLOBAL.NET

860-599-8498





2019



## A Biennial Election Year for North Stonington

The next biennial election cycle for Connecticut municipalities is coming up this November.

**Election Day is scheduled for Tuesday, November 5, 2019.**

What this means is that during the upcoming months we will begin the process of filling the many vacancies on our local boards and commissions. This is a critical election year in North Stonington - we need energetic, active residents who are willing to help us create a promising future.

Over the next several months the town's Democratic and Republican town committees will be posting vacancies and soliciting registered voters to fill these seats.

**July is a particularly important month for anyone interested in running for an office.**

There are necessary steps to take **as soon as possible** to become a candidate for one of the open positions in our town government. The steps vary depending on whether you are a Republican, Democratic or Unaffiliated voter.

### **Democrats:**

Contact the Chair of the North Stonington Democratic Town Committee (NSDTC), Toulou Balestracci, by email (emailtoulou@gmail.com) or cell phone (860-514-2929) to express interest. The NSDTC's purpose is to select and endorse candidates, as well as fund and run election campaigns. It is the sole body that interviews Democratic-endorsed candidates for municipal office.

Per its bylaws, NSDTC will call a meeting in July for the purpose of selecting the party-endorsed candidates for each municipal office available. A majority vote of the NSDTC members who are present to vote will determine the candidates.

### **Republicans:**

Contact the Chair of the North Stonington Republican Town Committee (NSRTC), Brett Mastroianni, by email or cell phone (401-954-7242) to express interest. The NSRTC's purpose is to seek out and recommend to the Republican caucus at least one qualified Republican for each office vacancy and to organize and direct general election campaigns.

A Caucus of enrolled NS Republicans will select the Republican Party-endorsed candidates on the current Registrar's list. Their 2019 meeting to vote for Republican Party-endorsed candidates will be held in July as well.

### **Unaffiliates:**

An unaffiliated voter has two options: (1) to seek endorsement by the Democratic or Republican Town Committees (see above) or (2) to petition to be placed on the November ballot by obtaining an Application for Nominating Petition by contacting the Secretary of State. The petition must be filed with the Town Clerk.

**For a full list of the vacancies that need to be filled and more information, contact Antoinette Pancaro, Town Clerk at 860-535-2877 ext. 21.**

# SPRING EVENTS



## April

17	WEDNESDAY	7-8:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Getting Organized/Spring Clearing	Page 13
20	SATURDAY	10 am	Recreation Field	Annual Easter Egg Hunt	Page 7
20	SATURDAY	11 am - 2 pm	NS Grange	5 <sup>th</sup> Annual Chikumbuso 10K/5K Challenge Register online at <a href="http://chikumbuso.com">chikumbuso.com</a>	
23	TUESDAY	6:30 pm	Wheeler Library	Book Discussion: <i>The Memory of Running</i> Ron McClarty	Page 13
27	SATURDAY	9 am	Details at Library	Native American Ceremonial Stonework Hike with Mark Starr	Page 13
27	SATURDAY	10 am - Noon	Benedict Benson Preserve	Avalonia Nature Hike: Benedict Benson Preserve, Swantown Hill	Page 15
30	TUESDAY	6 pm	Hewitt Hall	KNSA: "Development of Community- Themed Housing in North Stonington"	Page 15

## May

1	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	"Whale Tales & Whale Tails", Don Sineti on natural history of whales, dolphins and porpoises. Artwork & music, too.	Page 13
11	SATURDAY	9 am - 1 pm	Front Lawn of Old Middle/High School	North Stonington Garden Club Annual Plant Sale	Page 6
16	THURSDAY	6 pm	Wheeler Library	Armando Lucas Correa, Author of <i>The German Girl</i> and the forthcoming novel, <i>The Daughter's Tale</i>	Page 13
18	SATURDAY	10 am - Noon	Babcock Road	Avalonia's Hike & Seek: Babcock Ridge & Donald Henne Preserves	Page 15
25	SATURDAY	8:30 am	NS Grange	NS Education Foundation Annual Road Race.	Page 5
27	MONDAY	10 am	NS Village	Annual Memorial Day Parade	Page 5



# SPRING EVENTS

## June

1	SATURDAY	10 am	Fowler Road	CT Trails Day: The Land Alliance Walk on the Fowler -Grindstone Preserve	Page12
1	SATURDAY	10 am	Miller Road	Avalonia Hike: TriTown Forest, Miller Road	Page 15
2	SUNDAY	9 am	Grindstone Hill Road	Drawing & Photography with Bruce Fellman: Tefftweald Woodlands, Grindstone Hill Road	Page 15
3	MONDAY	6:30 pm	NS Historical Society S. Main Homestead	Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner	Page 15
24	MONDAY		Wheeler Library	Summer Reading begins!	Page 13
25	TUESDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	Kids' Nature Class (registration required)	Page 13
26	WEDNESDAY	10:30 am	Terra Firma Farm	Farm Storytime	
27	THURSDAY	10:30 am	Wheeler Library	DPNC Nocturnal Animals Program (registration required)	Page 13
28	FRIDAY	6:30 pm	NS Grange	Annual Pot Luck Picnic - ALL are welcome!	Page 11

Take time to enjoy Spring!



Special thanks to our terrific contributors and the support we receive from the High School Print Shop.  
Nita Kincaid & Lisa Mazzella, NSQ Editors

**Town of North Stonington  
40 Main Street  
North Stonington, CT 06359**

**PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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EDDM-Retail**

**Local  
Postal Customer  
North Stonington, CT 06359**



**The Budget is coming! The Budget is coming!**

Your Vote is your Voice.

Voting is the best way to support the efforts of our town officials and to have a say in how we spend our money. Please plan to attend the upcoming Public Hearing and Annual Meeting - then vote at the Referendum.

Go to the town website at [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) and sign up for News and Announcements to stay informed.