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EASTFORD had 18 inches of snow on Jan 29. Above right: Steve Sokolowski tackling the deep snow, photo by Marsha Sokolowski. **EAGLES RETURN TO EASTFORD** (above left, photo by David Hustus). **NATURE LOVERS:** Back cover: how to help Bluebirds by Roger Wolfe, and how you can help EES's PTO maintain our school's diverse gardens. Animal tracks & Recreation News (p2), First Selectman's report (p3), EIFC report (back cover), EES News (p4), Food Pantry (p5), Historical Society: *Eastford's Route 44* (p2), Seniors, Town Clerk, Library, Thanks to Communicator Donors (p6), Grove Cemetery (p7), Scout News (p7), Eastford A Best Small Town (p7) **SCRAMBLE PREDICTS: 6 MORE WEEKS OF WINTER!** Eastford's alternative to groundhog day is "Duck Day," created by the Torcellini family & celebrated this year with Scramble, Jr. and youngsters Benjamin & Isaac Torcellini (photo below left by Julia

Torcellini). Over the years: 100% accuracy. "Duck Day" was reported live on air by NBC CT's Meteorologist Josh Cingranelli (below right, photo by Carol Davidge). To watch Duck Day 2022 or earlier years, go to: <https://scrambletheduck.org/news/2022/02/02/scramble-forecasts-six-more-weeks/>



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Animal Tracks of New England



Recreation Commission
 News
 by Paige Brown, Chair

Happy February Everyone!

We are starting to plan upcoming events over the next few months. As we approach the warmer season this year, we are teaming up with other community organizations for outdoor activities.

Events will be posted online and in town as the events get closer.

Any question or concerns can be emailed to:
recofeastfordct@gmail.com

Please continue to stay safe by following COVID guidelines.

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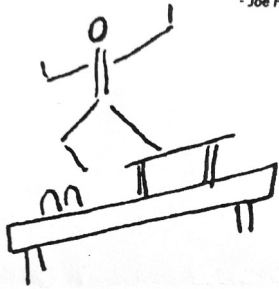
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Short and Sweet by Deb Richards, First Selectman/EMD – Kudos edition:

Two successful drive through mass distributions of covid test kits and N95 masks were completed. We received information on very short notice, so we had to scramble to put it together, cancel and put it together again! We could not have accomplished this without help from Liz Scranton, Jeannine Spink and Constable David Jakubowski. Thank you!

Kudos Mary Lavallee on completion of Eastford's 2022 grand list! Congratulations to Chris Hustus on a successful tax sale! Thank you, PW, for keeping our roads safe after the recent storms.

Thank you to our talented gardening volunteers who stepped up and are willing to help beautify the Town's gardens! Thank you, Terry Cote and Tom Latham, for budget guidance! Thank you to Bowen's Garage and EIFC for their collection and donations to the food pantry.

Our thanks to Scramble, Jr and the Torcellini family for being Eastford's own weather predicting duck and our informing us of the official Duck Day weather outlook!

A great big GIANT thank you to Steve and Karen Broderick who will be retiring in June as our Food Pantry volunteers. Steve and Karen have been organizing the food pantry for 20 years and have helped so many people in Eastford. They connect with our families -purchase supplies if needed – collect and organize all the donations, and make sure our families get the food and supplies they need. Part of their success stems from the generosity of the residents, the school, businesses, and agencies in Eastford who support the food pantry with donated items or monetary donations. We know we cannot replace Karen and Steve but we are looking for volunteers to be in charge of the Eastford food pantry by making sure our food pantry is sustainable, and meeting the needs of our residents. The Broderick's have offered to share their knowledge and show how they have managed the food pantry over the last many years. If interested in helping please email selectmen@townofeastford.org.

The Prescription Discount Card Program was updated for the Town of Eastford. Brochures and savings cards will be available soon. To find out more go to www.ctrdiscountcard.com or call 1-877-776-2285

Check the town's website for information, opportunities, and events!

<https://www.eastfordct.org/townofeastford>

Deb

DID YOU KNOW? Eastford Historical Society

Did you know that the longest stretch of U.S. Route 44 is in Connecticut?

U.S Route 44 is an east-west U.S. Numbered Highway that runs for 237 miles through four states. It starts in Kerhonkson, New York and travels through Connecticut and Rhode Island before ending in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Its longest stretch of road, 107 miles, runs through Connecticut. Historically, Route 44 was a system of connecting turnpikes: the Salisbury and Canton Turnpike (Salisbury to Lakeville), the Greenwoods Turnpike (North Canaan to New Hartford), the Talcott Mountain Turnpike (Greenwoods Road to West Hartford), the Boston Turnpike (East Hartford to Eastford), and the Pomfret and Killingly Turnpike (Pomfret to the Rhode Island border). In modern times, local stretches of Route 44 in the Phoenixville section of Eastford had to be given names to accommodate individual addresses. Therefore, those living west of Route 198 today reside on Hartford Turnpike. Those living east of Route 198 reside on Pomfret Road. A short road connecting Route 198 and Old Colony Road in Phoenixville is named for yet another historic highway. Where the Pomfret and Killingly Turnpike (Route 44) branched to the north in Pomfret, the road continued as the Connecticut and Rhode Island Turnpike (U.S Route 101). Since it led directly to Providence it was also known as the Providence Turnpike. That short Phoenixville Road is today called Providence Pike, and it was once part of the original Route 44. Three other original sections still exist in Eastford on Pomfret Road: Sprague Hill Road and Old Route 44, both town roads, and the private access road to Frog Rock. Donations of original writings, old photographs, and small historic items are always welcome and monetary donations are greatly appreciated! P.O. Box 350, Eastford, CT 06242. Questions call 860-974-1610 (Tom) or 860-933-0468 (Linda)

Tips for Today by Liz Ellsworth

For Valentine's Day or any special day this year, try more environmentally friendly options. Instead of fresh-cut flowers, what about giving a potted plant (which will last longer than a week)? Make your own Valentine's Day cards out of recycled paper, old pieces of wrapping paper/gift bags and ribbon, or those magazines you've just finished reading. Send a personal note or an e-card, chat by facetime or zoom, or offer your time as your gift.

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News and Notes from the Superintendent's Office by Donna P. Leake, PhD

Due to the continuing increase of positive COVID-19 cases, safely keeping EES open for in-person learning has been a major focus of attention. There continues to be numerous meetings to attend as well as updates to review from the State Departments of Education and Public Health and our Northeast Regional Health District. The administration has provided families and staff with timely communication regarding current information and resultant procedural changes, particularly with respect to quarantine and isolation. Our families deserve a special "shout out" for their continued supportive efforts to keep EES open for quality in-person instruction. A "shout out" also to Deb Richards, First Selectman. She has remained in daily contact with me concerning the Town and the school protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to COVID-19, our heating system continues to demand our attention. There have been ongoing issues with the operation of our boilers due to air in the oil lines. We continue to work through these issues, with the support of the BOE Facilities Committee, Rob Ellsworth and Steve Bowen, and the on-site support of Paul Torcellini, volunteer and Town selectman. Recently EMCOR sealed all the piping from the boiler room to the exterior walls. We also engaged the services of Service Station Equipment to redo the tank configuration which cost \$14,626. We are still monitoring the results of these efforts. We have spent many dollars to date on repairs for our heating system, beyond the cost of the original heating project.

At the January Board Education meeting, the BOE:

-Received the Committee appointments, listed below, made by Chairperson S. Bowen. As you can see, in addition to attending monthly BOE meetings, BOE members also serve on several subcommittees that facilitate the work that the BOE must accomplish at each of their monthly meetings. During subcommittee meetings specific, relevant topics are analyzed in depth. Updates and recommendations for possible action are made for the entire BOE to review at its next meeting. A huge "shout out" to our Board of Education members who are willing to commit to many hours of community service each month to serving the Eastford Learning Community. Policy: Lauren Barlow (Chair) and Jessica Perry; Woodstock Academy: Robert Ellsworth; EastConn: Terry Cote; Long Range Facilities: Robert Ellsworth (Chair) and Stephen Bowen; Transportation: Stephen Bowen (Chair) and Adam Minor; Curriculum: Adam Minor (Chair) and Lauren Barlow; Scholarship Steering: Terry Cote (Chair), Lauren Barlow and Jessica Perry; School Safety: Terry Cote (Chair) and Jessica Perry; Finance- the full BOE serves as the Finance subcommittee.

-Approved the 2022-23 School Calendar for Eastford Elementary School, posted on the EES Website. Although efforts are made to align with the calendars of the high schools our students attend, particularly with our designated high school, Woodstock Academy, total alignment is not always possible due to the unique needs of each school organization.

-Reviewed the responsibilities of the BOE Scholarship Steering Committee with respect to the recommendation of applicants for the Ethel Cushing Gardner Music Scholarship (Hartford Foundation).

-Accepted, with regret and thanks, the resignation of grade two teacher, Laurie Bardsley, and the resignation of Pupil Services Director, Mary Jo Chretien, at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. A "shout out" of admiration and professional respect to both educators, who provided years of dedicated service to the students and families of the Eastford Learning Community. They will be missed and difficult to replace.

-Approved the Town Roof Committee's recommendation to enter a contract with Silver/Petrucelli & Associates, Inc. for \$20,850 for the roof replacement project, currently under review. At its meeting on December 21, the Town Roof Committee recommended to pursue a state reimbursement grant. This process requires the use of an architect. At its meeting on January 13, after a review of proposals, the committee recommended the firm, Silver/Petrucelli & Associates to the BOE. At a Special BOE meeting on January 27, also based on a recommendation made by the Town Roof Committee at its January 25 meeting, the BOE approved the "add on alternate" fee of \$3800 for the firm to conduct a PV analysis and provide a project estimate so an informed decision can be made regarding the purchase and installation of PV panels as a component of the proposed roof replacement

-Agreed to continue the discussion of the Long-Term Capital Plan following the review and recommendation by the Facilities Committee, at their meeting on January 25.


-Received the Superintendent's 2022-23 proposed school budget. A PowerPoint presentation was made to the Board that provided an overview of the 2022-2023 proposal (both documents are posted on the EES website). This budget, with a proposed 1% increase, is the result of a collaborative effort of administration and school staff. At its meeting on January 27, the Finance Committee of the BOE began a detailed review of the proposed budget. On February 3 at 5:30PM, they will continue this review process. Although public participation is not permitted at Finance Committee workshop meetings, the public is encouraged to attend to obtain a better understanding of the scope of the proposed budget components as well as a sense of the reflective and in-depth process that the BOE and administration engage in to develop the 2022-23 BOE budget proposal.

From the Principal, by Carole McCombe


Grade 8 transition to High School: Eighth grade students and families are reminded that high school application deadlines are fast approaching. If you or your child has questions about, or needs assistance with, the application process, please reach out to Ms. Murana at smurana@eastfordct.org. Students who plan to attend The Woodstock Academy do not have to formally apply, as this is our designated high school. If your child is interested in attending a school other than The Woodstock Academy, Ellis Technical High School, Killingly High School Agricultural program, or a local magnet school (ACT or QMC), we ask that you formally request to do so by submitting a written request to school Superintendent, Dr. Donna Leake by March 1.

Preschool Registration: If your child was born in 2018 or 2019, and you are interested in having him/her participate in Eastford's preschool program during the 2022-2023 school year, please complete a registration form. Enrollment is capped at 17 students each year and there are partial day and full day slots available. Registration forms are available in the school office and on our website (www.eastfordct.org). Please submit your registration forms as soon as possible! Enrollment is **NOT** on a first come, first served basis, but rather determined by family income as dictated by the Readiness Grant that we utilize to fund the program. Families will be notified in late May as to whether or not they have been accepted into the program.


Kindergarten Registration: There is also a registration form available in the school office and online for children entering kindergarten. Children, who were born in 2017 (turning 5 years old by the end of December 2022), are eligible for kindergarten during the 2022-2023 school year. We will accept registration forms at any time. Students who are currently attending Eastford Elementary School's Readiness program **DO NOT** have to re-register for kindergarten.



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FOOD PANTRY by Steve & Karen Broderick We would like to thank the many residents of Eastford who have helped replenish supplies to our pantry. Demand for our services remains high and thanks to our residents, we have been able to meet that demand. Thank you to the Eastford Independent Fire Company for their very generous food drive donation. Thank you to Ruth & David Barlow, Mike & MaryEllen Ellsworth, Lynn Nelson and Elizabeth Grodzicki for their donations. Our cabinets are well stocked. While we appreciate each and every donation, please note that we cannot accept expired food, partially used products or open packages. Financial donations are critical to the work we do. We would like to thank the following for their donations: the Andert family, Kathleen & Karl Winkler; Stephen and Marsha Bean-Sokoloski, Rob & Deborah Torcellini, Randall Chinnock, Mike & Mary Ellen Ellsworth, Scott Huri, Mary Parker and several anonymous donors. Donations of food can be brought to the TOB during normal business hours, or arrangements can be made by calling 860-974-1618. Checks can be made out to the Town of Eastford and mailed to the Selectmen's Office, 16 Westford Road, Eastford 06242. Just write Food Pantry on the memo line. Any Eastford resident in need who would like to avail themselves of the food pantry can place a confidential call anytime to Steve or Karen at 974-1618, or contact the First Selectman's Office.

"We had another great turn out for this year's food drive. We want to thank all of our loyal customers at Bowen's Garage for their kind donations once again. Thank you all, and we will see you for next year's food drive! Sincerely, Bowen's Garage Inc."

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To the Citizens of Eastford: I wanted to be sure to thank all of the people who have conveyed words of support and encouragement as I begin my term as your newly elected Town Clerk. It's a pleasure to serve what I consider the best small town in Connecticut!
 Johanna H. Wolfe, Eastford Town Clerk

Eastford Library Information, including curbside delivery, call 860-974-0125 visit Town of Eastford webpage / library Website:
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Eastford Seniors by Linda SM dos Santos

The Quinebaug Valley Regional Senior Center (QV) receives about 50 boxes each month to distribute to seniors who qualify. Each box contains 30 pounds of non-profit perishable goods and a 2 pounds block of cheese. If you would like more information or would like to complete a short application, please call QV at 860-774-1243. You can pick one up or have one mailed to you. This program is in partnership with the Foodshare CT Food Bank.

Are you or a family member turning 65? Senior Resources is offering a virtual presentation, learn about Medicare Parts A, B, C, & D. Make Medicare Affordable with the Medicare Financial assistance program. Register at: <http://bit.ly/MedicareBootcampfebruary>
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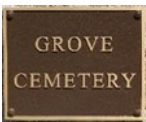
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EASTFORD GROVE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Notice

Trustees' Meeting:

Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. at the T.O.B.

Board of Corporators Annual Meeting:

Tuesday, April 5, 2022 (tentative)

Board of Trustees: Alex Kowalchuk, Scott Huri, Lauren Anderson, Herman Barlow, David Barlow, Carolyn Hazard, 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 at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/eastfordgrovecemetery/>

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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. Thank you!

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ATTENTION: All articles & news for The Communicator must be submitted to E-mail: ckdavidge@gmail.com

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

Scout Troop 92 Report

Activities:

Troop 92 participated in the winter Klondike Derby held this year at the Patchaug State Forrest in Voluntown. They faced competition in challenges along the sled trail, with a sled race at the end of the trail. The Troop was outdoors in winter weather for almost 36 hours. Cub Scout Pack 92: As part of learning about citizenship, the Scouts tested their geography skills, learned about local history, the pledge of allegiance and the American flag and how it is folded and stored.

Troop 92 Ashford/Eastford/Pomfret

For information, E-mail: nordyl77@gmail.com

Nord Yakovleff Ast Sct Mstr, Cory Blanchette Scout Master

Chris Murphy Ast Sct Mstr, Kurt van Heinigen Cubmaster

Doug Nemeth Committee Chairman

KINDNESS REPORTS:

Folks who brought meals to neighbors in times of crisis, Amy Whitehouse, Chris Whitehouse, and others who met needs of Eastford's residents.

Eastford - A Connecticut Best Small Town

Connecticut Magazine's cover story in March 1993 showed Eastford with Bowens Garage, the Ivy Glenn, cows, trees and people walking around our lovely village. Rankings were based on quality of life, affordability, good schools, low crime rate, leisure and other measures. Those qualities remain today.

Information: www.eastfordct.org/townofeastford

Facebook: Eastford CT06242 & EastfordCT06242SmallBusiness

See also article in Willimantic Chronicle, Jan 23, 2021

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EASTFORD INDEPENDENT FIRE CO., NO. 1, by Jeannine Spink

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2021 has come and gone. The EIFC wishes Eastford residents a prosperous and healthy 2022. In June, 2022, we will celebrate our 80th birthday of operation.

We have experienced loss within our ranks and are still dealing with COVID-19 and its variants. You can help the EIFC and yourselves by continuously wearing masks, practicing social distancing, washing your hands regularly, getting shots and boosters, and tested often.

Condolences are extended to the family of former Chief Christopher “Topper” Paige. Chief Paige joined the EIFC in 1958, served as President – 1974-1975, and Chief - 1972-1973.

Annually, the Company provides a report on the number of calls and descriptions for the previous year. In 2021, we responded to 169 “911” alerts. With COVID-19 and its variants, there have been restrictions on the number of alerts that have been responded to directly by KB Ambulance Service ONLY. Quality patient care and timeliness have not been compromised at any time. An additional 20 “911” medical emergencies were covered by KB Ambulance Service, and added to the 169. The EIFC responded to all other emergencies as follows:

Fires: (all types of related fires) – 12 Medical Emergencies: 87 Car accidents: (with and without injuries) – 14
Miscellaneous: Good intent, public service, wellness checks, weather conditions, cancelled enroute, alarm activations – 56

All local fire departments enter into mutual aid agreements with other departments to respond with personnel and/or equipment as needed. Included in the 169 “911” alerts, EIFC responded to the following departments:

Ashford – Town of Ashford: 3 Bungay – Town of Woodstock: 12
Dispatch Error – 5 Eastford – Town of Eastford: 141
Muddy Brook – Town of Woodstock – 1 Pomfret – Town of Pomfret: 6
Woodstock – Town of Woodstock – 1

“NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS”

In addition to responses, it should be noted that throughout the year, EIFC members attend a minimum of 5 – 7 meetings and drills or 25 hours per month, more for officers. Thank you to Eastford for the generous donations received toward our department operating budget and Memorial Fund. If you wish to contribute, please send to EIFC, PO Box 333, Eastford, CT 06242. All our annual public fundraisers have been cancelled that contribute to an already lean budget. Hopefully, we will be able to resume these events in the not too distant future.

Eastern Bluebirds by Roger Wolfe, Eastford Conservation & Historic Preservation Commission

Bluebirds are one of our most striking and beautiful birds. Although migratory and sometimes thought of as harbingers of spring, the Eastern bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) is becoming a more common year round resident in southern New England. Eastern bluebirds, like robins, are members of the thrush family and, as the name implies, the Eastern bluebird is the only bluebird found in New England. The male has a bright blue back and reddish-brown breast, sides, and flanks. The underparts are white. The female is similar, although more muted than the male. Bluebirds prefer semi-open habitats such as orchards, meadows, golf courses, and areas with scattered trees and short ground cover. They perch in the open, scanning the ground for their prey of insects and spiders. In the fall and winter, their diets change to wild fruits and berries such as sumac and winterberry. Bluebirds are cavity nesters and will search for natural cavities such as holes in tree trunks along the edges of woods, pastures, and large gardens. The nest, built by the female, is composed chiefly of grass. Competition with starlings for these natural cavities often forces bluebirds to seek nest boxes which they will readily use. For several years now, teachers and volunteers at Eastford Elementary have helped students learn about bluebirds and construct nest boxes. Residents Roger Wolfe and David Barlow also published an article in the May/June 2020 issue of Connecticut Wildlife magazine (<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Connecticut-Wildlife-Magazine>) showing how to build your own bluebird box. It's a simple and easy way to promote bluebird conservation. (Photo by Paul Fusco)

For more information on bluebirds and nest box designs, visit:
CT DEEP Wildlife Division: portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Learn-About-Wildlife/Wildlife-Fact-Sheets
North American Bluebird Society: www.nabluebirdsociety.org
Cornell Ornithology Laboratory: www.birds.cornell.edu/home



Adopt the Eastford Elementary School Garden



The Eastford Elementary School PTO is looking for volunteers to tend the school's front gardens from June through September. We tend three main garden areas that are waiting for your tender loving care. These sites are in very visible areas such as under the school sign, and at front entryways and do a great deal to enhance the beauty of our small town. All materials are supplied by the donations and PTO funds. Volunteers can tend the gardens as little or as much as they would like. We only ask that when you sign up, that you commit to the day and time you choose. This way, we are able to spread out our garden's maintenance over the entire spring and summer seasons.

The commitment is minimal considering the benefit, and if you love to garden, it's just plain fun! If you would like to help out or need more information, please contact Lauren Barlow at pto@eastfordct.org