

# The Eastford Communicator

Feb/March 2023, Vol. 32 Nos. 2,3

Eastford is one of Connecticut's BEST SMALL TOWNS because of quality of life-good schools, low crime rate, affordability & LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH NEED VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS (see Selectwoman's report p3) & Eastford Fire Co (p7, back cover); Food Pantry (p5); Union Society Bldg (p6); Grove Cemetery (p6). EASTFORD SCHOOLS REPORTS (p2,3); Eastford Communicator (p6); EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY—SEE INSIDE CENTERFOLD FOR QUARTERLY: Do you recognize anyone in photo on right with piano teacher Ethel Gardner (full photo in EHS Quarterly); see EHS's Did You Know (p5).



Scenes from Eastford Elementary School's Read Across America Day  
Photos by Mrs. Bibault



News and Notes from the Superintendent...Donna P. Leake (dleake@eastfordct.org)

**"Children are the future; we need to equip & prepare them the best we can."**(S. Bowen, BOE Chair)

March is Board of Education Member Appreciation Month. Although showing appreciation and recognizing our school board members should be a year-round process, taking advantage of this designated month assures that these important people receive some of the thanks they deserve for their commitment and hard work during these most challenging times. **"I feel very grateful to have been elected to the Board of Education in 2019. The reason I decided to serve on the BOE is because, simply put, I believe in our school. As a lifelong Eastford resident, I believe our school is our town's greatest resource, and should be supported to the best of all of our abilities. I believe our children are facing unprecedented challenges, and now more than ever, our school needs our support."** (A. Minor)

School board members are dedicated to supporting quality public school education for all students. Their actions and decisions affect the present and future lives of our children. **"I serve on the Eastford Board of Education because today's students are our leaders of tomorrow. They need a quality education that will challenge them and prepare them for the future. Eastford is an awesome community and Eastford Elementary School is a vital part of that community."** (T. Cote)

Our school board members work collaboratively with the administration and community members to provide leadership for our schools and the oversight necessary to ensure that the dollars allocated to education are being used efficiently and effectively in accordance with the educational vision of what we want for our students. **"As a parent and a teacher, I have a personal interest in preserving and improving the quality of our school system. I hope that my time serving as a member of this board will help to strengthen the ties between the community members and our school."** (L. Barlow)

We have a great Board of Education in Eastford: Stephen Bowen, Chair – 10<sup>th</sup> year; Terry Cote, Vice Chair – 6<sup>th</sup> year; Adam Minor, Secretary – 4<sup>th</sup> year; Robert Ellsworth – 11<sup>th</sup> year; Jessica Perry – 4<sup>th</sup> year; Lauren Barlow – 2<sup>nd</sup> year; Michael Bilica – 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Please make a special effort to tell each school board member that his or her hard work has been noticed and is very much appreciated!

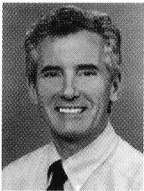


**From the Principal by Carole McCombe**

On Wednesday, February 15, 2023 Congressman Joe Courtney stopped to visit Eastford Elementary School. First Selectman Deb Richards, Superintendent Donna Leake, and Principal Carole McCombe met with Congressman Courtney to discuss matters relating to education, school budgets, and student and community mental health needs. The primary purpose of Congressman Courtney's visit was to congratulate Eastford on being awarded a grant to enhance the provision of mental health services for students and the families we serve. The grant was highly competitive with 92 school districts submitting proposals and only 20 districts awarded funding. Eastford Elementary School plans to use the funds to support a full time school counselor to address students needs on a daily basis, and to supplement that work with a part-time school social worker to assist families by connecting them with additional resources as needed. The photos show Congressman Courtney engaging with students and staff during his visit. Photo: U.S. Congressman Joe Courtney (D-2nd) in the library observing Grade 7 with Mrs. Bibeault, Mrs. McCombe and ELA teacher Mr. Salsich.

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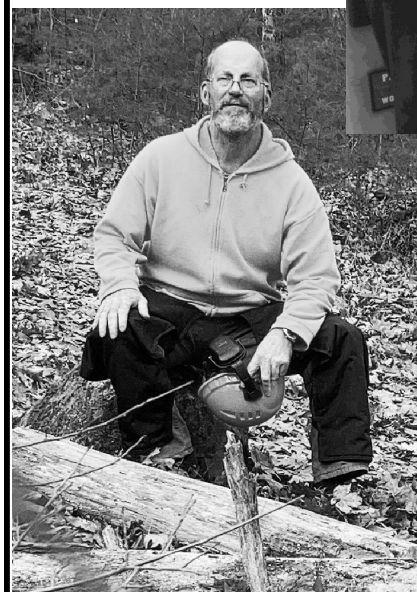
WE BUY STANDING TIMBER!

**Selectwoman's Snapshot by Deb Richards, First Selectman/EMD**  
Our town relies on volunteers to serve on the many boards, commissions, and committees that are important in running the Town. These include, Planning, Inland Wetlands, Conservation and Historic Preservation, Cemeteries, Agent for the Elderly, Burning Official, Board of Assessment Appeals, Constables, Library Trustees, Crystal Pond Park Commission, Recreation Commission, Transfer Station Committee, Union Society, Food Pantry, Emergency Management, MidNEROC (Waste Management), and the Tree Warden. The way to be informed about your town and to have a say on what matters most to you, is to become involved. Boards and Commissions generally meet once a month, the Board of Selectmen generally meet the first Monday of each month. Open Seats: Board of Education – Dem; Planning Commission; Constable – Rep; Conservation and Historic Preservation Commission; Library Trustees – Dem; Recreation Commission; Transfer Station Committee. If you are interested in any of these vacancies and wish to have a say in your local government through board or commission involvement – call the Selectmen's Office at 860-974-0133 x3. Our town volunteers are shining examples of a community that cares and we give thanks to them every day!

Budget meetings are under way. Department heads have submitted their budgets to the Board of Selectmen. Dates for the hearing and budget vote will be posted on the Town website and Town Facebook page.

**U.S. CONGRESSMAN VISITS EASTFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

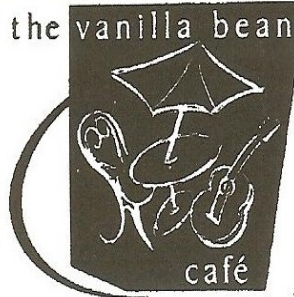
Congressman Joe Courtney visited EES (see Principal's report, p.2), in connection with a federal grant to the school. Shown in photo (l-r) are: Congressman Courtney, EES Principal Carole McCombe, First Selectman Deb Richards, and Superintendent, Dr. Donna Leake.

**VOLUNTEERS POWER EASTFORD!**

**TRAIL MASTER TOM DEJOHN (Photo left) has improved trails in Eastford for years, often accompanied by another long-time volunteer Ralph Yulo, Jr. Both are members of the Eastford Conservation & Historic Preservation Commission. Tom also serves on Eastford's Inland Wetlands Commission. He recently improved the Askew Trail behind EES and is shown here working a trail off Crams Road.**

the vanilla bean



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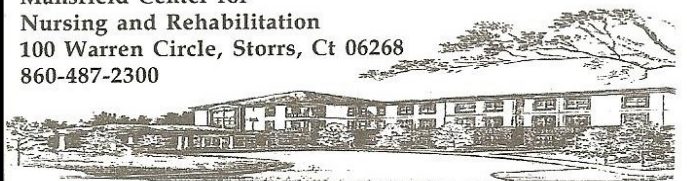
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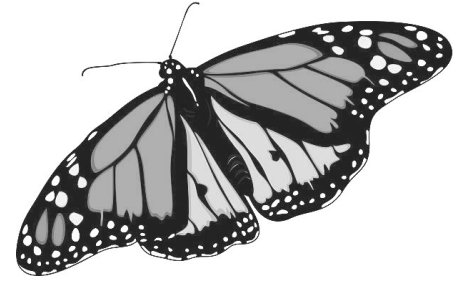
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**Saint Patrick's Traditions!**

Liz Ellsworth, The Communicator's "Tips for Today" columnist, and Andy Brownlee, with their daughter Hannah, participated in the O'Putnam road races in Putnam, an annual tradition to raise funds for food pantries.

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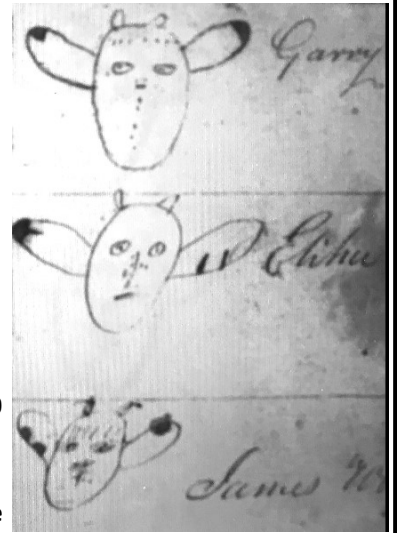
DO YOU KNOW THESE BRANDS?



DID YOU KNOW? EASTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Linda Torgeson, President

Did you know that horses in Connecticut were once required to be branded by a number that would identify the town in which they were stabled? Thumbing through the Town of Eastford Centennial Book (published June 7, 1947) I came across a curious historic fact which read, "The General Court authorized the Ashford-Eastford horse brand to be the number 3." That's it! Just one sentence! I needed to know more about "horse branding". A Google search brought me to a book titled Horse Raising in Colonial New England. Here's what I discovered (see photos, left and right).



The first recorded shipment of horses (13) arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629. The next 20 to 30 years showed a dramatic increase in the number of horses in New England. In those early years horses and cattle roamed freely on public commons. As the herds grew in number and settlements became more scattered the horses began to roam, often considerable distances, and causing major damage to gardens and crops. It became important for a farmer to identify the owner of the wandering animal, often a stray from a surrounding town. This led to the passage of "branding" laws. All animals must be branded with a mark of the owner and the town of his residence. The "brander" in most towns was an important dignitary. His job was to brand each animal and keep an official record book describing all the animal's natural and artificial markings, and the name and address of its owner. In 1656 the New Haven Colony required all horses to be branded and in 1665 the other Connecticut towns followed suit. Unbranded horses would be caught and sold with the proceeds going to the town. The earliest record of horses being shipped from New England to the West Indies was in 1648. Governor Winthrop noted in his journal the presence of a ship "lying before Charlestown with 80 horses on board bound for Barbados". It became known that "New England sends horses to turn the sugar mills in the islands". The sale of horses became a lucrative business, so it was no surprise when horse thefts were on the rise. One of the objectives of branding was to prevent horse theft. In Rhode Island and Connecticut there were severe penalties for any person who took or attempted to take out of town any horse without first informing the brander and receiving his permission. Branding alone, however, did not provide a very effective check on the stealing of horses or cattle. The Eastford Historical Society would greatly appreciate your support. We always welcome new members and/or contributions toward our efforts to preserve Eastford history. We are also very grateful to those of you who continue your support either through memberships and/or donations to: Eastford Historical Society, P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242

The first recorded shipment of horses (13) arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629. The next 20 to 30 years showed a dramatic increase in the number of horses in New England. In those early years horses and cattle roamed freely on public commons. As the herds grew in number and settlements became more scattered the horses began to roam, often considerable distances, and causing major damage to gardens and crops. It became important for a farmer to identify the owner of the wandering animal, often a stray from a surrounding town. This led to the passage of "branding" laws. All animals must be branded with a mark of the owner and the town of his residence. The "brander" in most towns was an important dignitary. His job was to brand each animal and keep an official record book describing all the animal's natural and artificial markings, and the name and address of its owner. In 1656 the New Haven Colony required all horses to be branded and in 1665 the other Connecticut towns followed suit. Unbranded horses would be caught and sold with the proceeds going to the town. The earliest record of horses being shipped from New England to the West Indies was in 1648. Governor Winthrop noted in his journal the presence of a ship "lying before Charlestown with 80 horses on board bound for Barbados". It became known that "New England sends horses to turn the sugar mills in the islands". The sale of horses became a lucrative business, so it was no surprise when horse thefts were on the rise. One of the objectives of branding was to prevent horse theft. In Rhode Island and Connecticut there were severe penalties for any person who took or attempted to take out of town any horse without first informing the brander and receiving his permission. Branding alone, however, did not provide a very effective check on the stealing of horses or cattle. The Eastford Historical Society would greatly appreciate your support. We always welcome new members and/or contributions toward our efforts to preserve Eastford history. We are also very grateful to those of you who continue your support either through memberships and/or donations to: Eastford Historical Society, P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242

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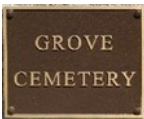
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**EASTFORD FOOD PANTRY.** The Eastford Food Pantry is available to any resident of Eastford who is in need of food assistance. A confidential referral can be made by calling the Town Office at 860-974-0133 or Audrey Carabeau at 860-933-7685, [acarabeau@yahoo.com](mailto:acarabeau@yahoo.com). The food pantry, located at the Eastford Baptist Church, is open the first Monday of each month from 8-11 a.m. by appointment. Thank you Trevor from His Oaks Ministry for continuing to provide our families with meat each month. Thank you Lynn Nelson for providing awesome birthday boxes for the children of our pantry families. Thank you Gerald Sazama, John Studley and all of the anonymous donors for your generous gifts. Also, thank you to all who dropped off groceries for the pantry. Some donation suggestions for this month include: tuna, peanut butter, hearty soups, canned fruit and vegetables, granola bars, cereal bars, crackers, pancake mix and syrup, taco kits, pizza sauce, pasta sauce, pasta, 100% fruit juice, toilet paper. We are also in need of egg boxes. All donations can be dropped off at the Town Office Building during regular business hours. Please make check donations payable to Town of Eastford with food pantry on the memo line, mail to: Town of Eastford, 16 Westford Rd, Eastford, CT 06242. Thank you for your support!

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# EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

## NOTICE

### EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

**Spring Clean-up:** The Trustees will conduct a general clean-up of the cemetery grounds **after March 15th**, on a date to be determined. Seasonal flowers, wreaths, 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 the 15<sup>th</sup> of March.**

**Landscaping/Mowing Season:** After March 15<sup>th</sup>, 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** and will be removed because the objects are a risk to the groundskeepers and their machines.

**Trustees' Meeting:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the T.O.B.

**Board of Corporators Annual Meeting:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., T.O.B. There are two vacancies on the Board of Corporators; if interested, call 860-974-1349.

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

Kindly consider assisting the Eastford Grove Cemetery Association in its pursuit of efficient perpetual care of the Grove Cemetery. We are a non-profit group that does not receive funding from the Town of Eastford. A tax deductible donation from you will help us meet present and future beautification and maintenance requirements. Contribution in any amount will allow us to continue to meet the goal of providing a well-maintained, respectable final resting place for your loved ones. Additionally, you could leave a gift to the Eastford Grove Cemetery Association in your will or living trust, known as a bequest. This allows you to offer future support without giving up assets today. Or, you may also wish to consider making "The Grove Cemetery Association" the recipient of a memorial donation ("in lieu of flowers"). We appreciate your consideration of our appeal and welcome any questions or concerns regarding the cemetery operation.

Questions? Call (860) 974-1349. You may also visit our website: <https://sites.google.com/site/eastfordgrovecemetery/>

The EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION greatly appreciates the following donors who have contributed to the beautification of the grounds:

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Dear Readers: We hope you contribute to The Eastford Communicator. Ads do not cover printing & postage costs. The Communicator is Eastford's main source of news about events, town government, and local organizations. We need donors to support this effort if we are to continue. If you can, please send a donation.

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ATTENTION: All items for The Eastford Communicator must include submitter's name, address & telephone, for verification. All items submitted are subject to editing. Article contents are those of the submitters, who are responsible for content. The Communicator does not print letters to editor or items it regards as offensive or slanderous. Advertisements are paid by the advertiser, who is responsible for the advertisement's content. The Communicator reserves the right to reject any submissions. Thank you for your support. Carol Davidge, Editor

**1806 Union Society Building Committee Report** by Carol Davidge, Chair  
Thanks to David Jakubowski, Sr. and son Kristopher who cleared brush that was endangering Eastford's Charter Oak Tree, which is located on the land with the Union Society Building. The building (at left in photo) and land are owned by the Town of Eastford. Before purchasing it in 2002, for 200 years, it was a place where rural children learned to read, the group helped found & fund the Eastford Independent Fire Co. No. 1, sponsored 4H & Boy Scouts, held gatherings for mostly poor immigrant families in the Phoenixville section of Eastford, and



welcomed all regardless of ethnic origin, spiritual belief, age or gender. This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its remarkable role of inclusiveness in rural community life. Photo shows the Union Society's Croquet Court which faces Rt. 198 and provided team sports for Phoenixville youngsters, including Hall of Famer Lauren Anderson. The Croquet Court was one of Eastford's earliest places lighted at night so kids could enjoy it after dark. The electricity was provided by John Smith who owned the large white house adjacent to the plot, with power from a nearby mill. Most folks who attended the Union Society could not afford a camera, so photos are rare. If you have pictures or documents, please email: [ckdavidge@gmail.com](mailto:ckdavidge@gmail.com). To donate toward preservation of this historic building, please make check payable to Town of Eastford, with Union Society in memo line, send to: Town of Eastford, 16 Westford Rd, Eastford, CT 06242.

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Eastford Independent Fire Co.No. 1 Report by Jeannine Spink, Volunteer Contributor

The EIFC extends its condolences to the family of Craig Whitehouse who recently passed. Craig joined the Company in 1974. He was part of a lengthy legacy of Whitehouse membership in the Eastford and Ashford Fire Departments, most notably his father James, who joined in 1955 and served as Vice President from 1974-1978, and President from 1977-1979.

The EIFC responded to 14 calls in January.

Each month, there is a dedication on the outside board to share reminders about healthcare awareness. JANUARY was "Donate Blood, Save A Life", FEBRUARY was "Heart Health Awareness" to raise responsiveness about heart disease, increase knowledge about prevention, education, dangers and following a track to better heart health. With much information regarding Concussion out there, MARCH will be "More than a brain injury campaign". There are more than 5.3 million individuals in the United States who are living with a permanent brain injury-related disability. If you or someone you know is living with brain injury, you know that it is a misunderstood, misdiagnosed, underfunded neurological disease, and everyone's experience is different. Brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability in the U.S., 47.9% are from falls. Research the signs and symptoms of concussion for better brain health.

It is budgetary preparation time for the EIFC. All organizations are experiencing challenging financial times with anticipated budgetary cuts. The EIFC is your driving force in dedication and commitment to the safety of the residents of Eastford. We thank you for your generous donations received in 2022. As a 100% volunteer organization since 1942, we rely heavily on the support of the town and especially the Board of Selectmen in understanding, asking questions, clarifying the regulations and standards of OSHA and NFPA. Thank you for your support.

Spring is right around the corner. Consider volunteering in the town-wide cleaning of the town's roads in April. Please replace or get green reflective house numbers and signs that can easily be seen from the road. This is especially critical if your residence is on a multi-drive entryway. Signs and numbers are FREE and can be obtained any Wednesday night at the firehouse at 7:00 p.m. Cleaning around the signs will aid us tremendously in providing quick and efficient response for your emergency needs.

As temperatures start to warm, more children, adults and pets will be out walking and riding bikes. Although we teach bicycle safety to our children, it is IMPERATIVE that we adults are observant at all times when behind the wheel for potential danger. Walkers, be mindful of oncoming traffic on our secondary roads and parking lots. Let's strive to have a safe 2023 spring and summer in Eastford.



### "READY TODAY – PREPARE FOR TOMORROW"

Editor's Note: Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to EIFC, a 100% volunteer organization which relies on donations to keep the fire company functioning. Please send your donation to: EIFC, PO Box 333, Eastford, CT 06242.

PHOTO LEFT: THIS IS NOT A DRILL!

EIFC VOLUNTEERS ASSISTING AT RECENT FIRE

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**CONGRATULATIONS CUPCAKE WARS CONTESTANTS & SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE CO. VOLUNTEERS!**  
Above left: Cupcake Wars participants Rory Barlow, Georgia Barlow, Chloe Minor, Ella Barlow & (above right) Cupcake Wars Winners: Front row (l-r): Alina Platt, Penny York & Georgia Barlow, Back row (l-r): Jessica Ruiz, Tina Flores & Grace Thompson.  
Below (l-r): Jack Hopkins (former owner of Eastford Building Supply & Camp board member) with EIFC Deputy Chief James Roy (center) and Chief Doug Beaudoin who were invited to the grand reopening of Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford to celebrate its recovery from the 2021 disastrous fire when EIFC volunteers helped save the camp. Other special guests ...



... included CT Governor Ned Lamont & State Representative Pat Boyd. You can watch the news report about the reopening, including interviews with Deputy Roy, on WTNH TV Channel 8's link: [https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/windham/hole-in-the-wall-gang-camp-celebrates-new-opening-after-fire/amp/?fbclid=IwAR0dy\\_vJQSR\\_Ty\\_C7Yft1s1FU8O9lysXdHhSz6Or8MqzI8N7lgxNpix2z0A4&mibextid=Zxz2cZ](https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/windham/hole-in-the-wall-gang-camp-celebrates-new-opening-after-fire/amp/?fbclid=IwAR0dy_vJQSR_Ty_C7Yft1s1FU8O9lysXdHhSz6Or8MqzI8N7lgxNpix2z0A4&mibextid=Zxz2cZ)