

THE EASTFORD Communicator



MARCH 2026

EASTFORD.NEWS

"Eastford: One of Connecticut's best small towns." - Carol Davidge

VOL. 34, No. 8



T.J. Howard officially announces Scramble's prediction of six more weeks of winter on Monday, Feb. 2, as his sister, Karissa, looks on. Adam Minor photo

JUST CHILLIN'



EASTFORD — Winter Storm Benjamin roared through the area on Sunday, Jan. 25 and Monday, Jan. 26, leaving upwards of 18 inches of snow in Eastford and surrounding towns. Due to the storm, road crews were out 24/7 cleaning up the mess, and schools were closed, giving kids the opportunity to play in an amount of snow Eastford hasn't seen in years. Pictured, Stephanie Bulan's dog, Soleil, enjoys the serenity after the storm. For more photos from Eastford's recent snow day, turn to page 22! *Courtesy photo*

Scramble has spoken: Six more weeks of winter

'DUCK DAY' TRADITION CONTINUES

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — It may not be the prediction people were hoping for, but it is official nonetheless. According to Scramble the Duck, a shadow has been seen — and six more weeks of winter is on

the horizon.

Eastford's own annual avian weather prognosticator made his prediction in frigid conditions on Monday, Feb. 2, at the Ivy Glenn Memorial, to a mixed reaction from locals who had been locked in a stretch of below freezing

Turn to **SCRAMBLE**, pg. 21

Several updates, changes imminent at Bowen Memorial Field

BY ADAM MINOR
MANAGING EDITOR

EASTFORD — Due to flooding issues, Bowen Memorial Field was unfortunately deemed too wet for play last year, which led all Pomfret Eastford Little League (PELL) games to be played in neighboring Pomfret.

According to Bowen Memorial Field Committee President Liz Scranton, the hope is to have the field ready for play in 2026, but much work remains in order for that to happen.

"This spring, there will be a ton of work being done," Scranton said in a conversation with the Communicator last

month, adding that the committee has been learning a lot about what they can do — as well as what they cannot do — because the land on which the field rests is technically considered a wetland.

"In the past year, we have gone to Board of Selectmen meetings and [Inland Wetlands &

Watercourses Commission] meetings, and we have gone to people to ask what we can do. ... It's a learning curve," Scranton said. "A lot of [the work] we can't ask of PELL because it's a town-owned field. ... We also have to stay within wetlands [guidelines]."

Turn to **FIELD**, pg. 23

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THE
EASTFORD
Communicator
LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

VOL. 34, No. 8 | MARCH 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. We do not publish Letters to the Editor.

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.

ADVERTISING

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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).

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

We are entering budget time — that time when the town's government begins the budget process and its deliberations toward finalizing both the town's and Board of Education's budgets for presentation at the Town Meeting later in the spring.

It is always a complex and difficult time for the Board of Selectmen, reviewing the many, justifiably valid requests from a multiplicity of constituencies to arrive at a judicious final budget that meets the needs of the town in the fiscal year ahead while fulfilling its citizen-driven mandate to govern within given fiscal parameters.

Among those budget requests the selectmen have received this year is one from the Board of Directors of *The Eastford Communicator* LLC. The board is seeking a line-item allocation of \$7,500 to continue its operation. This is an increase over the \$5,000 allocated by the selectmen in the current budget. These town funds are allocated for *Communicator* operating expenses, and when melded into the funds derived from advertising revenue and donations, comprise the totality of funding needed to publish the *Communicator* each month and get it into every home in Eastford.

The *Communicator* Board of Directors has consistently received positive feedback regarding the newspaper. Residents have expressed their appreciation for having a local source of news once again. Transitioning to a monthly publication schedule has proven highly successful, with readers expressing enthusiasm about receiving the *Communicator* every month.

If you are among our readers who welcome receiving the *Communicator* each month, we would ask that you make this known to the Board of Selectmen and that you express your support for our Fiscal Year 2026-27 line item budget request. Public support is critical to our continued success as an exemplar of community journalism.

The Board of Selectmen is reachable at (860) 974-0133, ext. 3. The First Selectman may be reached by e-mail at firstselectman@townofeastford.com. Or, you can drop them a note at 16 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242. Many, many thanks!

Atty. Michele Ann Palulis, Communicator Board of Directors Chairman; Arthur W. Brodeur, Communicator Editor-in-Chief



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.

From Nancy Gingras:

A shout out to the Friends of the Eastford Public Library for their planning and execution of the 2nd Annual Holiday Fair in December. The Fair was a huge success and we appreciate all of the hard work that they put into it, as well as all those who volunteered, donated items, baked goods, and/or attended. The funds raised significantly help our wonderful library!

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.

**A very special thank you to Pat Morgan
and the Beagary Trust for their
generous support of *The Eastford
Communicator!***

Thank You!

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Building hope in Eastford: A season of visible progress for CCE

BY ERIC PAYER
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — When I first arrived in Eastford, I was struck by the quiet beauty of this small town and the strength of its people. Today, standing on John Perry Road and looking at the new church building, that first impression has only grown stronger. What began as lines on paper and stakes in the ground has now become a structure you can walk through, touch, and imagine filled with life.

The new church is now 100-percent framed, and the shape of the sanctuary and ministry spaces is fully visible. You can stand where the congregation will one day worship, look up, and see the roof overhead, no longer simply a concept, but a reality. The building is dried in, the shell is protecting the work inside, and we have turned an important corner from heavy structural construction to the detailed finishes that will make this space feel like home.

Windows have been installed, bringing natural light into the sanctuary, classrooms, and fellowship spaces. As you walk through the building, you can now see how the sun will move across the room during a Sunday service or an evening gathering. Even in its unfinished state, the play of light through these windows hints at the warmth and welcome this church will offer to the community.

Inside the building, systems that you may never see but will rely on every week are coming together. Furnaces are being installed so that the church will be comfortable in every season. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing trades are coordinating their work so that when the congregation returns, everything behind the walls and above the ceilings will perform the way it should. These are critical

steps on the path to completion, and the teams on site are working diligently to keep the project advancing.

Drywall installation has begun on both the walls and ceilings, and this phase is transforming the interior spaces day by day. Rooms that once felt like open framing now have defined boundaries and more finished proportions. You can begin to picture classrooms filled with children, hallways lined with familiar faces on Sunday mornings, and a sanctuary ready to hold worship, prayer, and song. Each new sheet of drywall brings the church one step closer to that reality.

We are anticipating a mid-summer completion, and that target feels more tangible with every passing week. There is still much to do, from finishes and trim to flooring, painting, and final inspections, but the project is on a clear and encouraging trajectory. As we move through the remaining phases, our focus remains on quality, stewardship of resources, and staying aligned with the needs and vision of the Congregational Church of Eastford.

For me personally, one of the greatest blessings of this project has been the relationships that have formed along the way. Working with the pastors, church leaders, town officials, and many members of the congregation has been a privilege. The conversations on site, the shared problem solving, and the steady encouragement from the church family have turned this from a construction job into a partnership. Those relationships have made the long days worthwhile and have reminded me again and again why this building matters.

This new church is more than a structure rising from a cleared piece of land. It is a sign of perseverance after loss, a place where future generations will



According to Construction Project Manager Eric Payer, the new Congregational Church of Eastford building is now 100-percent framed. The project is slated for completion in mid-summer. Courtesy photos



gather, worship, and serve, and a visible reminder that God is still at work in Eastford. I am grateful to play a small part in this story and look forward to the day — not too far off now — when the doors are opened and the community is welcomed into its new home.

- Eric Payer is Construction Project Manager for Church Development Service



**ALL EASTFORD
ALL THE NEWS
ALL THE TIME**

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WEBSITE!**



Valentine's Day craft is a sweet treat at the library

EASTFORD — What could be sweeter than a handmade Valentine? Young patrons of the Eastford Public Library gathered on Valentine's Day, Saturday, Feb. 14, to make Valentine's Day cards and decorate heart-shaped sugar cookies. *Photos courtesy Jennifer John*



A DAY ON HALLS POND

LOCALS SHARE FISHING STORIES ON A FRIGID FEBRUARY WEEKEND

BY RANDAL CHINNOCK
SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNICATOR

EASTFORD — What drives people to sit out on a frozen pond for hours in frigid weather? Not being a fisherman myself, it's a question I've contemplated as I look out my office window at the ice fisherman on Hall's Pond. They have been particularly active this winter. And so, I ventured out on the pond myself on the weekend of Feb. 14 to find out more about these fishermen and what motivates them.

Antoni Wilczynski, of Newington, a 45-minute drive away, said he comes to Hall's for the nature and clean water. He comes here often and has been coming for years.

"I enjoy the fishing," he said. "I catch sometimes calico bass. Not big, but hey — my wife fries the fish for me. Around where I live, the water is not so clean."

I asked if he had any fish stories for me. He broke into a big smile and pointed.

"Behind that island there was a really big pike," he said. "I brought him up the hole and he filled the hole. Then he bit the line and got away. Two years ago."

Wilczynski immigrated here from Poland in 1979.

"Those days, the Communists came in, then martial law. It was so bad," he said, adding that he worked as a toolmaker and is retired now. "Now if it weren't for my grandkids and kids, maybe I go back. But my life here is good."



"We want flags," said Alex Riendeau, showing off a bass he just caught.

Nick Brisson and Matt Hall come from Ashford.

"I come here because the volume of fish is the best around here," Brisson said. "It's great that it's only 10 minutes away ... we like being outside."

Sometimes they also go to Mashapaug Lake, Mansfield Hollow, or Bolton Lake. At Hall's Pond he sometimes catches bass, yellow perch, and croppie. He releases the bass.

"But yellow perch or croppies are keepers," he said.

What do they do for fun in the warm weather?

"Fish," they said in unison. Brisson's uncle got him into fishing about seven years ago, but Hall said he is new to it.

Any fish stories? Brisson pointed to the north end of the pond.

"Right over there, in the spring, I caught a 5-pound bass," he said. "I would've kept that one, but I was in a kayak."

"We want flags," said Alex Riendeau, from Danielson, referring to when the flags on his "tip-ups" indicate a fish is on the line.

"We started with about four dozen minnows [for bait]. Now we're down to 10," added his uncle, Brandon Riendeau, from Manchester. "We've been out here since 6 a.m. ... we lost count of how many fish we caught, after 10. Hall's Pond is worth the drive."

They don't have a method for where to make holes — it's kind of random. Born and raised in



Antoni Wilczynski likes the calico bass.



At left, young Parker Hatch settles in. At right, Nick Brisson, left, and Matt Hall. "Yellow perch or croppies are keepers."

Connecticut, they also like to fish at Beach Pond and Pachaug Pond in Voluntown, as well as in the Connecticut and Thames rivers. Their main criteria for fishing? Lakes with clean water.

"Clean water means good-tasting fish," Riendeau said.

At Hall's Pond, they've been catching mostly pickerel, and pulled one out as we spoke. It was about 14 inches long.

"Sometimes, we catch them three times that size," Riendeau said, adding that that very day they caught a big wide-mouth bass. They always throw back the pickerel, but said "we might eat a bass if we're camping on the ice."

In warm weather they fish from a boat.

"It's all about being on the water," he said.

John Hatch Jr. is an excavator who had just driven in from Willington. He was drilling holes

with his auger while his young sons John III and Parker bounced around with excitement. John Jr.'s father used to bring him to Hall's Pond when he was a little boy.

"It's nice to bring my boys here now," he said, adding that in the warm weather, he's "either fishing trout in a stream somewhere or hunting deer or game birds."

He dipped a perforated ladle into a hole to measure the thickness of the ice.

"Looks like about 12-14 inches," he said.

He likes to drill holes where other people have fished.

"I have to figure there's something in those spots," he said as John III was scooping something out of a bucket. I asked what he had.

"Bait fish!"

What kind?

His father whispered into his ear, and the boy cried "Shiners!"

Natchaug Watershed Advisory Project seeks input from locals

EASTFORD — What most of us know about living in the Natchaug watershed is just how abundant, unique, and diverse the natural surroundings of this region are. We appreciate the variety of ecosystems and the extensive areas to work and play. Making a living in forestry and agriculture have been passed down through the generations.

A watershed includes the land that drains into a waterbody, like a stream, lake or river and eventually the ocean. As water or snow melt drains across the land, it carries with it various materials referred to as non-point source pollution, impacting the health of the watershed. The land and water in the Natchaug Regional watershed drain into three major rivers (the Natchaug, Mount Hope and Fenton Rivers) and is the source of drinking water for approximately 22,000 residents in Willimantic and parts of Mansfield and Windham. The Natchaug is recognized as an overall healthy watershed due to the high amount of forest cover (about 75 percent), minimal development impacts, and a good deal of state, town, land trust and privately owned protected land.

Federal and state environmental agencies continue to show strong support for the area. The Eastern CT Conservation District (ECCD) has been awarded EPA grant funding administered by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to create and facilitate a Natchaug Healthy Watershed Advisory

Board (NWAB) for eight of the watershed towns — Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Mansfield, Union, Willington, Windham and Woodstock. This is the first EPA-funded “healthy watershed” initiative undertaken in Connecticut focusing on preventing pollution before it happens and reducing common types of non-point source pollution including bacteria, nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, etc.), sediment, salt, petroleum products, PFAS, heavy metals, pesticides and trash.

A history of conservation cooperation exists in the Natchaug watershed, demonstrated by multiple municipal efforts to establish Greenways and the signing, by the eight watershed towns, of The Natchaug River Basin Conservation Compact in 2011. In it, the municipalities agreed to work cooperatively to balance conservation and growth in the watershed, demonstrating that residents, businesses, and academic institutions of the Natchaug watershed towns are cognizant of the special location in which they live.

Now in 2025, all eight towns’ first selectmen have signed Memorandums of Understanding with ECCD showing their leaderships’ support for the Natchaug project. It takes a cooperative regional effort using thoughtful land use planning and non-regulatory, cost-effective means to protect, and restore where needed, the watershed’s natural resources into the future.



Natchaug volunteers at a recent project outreach event. Courtesy photo

The NWAB and five workgroups have been meeting monthly since the project kickoff last April to focus on implementing recommendations from the 2020 Natchaug Healthy Watershed Protection Plan, including identifying stressors and solutions to protect natural resources and water quality. Workgroups include forestry and open space, healthy residential landscapes and septic systems, riparian wildlife corridors and pollinator pathways, cold water stream habitat and connectivity and municipal land use officials education. The Advisory Board and workgroups continually welcome municipal representatives, non-profit organizations, lake and outdoor recreational groups, local businesses, farmers and residents

with experience in any of the topics alongside an interest to work with neighbors on opportunities such as planning workshops, creating brochures, planting native vegetation and more!

Please reach out to Maura Robie, Natural Resource Specialist at ECCD, at maura.robie@comcast.net to participate. Go to ECCD’s website conservect.org/eastern and look under ‘Watershed Committees’ for more information and educational events. Join us in sustaining our shared home, the Natchaug watershed, for generations to come! This project was funded, in part, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The funding is administered by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

FROM THE GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

• Spring Clean-up: The Trustees will conduct a general clean-up of the cemetery grounds after March 15, on a date to be determined. Seasonal flowers, wreathes, logs and other objects will be removed at the time of the clean-up. If you wish to recycle your own decorations, you should do so at your earliest convenience, but prior to March 15.

• Landscaping/Mowing Season: After March 15, live flowers may be planted or placed in plastic pots within 12” of the base of the monument. Artificial flowers,

ornaments, and other objects are not allowed during the mowing season and will be removed because the objects are a risk to the groundskeepers and their machines.

• Board of Trustees’ meeting:

Tuesday, March 19, at 7 p.m., at the Ivy Glenn.

• Board of Corporators Annual Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, at 7 p.m., Town Office Building

• There is one vacancy on the Board of Corporators. If interested,

call (860) 428-0280.

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

EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE DONATION FORM

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

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Gift in memory of _____

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

IN THE GARDEN: SUSAN BURNS

I would like to tell you about a wonderful plant that blooms in late winter and very early spring. It is one of the most beautiful plants in a garden, and it comes up at a time when there is nothing but remnants of snow and mud. It's called snowdrops (Galanthus). Let me tell you about them.

With their nodding white blooms and fresh green foliage, snowdrops herald the end of winter. Planted en masse, they light up the early garden. There are several species and many hundreds of cultivars of snowdrops. You can tell them apart by their green and yellow markings. You can create a wonderful display with widely

available, affordable types of Galanthus purchased at your local garden center.

Snowdrops are perennial, so they will flower year after year. Once established, they are low maintenance and mostly trouble free. They do need the right growing conditions to thrive. The bulbs can be planted in autumn at the same time as daffodils. You can also plant container-grown snowdrops in late winter if they are available at the garden center.

Plant them in moist but well-drained soil. A position in part shade is ideal as they will receive some sunlight and rain in spring but have cover in summer. A spot under a canopy of a deciduous tree is perfect. They look

fantastic in large drifts and naturalize well.

To increase your number of plants for an impressive display, lift clumps of snowdrops just after flowering, and before the foliage turns yellow. Divide the clumps into smaller groups and replant them right away at the same depth, further apart. You can also let them set seed automatically. Once established, Galanthus need little care. After flowering, let the foliage die back on its own (same as you do with daffodils). I hope you get to add this excellent perennial bulb to your late winter, early spring plant collection. You will be very happy you did.



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT: DONNA LEAKE

Recently, you may have seen social media posts recognizing local schools and districts for their performance on the 2024–2025 Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System, including being named Schools of Distinction. We are proud to share that Eastford Elementary School has earned this designation. Being named a School of Distinction reflects consistent, meaningful success in supporting students academically, socially, and emotionally, and highlights the collective efforts of students, staff, and families.

Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System is a comprehensive framework that uses 12 indicators to tell the story of how well schools are preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. While academic achievement remains an important component, the system places a strong emphasis on student growth over time, which provides a more accurate picture of learning than a single test score or moment in time. Growth

measures help ensure that schools are recognized for helping all students make progress, regardless of where they begin.

These indicators fall into several broad areas, including academic achievement and growth, student engagement and wellness, and long-term readiness. In addition to state assessment results, the system considers factors such as chronic absenteeism, access to physical fitness, and participation in the arts. Research consistently shows that students who attend school regularly, maintain healthy habits, and engage in a well-rounded curriculum are more likely to succeed academically and beyond. Eastford Elementary's recognition as a School of Distinction reflects strong performance across these areas, demonstrating a balanced and student-centered approach to learning.

Family partnerships play a critical role in this success. Establishing routines at home and valuing education, health, and

wellness are essential foundations for learning. While students are with us for just over six hours each school day, their growth and development are shaped by the combined efforts of school and home. Well-rested, well-fed, and healthy children are better positioned to fully engage in learning, and strong collaboration between families and educators strengthens outcomes for all students.

At Eastford Elementary School, staff take a holistic approach to teaching and learning. This work begins with intentional reflection — examining our strengths, identifying areas for growth, and being willing to adapt as the needs of students and families evolve. We have systems in place to support both academic learning and social-emotional development, but we know that meaningful growth is only possible when strong relationships come first. By fostering positive connections among staff, students, and families, we create a school

environment that is supportive, responsive, and focused on continuous improvement. We strive to be a warm, caring community that both nurtures and challenges students to reach their potential.

Teaching, learning, and staying engaged in this work requires dedication, perseverance, and shared responsibility. By continuing to work together, we can build on this recognition and ensure that Eastford Elementary remains a place where students thrive.

Congratulations to our students, educators, and families on this well-earned honor. We are proud of our accomplishments and grateful for the collective commitment that led to Eastford Elementary School being named a School of Distinction — and we look forward to continuing this important work together.

- Submitted by Carole McCombe, Principal, Eastford Elementary School



WE WANT YOU!

BREAKING NEWS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Ask us how YOU can get involved with the *Communicator* today!





DID YOU KNOW?

The dog's nose print is so unique and detailed that it can be used to identify specific dogs? It's like our fingerprint!



DOG OF THE MONTH

Meet Tater! This sweet 9-week-old Great Pyrenees mix girl is as friendly as she is adorable. She's growing fast and will be a large, majestic dog once fully grown, so she'll need room to stretch her legs. Her family should enjoy plenty of brushing to keep that gorgeous coat in top shape. True to her Pyr roots, Tater has a gentle, loving nature. She's the kind of dog who will adore her family, shed generously, and watch over her home with calm, loyal devotion. Tater is microchipped, medically up to date, and ready to meet her match. Come meet her at PawSafe, 348 Old Colony Rd., Eastford. Learn more at www.pawsafe.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE

To our Readers:
We at the *Communicator* strive to get each issue in your hands every month in as timely a manner as possible. Each month, we aim for the first day of the month at the absolute latest to have it in every mailbox, at every home address in Eastford.

Some of you may have noticed that this was not the case in January for our special "Best of 2025" edition. Some of our issues were delayed due to a mix-up by our out-of-town postal delivery system (to be extra clear, this issue had nothing to do with the Eastford Post Office). Unfortunately, this situation was out of our control. The January edition was sent to the printer several days early due to the holidays, and the printer even sent the edition out early, several days before

Christmas, with the hopes it would arrive between Christmas and New Year's Day. However, it did not end up in mailboxes until well after the New Year — in some cases, a couple weeks into the New Year.

We rely on you, our readers, to notify us if any edition of the *Communicator* is late or never arrives. In the future, if you are waiting for your *Communicator* and it has not arrived by the first of the month, please reach out to us at eastfordnews@gmail.com, and let us know! This will help us iron out any issues we may be having with our mail delivery system, and help us fine tune any details we may need to figure out for future mailings. Thank you in advance for your help!

-The Eastford Communicator

DID YOU KNOW?

EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Did you know that at a Town Meeting in August 1849, Eastford selectmen authorized an order for \$100 for hiring a competent surveyor to obtain the best route for a railroad from Willimantic to the Massachusetts line through Mansfield, Chaplin, Eastford, Woodstock and Thompson?

A charter had already been obtained from the CT General Assembly, but the line was never built. In the 1880's more surveying work was done to assess the feasibility of a line from Willimantic through Eastford to Southbridge, Mass. This route likely would have travelled

along a similar path as today's Route 198, but no railroad connecting through Eastford was ever built. Eventually, a proper road was built from Phoenixville to Abington (now today's Route 44) to provide access to the train station in Abington.

Donations of original writings/documents, old photographs, and small historic items are greatly appreciated. Please think of us when cleaning out basements and attics or sorting through belongings of loved ones. If you have items to donate, please call Linda Torgeson at (860) 933-0468, or Tom Latham at (860) 974-1610.



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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.

MARCH

Sunday, March 1

Eastford Baptist Church will host its annual Chili Cook-off Sunday, March 1, after the A.M. Worship Service. Join us for Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., worship at 10:30 a.m., then stay after for fellowship in the Family Activity Center, and enjoy a variety of chili recipes. Chilis will be judged and prizes will be awarded for the top recipes. Eastford Baptist Church is located at 133 Union Rd., Eastford, CT 06242. Contact the church at (860) 974-1414, or e-mail eastfordbaptistoffice@gmail.com for more information.

Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Calendar Raffle, March 1-31. A prize will be drawn every day in March, most worth \$50 and up. To check out the daily prizes and purchase tickets, visit <https://form.jotform.com/260294412711147>. Thank you in advance for your support, and if you know anyone else that wants to win some cool prizes be sure to share the link. Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp, is located at 326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret Center. For more information, call (860) 974-1122 or visit www.4hcampct.org.

Tuesday, March 3

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

On Tuesday, March 3, from 6:30-8 p.m., Floral Design Night at the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp lodge. Cost is \$65 per person, which gets you a beautiful floral centerpiece to take home and an evening of fun! Proceeds go towards the Jim Logee Campership Fund. Preregistration required. Call (860) 974-1122 or go to www.4hcampct.org for a registration link.

Starting March 3: Ragged Hill Woods Environmental Science Programs at the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp. For Pre-K to 5th Grade on Wednesdays and Grade 6- 8 students on Tuesdays. March 3-4, Erosion; March 10-11, Baking: Make Your Own Muffin; March 17-18, Rockets; March 24-25, Nesting Animals. All activities are at 4:30 p.m., \$20 per session. Call (860) 974-1122 or e-mail raggedhillwoods@gmail.com to register.

Thursday, March 5

Eastford Public Library will "Story Time" at 11 a.m. Join us for a story, craft, snack and time of free play. In the afternoon, we will host a Dungeons & Dragons club from 4:30-5:30 p.m. The library is looking for six

adventurers to start a quest (ages 11-13). This group will continue to meet on the first Thursday of each month. Registration is a must. Later in the evening, we will also be hosting our first "Trivia Night" at 6 p.m. Grab some friends as Jeremy Barlow tests our knowledge. Please register.

Saturday, March 7

Eastford Public Library hosts an "Author Talk" with multi-talented horror enthusiast Clay Mcleod Chapman at 1 p.m. You won't want to miss him! Registration is required; space is limited.

Tuesday, March 10

Eastford Public Library hosts a "Gardening Presentation on Native Plants" at 6 p.m. This will be led by Benjamin Snow of Wilder Landscaping LLC. Please register.

Wednesday, March 11

Eastford Public Library hosts "Maker's Night" from 6 to 7:30 p.m. for teens and adults. Please register.

Thursday, March 12

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

Saturday, March 14

Eastford Public Library hosts "The Page Turners" our new book club at 1 p.m. We will be discussing the memoir "Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Coast Trail" by Cheryl Strayed. If interested, books are on display and available for check out.

Sunday, March 15

On Sunday, March 15, from 2-4 p.m., visit the Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp Open House, 326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret. Meet the director and other camp staff, take a camp tour, registration materials available. Call (860) 974-3379 for questions.

Thursday, March 19

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

Saturday, March 21

Eastford Public Library hosts a "Welcome Spring Craft" at 10:30 a.m. Please register.

Thursday, March 26

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

FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN: DEB RICHARDS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Public Works and Transfer Station attendants for their hard work during the recent cold and snowy weather. Their dedication to their jobs and to the residents of Eastford does not go unnoticed. Thank you, Ben, James, Zach, Mike, and David! We also want to wish Zach all the best as he begins his new full-time position and thank him for his great service to our community.

The Board of Selectmen has

begun the budget process. Meeting dates are posted on the Town of Eastford website, and all meetings are open to the public. Our focus will be on maintaining essential services, continuing to review and adjust town wages, and addressing infrastructure needs, as well as managing rising utility and insurance costs and state-mandated rebates.

We currently have a very part-time opening for an Office Assistant. This position is four hours per week and involves

supporting the Administrative Assistant with mandated reporting, filing, and other office tasks. We are also seeking an Assistant for the Assessor, a position totaling approximately 150 hours in the fall. We plan to hire one individual to fulfill both roles. Office Assistant hours are flexible, and we hope to increase those hours in July. If you are interested, please apply at the Selectmen's Office or e-mail your resume to emily.john@eastfordct.gov.

Planning is underway for our Memorial Day event. Terry Cote has generously offered to serve once again as chair — thank you, Terry! I have received approval for a military flyover, and we will feature a surprise speaker in honor of America's 250th Anniversary. Please save the date — Monday, May 25, 2026.

"Civility costs nothing and buys everything."

-Mary Wortley Montagu

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

January: 1

MARRIAGES

January: 0

DEATHS

January: 1

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Dec. 9: Weeks Road, \$83,000, Carl Panciera to Stephanie M. Bulan

Dec. 10: 182 Walker Drive, \$330,000, Judith Boisvert to Michelle T. Sweeney

Dec. 17: 77 Lakeside Drive, \$442,000, Gerald W. Sazama to Katherine Bonilla

Dec. 23: 62 Lakeside Drive, \$30,000, Allen K. Harmer to Susan Orcutt; 64 Lakeside Drive, \$30,000, Allen K. Harmer to Susan Orcutt; 96 Westford Rd., \$428,000, John C. Lorusso Sr. to Joseph B. Staubach; 16 Pifershire Rd., \$575,000, Windecker Sr. Edward Est. to Vernon L. Haug Jr.

Dec. 31: 29 General Lyon Rd., \$220,000, Lapierre Marion V. Est. to Kolton Dehler

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, March 2: Board of Selectmen, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, March 3: Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting, 6 p.m., Town Office Building

Friday, March 6: Board of Assessment Appeals, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

Saturday, March 7: Board of Assessment Appeals, 9 a.m., Town Office Building

Tuesday, March 10: Planning Commission, 7:30 p.m., Town Office Building

Wednesday, March 11: Crystal Pond Park Commission, 6 p.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, March 12: Board of Education, 6 p.m., Eastford Elementary School Library; Bowen's Field Committee, 6 p.m., Town Office Building

Thursday, March 26: Library Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., Eastford Public Library; Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, 7 p.m., Town Office Building

WELCOME TO THE WORLD!



EASTFORD — Shay Ivy Moore was born to parents Nate and Kate Moore, of Eastford, on Friday, Feb. 6, at 7.2 pounds. Proud big sisters are Grace, Anna, and Liv Moore.

Courtesy photo



Our next issue will be published on:

April 1

Please send all submissions to
eastfordnews@gmail.com by:

March 15

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(860) 774-1253
<https://neccoanimalservices.org/>

ASSESSOR

Mary Hawley
(860) 974-0133, ext. 7
Fax: (860) 974-0624
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5-7:30 p.m.; Fridays, 1-4:30 p.m.
E-mail: assessor@townofeastford.com

BUILDING OFFICIAL

Joseph Pajak
(860) 974-2068, ext. 8
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
E-mail: joseph.pajak@eastfordct.gov

BURN OFFICIAL

Gordon Spink
(860) 234-2012 (available by phone 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

EASTFORD FOOD PANTRY

Audrey Carabeau – Coordinator
(860) 933-7685
Location: Eastford Baptist Church, 133 Union Rd.

EASTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Katie Ball – Librarian
Jennifer John – Assistant Librarian
(860) 974-0125

Hours: 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.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
E-mail: eastfordpublib@gmail.com

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Deborah Richards – Director
(860) 974-0133, ext. 10
All Emergency Calls: 911
State Police: Troop D – Danielson: (860) 779-4900

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Martha Burgess: Treasurer
Kimberly Cyr: Deputy Treasurer
Lisa Kellermann: Accountant
(860) 974-0133

LAND USE OFFICE

Jim Larkin: Land Use Agent
(860) 774-1253
Susan Welshman – Land Use Secretary
(860) 974-2068, ext. 9
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

VETERANS SERVICES

Garry Brown – Municipal Veteran Representative
(860) 928-2309
Office Hours: First Tuesday of the month, 3:30-5 p.m.
Appointments preferred, but walk-ins welcomed
E-mail: garry.brown71@aim.com

PUBLIC WORKS

Ben Schmidt – Public Works Supervisor
(860) 974-2259
Address: 264 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242
Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Toni Doubleday: Republican Registrar
(860) 974-0133, ext. 2
E-mail: toni.doubleday@eastfordct.gov
Kathleen Healey: Democratic Registrar
(860) 974-0133, ext. 2
E-mail: kathleen.healey@eastfordct.gov
Office Hours: Second and fourth Wednesday of the month, 4-6 p.m.

SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

Deborah Richards
First Selectman
E-mail: firstselectman@townofeastford.com
Ashlyn Ellsworth
Selectman
E-mail: ashlyn.ellsworth@eastfordct.gov
Paul Torcellini
Selectman
E-mail: selectmantorcellini@eastfordct.gov
Emily John
Administrative Assistant
E-Mail: selectmen@townofeastford.com
(860) 974-0133, ext. 3

Fax: (860) 974-0624
Office Hours: Mondays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; first and third Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-6:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-5 p.m.; Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
First Selectman available by appointment.

TAX COLLECTOR

Christine Hustus, CCMC
(860) 974-1885, ext. 6
E-Mail: christine.hustus@eastfordct.gov
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesdays, 1-6:30 p.m.

TOWN CLERK

Johanna Wolfe
(860) 974-1885
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-4 p.m.; second and fourth Tuesday each month, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1-6:30 p.m.
E-mail: johanna.wolfe@eastfordct.gov

TRANSFER STATION

Address: 264 Westford Rd., Eastford, CT 06242
Hours: Sundays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CONSERVATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION UPDATE

The Eastford Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Town Office Building unless otherwise announced.

We encourage folks to get interested and get involved in the conservation and

preservation of our abundant natural resources and open spaces in town. We discuss ongoing and upcoming events and opportunities for residents to get involved in. We work with Eastford Elementary to promote outdoor activities and wise habitat management. We are

scheduling our spring bluebird box project where the eighth graders assist the third graders in making bluebird boxes that they can keep! This spring, we have plans to rebuild the bridge on the Askew Trail and will be looking for assistance with that. We are also working

closely with the Natchaug Healthy Watershed Group (administered by the Eastern CT Conservation Commission and the DEEP).

Please check us out on the town website and also the ECHPC Facebook page. Come see what we're all about!

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



In honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, the library will celebrate "Read Across America Week" March 2-7. There will be drop-in crafts and activities available as we encourage our patrons of all ages to read every day.

As winter draws to a close, we will also be celebrating the warmer weather and longer daylight hours. Spring is right around the corner, and there is a lot to look forward to in the upcoming months. Stay tuned!

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 website, or on social media, or in the Calendar section of the Communicator every month. If you haven't yet, please follow Eastford Public Library on Facebook and/or Instagram @eastfordpubliclibrary.

Pictured, Eloise Dexter made a beautiful Valentine for her father at our Saturday morning craft on Feb. 14. For more photos from the event, check out this edition of the Communicator!



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FROM THE EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE COMPANY #1 INC.



Thanks to all who are taking things safely when it comes to the amount of snow, ice, and falls that are occurring. Winter is far from over. We ask all to take a few minutes, safely, to clean around your mailboxes and especially make your house numbers visible from the road in the event you need to call "911." Clearing a path from your driveway to your house entry is critical should you need to be

transported to the hospital.

The department responded to 22 "911" calls during the month of January.

Welcome our newest member, Gavin Driscoll, to the department.

In addition to the monthly business meeting, truck checks, and line officers meeting, drills were held on SCBAs, mandatory airborne/bloodborne pathogens, sexual harassment in the workplace and HIPAA.

• Tip of the Month: The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss – Communicating with Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Most know that hearing loss in older adults is common, as well as cognitive decline. What is frightening is that seniors that struggle with hearing loss can experience cognitive decline nearly 40

percent faster than those without.

Taking steps to protect or address hearing loss can also protect your health and overall independence.

Tips for speaking and speechreading: Face the hard of hearing person, maintain eye contact, speak normally and clearly, not too slowly or loudly, do not exaggerate mouth movements.

Tips for communicating through writing: Keep writing simple and to the point, look for meaning in the person's message, ignore any grammatical errors.

Tips for Dementia: Mild hearing loss can double dementia risk. Moderate loss can triple risk, and severe hearing impairment can be five times more likely to develop dementia.

Tips for Risk of Falls: Even a mild hearing loss triples the risk

of falls.

Tips for Long-Term Care: One third of older adults that are hospitalized from a serious fall injury do not return home and require admission to long-term care.

Tips for Diabetes: Diabetes can have a significant impact on hearing health. High blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear, which can lead to hearing difficulties.

Recommendation: Research shows that restoring hearing loss with hearing aids may not only improve the quality of life, but could also extend it.

For further information, call 1-800-708-6796, 860-231-8756 or www.ct.gov/cdhi.

-Submitted by Jeannine Spink

WHAT'S NEW AT BOY SCOUT TROOP 92?

ASHFORD/EASTFORD — Boy Scouts of America Troop 92 enjoyed spending time outdoors at the Klondike Derby at the end of January. It was bitter cold, but sunny and no wind. There was plenty of snow on the ground, so that was good. Due to extremely low temperatures the Troop did not stay overnight. It is really hard to cook outdoors when the temperature is 14 degrees below zero!

Activities at the Klondike Derby included fire starting, first aid, backpack survival, shelter building and others. At the end of the day, 20 patrols competed in a dogsled race on a course around the snow-covered parade field. There were no injuries.

The February Scout meeting was devoted to rank advancement, as will the March meeting. Scout ranks give youth hands-on experience with leadership roles.

Troop 92 is scheduling a white-

water rafting trip for this summer on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts. Prerequisite to attend is to have earned the Kayaking Merit Badge.

In March, Cub Scouts will participate in the annual Pinewood Derby competition. This is one of Cub Scouts' most popular activities. Cars are gravity powered, and run on a timed track. Competition is fierce! Winners are eligible to go on to compete in regional competition.

Troop meetings are the second and last Tuesday of the month at St. Philip's Recreation Center in Ashford. New members are welcome.

- Submitted by BSA Troop 92:
 Nord Yakovleff, Assistant Scoutmaster;
 Jesse Burnham, Scoutmaster;
 Gerard Taylor, Assistant Scoutmaster;
 Rob Hany, Committee Chairman;
 Doug Jenne, Cubmaster



Scouts at the Klondike Derby with their dogsled. Courtesy photo



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ATTENTION

OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS

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 March 15.



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

eastford.news

HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

The Eastford Communicator is seeking news submissions from area high schools that Eastford students attend, such as honor rolls, upcoming events, and other newsworthy information. Please send all information to eastfordnews@gmail.com, and we will run everything as space allows.

WOODSTOCK ACADEMY

• Senior Event Dates — Below is the updated calendar of events for seniors during the final few weeks of the school year. Please note that Commencement has been moved to June 13.

May 23: Senior Prom; June 1: Senior Athletic Awards; June 2: Pops Concert; June 3: Senior Class Trip; June 5: Last Day of Classes for Seniors; June 8: Pink House, Spring Athletic Awards (Evening); June 9: Give Back Day; June 10: Pink House Rain Date and Senior Activity TBD; June 11: Commencement Rehearsal; June 12: Commencement Rehearsal (Morning), Class Night (Evening); June 13: Commencement

• Counseling Letter for Juniors — College Planning Night (Date Change), Monday, March 2, 6:30 to 7:45 p.m., Bates Memorial Auditorium, North Campus. This is a great opportunity for students and families to find out about the college search and application process. All students and at least one parent/guardian are encouraged to attend this program. Andrew Carter, Admissions Officer at The College of the Holy Cross, will present.

• WA College Fair — Wednesday, March 4, 9-10:45 a.m., Alumni Fieldhouse, North Campus. All juniors will attend the college fair during the school day.

• SAT — Thursday, March 26. All juniors will take the SAT during the school day. The test is provided for free by Woodstock Academy and the State of Connecticut.

• Please note that WA communications via text message will now come from a 10-digit phone number. The general text line, such as weekly updates, will come from the number ending in 3734. Any urgent messages, such as school delays/cancellations or other emergencies, will come from the number ending in 1196.

Informational SMS/text: (860) 743-3734; Emergency SMS/text: (860) 200-1196.

Parents may receive messages from different numbers depending

on the region they're in. In this case, look out for a text that begins with the code "WA" to ensure it is from The Woodstock Academy.

While these numbers are not able to receive replies, we encourage you to save them both to your contacts. This change is necessary to enhance the reliability and security of our communications and aligns with the industry standard.

EDWIN O. SMITH HIGH SCHOOL

E.O. Smith High School offers students a wide breadth of education to prepare them for the future. We host active academic departments, an agricultural training program, and a number of student clubs and extra-curricular activities. Our world-class Library Media Center and computer labs reinforce and enhance our education programs. We have a sports program — our mascot is the Panther — and an active alumni community. We encourage our students to develop the motivation and capacity for lifelong learning.

Core Values: We strive to have all members of the E.O. Smith community support and promote these values. Edwin O. Smith High School's five core values are: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Achievement, Community. Regional School District #19 is made up by the towns of Ashford, Mansfield, and Willington and provides education for Grades 9 through 12.

HARVARD H. ELLIS TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School is located in Danielson. We have more than 600 students from 20 towns and enroll grades 9-12.

We pride ourselves on keeping up with the latest in industry trends and outfitting our classrooms with state-of-the-art technology and equipment to create authentic environments that will prepare students for future careers. Our commitment is unwavering — to equip our students with the skills to succeed, and to provide a talented

workforce that is responsive to state and industry needs.

Our 12 trade offerings focus on excellence, craftsmanship, work-readiness and skills for rapid advancement.

Students can choose from: Architecture; Automotive Collision Repair and Refinishing; Automotive Technology; Carpentry; Culinary Arts; Health Tech; Electrical; Hairdressing and Cosmetology; Masonry; Plumbing and Heating; Precision Machining Technology; Robotics and Automation.

Our academic offerings, in partnership with Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson and Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, offer high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to receive college credit for select high school courses. And Ellis proudly boasts of a full complement of student activities.

We attract a diverse student population from across Connecticut because of our extensive Career and Technical Education programs, rigorous academics, opportunities for real-world work experience and the chance to earn college credit. Towns our students frequently come from, include Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Eastford, Griswold, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Scotland, Stafford, Sterling, Thompson, Voluntown, Willimantic, and Woodstock.

EASTCONN/QUINEBAUG MIDDLE COLLEGE

EASTCONN's Quinebaug Middle College (QMC), a regional, public magnet high school, is currently recruiting academically motivated students for the 2026-2027 school year. Application deadline is Feb. 28. Students who seek a more independent learning environment tailored to their academic and career goals are encouraged to apply.

Located on the campus of CT State College-Quinebaug Valley (CTSC-QV) in Danielson, QMC

offers high school students a middle college experience that enables them to earn a high school diploma while also earning free, transferable college credits from CTSC-QV. The school's unique partnership with CTSC-QV provides students access to college facilities and opportunities for meaningful collaboration with college faculty and resources.

Students select from one of our six distinguished learning pathways: Liberal Arts and Humanities, Education, Business/Leadership, STEM Engineering, STEM Manufacturing, and STEM Health Sciences. Core academic and elective courses, along with industry mentorship opportunities, are carefully aligned to each pathway.

“QMC provides a small, personalized learning environment where students embrace our core values of Inspiration, Kindness and Respect,” said Principal Edward Keleher. “Through access to college-level coursework, our students can explore their interests while families benefit from significant college cost savings. QMC creates opportunities for every student to thrive. We welcome students seeking an engaging, supportive high school experience that prepares them for future success.”

The program emphasizes real-world experience in project management, public communications, and community leadership. Service leadership is integrated into the daily schedule, enabling students to actively participate in meaningful community service projects and initiatives.

QMC serves approximately 160 students in grades 9-12 from 18 towns across northeastern Connecticut, and is administered by EASTCONN through a partnership including CTSC-QV and seven northeastern Connecticut towns.

For enrollment information and applications, visit www.eastconn.org/qmc. Contact QMC Principal Edward Keleher at ekeleher@eastconn.org.



EVERYTHING EASTFORD

WORD SEARCH

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 B A B U I L D I N G S U P P L Y I M C B
 U N V B C D B U E L L S O R C H A R D C
 L O T S I T P A B D R O F T S A E F O O
 L I K R A P D N O P L A T S Y R C M P N
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 G G E Z H Q V L G J Z A H B N W S W C Y
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FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EASTFORD: MIKE MORAN

Hello Eastford!

As I write this, we are still in the grip of winter cold and everything is under a mantle of snow. I have seen some maple tree taps, but other than that, all seems pretty much dead and gone. But living in New England we know that's not true. In fact, I bet we are all certain that by May everything will be crazy alive — dazzling green grass, flowers, trees budded out, those glorious light green new leaves soaking up the spring sunshine. New life springs forth from what appeared to be dead and gone. New life.

It was in the springtime about 20 centuries ago that Jesus, the Son of God, gave His life for us, dying a horrible death on a cross where He paid the price for our brokenness before God. That was on a Friday afternoon. To His devoted followers, it seemed as all was lost. Dead is dead, right? Irreversible. Final. But on Sunday morning Jesus rose from the dead. Life from death. New life. This incredible (and true) event is the foundation of all of Christian faith. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter every year.

I recall a conversation I had a while ago with a checkout clerk in a sporting goods store. It was spring and I was buying some fishing tackle. She seemed tired. I asked

her how her day was going, and she confirmed that it was exhausting. I asked her how much longer her shift was. She said, "It just started. This is my second job. I already worked eight hours at my other job. It's the only way I can make ends meet."

I responded, "Sounds like your life is a real handful right now."

Her reply was, "If only I could have a new life..."

How about you? Would a new life be a blessing? New life is what is on offer from Jesus. He died on that cross to wipe our slate clean — no guilt, no shame — the package of complete and utter forgiveness. All motivated by God's love for you. Amazing. Jesus died and He rose again. So can we.

Maybe you already know this truth and are a follower of Jesus. Maybe not. In any case, let me invite you to attend an Easter worship service in a Christian church this year. Our services will be at sunrise (on top of the hill at 8 Church Rd. at 6:30 a.m.) and at 10 a.m. in the Eastford School gym. Not only will we celebrate what Jesus did long ago, but we will encounter Him in the moment. You see, Jesus is alive! Come and celebrate new life — with us or at the church of your choosing. Happy Easter.

TIPS FOR TODAY

LIZ ELLSWORTH

Happy soon-to-be spring!

There is an energy-saving initiative called Earth Hour which takes place at the end of this month. Founded in 2007, Earth Hour occurs on Saturday, March 28, at 8:30 p.m. local time. Participants around the world are asked to switch off their non-essential lights for one whole hour. This campaign hopes to send a strong message about energy conservation and to inspire participants to reconnect with nature.

During these 60 minutes, families and communities are asked to do something positive for the planet, such as re-thinking your outdoor light use, developing a plan to encourage pollinators in your town, discussing connecting to nature with friends and family, making choices to fight climate change, or spurring on the expansion(s) of advocacy at a local event.

For more information, visit <https://www.earthhour.org/faqs>.

THE EASTFORD Communicator LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1992

THE PASTOR'S PEN: TIMOTHY R. HOWARD JR.

As March unfolds, many of us are ready to see winter loosen its grip and give way to signs of new life. That anticipation fits perfectly with what Christians look forward to most this season, namely Resurrection Sunday, also commonly known as Easter. The days leading up to

Resurrection Sunday invite us to reflect not only on the joy of the empty tomb, but also on the cost that came before it. This year, we are grateful to join together with the Congregational Church of Eastford for a combined Good Friday service at 7 p.m., as we remember Christ's

sacrifice and the meaning of the cross. It is a meaningful opportunity for our town's churches to gather as one. Then, on Sunday, April 5, we will celebrate Resurrection Sunday (Easter), the heart of the Christian faith. We will begin the morning with a Sunrise Service at 6:30

a.m. at Buell's Orchard, followed by breakfast at Eastford Baptist Church. Later that morning, we will gather again for our Resurrection Sunday Worship Service at 10:30 a.m. Resurrection Sunday is more than a tradition. It is a message of eternal hope. It reminds us that death

does not have the final word, that forgiveness is real, and that new and everlasting life is possible. Whether you have attended church for years or haven't been in quite some time, you are warmly invited to join us as we remember, reflect, and rejoice together.



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EASTFORD DEMOCRATS: Here's your chance to have a voice in electing Statewide & Congressional Candidates



A caucus will be held on March 24th, 2026, at 6:30pm, at the Eastford Public Library to endorse delegates to the 2026 Democratic State Conventions in the period of May 11-21. There will be an open process for nominating delegates during the caucus. The several conventions are for the endorsement of candidates by the Democratic State Central Committee for the Democratic primary of Aug 11, 2026, and the general election of Nov 3, 2026. Candidates to be endorsed include Judge of Probate, State Representative, State Senate, US Congress, and CT constitutional officers (Gov, Lt. Gov, Secretary of the State, Attorney General, Treasurer, and Comptroller). See the Eastford Democratic Town Committee Facebook page for more info.

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, home goods and money in the month of February. A special thank you to Bob and Missy Vincent who donated a new chest freezer to the pantry.

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 include canned fruit, soup, healthy snacks, crackers, jelly, pancake mix and syrup. Thank you for your support!

Eastford Food Pantry hours: Monday, March 2, 8-11 a.m.; Wednesday, March 18, 2-4 p.m.

**TO OUR READERS
 TO OUR ADVERTISERS
 TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS
 TO OUR SUPPORTERS
 TO OUR DONORS**

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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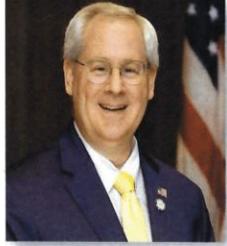
EASTFORD ROADSIDE CLEANUP

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Six more weeks of winter predicted by Eastford's own forecaster

SCRAMBLE

Continued from pg. 1

temperatures for what seemed like weeks.

Nevertheless, Scramble emerged and spoke his prediction to his handlers — brothers Isaac and Benjamin Torcellini, and siblings Karissa and T.J. Howard — who translated his thoughts for the people in attendance in person and online. T.J. Howard held up the official declaration while his sister read the poetic prophecy aloud as Scramble declared his intentions:

*As ice stays thick on the frozen pond,
I, Scramble, come out and look beyond.
I see icicles glitter and snow falling ahead.
I let out a sigh and shake my head.
The winter's been hard. The snow has been piling.
When will it end? I quacked, smiling.*

*Will there be puddles or will there be shovels?
Will there be mowing, or will there be plowing?
The sun looks pale.
The wind is blowing cold.
The spring will stay quiet.
The winter is bold!
Six more weeks of winter to behold!*

The tradition of "Duck Day" in Eastford dates back to 2015. Over the years, the alternate option to Groundhog Day has garnered national and international attention, as news outlets from around the world have picked up Scramble's predictions over the years. Local state government officials have also made it a routine to stop by and officially support Scramble's efforts, as State Rep. Pat Boyd and State Sen. Jeff Gordon stopped by on Feb. 2 to present Scramble with a citation from the Connecticut General Assembly, noting his accuracy and thanking



Scramble the gets ready to share his prediction with his handlers.. Adam Minor photos

him for his service to the community.

According to the Torcellinis, Scramble boasts a 100-percent accuracy rating, something that can't be said for other prognosticators.

"With his record of 100-percent accuracy, Scramble is trustworthy and his predictions should be heeded, he said. "The quacks that we interpret for you

today have a legacy of accuracy. They come from a duck who is well-educated, spends his time enjoying and studying the weather, and above all is working to maintain the honor of his prognostication discipline."

For more information about Scramble the Duck and to see photos and videos of the event, visit scrambleduck.org.



State Rep. Pat Boyd and State Sen. Jeff Gordon present Scramble with a citation from the Connecticut General Assembly.



Scramble gets ready to share his prediction with his handlers.



Scramble the Duck strikes a pose for media and fans after his official prediction.



State Rep. Pat Boyd and State Sen. Jeff Gordon with Scramble's handlers Benjamin and Isaac Torcellini.

Town endures historic snowfall as Benjamin makes its mark

EASTFORD — The town experienced snowfall like it hadn't seen in years on Sunday, Jan. 25 and Monday, Jan. 26, as Winter Storm Benjamin rolled through Connecticut, leaving behind upwards of 18 inches of snow in Eastford. While adults may have groaned about clearing snow and driving on roads, children celebrated a snow day on Monday, Jan. 26, and the *Communicator* wasn't about to pass up the opportunity to collect photos of the big day! Enjoy these reader-submitted photos from around town!
Courtesy photos



Meadow Pacheco builds a snowman as the sun shines.



Cooper Kjos is all bundled up.



Bo poses by the manger at Eastford Farm.



Trinity Howard gets a thrill ride on her snow tube.



Sonny Garry gets major air as he leaps off his playground set into the soft snow below.



Mila Vinal is all smiles as she plays in the snow.



Ryden and Freya Hubbard enjoy their time outside in the snow.



Aaron flops on top of the mountain as Chloe, Amelia, Aubrey, and Emma enjoy a break at the entrance of the fort.

Officials hope Bowen Memorial Field will be ready for spring play

FIELD
Continued from pg. 1

Scranton added that because the town owns the field, if the town were to hypothetically just pay for the major work the field requires itself, it would be a significant added burden to residents when it comes to budget season.

“We don’t want to put that on taxpayers,” she said. “We just want a somewhat dry field, and have parents be dry too. In April, it is just wet.”

In order to do the required work, the strategy is to rely on the generosity of volunteers. For now, the plan is to add more infield mix, as well as extra stone to help with drainage. Another “maintenance day” is planned for Saturday, April 4, to get this manual labor done by dedicated volunteers.

“We need lots of hands and shovels,” Scranton said. “We will have a tractor trailer of stone and infield mix to put on field, so that we can make the field more playable.”

According to Scranton, Gary Whittenburg is donating the stone needed for the field. The stone will be poured around bleachers and the concession stand to help keep things dry. Other work planned includes installation of a new scoreboard, which will be donated by the Inn at Woodstock Hill and Kazantzis Real Estate. Renovation work is also planned for the concession stand, the time and materials for which are being donated by Tom DeJohn.

“Hopefully, all of these materials will help the field stay dry in the spring and able to be used in the fall for fall ball,” Scranton said. “The plan is to have practices and games at Bowen Field all season, almost every night of the week. It all starts at the end of April. PELL needs fields for kids to play on. We have the kids to play — three coach-pitch teams, tee ball teams, softball for girls — they need fields.”

Beyond plans for the immediate needs of the field, Scranton said the committee is also looking



Volunteers work on cleaning up Bowen Memorial Field last April. Much work is still planned for the property, which will hopefully be ready for games this spring. File photo

further down the road to address the second field that sits adjacent to the main field. This second field has sat relatively unused in recent years. She said that the committee hopes see this space as a softball field in time.

“Hopefully, long-range, down the road, in the next year or two, we can make it into a softball field,” she said, adding that this area is also being considered as space for extra parking. “It has always been a wetter location — the water just drains off.”

For now, Scranton stressed that the planned improvements are just going to require patience.

“There are three committees working to get different things approved,” she said. There are going to be great things that

happen at the field — it’s just going to take time. We just want to make sure everything is done correctly.”

Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the Bowen Memorial Field can make checks out to the Selectmen’s Office, with “Bowen Memorial Field” in the memo line. Another way to contribute is through a sponsorship through PELL, which will include having a sponsor flag on the field. Forms are available at <https://leagues.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=2116119>.

For more information about Bowen Memorial Field, or questions about how you can get involved, e-mail liz.scranton.realtor@gmail.com.

EBC

Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday Service

Sunday, March 29, 10:30 a.m.

Good Friday Service

(w/Congregational Church of Eastford)

@ Eastford Baptist Church

Friday, April 3, 7 p.m.

Sunrise Service

Sunday, April 5, 6:30 a.m. @ Buell’s Orchard

Breakfast to follow immediately afterward

@ EBC Family Activity Center

Resurrection Sunday Worship Service

Sunday, April 5, 10:30 a.m.

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