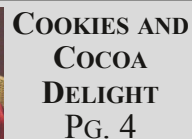


"Eastford: One of Connecticut's best small towns." - Carol Davidge VOL. 34, NO. 6

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BULLDOGS HOOPS
UPDATE
PG. 3
CALENDAR: PG. 9

THE EASTFORD Communicator

LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

VOL. 34, No. 6 | JANUARY 2026

MANAGING EDITOR: Adam Minor

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Arthur Brodeur

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Michele Palulis, Chairman; Randal Chinnock, Vice Chairman; Nancy Gingras, Treasurer; Julia Torcellini, Secretary; Arthur Brodeur

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Articles, calendar or event information, press releases, photos or questions may be sent to eastfordnews@gmail.com.

Please send text in Microsoft Word format (not PDF), and high-resolution photos in JPG format. Send mail to Editor, Eastford Communicator, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242, by the 15th of the month preceding the next issue. All submissions to the *Communicator* are subject to editing. The *Communicator* reserves the right not to accept submissions.

To contact the *Communicator* by phone, call (860) 337-2481, and leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as we can.

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CIRCULATION

The Eastford Communicator is available online at <https://eastford.news/>, and in print, free of charge, to every home in Eastford. Out-of-town subscriptions are available by request, for an annual fee of \$50 (although additional donations are appreciated).

Planning Commission seeks participation in POCD survey

EASTFORD — The Town of Eastford Planning Commission has begun the process of updating the town's Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD). The POCD sets the vision for how the town would like to move forward over the next 10 years.

The Planning Commission is responsible for updating the POCD at a minimum once every 10 years, as required by state statutes. Eastford's POCD was last updated in 2016 and can be found on the town's website. This update provides an opportunity for the town to consider whether to make changes in terms of the goals and objectives for the community.

As part of the process, the commission will be conducting a Community Survey that will be available both online and in print at various locations throughout town starting Jan. 1, 2026. Scan the survey's QR code that

accompanies this article to participate.

For more information and/or to find out how to get involved, please visit the Eastford Planning Commission website page at

<https://www.eastfordct.gov/land-use-office/page/planning-commission-forms-documents>.



POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The Town of Eastford is looking for a per diem snow shoveler for the Ivy Glenn. This person will be responsible for keeping the walkways and stairs of the Ivy Glenn free of snow and ice. Applications available at the Selectmen's Office or application is available to download on the town website, www.eastfordct.gov.

The Town of Eastford is looking for a Transfer Station attendant. Hours are Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Applications are available at the Selectmen's Office at the Town Office Building or applications may be downloaded from the town website, www.eastfordct.gov.



Sometimes, the little things make the biggest difference. "Shout Outs" is your place to celebrate kindness, gratitude, and everyday heroes. Did someone brighten your day? Help without asking? Go the extra mile when no one was watching? Let's tell their story. Share your "shout out" and together, we'll spread some joy — one good deed at a time.

Here's a Shout Out from the Board of Selectmen!

"The Town of Eastford Board of Selectmen would like to thank the Quiet Corner Garden Club, Mike and Cheryl Radzvilowicz, and Lauren Salo, for making the beautiful wreaths hanging on the front doors of the TOB and the Ivy Glenn!"

Send your "shout outs" to Managing Editor Adam Minor at eastfordnews@gmail.com, or send a message to us on our Facebook page. Please keep your messages to 75 words or less. The editor has the right to accept, reject, or edit any submission. Deadline to receive "shout outs" is the 15th of every month before the next publication.

Thank You!

Thank you to Tom and Betsy Barker, C.T. French, and Margarita Halpine & Brian Holley for your generous donations!

DONATIONS MAKE THE COMMUNICATOR POSSIBLE!

Please consider a donation to the Communicator!

Send checks to:

Eastford Communicator, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242

Bulldogs boys remain competitive going into holiday break

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Editor's Note: Live coverage of the Eastford Bulldogs basketball season is posted after every game on the Eastford Communicator's Facebook page. The following article is a brief summary of our coverage up to the halfway point of the season. Follow us on Facebook for more photos and information as it becomes available!

EASTFORD — It's been an up-and-down season for the Eastford Bulldogs boys' team, but at the halfway point, they find themselves in the hunt, with a record of 2-2.

Starting out with a loss to St. James at home on Dec. 4, Eastford pulled off two consecutive victories against Parish Hill (Dec. 8) and Wheeler (Dec. 11), followed by a loss to Pomfret on Dec. 16. Originally scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 18, Eastford's game against Ashford was postponed, with a make-up date yet to be determined. The postponement means that the Bulldogs head into the holiday break with a .500 record. The victory against Parish Hill last month was the first for the program in nearly three years, and Head Coach Zach Hutchings, who is in his fourth year with the program, was excited to see if it would continue to trend upward for the Bulldogs.

"I couldn't be [prouder] of the boys," Hutchings said after the game on Dec. 8. "They showed hustle and grit that I hope to continue to see throughout this season. I can't wait to go get some more."

It only took them three days to get their second win, as they handled Wheeler at home on Dec. 11.

"The boys played with the same tenacity that got us a win the other night," Hutchings said after the team's win over Wheeler. "Everyone contributed. As a coach, you can't ask for much more."

Callum St. John has emerged as the offensive leader for the Bulldogs, scoring 50 points through four games, an average of 12.5 points per game. Charlie Ellsworth (6.8 ppg), Syllas Platt

(6.3 ppg), Jackson Ritter (4.8 ppg), Blake Gilbert (3.8 ppg), and Ryan Collard (2.3 ppg) have also contributed points for the team.

After the holiday break, the Bulldogs boys' team will kick off the road portion of their schedule with a visit to North Stonington, and a rematch with Wheeler on Tuesday, Jan. 6. Tipoff (Varsity only) is slated for 3:30 p.m.

BULLDOGS GIRLS' TEAM SEARCHING FOR ELUSIVE FIRST WIN

Shifting gears to the Bulldogs girls' team, the first all-girls team in several years has been fighting for that first win, but it has not come yet — as the team stands 0-5 at the halfway point of the season with losses to St. James (Dec. 4), Parish Hill (Dec. 8), Wheeler (Dec. 11), Pomfret (Dec. 16), and Ashford (Dec. 18).

Mackenzie Lathrop is the team's leading scorer, with 21 points through five games (4.2 ppg). Olivia DePercio (1.8 ppg), Zoë Labonte (1.2 ppg), Emma-Lynn Salony (0.6 ppg), Georgia Barlow (0.4 ppg), and Aiyana Reed (0.2 ppg) have also contributed offensively.

After the holidays, the Bulldogs girls' team will kick off the home portion of their schedule by hosting Wheeler on Tuesday, Jan. 6. Junior Varsity will tip off at 3:30 p.m., and Varsity tipoff is slated for 4:15 p.m.

SEASON AT A GLANCE

BOYS

- Thursday, Dec. 4: vs. St. James, L, 35-43
- Monday, Dec. 8: vs. Parish Hill, W, 43-33
- Thursday, Dec. 11: vs. Wheeler, W, 45-31
- Tuesday, Dec. 16: vs. Pomfret, L, 22-43
- Thursday, Dec. 18: vs. Ashford, POSTPONED (DATE TBD)
- Tuesday, Jan. 6: @ Wheeler, 3:30 p.m. (Varsity Only), Wheeler High School, 297 Norwich-Westerly Rd, North Stonington



Callum St. John brings the ball up the court against Wheeler on Dec. 11.

Adam Minor photo

- Thursday, Jan. 8: @ Pomfret, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Pomfret Community School, 20 Pomfret St., Pomfret
- Monday, Jan. 12: @ Ashford, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Ashford Elementary School, 440 Westford Rd., Ashford
- Thursday, Jan. 15: @ St. James, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); St. James Parochial School, 120 Water St, Danielson
- Tuesday, Jan. 20: @ Parish Hill, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Parish Hill Middle School, 304 Parish Hill Rd, Chaplin
- Thursday, Jan. 8: @ Pomfret, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Eastford Elementary School
- Monday, Jan. 12: vs. Ashford, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Jan. 15: vs. St. James, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Eastford Elementary School
- Tuesday, Jan. 20: vs. Parish Hill, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Eastford Elementary School

SEASON SCORING LEADERS

GIRLS

- Thursday, Dec. 4: @ St. James, L, 4-45
- Monday, Dec. 8: vs. Parish Hill, L, 6-57
- Thursday, Dec. 11: @ Wheeler, L, 16-50
- Tuesday, Dec. 16: @ Pomfret, L, 14-49
- Thursday, Dec. 18: @ Ashford, L, 2-73
- Tuesday, Jan. 6: vs. Wheeler, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m. (Varsity); Eastford Elementary School
- Thursday, Jan. 8: vs. Pomfret, 3:30 p.m. (JV), 4:15 p.m.

BOYS

Callum St. John: 50 (12.5 ppg)
Charlie Ellsworth: 27 (6.8 ppg)
Syllas Platt: 25 (6.3 ppg)
Jackson Ritter: 19 (4.8 ppg)
Blake Gilbert: 15 (3.8 ppg)
Ryan Collard: 9 (2.3 ppg)

GIRLS

Mackenzie Lathrop: 21 (4.2 ppg)
Olivia DePercio: 9 (1.8 ppg)
Zoë Labonte: 6 (1.2 ppg)
Emma-Lynn Salony: 3 (0.6 ppg)
Georgia Barlow: 2 (0.4 ppg)
Aiyana Reed: 1 (0.2 ppg)
Elementary School

'Cookies and Cocoa' event brings festive fun to Eastford

EASTFORD — The Recreation Commission hosted its annual "Cookies & Cocoa with Santa" event on Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Eastford Elementary School gym, providing music, ornament decoration, crafts, treats, and yes — cookies and cocoa. Santa and Mrs. Claus even made a special appearance at the event, spending time to interact with kids of all ages. Music was provided by the Babcock Cornet Band of Ashford.

Adam Minor photos



Fiona enjoys a helping of sweet frosting at the cookie decorating table.



The ornament coloring station was a popular attraction at the event.



Abel and Hailey pose for a photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Santa makes his long-awaited arrival at the event.



Abby is all smiles as she visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Congregational Church of Eastford Pastor Mike Moran leads a rendition of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" with the Babcock Cornet Band.



Hailey and Hannah bring happiness and cheer with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Tree of Life ceremony pays tribute to lost friends and family

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — On Sunday, Dec. 7, people from all over northeastern Connecticut gathered together in 11 different locations to remember lost family and friends for Day Kimball Healthcare's 36th Annual Hospice Tree of Life Ceremony.

In Eastford, a gathering was held at the Ivy Glenn Memorial. The other towns hosting events were Brooklyn, Canterbury, Danielson, Griswold, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson, Woodstock. In years past, the tree lighting event has raised about \$35,000 annually to support hospice and palliative care services in the region. Trees at all 11 locations were decorated with colored lights, which

according to DKH, symbolize "love and hope," helping family and friends to remember loved ones who have passed away while in hospice care. Each year, Day Kimball Healthcare offers the purchase of memorial lights on each community's Tree of Life to benefit the work done by Hospice & Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut to enhance the lives of terminally ill patients and their families.

Eastford's Tree Lighting Ceremony, which was hosted by the Congregational Church of Eastford (CCE), began with a selection of Christmas carols. Day Kimball Healthcare Foundation Director of Development Kristen E. Willis delivered remarks, thanking people for their support. CCE Pastor Mike Moran delivered the

invocation.

Hospice representatives Susan Honeychurch and Ashley Ravenelle also addressed the crowd, thanking them for supporting hospice and palliative care in the region. The tree lighting itself was conducted by Justin Loss, in honor of his grandmother, Helene, who died in December 2024.

"Thank you all again for being here tonight to support these efforts and more importantly to take time to reflect on the journey of Hospice and the significance of what has become a community celebration of hope and healing," Willis said, adding a message from 2025 Tree of Life Chairman Roger Franklin: "As we gather here, and at the other 10 sites throughout northeastern Connecticut this evening, we can

attest to the compassionate care a loved one has received. It is for that reason, we are here not only to remember our loved ones who have passed on, but to honor those who continue to provide end-of-life care. As we experience this festive time of year, may we be reminded that those whom we are here to remember and honor have a very special place in our hearts. For it is in this same festive spirit that we hope and pray for all people affected by life threatening diseases. And so, let us remember our loved ones this evening as we illuminate the Hospice Tree of Life. May we be reminded too of the compassionate caring and dedication of the Hospice Team, and may we look forward with hope that someday many dreaded diseases will be no more."



From left, Hospice representative Ashley Ravenelle (with kids), Congregational Church of Eastford Pastor Mike Moran, Hospice representative Susan Honeychurch, and Justin Loss near the Tree of Life at the Ivy Glenn Memorial.



Day Kimball Healthcare Foundation Director of Development Kristen E. Willis delivers a speech thanking people for their support of the Tree of Life event.



Christmas carolers sing "Silent Night" to conclude the event.



Justin Loss thanks the people gathered at the event for their support as he prepares to light the Tree of Life in honor of his grandmother, Helene, who died in December 2024.

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT: DONNA LEAKE

The winter weather season has arrived. With it comes one of the most exciting messages a student can receive — no school today due to snow or ice-covered roads.

In Eastford, for closings or delays, due to busing schedules, we generally follow the decision of Woodstock Academy. Making a weather-related call is never easy. When the decision is straight forward, I like to make the announcement the evening before so families can make plans for the adjusted schedule. If the decision is not clear, the call may be delayed until the morning.

Occasionally, a snow call may be changed from a delay to a closing. Changing from a delay to a closing may occur due to changes in the pattern of the storm, roads that cannot be cleared as quickly as anticipated, or buses that fail to start. The safety of our students is the most critical factor in making final decisions. All EES staff and

families receive text, voice and e-mail messages concerning school closing and other important information.

The weather does not impact the volunteer spirit that permeates the Eastford community. At EES, we are fortunate to receive volunteer support from many members of the community. Over the next few months, I hope to highlight individuals and groups that share their time and talents to enrich the lives of the students at EES.

Since 2013, volunteers from the Congregational Church of Eastford have been providing a variety of after-hours experiences for our students, that include constructing bird houses, playing board games, building rockets, making crafts, supporting the homework club and one-one mentoring. Over the years, the time has varied from one to four afternoons a week, and the number of volunteers has varied from 20-50 individuals per year.

These activities benefit not only our students but also the seniors, as evidenced by statements such as, "I somehow thought I didn't like kids until I started sitting cross-legged on the floor in the school library playing 'Chutes and Ladders' with littles. Who couldn't fall in love with them?" Or, "When I was in junior high, I was all into model rockets. At EES it is such a blessing to have been able to share that excitement with such fine middle school students."

In other news:

- The application process for the Ethel Cushing Gardner Scholarship is now open. This is a scholarship open to high school seniors and college level students who live in Eastford and have a serious interest in music. Additional information is available on the Eastford School website.

- The Board of Education met on Dec. 11 and took the following

actions: We welcomed Nancy Neff to her first term; approved the re-appointment of Stephen Bowen as BOE chairman, Terry Cote as vice chairman and Adam Minor as secretary; and approved revisions to several policies.

Each new year brings to any community a new set of challenges, accomplishments, and surprises. I am confident that in 2026 the Eastford learning community will work together to overcome challenges, celebrate accomplishments, and hope that all surprises are positive. One of the first challenges the BOE faces is the development of the 2026-27 budget. At the Jan. 8 Board of Education meeting, I will present a recommended budget to the BOE for review at its budget meetings on Jan. 22 and Feb. 3.

All the best for a safe and healthy 2026. As always, never hesitate to contact me at dleake@eastfordct.org.

FROM THE EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE COMPANY #1 INC.



How you can help us when we respond to your emergency: The importance of patient medical information at medical calls cannot be overstated. It is crucial for healthcare providers to have access to accurate and up-to-date medical information to provide the best possible care to patients on scene. Medical information serves as a vital communication tool that connects patients with healthcare professionals and ensures that they receive the necessary medical advice and treatment. Gathering information

verbally and in writing by the first responders and paramedics provide the best possible treatment prior to transport. See the list below for necessary information:

Name of Patient:

Date of Birth:

Age:

Gender: M/F

Home Address:

Pertinent Past Medical

History:

Current Medical History:

Allergies:

Describe Reaction to Allergies:

Medications: (Prescription/Over-the-Counter), Name of Medication, Dose, Purpose

Recent Surgeries: Procedure, Date

Preferred Transport Hospital: Day Kimball Hospital – Putnam/ Windham Hospital – Willimantic

We recommend that the above information be created and filled out in its entirety, regularly

updated, multiple copies made and visibly taped to the refrigerator door. A copy will be given to the ambulance service, one to the receiving hospital emergency department and one to be updated. Having the above readily accessible will enhance our transfer of critical information.

The fire department responded to 31 "911" emergencies in November. For fun, we participated in the 26th Annual Dazzle Light Parade on Dec. 7, in Putnam, brightly lit with colorful lights on an engine tanker.

Welcome to Dan Driscoll as our newest member. Dan will be cross-trained as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and in Fire Suppression.

There is still plenty of time to consider making your annual tax-deductible charities donation to the EIFC. We, a 100-percent volunteer organization, rely on the generous annual monetary support

we get from you, the town residents. Finances are tight due to the escalation of costs to maintain the company functioning and meet training requirements. Through your generosity, you are helping us make a difference in your community and help us to sustain a feeling of personal satisfaction that we get from helping our friends and neighbors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please send your donation to EIFC, P.O. Box 333, Eastford, CT 06242. You will receive, by return mail, a thank you showing the amount donated for tax purposes.

The EIFC has accomplished much in 2025. A detailed report will be provided in January of 2026. Although we are currently small in numbers, we are strong in our training and call response. We welcome any and all who wish to be part of our family.

-Submitted by Jeannine Spink



Want to see the *Communicator* in its full-color glory? Download the latest PDF at:

eastford.news

WHAT'S NEW AT BOY SCOUT TROOP 92?



Above left, the Scouts Court of Honor. Becket receives Merit Badges for achievement. Above right, Cub Scout participants in the Rain Gutter Regatta. Courtesy photos

Happy New Year, everyone!

December was a slow month for Scouts because of the holiday season. The Troop had a Court of Honor to award the many Merit Badges that have been earned by the Scouts. Four Scouts were advanced in rank.

- Coming Up: Ski trip at Ski Sundown on Sunday, Jan. 4. This will be a day trip.

- Spring Trip: Potential

orienteering trip to Stone's Ranch Military Reserve, in East Lyme. Possibly March or April. Scouts will learn compass skills and navigation at a camp out there. End of the year wrap up trip is still being discussed. High adventure!

Last month the Cub Scouts participated in their annual Rain Gutter Regatta. The cubs built and painted their small sail boats.

They propelled their boats down the inflatable water filled race track by blowing air into the sail through a straw.

Upcoming Cub Scout events include an overnight at the New England Air Museum and our annual Pinewood Derby. Cub Scout meetings are the first Friday of the month at Knowlton Memorial Hall at 6 p.m. New members are welcome. Troop

meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at St. Philip's Recreation Center. New members are welcome.

- Troop 92 BSA Ashford/Eastford, Nord Yakovleff, Assistant Scoutmaster; Jesse Burnham, Scoutmaster; Rob Hany, Committee Chairman; Doug Jenne, Cubmaster

FROM THE GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rules and regulations from the Grove Cemetery Association Board of Trustees:

- The planting of real or artificial trees and shrubs, whether in the ground or in containers, will not be allowed. Live flowers (annuals or bulbs) may be planted or placed in plastic pots at the base of the monument. These plants must not extend more than 12" from the base. On a single interment space (4' X 9') with a flush marker and in the Cremation Section of the cemetery, only cut flowers or live, potted plants will be allowed. Seasonal wreaths, logs, or baskets containing live or artificial flowers will be allowed from Thanksgiving to March 15.

- The Trustees will conduct a general clean-up of the cemetery grounds after March 15 each year. Flowers and seasonal wreaths and logs will be removed at this time.

- Ornaments and Other Objects: At any time throughout the year, ornaments and other objects such as, but not limited to, artificial flowers, shells, toys, balloons,

rocks, metal designs, statues, luminaries/solar lights, chairs, settees, and glass vases shall not be placed on burial plots/spaces. Such ornaments and other objects, if left, will be removed by the Board of Trustees (or designee).

- American flags and Eastford Volunteer Fire Department flags will be placed at the cemetery by the Board of Trustees (or designee) on Memorial Day weekend and will be removed after Veterans Day (Nov. 11) on a date selected by the Board of Trustees. The placement of any flag, including the American flag, is limited to those flags placed on the graves of military and fire department veterans by the Board of Trustees. Unauthorized flags will be removed.

The Eastford Grove Cemetery is closed for all burials from Dec. 15 to April 15.

- Board of Trustees: Alex Kowalchuk, Carolyn Hazard, David Barlow, Ken Grube, Lauren Anderson, Linda Torgeson, Rick Torgeson, Scott Huri

EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE DONATION FORM

Yes, I would like to help. Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Gift in memory of _____

Send to: Eastford Grove Cemetery Assoc., Inc. P.O. Box 284, Eastford, CT 06242

Happy Holidays!

Eastford Town Office Building



Holiday Hours

Wednesday, December 24th
Closing at 12PM

Thursday, December 25th
CLOSED

Wednesday, December 31st
Closing at 3PM

Thursday, January 1st
CLOSED

STATE SENATE UPDATE: JEFF GORDON

I wish your family and you the best this holiday season and when the new year starts!

In early February, the legislative session starts up again. It will be a "short session" of only several months. Yet, a lot is planned and I expect there will be a whirlwind of activity. Topics of interest will be adjustments to the state's rainy-day fund and budget, and spending and taxation policies. These are

weighty topics indeed that affect everyone in Connecticut.

I continue working on issues to make Connecticut more affordable for you. Things have been done to address the issue, but there is more that needs to be done! I endeavor to work in a bipartisan way to get things done. Topics of focus for me include expanding upon the leadership work I did on prescription drug prices, income

tax cuts, electricity bills, child tax credits, public education funding, town aid, work force development, public safety, and support for health care in northeast Connecticut. I continue to defend our individual rights, parental rights, and medical freedoms.

I'm proud to represent and work for you and Eastford. As always, please reach out to me if I can help you with a constituent matter,

answer a question, or take up a concern. You can call my office at 860-240-8800, e-mail me at jeffrey.gordon@cga.ct.gov, check for news and updates at www.senatorgordon.com, or learn about what I am doing on Facebook at "Senator Jeff Gordon." Through my website, you can sign up for my e-newsletters (Common Sense Matters).

To enrolled members of the Democratic Party of the Town of Eastford, CT:



Pursuant to the Rules of the Democratic Party and State election laws, you are hereby notified that a caucus will be held on January 13th, 2026, at 6:30pm, at the Eastford Public Library (Ivy Glen Memorial), 179 Eastford Road, Eastford, CT 06242, to endorse candidates for the Eastford Democratic Town Committee and to transact other business as may be proper to come before said Caucus.

Dated at: Eastford, CT, January 1, 2026
Eastford Democratic Town Committee Chair Randal Chinnock

DID YOU KNOW? EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Did you know that Connecticut Magazine once named Eastford the number one town in Connecticut (towns with a population below 4,500) for "Quality of Life"?

One of the listed attributes of the town was "an excellent school system." Education was rated on the percentage of local public high school graduates from the class of 1991 who went on to college, and on the 1991-1992 Mastery Test results for fourth and eighth graders in math and language arts.

In other school news, the Student Council voted to purchase a tree to be planted in place of the beautiful old maple that was destroyed by the December snowstorm.

The Eastford Historical Society wishes you all a happy, healthy holiday! Kindly consider honoring us with a donation during this holiday season of giving. Your support would be greatly appreciated: Eastford Historical Society, P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242.




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There is an annual \$50 subscription fee for non-Eastford residents to receive the *Communicator*, which covers production and mailing costs. For uninterrupted service, if you would like to continue receiving the *Communicator* for the next year, please mail a check for a minimum of \$50 to *Eastford Communicator*, P.O. Box 253, Eastford, CT 06242. We must receive payment no later than Jan. 15.

CALENDAR

Calendar entries must be submitted before the 15th of the month preceding publishing. Please send all calendar content to eastfordnews@gmail.com, and limit submissions to less than 100 words. All entries are subject to editing at the editor's discretion.

JANUARY

Thursday, Jan. 1

Eastford Public Library will be closed for New Year's Day. However, during the month of January we invite families to enter the world of Narnia. Please come in and take out a copy of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," by C.S. Lewis. We encourage everyone to participate in a family read aloud. At the end of the month, we will be featuring the movie at the library.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

Eastford Public Library hosts "Homeschool Hour" at 10:30 a.m. Please register, as space is limited.

Thursday, Jan. 8

Eastford Public Library hosts "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play.

Saturday, Jan. 10

Eastford Public Library hosts a "Winter Wonderland" at 10:30 a.m. We will have a craft, homemade snow, and create a sweet winter treat. Please register.

Eastford Baptist Church will host its monthly Men's Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 7 a.m. All men are invited to come out for a time of prayer, fellowship, and food. We need these times more than ever so don't miss out on this opportunity!

Sunday, Jan. 11

On Jan. 11, visit the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Open House from 1-3 p.m. at 326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret. Meet the director and other camp staff, take a camp tour, registration materials available. Take advantage of early bird discounts – details available at the open house or on the website, www.4hcampct.org.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

Eastford Public Library hosts

"Maker's Night" from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for teens and adults. Please join us!

Thursday, Jan. 15

Eastford Public Library hosts "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play.

Saturday, Jan. 17

Eastford Public Library hosts an Author Talk with gothic, horror writer Christa Carmen at 1 p.m. Please register; space is limited.

Thursday, Jan. 22

Eastford Public Library hosts "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play.

Saturday, Jan. 24

On Jan. 24, join us at Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp from 5-8 p.m., for a fun, family "Sno-Ball" Dinner Dance. There will be a sit-down baked chicken and mac and cheese dinner prepared by our amazing camp cook and We-Lik-It Ice Cream Bar for dessert. We will have a DJ, dancing for all ages, door prizes, raffles, family pictures and a great night out to beat the winter doldrums. All proceeds benefit the Jim Logee Campership Fund. Adults \$25, Kids 10 and under \$15. Buy tickets by Jan. 20 by calling the camp at 860-974-3379. Snow date is Jan. 31.

Thursday, Jan. 29

Eastford Public Library hosts "Storytime" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play.

Friday, Jan. 30

Eastford Public Library hosts a "Movie Night" at 6 p.m. featuring "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Please register.

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

November: 0

MARRIAGES

November: 0

DEATHS

November: 1

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Oct. 22: 6 Stone Mill Lane, \$302,500, Julie Burgess to Devin B. Waddicor

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, Jan. 5: Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, Jan. 6: Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, Jan. 8: Board of Education, 6 p.m., Eastford Elementary School Library

Tuesday, Jan. 13: Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Office Building,

Wednesday, Jan. 14: Crystal Pond Park Commission, 6 p.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, Jan. 22: Library Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., Eastford Public Library; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

AUDREY CARABEAU

The Eastford Food Pantry is located at the Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd. Please see our hours of operation at the end of this article.

We continue to seek individuals or families who reside in Eastford and are in need of food assistance. If you are in need of food call Audrey Carabeau at 860-933-7685 to sign up. We have the resources to help you! All referrals are kept confidential. Delivery is available to those who are homebound.

Thank you to all who donated food, money and gifts in the month of December. Your donations are greatly appreciated by our

pantry families. The Eastford Food Pantry relies on donations from the community. All donations to the pantry can be dropped off at Bowen's Garage or at the Town Office Building during regular business hours. Check donations can be mailed to: Eastford Food Pantry, 16 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242.

Donation suggestions: Macaroni and cheese, pasta sauce, pasta, tuna, canned fruit, soup, healthy snacks.

Thank you for your support! Eastford Food Pantry gifts in the month of January hours are Monday, Jan. 5, 8-11 a.m.; Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2-4 p.m.



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Holiday Fair another 'resounding success' at the library

EASTFORD — The Friends of the Eastford Public Library hosted its 2nd Annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, Dec. 6. Festivities included a silent auction, hand-crafted gifts, baked goods and more. All proceeds from the Holiday Fair went to support library programs. According to Librarian Katie Ball, the Holiday Fair was a "resounding success." *Adam Minor photos*



Seth Budd brought a festive flair to the coloring station at the Holiday Fair.



Reese, with her father Jesse, check out some of the baked goods at the Holiday Fair.



Brandy and Aliessa celebrate another successful Holiday Fair.



The baked goods table was a popular destination at the Holiday Fair.

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WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY? KATIE BALL

To each and every person who donated, volunteered their time, or attended the Friends of the Eastford Public Library's Holiday Fair in December — thank you! It was a resounding success. We are a small-town library with a big heart and the support from our community allows us to reach a little further and shine a little brighter. We are truly grateful.

Our hope in the new year is to continue to offer our beloved patrons a cozy spot to visit, create, and, of course, grab the perfect read. Stop in, we'd love to see you.

Library hours are Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

You may reach us at (860) 974-0125, or by e-mail at eastfordpublib@gmail.com. Upcoming events and programs can be seen on the town page or on social media. If you haven't yet, please follow Eastford Public Library on Facebook and/or Instagram @eastfordpubliclibrary.

FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN DEB RICHARDS

During this festive holiday season, I wish you a New Year filled with fresh hopes, new joys, and new beginnings. It is my hope that we will continue to work together with kindness and respect, always striving to do our best for the Town of Eastford. Happy New Year!

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FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD: EVAN BURGESS

Well, the holidays are over, and the year 2025 is now fading into the rear-view mirror. The old is gone and the new has come. And with every new year comes new opportunities, new beginnings, and potential for new life.

As a pastor during the Christmas season, it is probably not surprising that I thought a lot about the baby Jesus. This year, our church had a number of new babies in our congregation to choose from to play the key role in our Christmas pageant. A few Sundays ago, I found myself making faces at one of these little ones before the service, trying and failing to earn a smile. If you've ever held a newborn, you know that they can't see very well or very far. But what always surprises me about babies is their ability to find and focus on the

faces they know, and recognizing the faces they don't know yet.

Admittedly, I'm still quite new to the town of Eastford, and because of the small-town New England culture, probably will be for a while. At this point, I probably wouldn't recognize most of you, and you may not yet recognize me. However, I'd like to share with you something I learned in 2025 that I'd like to pass onto you and encourage you with as you begin dreaming up resolutions for 2026 — human beings need to be recognized.

The moment after a baby is born, when the first few cries of delivery start to quiet, newborns typically spend an hour or so in a stage doctors call "quiet alert." Though they can't see great, they are searching for a face, and when they find one, they fix their

eyes on it. From the first moments of life, a person seeks to be recognized and seen. As we grow and mature, this need does not go away.

Entering into 2026, there are two truths that seem paradoxical but are simultaneously true — our world is more connected than ever, and our world is lonelier than ever. Though it is beautiful living out here in the Quiet Corner, it is also very easy to go unseen for long periods of time. Perhaps you are feeling this loneliness as the holiday season fades and family trips come to an end. Whoever you are, I'm excited to tell you, there is a community that is always here for you in Eastford, with two different locations, and that is the family of God. The Congregational Church of

Eastford and Eastford Baptist Church are not buildings. They are communities where you will be welcomed, recognized and loved all year round.

There is no entrance fee, no deeds that can be done to earn your way into the family of God. Jesus is the way, the door, and the gate. He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and I'd like to invite you to join in on this truth and life. I'd love to meet you, and please know you are always welcome to join our church family for a Sunday morning at the school gym at 10 a.m., or a Tuesday night at Eastford Baptist at 5:30 p.m. May 2026 be a year where you find the love of the One who is always there, waiting for you to gaze back at Him!

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Once donations are collected and sorted, the boxes will be placed at the Town Offices, Eastford Library, and Food Pantry for residents to take what they need!

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TO OUR ADVERTISERS
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THANK YOU

The Communicator would not be what it is without each and every one of you! As we move into 2026, thank you for your continued support of Eastford news!

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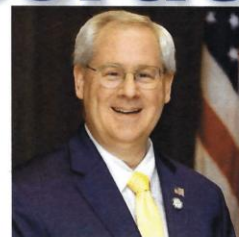


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- Christmas Day: Closed
- New Year's Eve: 6am-1pm
- New Year's Day: 6pm-1pm





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- ◆ Eggnog Cinnamon Raisin Bread French Toast
- ◆ Red Velvet Pancakes
- ◆ Winter Beet Salad

Save the Dates!

We will be CLOSED FOR VACATION from January 5th through January 12th. We will re-open Tuesday, January 13th @ 6:00am

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THE BEST OF 2025

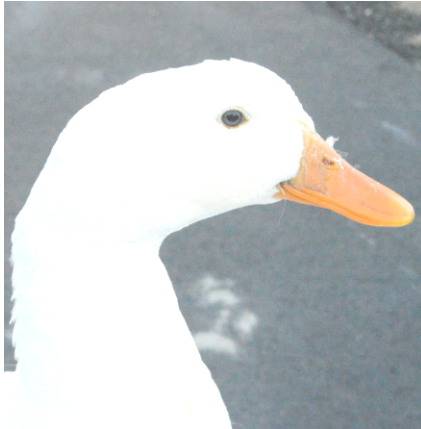
JANUARY



The New Year began with a freeze. Scouts remained busy in January with their annual Rain Gutter Regatta event. Meanwhile, the Eastford Bulldogs basketball team concluded their tough season on Jan. 27 without a win. File photos



FEBRUARY



Community events picked up steam in February, as Scramble the Duck made his long-awaited return to predict an early spring on Feb. 2; Linnea Barlow and Abigail Budd enjoyed a sweet treat at the Congregational Church of Eastford's 7th Annual Cupcake Wars on Feb. 15; and Kara Norman claimed her third straight Olympians Lego Derby title at Eastford Baptist Church on Feb. 22. File photos

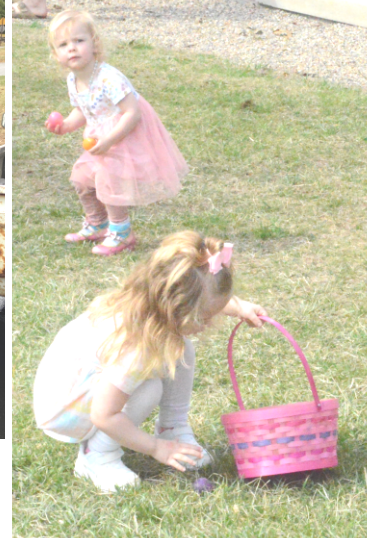
MARCH



Eastford Elementary School students celebrated Read Across America on March 4 by reading stories to Reading Education Assistant Dogs (READ). Meanwhile, Grove Cemetery Association hosted a spring clean-up at the cemetery on Wednesday, March 19. Over at Eastford Baptist Church, Chili Cookoff winners Sally Rempel, Dave Hustus, and Herm Barlow were crowned on March 23. File photos

THE BEST OF 2025

APRIL



In April, the Pomfret/Eastford Little League (PELL) hosted a cleanup at Bowen Memorial Field on April 19; Eastford Baptist Church and the Congregational Church of Eastford joined forces on April 6 to conduct a Roadside Cleanup Day; and the Recreation Commission hosted its annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 19, providing a fun morning of egg hunting fun for kids. File photos

MAY



In May, Sloane Volpe was one of many kids who enjoyed the Experience Eastford event on May 10. Meanwhile, Eastford held its annual Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony on Monday, May 26. At Experience Eastford, Katie Fontaine posed with her family after completing the Heart of Eastford 5K, her 100th completed race out of a planned 169 in Connecticut. File photos

JUNE



In June, Eastford Elementary School sent off the Class of 2025 at its annual Graduation Ceremony on June 12. Earlier in the month, the class visited Washington D.C. for the school's annual field trip, including a visit to Arlington National Cemetery and the gravesite of Joseph E. Phaneuf II, a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army from Eastford who was killed in Afghanistan in 2006. Earlier in the month, the Congregational Church of Eastford hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on June 1 for its new church location. File photos

THE BEST OF 2025

JULY



In July, the Congregational Church of Eastford hosted its annual Frog Jump and Band Concert at Crystal Pond Park on July 12, which included the fan-favorite "Cake Walk." Meanwhile, the Congregational Church of Eastford and Living Proof Church of Ashford held its annual Sports Camp at Eastford Elementary School July 21-25. Down the road, Eastford Baptist Church held its annual Vacation Bible School July 28-Aug. 1, which included an appearance by the dastardly "Grump." File photos

AUGUST



In August, Eastford Elementary School welcomed students back to class on Aug. 27. Mila Vinal, pictured here with her dog, Lily, was excited for preschool. Meanwhile, Connor Buell, of Eastford, earned top prize at the Woodstock Fair's Open Dairy Show Saturday, Aug. 30. File photos



SEPTEMBER



In September, the Pomfret Eastford Little League (PELL) celebrated opening night of their annual Fall Ball season on Sept. 8. Meanwhile, on Sept. 13, the Connecticut Sons of the American Revolution hosted a Liberty Tree dedication in honor of the United States Constitution and the 250th anniversary of the United States. At right, Callum St. John races after the ball during the Bulldogs' 9-2 loss against Pomfret on Tuesday, Sept. 30. File photos

THE BEST OF 2025

OCTOBER



In October, Buell's Orchard held a pair of events that brought the community out to enjoy some family fun. Their annual Trunk or Treat event was held Oct. 26, featuring more than a dozen trunks for families to enjoy. Earlier in the month, the orchard held its annual Harvest Festival on Oct. 11. Meanwhile, the town hosted its annual Trunk or Treat on Halloween night, Oct. 31, at Eastford Elementary School, which brought out children and their families to enjoy a myriad of treats. File photos

NOVEMBER



In November, Eastford veterans, along with several other surrounding towns, were honored in a Veterans Day ceremony at E.O. Smith High School in Mansfield on Nov. 8. Meanwhile, on Nov. 4, Eastford held its Municipal Election, and several were sworn in during a brief ceremony on Nov. 17. Over at Eastford Elementary School, Georgia Barlow was selected as the winner of the PTO's annual sign contest on Nov. 12. File photos

DECEMBER



In December, the Eastford Bulldogs won their first Varsity basketball game in nearly three years with a 43-33 victory over Parish Hill on Dec. 8. Meanwhile, the Recreation Commission hosted its annual "Cookies & Cocoa with Santa" event on Dec. 6. On Dec. 7, Day Kimball Healthcare's 36th Annual Hospice Tree of Life Ceremony was held at the Ivy Glenn Memorial, where Justin Loss lit the tree in honor of his grandmother, Helene, who died in December 2024. File photos

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