

# Washington, CT

## Early Voting Brings New Energy to Town Hall

For the two weeks leading up to the November 5th election, early voting brought a lively energy to Town Hall. In 2022, Connecticut voters passed a state constitutional amendment to allow early voting, introducing 14 days of voting prior to Election Day. This addition created 120 hours of voting that required coverage by our registrars, moderators and poll workers - all of whom underwent extensive training.

Denise Arturi and Lois Pinney, the Town of Washington's registrars, extend their gratitude to all the poll workers who ensured the process ran smoothly. Going into this first experience with early voting, they were uncertain of what to expect but were pleasantly surprised to see 1,000 voters take advantage of the opportunity. The first day of early voting saw the highest turnout until Election Day itself. "The voters who came in were appreciative of the convenience and very positive," said Denise Arturi. "We really appreciated everyone's patience as we put the new procedures into effect."



Some voters had questions about how early voting worked. Denise and Lois explained the process: each early ballot was sealed in an envelope by the voter and then secured in a locked cabinet in the

Town Clerk's fireproof vault until Election Day. On Election Day, four poll workers from both major parties opened, shuffled and processed these ballots through a tabulator alongside absentee and same-day registration ballots.

One of the additional challenges for our registrars and moderator has been the addition of another State Senate district within the town requiring separate reporting of same day, early, absentee, overseas and election day tallies for each district. This change doubled their workload and made for a very long night on Election Day. In the end, 2,268 electors participated in the election representing 85% of our 2,677 active registered voters. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our election team, early voting ran smoothly, marking a strong first step in adapting to the new chapter in our voting process. Thoughts or concerns about early voting can be directed to your state representative or senator.

## Message from the Selectmen's Office

For many residents, winter represents a quieter time in Washington. In January and February things do tend to quiet down. Many of our residents head for warmer climates to avoid the typical New England winter. For those who stay, our Town civic organizations', Parks & Recreation Commission and the Washington Business Association make sure there are plenty of things to do to keep a full calendar throughout the season.

For the past several years we have endured many different "weather events." We've had rain storms that have dropped unprecedented amounts of precipitation in very short periods of time. These events cause a variety of damage and issues for our residents. We have been fortunate that the past several winter seasons have been relatively mild. Nonetheless, we should always be mindful of the potential for more

severe storms this winter. Pay attention to alerts and announcements, be aware of the work our Highway Department is doing to keep roads safe and passable and please check on your neighbors.

---

**"You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage and tangled Christmas tree lights."**

**– Maya Angelou**

---

With each newsletter we highlight individuals or organizations who serve our community with distinction. This season we are honoring Linda Gomez. Linda has worked tirelessly for many years for the Town of Washington. She holds the position

of Director of Finance and works in the Selectmen's office. If you've ever called Town Hall, you've most likely spoken with her. While Linda wears many hats, one of her most important roles is guiding and advising the Board of Selectmen in the creation, oversight and implementation of our annual town budget. Linda is responsible for all fiscal matters involving Town finances and consistently goes above and beyond while taking great pride in her duties for the Town. Thank you, Linda!

In closing, The Board of Selectmen on behalf of all Town employees and volunteers, wish our residents a happy and healthy holiday season.

Washington Board of Selectmen  
Jim Brinton  
Jay Hubelbank  
Dean Sarjeant

## Spotlight on Business: Privet House

When you step into Privet House, you're surrounded by treasures, both new and old. Owners Suzanne Cassano and Richard Lambertson, with decades of combined retail expertise, joined forces over 16 years ago. In 2013, they relocated from Warren to their historic building in the heart of New Preston, honoring the building's rich century-old retail heritage by creating an "emporium of home goods, antiques and curiosities."



In an age dominated by online shopping, they know that a carefully curated collection is key to creating a unique, personal shopping experience. They travel the globe seeking distinctive items, each with its own story- whether vintage silverware from a Parisian hotel or hand-loomed mohair throws from Spain.

Privet House is particularly known for its collection of specialized brushes, sourced from a Paris trade show, with unique designs for every cleaning and bathing need. Upstairs, a room beautifully designed by Ostafin Design features curated furniture, art and decorative accessories.

Suzanne shared how much they've loved being a part of the New Preston community, where shop owners collaborate to ensure they offer distinctive items and support one another- a spirit that was especially meaningful during COVID. She treasures the long-lasting relationships developed with her customers, describing New Preston as a "very special village." Privet House, 13 East Shore Rd. New Preston, Open Wednesday - Sunday 11-5pm. [Privethouse.com](http://Privethouse.com)

## Assessor's Office

The Assessor is currently finalizing the real estate, personal property and motor vehicle values to be adopted by the Town for the 2024 Grand List (GL). The 2024 GL lists the owners and assessed values that are used to create the Tax Collector's tax bills for July 1, 2025.

The 2024 GL is expected to be completed at the end of January 2025. If there is an assessed value increase for any real or personal property, written notices of increase will be mailed to property owners. Owners who believe their assessments are incorrect are encouraged to contact this office for an explanation. For further information, please go to [www.washingtonct.org](http://www.washingtonct.org) or call 860-868-0398.

## Welcome!

Opening Soon! The Ideas Depot: Where Creatives Connect  
Conceived as a multi-use space for co-working (by workday) and gatherings/pop-up retail/ performances/ class space (evenings, weekends, early mornings), it will also be housing a multi-media lab (with local production resources and training available for video filming & editing, podcast recording & editing, etc.). Location: 11 Bryan Hall Plaza, Washington Depot, CT 06794

## Parks & Recreation

### Pickle Ball

Days/Times TBA

### Adult Morning Swim

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 5:30-7:15am

Shepaug Valley School

\*All swimmers must fill out a waiver

### Holiday in the Depot ~ December 13, 6pm

### Washington-Gunn Family Skate

Every Sunday Dec 3 – March 2, 4:45 – 6:30pm, Gunn

Linen Rink



## Town of Washington Tax Collector's Office

### January 1, 2025 Tax Payments

The second installment of real estate taxes and motor vehicle supplemental taxes will become due and payable to the Town of Washington on January 1, 2025. Motor vehicle supplemental bills will be mailed late December. Payment coupons for the second installment of real estate taxes were mailed in June and will not be re-mailed.

The last day to pay without an interest penalty or a DMV registration hold is February 3, 2025. State law requires DMV to deny vehicle registrations in the name of a person reported as tax delinquent. Real estate tax liens will be filed April 1, 2025 on any

property with unpaid real estate taxes.

If you have questions regarding assessments or motor vehicle bills, contact the Assessor's office at **860-868-0398** prior to paying your tax bill.

### Convenient payment options:

- **Drop box** – beside the Town Hall central doors. Place check, including phone number and payment coupon, in a sealed envelope. **NO CASH.**
- **U.S.P.S.** – postmark is accepted as date of payment. Mail to: Town of Washington, Tax Collector, P.O. Box 383, Washington Depot, CT 06794.

- **Online** at [www.washingtonct.org](http://www.washingtonct.org). "Tax Lookup and Pay Online"

**Pay  
Online:  
Scan Here**



Please visit the Tax Collector's Department on the town's website, [washingtonct.org](http://washingtonct.org), to print payment receipts and tax bills, obtain tax balances, research tax records, and pay online.



## Region 12 News

Dear Washington Community,

Region 12 students have had opportunities to participate in inspiring classroom, field and partnership experiences in the first months of the school year. Students at the elementary, middle and high school levels engaged in motivational activities through a variety of school-wide events, educational field experiences and community partnerships.



### Firehouse Visit

The PreK-5 students and staff at Washington Primary School went on a field trip to the Washington Firehouse where students learned critical information about local ambulance, police and fire services. Through hands-on experiences and the expertise shared by members of each department, students learned about specialized equipment and the safety assistance each service provides the community. Students enjoyed trying on fire equipment, riding the stretcher, spraying the hose, seeing the jaws of life in action, and engaging the police car siren!

### Community Partnerships and Presentations

In partnership with the Steep Rock Association, Shepaug's 6th grade class is



currently collaborating on a year-long project to celebrate Steep Rock's 100th anniversary and attract families onto Steep Rock's hiking trails. Students have begun work on A Passport to the Trails, a booklet that will highlight maps, artwork, poetry, and nonfiction writing focused on the Steep Rock Preserve hiking trails. The intention is for families to use the booklet as a trail guide. A Passport to the Trails will be published in time for Steep Rock's 100th Birthday in the spring.

The Shepaug FFA Chapter recently attended the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, where two teams competed for the first time in meat evaluation and dairy judging. Both teams earned silver placements, with one of our students achieving an individual gold ranking in dairy judging. Our students toured local agricultural businesses in Indianapolis, attended the National FFA Expo to network with colleges and employers, and met thousands of students from across the country.

We thank the entire Washington community for supporting Region 12 schools, and we hope to see you all at future school events.

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Interim Superintendent

## Upcoming Arts Events at The Frederick Gunn School



### Holiday Concert

December 17,  
2024  
7 p.m.

The Frederick Gunn School, Tisch Family Auditorium, Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center [frederickgunn.org](http://frederickgunn.org)

Please join us for a spectacular night of music sure to get you in the mood for the holidays, featuring Jazz Band, Vocal Ensemble, Chamber Orchestra, and special guests. Admission and parking are free.

### Mean Girls

February 20, 21 & 22  
7 p.m.

The Frederick Gunn School, Tisch Family Auditorium, Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center [frederickgunn.org](http://frederickgunn.org)

The Frederick Gunn School Theatre Program will present the musical comedy Mean Girls, book by Tina Fey, music by Jeff Richmond, lyrics by Nell Benjamin. It's gonna be so fetch! Admission and parking are free.

## Washington Community Housing Trust

The Washington Community Housing Trust (WCHT) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 and committed to providing affordable/workforce housing in the Town of Washington. With the support of the town, state and federal agencies, and generous donors in our town, WCHT maintains 37 affordable apartments in Washington and three, one-family homes.

In 1995, Dodge Farm with 14 apartments was built with one- and two-bedroom units. Riverwood Apartments was built in 2002 as senior housing with a total of 12 units. The Church Street Apartments were built in 2003 on the site of the old Montessori school in New Preston. The property was purchased and donated to the WCHT by a member of our community. Two of the eight units are handicapped accessible. Our most recent project is Vincent Farm



in New Preston on Mygatt Road. The original farmhouse on Rte. 202 along with two single-family homes on the property are all occupied! A single-family home on Baldwin Hill Road is being started on a donated piece of property.

How can you help? A donation of land is the most important first step. The land at 77 Wykeham Road is our most recent generous gift. We'll build single-family homes on the site. The feasibility study for how many is in the works. This is a huge project, but we know we can do it with your help. Our community needs workforce housing so people who work here can live here.

Donations may be mailed to the Washington Community Housing Trust, 16 Church Street, New Preston, CT 06777. Bill Fairbairn, Chair WCHT, [williamfair277@earthlink.net](mailto:williamfair277@earthlink.net)

Visit us on Facebook at [washingtoncommunityhousingtrust.org](http://washingtoncommunityhousingtrust.org)

# ASAP!® Upcoming Programs

For more information about these programs, please visit [asapct.org](http://asapct.org) or call 845-518-5859.

## ASAP!'S 14th Annual Celebration of Young Photographers Recognizes Washington Students



Frederick Gunn School faculty Lincoln Turner photographs top selected young photographer Yoyolet Zhang at the 13th Annual CYP exhibit.

ASAP! honored this year's top selected young photographers at an exhibit on Sunday, November 10 at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury. The event featured the top 60 selected photographs out of 461 submissions from around the state. Among the 28 schools represented were three Frederick Gunn School students and one Shepaug Valley School student, recognized for their outstanding images that captured the theme "grace." Congratulations to Evan Bailey, 11th grade, Peter Buchanan, 11th

grade, Bridget O'Hara, 10th grade, and Maggie Poudier, 11th grade. View CYP awardees at [asapct.org](http://asapct.org).

## ASAP! Youth Ensemble

January 16 May ?  
Grades 6-12



Participants at one of the ASAP! Youth Ensemble sessions.

Registration is now open for ASAP!'s Youth Ensemble, an enriching and innovative music experience for students in Litchfield County. This year's program includes an inspiring field trip to NYC Pops at Carnegie Hall, in addition to multiple concerts for the public. Sessions will take place at Schaghticoke Middle School and the Silo at Hunt Hill Farm. Register at [asapct.org](http://asapct.org).

## Save the Date - ASAP! Celebrates Saturday, May 31, 2025 Washington



ASAP! staff at the ASAP!'s Celebrates 25 Years fundraiser.

Save the date for an extraordinary experience at ASAP!'s Annual Celebration on May 31, 2025 in Washington. Join us for a unique opportunity to witness the talent of young artists, musicians, and writers from across Connecticut. Join us to inspire and ignite a passion for learning through the arts! More details about the program, special guests, and ticket sales will be on the way, so keep an eye out for updates at [asapct.org](http://asapct.org).

## What's New at the Senior Center?

The Senior Center will be closed December 25, 26 and 27. Happy Holidays!

**Crafternoon at Gunn Memorial Library Makerspace** - December 5, 1pm. Make a holiday gift!

Call center to reserve a spot.

- **Holiday BINGO** - December 6, 1pm - Make your reservation in advance. Prizes will be offered! Sponsored by Candlewood Valley Health and Rehabilitation Center.
- **Holiday Shopping and Lunch at Danbury Fair Mall** - December 10. Cheesecake Factory and shopping. Bus leaves the center at 9:30am; call to reserve a spot.
- **Holiday Shopping to Southbury Plaza** - December 16. Bus leaves the center at 9:30am; call to reserve a spot.
- **The Senior Center Holiday Party** - December 18 at 12pm - Thank you to

Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia from Spring Hill Vineyards for offering to share their barn for Senior Center events and programs. We'll kick off this gracious gift to our community by hosting the 2nd Annual Senior Holiday Luncheon at the Vineyard. Thank you to Aspetuck Animal Hospital and Sotheby's for sponsoring this event with a lovely meal.

- **Gingerbread Houses!** December 23 at 1pm. Celebrate the season with holiday bonding and gingerbread fun! Gingerbread House kits will be provided, as well as extra candy for you to decorate with (or to enjoy while decorating!!). Call Center to sign up!
- **Let's meet at the River Walk Pavilion** and get our steps in! The benefits of walking are a simple and effective way to improve our health and well-being. Bundle up and join Carolyn to get moving! Every Wednesday at 9:30am.

- **Exercise with Pam** - Every Monday at 9am.
- **Coffee & Muffins** - Every Monday at 10:30am - Join us for coffee and conversation!
- **Tai Chi** - Tuesday's at 10am. All are welcome!
- **Bridge** - Tuesday's at 1pm. All are welcome!
- **GYROKINESIS** - Wednesday's at 2pm. This exercise class is designed to promote strength, balance, flexibility and efficiency of movement.
- **Fun & Games** - Every Thursday at 2pm. Tables will be set up for Mah Jong, Mexican Train, Scrabble, Rummy Cup and Yahtzee.
- **Gentle Yoga** - Friday's at 10am. All levels are welcome!
- **Zumba** - Join the fun on Friday's at 11:30am. All are welcome!



## News & Highlights

\* Registration is required for all programs.  
Visit [www.gunnlibrary.org](http://www.gunnlibrary.org) for more program information and registration.



## Adult Programs

### • AI - Intro to AI, with Mary McPheat, CEO of Grounded Logic

Session #1: Concepts, Demos, and Safety, Tuesday, January 28, 6:00-7:00pm  
Session #2: Making Use of AI in Your Business, Tuesday, February 25, 6:00-7:30pm, Online event

### • Three Contemporary Confessional Poets, with Mark Scarbrough - Ellen Bass, Dorianne Laux, and Mark Doty; February 20, March 20 & April 17, 6:00-7:00pm

**Gunn Memorial Library Book Clubs** will read from the *NYT Top 100 Best Books from the 21st Century*:

### Thursday Evening Book Club, 6:00-7:00pm:

- January 23, 2025: *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, by Olga Tokarczuk
- February 27, 2025: *The Vanishing Half*, by Brit Bennett

### Friday Afternoon Book Club, 1:00-2:00pm

- January 10, 2025: *Hamnet*, by Maggie O'Farrell
  - February 14, 2025: *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- \*(No December meeting).

## Makerspace

### December Events

- **DIY Gift Wrap Party** | December 5, 6:00-7:00pm, December 12, 6:00-7:00pm & December 13, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Cozy Cocoa Mugs** | Teens: December 14, 10:00-11:30am, Adults: December 21, 10:00-11:30am
- **Crochet Basics Workshop** | December 14, 12:00-2:00pm
- **Embroidery Patterns with Turtle Stitch** | December 17, 2:00-3:00pm
- **Winter Luminaries** | December 20, 10:00-11:30am
- **Coding Playground** (Grades 3+) | December 23, 10:30-11:30am
- **Relaxing Winter Watercolors** | December 27, 10:00am-12:00pm
- **Creative Family Fun: Snow Globes** | December 28, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Beginner Sewing Club** (Grades 4-5) | January 10, 17, 24, 3:30-4:30pm
- **Creative Coders** (Grades 4-5) | February 7 and 14, 3:30-4:30pm
- **Library Adventure Club** (Grades 4-5) | Fridays (February 28-April 11), 3:30-4:30pm

### January Events

- **Create Your Vision Board** | January 7, 6:00-7:00pm
- **Beginner Sewing Club** (Grades 4-5) | January 10, 17, 24, 3:30-4:30pm
- **Creative Family Fun: Snowflake Symmetry** | January 11, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Tech Tuesday: Mike Ingber Presents "Doing More With Your Computer"** | January 14, 2:00-3:30pm

- **Organizing Your Photo Collections** | January 18, 10:00-11:30am
- **Adult Workshop: Quote Totes** | January 24, 10:00-11:30am
- **Winter Crafts for Teens** | January 25, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Crafting History** | January 28, 2:00-3:30pm

## February Events

- **Peaceful Palettes: Cardmaking** | February 1, 10:00-11:30am
- **Valentine Cards and Crafts with Cricut** | February 6, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Creative Coders** (Grades 4-5) | February 7 and 14, 3:30-4:30pm
- **Quilting for Beginners, An Introductory Class for Adults** | February 7, 14, 21, 10:00am-12:00pm (Must attend all three sessions)
- **Creative Family Fun: Storybook Art** | February 8, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Tech Tuesday: Library Tech You'll Love** | February 11, 2:00-3:00pm
- **Adult Workshop: Sew a Pillow Phone Stand** | February 15, 10:00-11:30am
- **Crafting History** | February 18, 2:00-3:30pm
- **Teen Workshop: Sew a Penguin Plushie** | February 22, 1:00-2:00pm
- **Library Adventure Club** (Grades 4-5) | Fridays (February 28-April 11), 3:30-4:30pm

## Junior Programs

- **Annual Holiday Sale for Children Only** - Thursday, Dec. 12, 3:30-5:30pm, Friday Dec. 13, 3:00-4:30pm
- **Holiday Story Time & Snowman Craft**, "What Snowmen Do at Night" Monday, December 23, 10:30am
- **December Movie Matinee**, Friday, December 27, 11:00am
- **Toddler Fun Time** - Mondays 10:00-10:30am, Feb 24-April 7
- **Bouncing Babies** (ages birth to 24 months) and their caregivers - Thursdays, January 9-30, 2025 @ 10:00am

## Children's Story Times

**Morning Toddler** – Fridays, 10:30-11:15am, Feb 28-April 11  
**Afternoon Preschool** – Fridays, 2:15-3:00pm, Feb 28-April 11

## Afterschool Story Times

**Kindergarten & 1st grade** – Storycraft – Tuesdays, 3:30-4:15pm, Feb 25-April 8  
**2nd & 3rd grade** – Storycraft – Thursdays, 3:30-4:15pm, Feb 27-April 10  
**4th & 5th grade** – Mondays, 3:30-4:15pm, Feb 24-April 7  
**Amusons-nous! An hour of games and French conversation** for intermediate and advanced-speaking children, 6-10 years old. Saturdays, January 25 & February 22, 10:00-11:00am.

**Winter Saturday Family Programs** - Saturday programs continue in January, February & March @ 1:00pm for multiple ages. Please stop in and pick up our monthly calendar or check our website for further information. Registration is required.

(Gunn Library—continued on next page)



(Gunn Library—continued)

## Stairwell Gallery Exhibits

- **Sergio Villaschi**, November 30-January 25 - "Light, Color and Mood: A solo show by Sergio Villaschi." Photography
- **Caryn King**, February 1-March 29 - "For the Love of Animals." Original paintings and archival pigment prints

## Gunn Museum Winter Programs

[www.gunnlibrary.org/calendar/category/museum/](http://www.gunnlibrary.org/calendar/category/museum/)

### Letters Home

This exhibit features selected letters and photographs WWII Army Nurse and Helen Wersebe took.

**History Book Club - 1:00pm at the Gunn Memorial Library**

Monday, December 9, 2024: *Differ We Must* by Steve Inskeep.

Monday, January 13, 2025: Title TBD

Monday, February 10, 2025: Title TBD

### Cooking Through Time Cookbook Club

Thursday, January 9, 6:00pm at the Gunn Memorial Library, The program combines history and food as we discuss the history behind the recipes and food fads. Registration is required.

## Washington Environmental Council

### Winter Harwood Lecture - Jay Collins on COP-29

Join us in welcoming back Jay Collins, Vice Chairman of Citi and Adjunct Professor of Sustainability at Georgetown University, for our Winter Harwood Lecture. Jay will share new insider information on this year's United Nations climate change conference in Baku that took place November 11 – 22, 2024. Don't miss his fascinating perspective on the financials of climate change, and what it will take to overcome the challenges ahead.

The Harwood Lecture Series was started in 1992 in honor of the late Michael Harwood who was a founding member of the Washington Environmental Council (WEC). We're thrilled to bring expert speakers and thinkers to the local community in pursuit of sustainability and environmental awareness. All Harwood lectures are free and open to the public.

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024  
7-8pm

The Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens

### Moon Dance is Back - Save the Date

The Washington Environmental Council's big fundraiser and community event is coming back on May 10! Mark your calendars to join us for live music, a live



auction, dancing, delicious food and community fun. Tickets will be available on our website in the spring. Saturday, May 10, 2025 7-11pm

Bryan Memorial Town Hall

### Scholarships - Apply

WEC awards scholarships annually to students pursuing environmental study in college and beyond. The scholarships are open to any Washington, Roxbury or Bridgewater student in sound scholastic standing provided the student attends or has attended high school in Washington, Connecticut. Applications will be open in January and scholarship recipients will be notified by May. Please spread the word to any young environmental stewards you know in the community, and check out our website for more information.

### About WEC

The Washington Environmental Council (WEC) is a local nonprofit organization that's mission is to be an advocate and provide leadership in maintaining, protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of the Town of Washington and the surrounding region, and expanding community awareness of potential climate change impacts.

Please check out our website at [wec-ct.org](http://wec-ct.org) to learn more or email [lauren@wec-ct.org](mailto:lauren@wec-ct.org) to find out how you can get involved!

## Washington Art Association & Gallery

Crowded malls, long checkout lines and aisle after aisle of mass produced "stuff." Holiday shopping can be such a drag! That is not the case at this year's Washington Art Association's Holiday Gift Shop, showcasing the best inspired, one-of-a-kind crafted gifts and decor to brighten and bring cheer to your holiday season with eye-popping colors, sparkle and bold design. Over 30 local artists and artisans will display their wares both online and in our galleries.

Come and pick out useful and decorative items to fill your holiday gift list, including jewelry, ceramics, scarves, furniture, turned wood and carved pieces, lighting, textiles, handknits, sculpture, blown glass, stationery, candles, body care, games, and more.

This popular fundraiser runs from November 29 to December 24, 2024. Join us for an Opening Cocktail Party on Friday, November 29 at 5:00pm and start your holiday shopping!

### Holiday Gift Shop Hours:

Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00am to 5:00pm, Sunday, 12:00pm to 4:00pm.

We invite you to visit our website to find out about our winter classes running from January 13 to March 9, 2025. We also have several family-oriented workshops in December and January including:

- Wreath decorating with Christina Finaldi on Thursday, December 12, 10:00am to 11:30am
- Family Candle Making with Legrify on Saturday, January 18, 2:00pm to 4:00pm and
- Hatching with Nicole Alger on Saturday, January 25 from 1:00pm to 4:30pm.

For more information, visit [www.washingtonartassociation.org](http://www.washingtonartassociation.org).

Washington Art Association is located at 4 Bryan Memorial Plaza in Washington Depot. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00am to 5:00pm and Sunday, 12:00pm to 4:00pm.



# Announcing *Common Ground with Jane Whitney's* (Re)Uniting America

Following a divisive election in which both sides questioned each other's legitimacy, *Common Ground with Jane Whitney* presents *(Re)Uniting America*, an eight-part series exploring the forces pulling us apart and the pathways that could bring us back together.

The series is divided into two interconnected modules. The first four shows, grouped under the title "Unity," focus on embracing our differences; the second four, "The Future Is Now," focus on the forces shaping our tomorrows.

Join us for live tapings of the first module at The Frederick Gunn School. Here's a preview of each show:

## Can This Marriage Be Saved? Avoiding National Divorce - January 12

The idea of an America stretching "from sea to shining sea" is such a basic part of the national identity that it's the foundational line of our unofficial national anthem, "America The Beautiful." But now the rift between blue and red, urban and rural, coastal and heartland, Whole Foods and Cracker Barrel has grown so vast and bitter that some now question if, like an acrimonious marriage, it's time to divorce. For others, this idea borders on heresy—a notion as explosive as declaring civil war. In this episode, *Common Ground* examines the fraying bonds of our union and explores whether they can still be mended.

## Do Evangelicals Get a Bum Rap? - February 2

As the country marks the centennial of the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, which supposedly settled the role of Christianity and fundamentalism in the country's daily life, battles over religion's place in America's public square once again scar the political and legal landscape. In the wake of a presidential campaign where evangelicals, who once extolled the primacy of character, backed a twice-divorced casino magnate convicted of rape, Christian activists often are portrayed as wannabe authoritarians who have sold their souls for political gain. In this episode, *Common Ground* explores



the deep-rooted, often misunderstood ties between evangelicalism and the Republican Party, examining the complexities and nuances of faith, politics, and power in modern America.



## Filling The (W)Hole: One Conversation at a Time - February 23

In an era defined by new ways to make friends, Americans are lonelier than ever, with an epidemic of isolation eroding our collective mental and physical health. Instructed to spurn anyone different by algorithms designed to channel hate, Americans have stopped talking to each other and, in a perverse way of connecting, have turned to launching preemptive strikes via anonymous rage tweets, which amounts to venting by escalating. Enough! a majority says. Polls show many want to

start mending fences—but don't know how. This back-to-basics "Common Ground" features a crash course in how to master the fine art of disagreeing agreeably—the first step to rebuilding America's frayed social fabric.

## The Tyranny of the Minority - March 9

"Fools on the Hill: The Hooligans, Saboteurs, Conspiracy Theorists and Dunces who Burned Down the House."

That's the title—and all too accurate description—of a recent book that exposes the dysfunction of our lower chamber. Once envisioned as a driving force for change, the House recently completed its least productive session since the Civil War. The Senate doesn't function much better. Legislation supported by vast majorities of Americans – gun safety, abortion rights, civil rights, etc. – doesn't even get considered. Why not? What happened? This

program looks at why our legislative bodies, which the founding fathers worried would be panicked by popular passions, are tied in knots and how the deadlock has contributed to the crisis bedeviling American democracy.

Tickets will be available soon on our website!

To learn more about Common Ground or see descriptions of the full eight-show series, visit [www.cgjw.org](http://www.cgjw.org) or subscribe to our newsletter, The Guide, available on the home page.

## Stay in the Loop on Washington News and Events!

Visit [ExploreWashingtonCT.com](http://ExploreWashingtonCT.com), the official community website for events, things to do, shopping, dining and happenings around town. Sign up for "This Month in Washington" e-news to stay in the loop on all things Washington! Just click on the envelope icon at the top of the website to sign-up.

Visit [washingtonct.org](http://washingtonct.org), the town's website for municipal and departmental information. To sign up for weekly e-news from the First Selectman, look for the envelope icon on the website.





# The Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens

The days are getting shorter, the cold has set in and nature has begun its winter slumber. Here at The Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens, we're reflecting on a fantastic year that's almost behind us, and looking forward to a fun-filled holiday season and new year ahead.

## Holiday in the Depot

Can you hear those sleigh bells jingling? That must mean Holiday in the Depot is right around the corner! We invite the community to join us at the park for this beloved town-wide celebration on Friday, December 13 beginning at 5:45pm. We'll have fire pits with make-your-own s'mores with National Iron Bank, hot apple cider from Averill Farm and other treats from the Mayflower Inn & Spa. We'll also have a special holiday photo opportunity, and the Gunn Memorial Library will provide a children's activity.

## Halloween at the Park

What a spooktacular Halloween event we held on October 26 during the farmers market! This year we went all out and conjured up some spooky Halloween magic to transform the park into a hauntingly happy playground of ghoulish fun. Folks wore costumes, vendors passed out candy to trick-or-treaters, kids decorated pumpkins, and some people were even caught off guard when a large stuffed tarantula dropped out of a tree onto unsuspecting passersby.

## Farmers Market

Another fantastic season of our weekly Saturday farmers market has concluded. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the



From left to right: Marketing Director Elyse Sadtler, Executive Director Laura Neminski, Programming Director Cotille Davis and Board member Carolyn Setlow in costume at our recent Halloween event.

vendors, shoppers, musicians and volunteers who contributed to the market's success. A big shout out also goes to our market master, Jenny Cox, for all her coordination and management.

## Art

We hosted a diverse array of unique artists representing many styles this past year at the park, including Anastasya Peña, Jack Rosenberg, Alicia Mordenti, Stephanie Johnson, Hugh Kepets, Dennis Flaherty, Adam Rogers, Brendan O'Connell, a collection of multiple emerging Latinx artists as part of our National Hispanic Heritage art show, Theresa Bates, Barbara Vaughn, Peter C. Jones and Terri Tibbatts. Our last exhibit of the year will feature works by students at Western Connecticut State University, on view December 6 through December 22.

## Board of Trustees & Staff

We welcomed two new Board members this year: Michelle Madden and David

Varnish. Michelle is a pandemic transplant to Washington from New York City. She's an avid tennis player, skier and former marathon runner. Prior to her appointment to the Board, Michelle served as our Coordinator of Volunteers.

David is an architect by trade. He and his wife discovered Litchfield County in the late 1990s, and made their weekend home in Washington their full-time residence in 2021. Prior to his appointment to the Board, David served on our programming committee for several years.

In April we also welcomed a new staff member, Programming Director Cotille Davis. Having relocated to Connecticut from California during the pandemic, Cotille brings a wealth of experience from the dynamic world of Silicon Valley to her role at the park. Her creativity knows no bounds—she infuses every project with her signature warmth and cleverness, as evidenced by her many creative contributions to the park this year. Cotille is an amazing asset to our small team where she has quickly made herself an essential and integral part of our operations.

## Look Ahead

We're looking forward to another fabulous year of community events in 2025, starting with our first one on MLK Day, January 20. Stay tuned on our social media and website for more details to come soon!

For more information about the park and our upcoming events, visit [judyblackpark.org](http://judyblackpark.org). For the latest updates and changes, check our social media at @judyblackpark on Instagram and Facebook.

# Connecticut Theatre Exchange

Connecticut Theatre Exchange (CTX), based in Washington, CT, is pleased to gather the community for the second annual Winter Interchange. Launched last December, this unique community-focused fundraising event encompasses the mission of CTX centered on developing new work and will immerse event goers in the play-making experience. Connecticut-based playwright Susan Cinoman will be featured, along with a team of locally-based artists, to create a new 10-minute play that will be performed as a staged reading during the event.

“Our mission is to support artists in the creation of new work, and bringing the audience into that creative process is not only paramount, but an exciting and fun contribution. We can't wait to hear what is created right in front of our eyes!”

Winter Interchange 2024 will be Saturday, December 21, from 5-8 pm, hosted at the beautiful Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center on the campus of The Frederick Gunn School.

All proceeds of this event will benefit CTX's vision of garnering resources for historically under-represented or under-supported populations and actively identifying ways to remove barriers to the CTX experience. For more information about Connecticut Theatre Exchange, please visit the website at [www.cttheatrex.org](http://www.cttheatrex.org).





# Steep Rock Upcoming Programs, Events, and Volunteer Opportunities

To register please visit [www.steeprockassoc.org/events-programs](http://www.steeprockassoc.org/events-programs)

## Holiday in the Depot

Friday, Dec. 13, 6:00PM – 8:30PM

Bryan Memorial Town Hall Steep Rock Association will be back again this year with our ornament craft kits and merchandise for holiday shopping. The evening will begin with the lighting of the Town tree followed by Santa arriving by horse and wagon. Christmas carols will be performed on the steps of the Bryan Memorial Town Hall by our local school choirs. Visit the shops in the Depot then come find our tent.



Photography by Sal De Fini

## Midwinter Eagle Survey

*A Community Science Opportunity*  
Virtual Training: Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025 from 5:00PM – 6:00PM  
Survey: Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025 from 7:00AM – 11:00AM

Bundle up and become a community scientist by scanning sections of the Shepaug River for bald eagles. The data collected will be reported to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) as our contribution to the nationwide survey whose goal is to document trends in eagle populations over time.



## Christmas Bird Count

*A Community Science Opportunity*  
Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024, 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Macricostas Preserve (124 Christian Street, New Preston, CT)  
Join Steep Rock Association on a 1 1/2-mile winter birding excursion through the diverse habitats of Macricostas Preserve. Your eyes, ears and enthusiasm are needed to collect data for the nation's longest-running community science bird project, Audubon's 125th Christmas Bird Count. Everyone from seasoned ornithologists to first-time birders, individuals to families with children are welcome to participate in this special holiday activity.

## Winter Firepit Celebration

Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024, 5:00PM-7:00PM

Steep Rock House, 116 Christian St, New Preston  
Join us by the firepit as we welcome the winter season with refreshments and good times!

## Centennial Virtual Speaker Series: Rossiter's Riverside Retreat

Guest Speaker Carol Santoleri, Author of *The History of Steep Rock Association: The Jewel in the Crown*  
Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025  
For details, please visit [steeprockassoc.org/events-programs](http://steeprockassoc.org/events-programs)

## Centennial Virtual Speaker Series: Shepaug Railroad: A Historic Era

Guest Speaker Peter Vermilyea, Local Historian  
Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025  
For details, please visit [steeprockassoc.org/events-programs](http://steeprockassoc.org/events-programs)

# Washington Friends of Music

Washington Friends of Music (WFM) welcomes music lovers from near and far to the New Year's Day Concert and Party on January 1 at 4pm at the Frederick Gunn School Thomas S. Perakos Arts and Community Center Auditorium, 22 Kirby Road in Washington, CT.



A stellar cast of thirteen world-class musicians will be presenting an exquisite concert featuring music of the baroque and the classical eras to ring in the New Year.



Following the concert the audience is invited to meet the artists at a jovial party with French bubbly and delectable hors d'oeuvres.

Further information and tickets are available in December on the WFM website, at the Hickory Stick Bookshop in Washington, and County Wine & Spirits in New Preston or by phone 860-868-9174.

Those interested in classical music are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance. The previous WFM New Year's Day concerts were sold out!

Come experience the *Northern Lights* at the  
**Shepaug Valley School Holiday Bazaar**  
**Thursday, December 5th**  
**6:00pm-8:30pm**  
 Get your holiday decorating and gift shopping started at our fun filled Holiday Market with booths selling

Kids Games	FFA Trees and Boxes
Holiday Cards	Holiday Wreaths
Raffle Baskets	Baked Goods
Holiday Ornaments	Poinsettias
Used Book Sale	Shepaug Apparel
Senior Dinner	Arts & Crafts
Planetarium Show	....and so much more!

## Update of Recycling Efforts

The Town of Washington, through the Sustainability Committee, has continued to implement additional options for residents to recycle materials that would otherwise go into the trash. This past spring we began a program to recycle film plastic. This includes produce bags, store bags, Ziploc and other reclosable bags, cereal box liners, bubble wrap and bread bags, to name a few. For a complete list of recyclable bags, please visit the Town's website: <https://www.washingtonct.org/sustainability-committee/webforms/sustainable-resources>.



We have partnered with NexTrex, the company that makes Trex products, and Big Y in New Milford to implement a program for residents. Our goal is to collect 1,000 pounds of film plastic by April of 2025. To date we have collected over 500 pounds. Currently residents can recycle their plastic at the Transfer Station and in a bin in Town Hall, soon to be relocated in the back parking lot. While our goal is to recycle plastic as much as we can, if we reach our goal, NexTrex will donate an outdoor Trex bench as a nice reward for reducing our regular trash.

# HOLIDAY in the DEPOT

fun for everyone      treats      crafts for kids  
fire pits      s,mores

## December 13

**Festivities begin at 5:45 pm**  
**Santa arrives by sleigh 6:00 pm**

Sponsored by Washington Park & Rec and  
Washington Business Association



### Washington Trivia by Sheila Anson and Bill Fairbairn

In 1955, who did Charlie McGuinness wheel down the center of the Depot in a wheelbarrow after the New York Yankees lost to the Brooklyn Dodgers?

*What's Happening in Washington, CT* is organized and printed through the Washington Economic Development Committee. [mgorra.washingtonct.org](http://mgorra.washingtonct.org)  
Look for our next issue, coming out in March 2025.

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
EDDM Retail

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSEDDM\*\*\*\*\*

Postal Patron