

# OTIS OBSERVER

Your Town, Your Neighborhood and You

April 2023 Vol VIII Issue 11

## Otis Ridge Inspires Local Author

By Sandy Balayan



Photo: Ellen Dilts

At the recent cardboard box races at Otis Ridge a table was set up with an affable young man behind it enjoying the sunshine and crowds. While the participants walked by with their homemade box sleds, Conor Driscoll, the creator and author of the *Thundersnow Squad Adventures* (“Chapter Books for Kids Who Love To Ski,” as he says)

greeted people with a smile. Stopping by the table, you could learn that Conor spreads his true love of skiing and of our own Otis Ridge with a pretty wide audience. His latest book, the third in this adventure series, *The Ridge Rat Ruckus*, focuses on the ski camp at Otis Ridge and a group of youngsters who love skiing. The series of books is meant to be shared by parents and children together as a nightly read, or as a first chapter book for grades two through five to read independently.

The inspiration for this series comes from Conor’s love of skiing and his own children, Courtney age six and Eleni, age two. When Courtney was two, she began skiing with her parents at the Ridge and she hasn’t stopped yet. Eleni began this season and is showing great promise. Conor, an educator living in Easthampton, began writing these books for fun and

he is enjoying it so much he has more ideas in the works. Next up is a book on Magic Mountain in Vermont, and then a book that will serve as a fundraiser for the Arcadia Nature Preschool in Easthampton.

Conor and his wife both grew up in Massachusetts and enjoyed the small intimate family ski slopes around them. Conor later did ski patrol at Otis Ridge and hopes to get back to that when his schedule allows.

“Otis Ridge is a fantastic place to learn to ski. Unknowingly, while talking to an aunt of mine, she relayed to me that she also learned to ski at the Ridge as a child. We have now met there and skied together as a family. The Ridge is like going down memory lane for a lot of us,” said Conor. “Otis Ridge is a true gem. It is by far our favorite place to ski as a family. It is how skiing used to be and should be. There is a charm and warmth at Otis Ridge that is seldom felt at other ski areas.”

In the book, the youngsters can’t wait to get into the lodge for the french fries and cocoa. In fact, Conor shared that that is still one of his favorite après ski treats and he has taught his kids to dunk then eat the fries and they enjoy this pastime too. Sounds delicious!

*Continued on page 2*



Continued from page 1

As Conor says in the book, “Nothing else matters when you ski. Everything else just kind of melts away.”



Conor Driscoll

Photo: Ellen Dilts

Conor would love to hear from you and if you have questions, or wish to purchase any or all of his Thundersnow Squad Adventures, contact him at **info@thundersnowsquadsquad.com** or go to his website, **www.thundersnowsquadsquad.com**.

Happy skiing! ☺

# SEMESTER ONE HONOR ROLL 2022-2023

## Lee Middle and High School

### HIGH HONORS

Students must have a 90 average with no grade below an 85. There are currently 320 students enrolled at Lee Middle and High School. These students represent 22% of the total student enrollment.

**Juniors:** Angeli Faggioni

**Sophomores:** Megan Fountain

**Freshmen:** Timothy DeLuca,  
Adam Pincelli

### HONORS

Students must have an 85 average with no grade below an 80. These students represent 11% of the total student enrollment.

**Juniors:** Donald Scaglione

**Sophomores:** Nya Chaffee

**Grade seven:** Callan Dolan,  
Christoph Newsome

### HONORABLE MENTION

Students must have an 80 average with no grade below a 75. These students represent 8% of the total student enrollment.

**Seniors:** Makenzie Chaffee

**Freshmen:** Rydel Drenga

**Grade seven:** Halley Hankey,  
Aidan O’Neil

## W.E.B. Du Bois Middle School

### HIGH HONORS

Lilly Godwin

### HONORS

Isaac Hartshorn

Ryan Murray

## Monument Mountain High School

### HIGH HONORS

**Juniors:** Avery Carr

**Sophomores:** Isaac Schultze

### HONORS

**Seniors:** Emma Perry

**Juniors:** Ashley Kopiec

**Sophomores:** Andrew Amado,  
Claire Murray

**Freshmen:** Francis Bilotta

*The above lists highlight FRRSD/Otis and Sandisfield students.*



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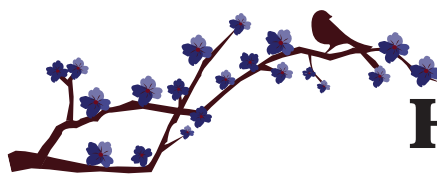
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## Free Public Forum on Climate Incentives

The Berkshire Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby is hosting a forum on **Mon., April 3<sup>rd</sup>**, at **Pittsfield's Berkshire Innovation Center, 45 Woodlawn Ave.** This includes how to access immediate rebates and tax credits available for families and businesses to electrify our homes.



On the panel for the 90-minute forum will be State Senator Paul Mark, Judy Chang, former undersecretary of energy and climate solutions for Massachusetts, and Larry Chretien, executive director of Green Energy Consumers Alliance. A short message from U.S. Congressman Richard Neal rounds out the panel. Following the presentation there will be moderated questions from the audience. **An opening reception is at 5:30 p.m., with the discussion at 6:15.**

*The Berkshire Eagle*, Ener-G-Save and Pittsfield's Berkshire Innovation Center are partnering with Citizens Climate Lobby on this event which will be live streamed on Pittsfield Community Television's Facebook page.

For more information, contact Pauline Banducci at **pbanducci@gmail.com** or **(413) 645-2035**. ☎

**ATTENTION  
2023 OTIS  
GRADUATES AND PARENTS**

Do you want to celebrate your graduates? Please email **rsarnacki@gmail.com** by May 1<sup>st</sup> with your son's or daughter's info. Please include their post graduate plans, which high school they are graduating from and any awards received. Include a senior picture if you wish. We will include a photo, subject to space limitations.

Thank you.

## Upcoming Town Caucus

The Citizens of the Town of Otis will hold a Caucus at the Otis Town Hall, Otis Massachusetts on **Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.**, for the purpose of nominating candidates to be voted on at the Annual Town Election which will be held on Tuesday, **May 23<sup>rd</sup>** for the following offices.

- 1 Selectperson for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Moderator for 1 (One) Year
- 1 Tree Warden for 1 (One) Year
- 1 Finance Board Member for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Assessor for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Cemetery Commissioner for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Library Trustee for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Planning Board Member for 3 (Three) Years
- 1 Planning Board Member for 5 (Five) Years
- 1 School Committee Member for 3 (Three) Years ☎

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# Light Shines on a Mysterious Artist

By Diane Provenz

Our little hamlet of Otis is attracting world-class authors like Carol Diehl who spoke to a large group at the Otis Library on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. The subject was a universally famous living artist, Banksy.



Carol Diehl speaking at the Otis Library.

Photo: Gail Gelburd

Surprisingly, no one knows who he is. For more than twenty years, his wry political and darkly humorous spray paintings have appeared mysteriously on urban walls around the globe, generating headlines and controversy. Art critics disdain him, but the public (and the art market) love him.

With her generously illustrated book, artist and critic Carol Diehl is the first author to probe the depths of the Banksy mystery. Through her exploration of his paintings, installations, writings and Academy Award-nominated film, *Exit through the Gift Shop*, Diehl proved that there's more to Banksy than the painting on the wall.

This free **Notice Otis** event was sponsored by the **Otis Preservation Trust** through a generous grant from the **Otis Cultural Council**. ☉



Celeste Watman at her exhibit at the Monterey Library

Photo: Steve Graves

Otis Observer Contributing Writer **Celeste Watman** is exhibiting her artwork ("Reuse/Revision") at the Monterey library through April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Please call the library at **(413) 528-3795** or visit their website at **www.montereymasslibrary.org/events** for their hours of operation.

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# Otis Council on Aging

By Eila Bell

## Look What is Happening at the Otis Council of Aging

- April 5 - The **foot nurse** will be at the center. Please call for an appointment. **(413) 269-0100, ext. 5**
- April 5 - **Exercise class for the aging body** at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.
- April 6 - **Out to lunch at Michael's Restaurant**, 5 Elm Street, Stockbridge, 12 noon.
- April 12 - **Exercise class for the aging body**, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.
- April 19 - **Potluck lunch** with guest speaker Atty. Paula Almgren, Elder Law. 12 noon. All are welcome.
- April 21 - **Brown bag**.
- April 24 - The **traveling hairdresser** will be at the center.

End of Life Planning is important to have our needs and wishes carried out. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, Attorney Paula Almgren will be our guest speaker following our pot-luck luncheon. Attorney Almgren specializes in elder law, estate planning, tax planning, long term care planning and medical eligibility community-based care, veteran's benefits and life care planning.

This event is open to all. Please call the center at **(413) 269-0100, ext.5** to RSVP or email Eila Bell at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com). ☺

*This page is sponsored in part by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.*

April, 2023

## FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HELP WANTED: TWO POSITIONS

### SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

#### DUTIES/DESCRIPTION:

Fill in for FRRSD teachers. Assume all duties of the regular classroom teacher or paraprofessional promptly and in accordance with school rules. This may include lunch, recess/playground, or any other duties assigned by the building principal.

- Substitute teachers or paraprofessionals with licensure from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Education receive \$110 per day with the completion of time sheets.
- Substitute teachers or paraprofessionals without a license receive \$90 per day with the completion of time sheets.
- The school tries to give advance notice, but calls often happen between 6-7 am.

#### REQUIRED:

- Minimum of a High School Diploma. Associates or Bachelor Degree preferred.

### SUBSTITUTE VAN DRIVERS

#### DUTIES/DESCRIPTION:

Be prepared to fill in for drivers during one of both shifts: 6:15-8:45 or 2:15-4:00

#### REQUIRED:

- Ability to operate a 10-passenger van
- Safely transport students
- 21 years or older
- Valid MA Drivers License
- 7D License or CDL Preferred
- CORI and drug Test
- Knowledge of Sandisfield and Otis roads are a plus.
- Minimum high school diploma
- \$18 per hour without benefits

### APPLICATION PROCESS:

Send a letter of interest/intent, three current, work-related references, a copy of diploma, transcripts, degrees, etc., and any other materials that will strengthen your candidacy to:

**ROBERT PUTNAM**  
Interim Principal/Superintendent  
Farmington River Regional School District  
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA, 01253  
or [rputnam@frrsd.org](mailto:rputnam@frrsd.org)

Please visit [www.frrsd.org](http://www.frrsd.org) for additional information.

*FRRSD is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, visibility, or any other status protected by law in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.*

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# OTIS HISTORY

## Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation

By Peter Cameron

Abraham Lincoln was president during one of the darkest periods in American history, the Civil War. The bright spot in his presidency was the Emancipation Proclamation, a presidential military order, which freed the slaves. Or did it? Recently historians have debated this, as well as Lincoln's motivation behind the Proclamation. To understand this debate, we must decide what the Emancipation Proclamation did and did not do.

The preliminary Proclamation, issued on September 22, 1862, declared those southern states that had seceded from the Union had until January 1, 1863 to return to the Union, or their slaves would be declared free. The final Proclamation was issued on that date, January 1, 1863. In actuality, it immediately freed few of the southern slaves. It also directed Union Army officers to free slaves as they captured confederate territory. At the time of the Proclamation the Union Army controlled parts of eastern Virginia, Louisiana, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas, so slaves from these areas, about 50,000, were immediately freed by the Proclamation.



As well as not immediately freeing the confederate slaves, the Proclamation did not free the slaves in the border states. Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware and eventually West Virginia had not seceded from the Union but were heavily occupied by southern leaning slave owners. For Lincoln, the political reality was that if he freed slaves there, those states might leave the Union for the Confederacy. Thus, he kept slavery legal in those states. Lincoln also realized that the Proclamation was simply a presidential military order, in direct conflict with the Constitution, which protected the institution of slavery. He had to walk a fine line to avoid the courts finding the Proclamation unconstitutional. If no one contested the Proclamation, then there would be no court oversight. He had to try to keep everyone happy.

There were several immediate benefits of the Proclamation. The first was planting the seeds of freedom within the southern slave population. Many then attempted escape to Union lines. This

led up valuable confederate military resources chasing and recapturing those escapees. Perhaps more importantly, the Proclamation changed the focus of the conflict from an argument over states rights to a war to abolish slavery. In doing so it laid the groundwork for the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution which, in 1865, outlawed slavery.

Some claim the Emancipation Proclamation was nothing but a measured political move on Lincoln's part and that he cared less for the plight of the slaves. Historically, Lincoln was always against slavery. In 1837 he described slavery as "founded on both injustice and bad policy." In 1854, Lincoln, then in Congress, argued against the Kansas-Nebraska Act stating, "slavery was a monstrous injustice." Lincoln was nothing if not a pragmatist. He knew as far back as the 1850s that slavery would not just cease to exist. He always had advocated a long-term plan phasing out over several decades, with compensation for slave owners. His plan also included relocation for freed slaves, moving them to Liberia, or countries in the Caribbean or South America.

The historian's argument over Lincoln's legacy pits his politics and the lack of immediacy in freeing confederate slaves, versus the eventual outlawing of slavery nationwide. Lincoln was a brilliant planner and politician. His policies regarding slavery were based on finding a permanent solution while balancing the political realities of the time. It is true the Emancipation Proclamation immediately freed few slaves, but by War's end it had freed over one million. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment had been ratified by War's end, inspired by the Emancipation Proclamation. Slavery was constitutionally and realistically dead.

It is this humble historian's opinion that Lincoln was truly "The Great Emancipator." ☺



Peter Cameron is an Otis, MA resident and a retired policeman. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in History with a concentration in U.S. Colonial History.



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## MASH Finale Festivities- A Memory for Many Otisites

By Sandy Balayan

On February 28, 1983 the final episode of the long running television series *MASH* aired on CBS. Forty years later, it remains the most watched scripted TV series finale in history. A lot of us probably watched this piece of history as it happened. In fact, a group of diehard fans in our little town got together for a watch

party at the Grouse House under the management of Dave Sullivan back then. The rules were simple, dress in character if possible and get ready for a “mess hall” style dinner complete with ration like foods and plenty of booze just like the beloved *MASH* characters enjoyed for eleven seasons. (Note: the Korean War, which the series was based on, only lasted three years.) The finale ended with an aerial shot of the last outgoing helicopter flying away and we had to face that reruns were all we would have left.

The Grouse House wasn't the only finale party venue. There were parties both large and small, all over the country. But for a small community like Otis, this effort was overwhelmingly successful for those attending and showed the true camaraderie and spirit that exists in our town. A good time was had by all! ☺

## NAME THAT OTISITE Contest Winner!



Trish Racine, winner of photo contest, receiving her prize.

Photo: Frank Tolopko

Trish Racine is the winner of the Name that Otisite Contest. She correctly named Nancy Sweatland Pigman as the rider of a horse in 1946. Nancy is now 90 years old!



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# AN OTIS LEGEND

By Sandy Balayan

There are very few Otisites who don't know the name Dave Sullivan. Many were lucky enough to know him personally. For over thirty years he was a volunteer fireman, a job he was very passionate about. His other passion was the "beach" on the Reservoir, where he enjoyed relaxing and kibitzing with old friends and new. He loved his family and he loved humankind. No one was ever a stranger to Dave. He loved to talk to people and took every opportunity to socialize with town folk. His daily routine started with coffee at Hall's and ended with a beer at the Knox or the marina. He had a knack for making one feel like the only person in the world when he talked to you. He was a beloved fixture of our town.

After becoming a dad very young, Dave spent two years in the army in Germany working as a mechanic with missiles and was keenly aware of the ramifications of the Cuban missile crisis. He told his sons about it in later years and relayed what a scary time it was in the world.

When he returned, he was ready to be a father and go back to college, graduating with a civil engineering degree from UMass in 1966. As a single dad, he was strict but loving and he raised his two sons by himself. His work revolved around real estate development and he spent many years helping to survey and develop planned communities like Wildwood in Tolland, and others in Massachusetts,



Dave Sullivan

Photo: Pete Sullivan

Connecticut and New Hampshire. He enjoyed seeing things through, from the ground up, literally. Many of the recreational communities he worked on are still vital today.

Some of his other jobs involved selling trusses at O'Connor Lumber in Westfield where he provided the trusses that helped build Paul Newman's original Hole in The Wall Gang camp for children with illnesses in Connecticut. He went on to manage the Grouse House. After retirement, he became a Title 9 inspector. He also had a 16-year marriage during this time and was definitely a ladies man after his divorce. When Dave bought the Pumps, Inc. building, straddling the Otis, Tolland, Blandford line, he converted it into apartments and moved into it himself. It became a gathering place for many friends and neighbors and Dave was in his glory.

Dave's Tiki Barge is a legend in itself around the Reservoir. He had been seeing an old pontoon boat in the woods for at least ten years. Close to Big Pond, it had clearly not been in the water in a very long time. Dave finally persuaded the owners to sell it to him. One might wonder what he planned to do with this unseaworthy rotting carcass of a boat. Dave had plans. Big plans. After a short stint living in Southern California many years before, Dave became obsessed with Trader Vic's and anything Tiki. He decided to rebuild this pontoon from the platform up into a Tiki bar that floated on the lake. He gathered old umbrellas, flamingos, beads, grass skirts, etc. and had his friend Tara Williamson stencil "Dave's Tiki Barge" on the side. (See the accompanying photo.) The result was a hoot when it went out on the lake for the fireworks that summer of 2010.

When the boat was at Dave's dock, kids and adults alike would sit on it and relax and take in the sunset and share stories. Dave loved this boat. It is still at his former home on the ground filled with memories and probably a ton of leaves. Shortly after the maiden voyage, Dave died unexpectedly of a heart attack alone at home. A shock to all, as he was just 70, but oh, did he live and enjoy those 70 years. It was a peaceful death but it was much too soon. Dave Sullivan, you will never be forgotten. ☹



Tiki barge

Photo: Pete Sullivan



# The Rural ETHICIST Inventions Needed

By Katharine Adams

Now and then, we think up little ideas we believe could become good inventions.

In *11 Inventions That Need To Hurry Up And Exist*, author Rebecca Jane Stokes offers fetching ideas for better living that include: dog translator, dream-to-movie maker, instant heartbreak-healer, domesticated penguin butlers, and a sure hit with any Halloween-enthusiast friend: clouds that rain candy corn.

Curious little articles sometimes pop up on my palm-sized, digital town crier. “9-Year-Old Accidentally Describes a Landline,” declares one recent headline. I took the bait with an appetite, reserving affection for old, heavy dial-phones.

In her brief, writer Kaitlin Stanford analyzes the satire contained within a child’s innocent “invention.” A gem of an idea, the child’s suggestion is explained within the video of a nanny who goes by the handle [@weirdochicken](#).

In [@weirdochicken](#)’s video, her charge of just nine years issues forth with a light bulb epiphany: “They need to come up with one phone for the whole family that just stays in the house. That way, if you need anyone in the house, you can just call that phone,” the girl suggests. Her idea is an attempt to solve the complications of a phone-tag string the family experienced using individual cell phones, all in an effort to pinpoint one person.

Long ago, we were sad to disconnect our own landline, being attached to our unique, 10-digit identity. But an increasingly crackling, static-filled service became silly to maintain. Copper is 100% recyclable, so all is not lost. Repurposed, it can even breathe a new, artful life spun into airy jewelry and sculpture, such as wire birds.

We reinvent things for reasons of need or joy. The Utah Education Network claims that we do so “in order to meet basic human needs or to fulfill their own creative desires.” I agree with their overall assertion that most inventions are “inspired by social or economic reasons and the desire to make life easier and more comfortable.”



Photo: Katharine Adams

I think I’m targeting human need with my scheme for a purr-appreciation, massage-like emulation table (PAMLET). The PAMLET is meant to bring pets and their people closer by using one of nature’s most soothing sounds to provide a form of meditation. It may even possibly improve heart health by momentarily reducing blood pressure—that is, crucially, if you don’t unintentionally *raise* your blood pressure, consumed with worry while trying to use it.

I have a few stumbling blocks to solve. I think I’ve got human ergonomics down, but the question persists: will a cat find it agreeable? They’re usually easygoing about everything, not typically finicky, right?

The would-be PAMLET is a small, 8-inch square, fleece-wrapped table on short legs with a hole at the center, intended to function for a listener much the way a massage table permits one’s face. The difference is you lay your face sideways on the table, permitting one ear to face down over the sound hole.

No prototype yet exists, because I haven’t yet figured out how you get a cat to willingly relax beneath said table, much as I consider myself to have a PhD in feline psychology.

In my mind’s eye, I figure if the table is crafted correctly, one could gently approach a cat in repose (there are plenty of opportunities per day), cooing sweet nothings and promises of treats. In turn, a human’s affection may favorably promote the targeted call to action: a cat’s contented purring.

Being comprised of fleece (including a fleece drape arranged beneath), this remarkable material would hypothetically draw nearly 100% of house cats to nest, make biscuits and recline beneath.

When you happen upon said cat enjoying their enticing, fleecy cave, you would then carefully lay your ear centered atop the table to absorb nature’s great, buzzing rhythm section.

You’d enjoy a reduction in neck strain, since you’d be liberated from holding up your head in an effort to avoid placing weight on the side of the cat.

A physical therapy outfit based in Denver contends that purring has “long been associated with a therapeutic healing ability on human bones and muscle.”

Maybe a licensing deal, stamped with “as seen on TV” for a wee-hours infomercial? Stay tuned. ☹



# Mum's the Word

By Sandy Balayan

Camp Nawaka, an East Otis fixture from 1967-2009, has the distinction of being the summer camp that one Britney Spears attended. She has referenced it many times and it clearly remains a positive light in her tumultuous life.

With a net worth of over \$60 million dollars, it wasn't until recently that a court imposed conservatorship ended and she is free to spend her money any way she sees fit. One of her recent purchases has been a nostalgia-driven walk down memory lane for Britney. She has purchased a very large house on the Otis Reservoir in East Otis and plans to be here most of her summers. Although it has not been publicized as to which house it is, for good reason, most of the locals know the exact locale of this beautiful home and are staying mum.

Let's hope that when we see her at Katie's or the Knox we can all give her the respect and privacy she craves and be sure to give her space. We hope she enjoys the beauty and peace of our little slice of heaven. ☺



# OTIS FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

By Terry Gould

As I write this update that you will see in April, I was hoping that we would be seeing signs of spring, crocuses or pussy willows. Instead, we are readying for a snowstorm that must have been lost since it sounds more like January than March. We are in like a lion for sure.

No matter what the weather predicts, the Otis Food Pantry remains the same. We are here for anyone who wishes to visit us every Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall.

Many people ask what sort of foods are helpful to stock our shelves, so I am going to provide a basics list here for anyone who thinks of us as they are food shopping. Every day needs of our families include:

- Cereals and oatmeal
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Condiments (mayo, mustard, ketchup, dressings)

- Crackers and kid snacks
- Canned soup, vegetables and fruits
- Juice, coffee and tea
- Canned tuna and chicken
- Baked beans, chili or hash
- Pasta and sauce
- Mac 'n cheese

These are the sorts of items that families look for each week, that keep their kitchens stocked.

Plans are in the works for Easter dinners sponsored by the Knox and their Pay It Forward campaigns. These wonderful holiday dinners are a lovely treat for so many of our neighbors.

My hope is that, by the time you are reading this little update, the crocuses, daffodils and tulips have started or continue to bloom. Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Otis Food Pantry and your neighbors. Happy spring everyone. ☺



## ★ DINE IN OR TAKEOUT

*New Winter Menu!*

\*HOUSE SPECIAL PRIME RIB  
(thursday-saturday)

- BAKED HADDOCK
- CEDAR PLANK SALMON
- BROWN BUTTER GNOCCHI
- SPAGHETTI & MEATBALLS
- WINTERBERRY SALAD
- PULLED PORK MAC & CHEESE
- KNOX CHICKEN PICCATA

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# ASTROLOGY ✨

## The Engine of Progress

By Hilary Harley

All planets are still turning direct motion as April begins. If you need to purchase large items: houses, cars, appliances, technical devices or book travel plans, lock these in during the first ten days of the month.

The first week of April we are literally *all fired up*. The Sun, Generous Jupiter and Messenger Mercury in fiery Aries push us to get a move on. So caution: before you pull the trigger, make sure you gather necessary information. More considerate energy arrives on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> when Mercury turns into Taurus. Our minds are not so quick to the draw. We want to know exactly what we are getting for our money, time and effort.

Mercury joins Valuable Venus and Change Agent Uranus already cycling through earthy Taurus. The trio lends a steady sturdiness and practical hand to what might otherwise get out from underneath us. Their energy offers balance and ballast to any decisions we face.

Mercury pairs tightly the lunar north node over the next week, strengthening and empowering *how we communicate*. We say what we mean and mean what we say now. Yet this practical duo also clashes with Pluto in Aquarius. *What and how we think and say is challenged* beyond our comfort zone.

Taurus Mercury-North Node is the real deal, result-oriented and *traditional*. The pair sticks to what it knows will work while Aquarian Pluto *could care less* about tradition. It stirs up situations just to see *what will happen*. This clash may make for some highly charged scenes, so expect the unexpected.

Sun and Jupiter in Aries on Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, ignites us to blaze new trails from a jungle of choices. *There are no*

*wrong choices except to dishonor what feels right for you.* The very same day, Valuable Venus shifts into versatile Gemini, giving flexibility to our relationships and how we utilize our skills and talents.

Focus on the work at hand. Use practical language to yield innovative outcomes. The Taurus energy offers a solid foundation to help realistically navigate what crosses our path. It serves as reliable support for a series of planetary events *occurring on the exact same day*, Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. *You will feel the energetic shift.*



The first eclipse of 2023 occurs early on the 20<sup>th</sup>, bearing a crescendo of energetic emphasis. This solar New Moon eclipse is a clarion call to bravery. Some will stand and fight, and some will wade into new terrain. To understand how you are impacted and respond look at choices you face, be it family, work, finances, or otherwise.

Hours later, the second event occurs. The Sun (our will) enters real-deal

Taurus and asks us how we may be most resourceful. We are now firmly footed in springtime, the time for planting what we want to grow more of.

Then, Messenger Mercury turns retrograde. Its reverse gear shift ends a protracted forward motion of all ten planets. Mercury's retrograde reminds us to consider the consequences of our decisions. Before you agree to anything hit the pause button and ponder the impact on your future. Use the next three weeks of the messenger planet's reversal to use the RE words: review, remember, RESEARCH, renew, recharge.

Soon it will be time to harness your plan to sow the seeds of your future, after the second eclipse on May 6<sup>th</sup> and Mercury's shift direct motion in mid-May. For now, through the remainder of April and first half of May, review your options. We are only limited by our imaginations. ☯

*Otis resident Hilary Harley is a writer, astrologer and host of Mystical Messages podcast.*



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# The Reel World of Films

By Eileen W. Cohen

Last month, the glitz and glamour on the "red" (now beige) carpet and the film winners from the 95<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards ceremony have become history. April offers a top slate of headline grabbing sports-themed movies featuring stories of great interest. The heavy-hitting tandem of Ben Affleck and Matt Damon (remember the duo in *Good Will Hunting?*) are starring in the film, *Air* (a true story opening on April 5<sup>th</sup>), chronicling Nike's rise, in the 1980s, to sneaker stardom through the partnership with the iconic, super-star basketball player, Michael Jordan. In 1984 Jordan signed a deal that promoted his signature shoe, the "Air Jordan," that became the catalyst for Nike's meteoric rise in the industry and set a new standard for athletic paraphernalia and equipment. Affleck will direct the film and will also star as Phil Knight, Nike co-founder, and Damon will take the role of Sonny Vaccaro, sneaker salesman turned sports executive "guru." The impressive list of supporting cast members features Viola Davis, Marlon Wayans, Jason Bateman and Chris Tucker.

For basketball devotees, the magic continues to reign supreme in the

biographical and inspiring drama, *Sweetwater*, opening in theaters on April 14<sup>th</sup> (not to be confused with the 2013 western thriller of the same name). Nathaniel "Sweetwater" Clifton was the first African-American player to sign a contract in the NBA to play with the New York Knickerbockers in 1950 when color barriers were still in existence. At 6 feet, 8 inches and possessing "exceptional" ball-handling skills, outstanding athleticism and being a great rebounder, Clifton was also a star attraction showman for a short playing stint with the Harlem Globetrotters. *Sweetwater* is played by newcomer, Everett Osborn (a former college basketball player for Texas Pan American) with a cameo appearance by Milwaukee Bucks champion, Bobby Portis, Jr. in the role of Earl Lloyd of the Syracuse Nationals. Clifton, a Hall of Famer, was nicknamed "Sweetwater" because of his love of soda pop as a kid.

Stepping off the court and into the boxing ring, our next one-two punch movie, opening on April 28<sup>th</sup> tells the story of a world heavyweight champion; turned pastor, turned world heavyweight champion, turned famed grill entrepreneur. And let's add Olympic Gold Medalist to this impressive list of achievements. The film is *Big George Foreman: The Miraculous Story of the Once and Future Heavyweight Champion of the World* and his legendary life from impoverished childhood to heavyweight world champion will be featured in this biopic. Khristian Davis (*Judas and the Black Messiah*) stars as Foreman and Forest Whitaker as Foreman's trainer and mentor, Doc Broadus. In the tradition of previous boxing films like *Cinderella Man*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *Raging Bull*, *Rocky* and *Creed*, this film will be filled with many moments of movie magic – like the transformational power of second chances and Foreman's great comeback at age 45 when he defeated 26-year-old Michael Moorer in 1994.

Judy Blume is a writer of children's, young adult and adult fiction and launched her career in 1959. Ten years later, her first story, *The One in The Middle* is the *Green Kangaroo* was published. In

1970, she wrote one of her best-known pre-teen works, *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* and now, 53 years later, she sold the screen rights to James Brooks and Kelly Fremont Craig to bring this groundbreaking coming-of-age classic to the big screen. The cast features Abby Ryder Fortson, Rachel McAdams, Benny Safdie and Kathy Bates. The movie will closely follow the novel's storyline with a focus on Margaret Simon, an 11-year-old 6<sup>th</sup> grader, the daughter of an interfaith couple, relocating from New York City to a New Jersey suburb with her parents. As the title of the novel indicates, Margaret struggles with her relationship to religion, her new neighborhood, "the tumultuous throes of puberty" and ultimately goes on a spiritual journey for answers.

Mario, the legendary plumber turned video game hero and one of the most recognized and loved game characters (a.k.a. Nintendo's mascot) and his brother Luigi, will make their way into the hearts of movie fans and back into the Mushroom Kingdom for another adventure in the *Super Mario Bros. Movie*.

Both old and new generations of kids and adults will love this entertaining, animated movie.

Stay safe and until next month ... ☺



Eileen is a retired NYC school administrator and college professor. She is a part time Otis resident and an ardent cinephile with a love of creative writing, cooking and grandparenting.



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## OTIS LIBRARY NEWS

By Susan Ebitz

Since the retirement of Kathy Bort as Director of the library, we have added some new faces to the board and seen some of the old faces take on new roles. Lois Hall is now the Interim Library Director, and the Board of Trustees is very grateful for all that she is doing at the library. Kerry Bean is our Children's Librarian and she works every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm. We are hopeful that Kyle Hawley will join us again this summer when he is done with school. Long time Chair of the Board, Diane Dyer, has stepped

down to organize a "Friends of the Otis Library" organization and serve as liaison between the two groups. Susan Brofman is now the Chair of the Board.

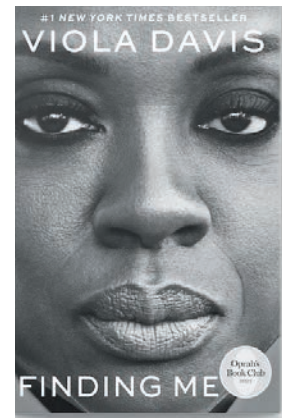
In November, the trustees voted to change the by-laws of the library to expand membership from seven to nine; three elected and six appointed. Tom Burke, who is now Treasurer, and Carol Reife are the newest members joining Jim Adams, Gloria Mamokhin, Donna Rich, Celeste Watman and Susan Ebitz. Feel free to contact us about anything you would like addressed concerning the library. We are working hard to find an individual to serve as Library Director who will be a good fit for our community.

At this moment, Otis is covered by three feet of serene and pristine snow. The beauty is breath-taking, yet back-breaking and I confess to spending more time sitting in an overstuffed chair with a good book than I usually do during the day. There is nothing better after the fatigue and aches of snow removal have set in.

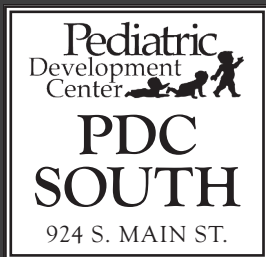
We have some great books at the Otis Library and I always start here before buying books. Recently I finished the memoir *Finding Me* by Viola Davis. She just received a Grammy Award for reading her own audiobook. The audiobook section of our library has some great selections and if you drive (and who in town does not?) there's nothing better than being entertained, if you're reading fiction, or informed, if you're reading nonfiction.

Kathy and Kerry are always choosing great books, audiobooks and DVDs for our collection. Access to this material is free and your library card will get you admitted to any library in the CWMARs membership area. Lois and Kerry will be happy to sign you up for a library card. Once you get a library card (and one for your kids, too), you can download the Libby App. This app gives you access to over 30,000 libraries where you can read or listen to materials instantly for free! You can use your phone as a Kindle or read or listen directly on your phone. Books and magazines for all ages are available. If you "pair" your Bluetooth with your Libby App you can listen to all the newest books for free! If you have any questions or difficulties installing Libby, Kerry is at the library on Saturdays and enjoys getting people hooked up with Libby.

Happy reading, whether you use your eyes or ears, your mind and senses will reward you for the experience. ☺



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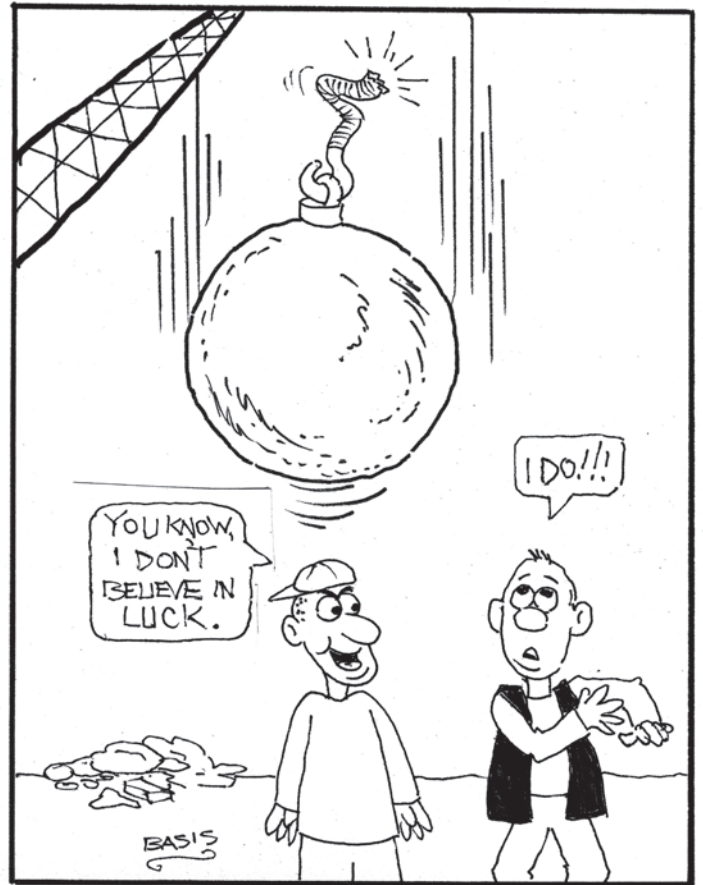
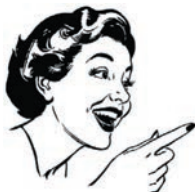
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# Laugh with Carolyn

Our resident joke teller, Carolyn Lawry, shares another one of her gems with us this month. Long known for sharing whatever tickles her funny bone with family and friends, Carolyn is a delight to talk to and loves to share her great sense of humor with the readers of the Otis Observer.

BOSS: Well, you can have the job because there are no other applicants. But I must tell you that you must smarten up if you plan to work here. You came to this interview with a black eye, disheveled clothes and a dirty face."

YOUNG MAN: That's nothing. You should've seen the other three guys that were after the job! ☹



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## GREETINGS FROM THE PTA!

### Not Your Grandma's PTA: Advocacy, Awards and Opportunities!

By FRES PTA Leadership Team

The PTA (Parent Teacher Association) operates at a local level, with the Farmington River Elementary School (FRES) PTA providing resources, support and advocacy here in Otis and Sandisfield. But the PTA can also be found working toward the mission of helping every child reach their potential at the state and national levels. In its over 125-year history, the National PTA has been instrumental in influencing legislation around school lunches, universal kindergarten and much more.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, FRES PTA members joined PTA colleagues from across Massachusetts at the Annual State PTA Convention. The Farmington River Elementary School PTA was recognized with a Membership Award, celebrating an increase in members over previous years. This exciting event provided networking and learning opportunities

that FRES PTA is eager to bring back to our community.

In early March, local PTA members joined those from across the US in speaking with legislators on the PTA's 2023 advocacy platform, areas where we believe we can make a difference in national policy development for the benefit of all children. This year these legislative priorities include family engagement, welcoming and supportive schools for all students, school safety and preparedness and digital inclusion. FRES PTA President Cecily Goulange was able to speak about school safety, one of the PTA's 2023 legislative priorities, in virtual meetings with legislative aides from the offices of all 11 Massachusetts senators and representatives.

In local news, volunteer opportunities abound as our school year begins to wind down. Teacher Appreciation Week, Screen Free Week and Field Day are all coming up, and all members of the FRES community are welcome to join in the fun! Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Visit the FRRSD PTA Facebook page, or email **PTA@frrsd.org** to become a member, to join us for our meetings and activities, or to share ideas and resources! ☺

## Office of Public School Monitoring Farmington River Regional School District

During the week of April 24, 2023, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of the Farmington River Regional School District.

The Office of PSM visits each district and charter school every three years to monitor compliance with federal and state special education and civil rights regulations. Areas of review related to special education include student assessments, determination of eligibility, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team process and IEP development and implementation. Areas of review related to civil rights include bullying, student discipline, physical restraint and equal access to school programs for all students.

In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The review chairperson from the Office of Public School Monitoring will send all parents of students with disabilities an online survey that focuses on key areas of their child's special education program. Survey results will contribute


*Continued on next page*



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to the development of a report. During the onsite review, the Office of Public School Monitoring will interview the chairperson(s) of the district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC).

Other onsite activities may include interviews of district staff and administrators, reviews of student records and onsite observations. Parents and other individuals may call the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Public School Monitoring Chairperson, Sandra Hanig, at **(413) 413-6707** to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the department will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the district or charter school with a report with information about areas in which the district or charter school meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the district requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The public will be able to access the report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>. 

Michael A. Saporito, Director of Student Services, **(413) 269-4466**.



## Farmington River Regional School District

Otis & Sandisfield

Preschool/Early Kindergarten and Kindergarten Registration & Screenings

### NEW STUDENTS ONLY



The Farmington River Regional School District will be accepting registrations and scheduling screenings for enrollment in our Preschool Program and Kindergarten for the '23-'24 School Year.

Children who are residents of Otis or Sandisfield and will be **THREE** years old **BEFORE September 1, 2023** may be eligible to enter our public **Preschool/Early Kindergarten Program** in the fall.

For the upcoming school year, our Preschool/Early Kindergarten Program will offer families the following options (*minimum 3 days/week required*):

- 5 half-days a week (8:30-11:30 am) for 3- and 4-year-olds
- 5 full-days a week (8:30 am - 2:30 pm) for 4-year-olds **ONLY** (*must turn 4 by September 1, 2023*).

Children who are residents of Otis or Sandisfield and will be **FIVE** years old **BEFORE September 1, 2023** may be eligible to enter our **full-day Kindergarten Program** in the fall.

Residents of neighboring communities are also invited to apply.

A screening is required for all enrolling children\*, and will take place in half-hour increments. The screening will be conducted in the areas of speech and language, fine and gross motor development, and learning skills. \*No screening is required if your child is already enrolled in our Preschool program.

**PK/EK Screenings:**

April 5, 2023

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

**Kindergarten Screenings:**

April 6, 2023

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

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## Notice Otis Series

### Notice Otis Hosts Event

By Hilary Harley

The Otis Historical Commission and Otis Preservation Trust are hosting the third Notice Otis Series cultural event of the 2022-'23 season featuring the documentary film *Symphony of Courage* on Thursday, April 20, 2023 from 7-8 p.m., Otis Town Hall, One North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253. Local residents Lesley Rosenthal and Jessica Lustig will speak about their work with the Afghan project depicted in the film.

*A Symphony of Courage* is a 30-minute documentary by Voice of America that tells the story of the brave young Afghan musicians who have had to evacuate their country. Today they are making music again in a new, welcoming homeland through the heroic efforts of some very special people. The Afghan National Institute of Music (ANIM) was the country's only music school, and home to the world-renowned Zohra Orchestra —Afghanistan's first all-female ensemble. ANIM's director Dr. Ahmad Sarmast worked with an international team of philanthropists, politicians and musicians, including renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, led by Friends of ANIM President Lesley Rosenthal and Treasurer Jessica Lustig. Together, they facilitated the evacuation of 273 ANIM students, faculty, and staff. After a brief period in Doha, the group travelled together to Lisbon, their new home.

The documentary follows Farida and Zohra Ahmadi, two pre-teen girls and the last ANIM students to be evacuated from Afghanistan. They spent their last days in the country moving from safe house to safe house until they were finally able to leave. Their uncle and guardian Juma Ahmadi documents their final moments in the country on his cell phone, painting a raw and intimate portrayal of their journey from Afghanistan. After a touching reunion with Dr. Sarmast on the Doha tarmac, the girls rejoin the ANIM musical community and begin preparing for their new life. Upon arriving in Portugal, we witness the girls blossom with new freedoms as they attend classes at the relocated ANIM and return to performing with the orchestra ensembles. Farida and Zohra are committed to keeping the cultural history of Afghanistan alive. For all that they enjoy their new lives in Lisbon, Farida and Zohra can't help but wish for a future when they can safely return to their homeland.

Lesley Rosenthal is President of Friends of ANIM, the US-based foundation that supports the school. In her professional life she is Chief Operating Officer and Corporate Secretary of The Juilliard School. Previously she served as Executive VP, General Counsel & Secretary of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York. Rosenthal graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School, and was later elected by alumni worldwide to a six-year term on the Harvard University Board of Overseers. Lesley, together with her husband, the jazz pianist Ted Rosenthal, are part-time residents of Otis.

Jessica Lustig is Treasurer of Friends of ANIM. In her professional life she is the Founding Partner and Managing Director of 21C Media Group. With more than 25 years in the music business, Managing Director Jessica Lustig brings a global perspective to 21C. Clients have included Google, the Global Fund and the World Bank. Lustig holds an undergraduate degree in music and an MBA in international business and marketing from New York University. Jessica, together with her family, are part-time residents of Great Barrington.

The Otis Preservation Trust (OPT) works with the Historical Commission to organize and preserve the history and heritage of Otis, MA for future generations by supporting efforts to preserve, restore, repurpose and educate about buildings, monuments, lands and memorabilia of Otis. OPT is a not-for-profit (501)(c)(3) organization operated for fundraising and educational purposes. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The event is in-person at the Otis Town Hall, One North Main Road, Otis, MA, 01253. To register or for more information, please visit: [www.otispreservationtrust.com](http://www.otispreservationtrust.com); or [www.townofotisma.com](http://www.townofotisma.com). There is no charge to attend this event. Donations are welcome. ☺

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# Cookie Love

By Stephanie Skinner



Sheila Coon

Photo: Stephanie Skinner

Sheila Coon opened her second shop, **Hot Oven Cookies**, on Elm Street in Westfield in late February 2023, taking over the spot where Mama Cakes used to serve up much-loved cupcakes. I

interviewed her in her shop in Springfield's Bicentennial Plaza where a steady stream of customers came in to buy her unique cookies for as little as \$20/dozen.

This mom of seven, grandma of 11, has the creativity of an innovator, the heart of a servant and the spirit of a tiger, all of which she's needed in her circuitous route to cookie entrepreneurship.

*Stephanie Skinner, (SWS): Where were you born?*

*Sheila Coon, (SC):* I'll spell it for you, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. (NB this is now a district of San Juan, with a long history of agriculture.)

*SWS: How did you get into the cookie business?*

*SC:* My mom started a baking business out of her kitchen, cookies, cheesecakes, donuts. And my grandma made limber (Puerto Rican frozen juice in a plastic cup), but she made it with good juice like coconut,

guava, not the regular stuff. I was raised by my grandparents because my mom came to the US to follow my dad – who has been a non-entity – and when my brother and I followed her, they left everything behind in Puerto Rico to come with us.

*SWS: So you always wanted to be a baker?*

*SC:* Yes and no. My grandpa wanted me to go to law school. But I became a teen mother at 15. But I got my GED at 16 and went to college to become a Paralegal – so I could make some money to fuel my goal to start a bakery. By the time I graduated, I already had four kids and everything was on me because although my husband was a master mechanic, he unfortunately had addiction problems and I couldn't leave the kids with him.

I am the kind of person who always has a Plan B. So I saw that Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) work would give me the kind of flexibility to raise my kids, basically alone. My family was no help. But this taught me, no moaning, just get on with it. I got my CNA certificate from Holyoke College in 2002. I did OK. I worked at a convent, bought a house and was happy that this conformed to my mommyhood.

*SWS: How did you get from there to here?*

*SC:* I still wanted to open a bakery. My grandpa gave me some money to rent space and start a bakery – but it failed although we had plenty of business. Then my grandparents needed assistance, so I had to quit doing everything to help them. I was so mad at God.

My grandmother died in 2013 but before she left she said, "you need to find a way to open up again." And like Elijah with the

dry bones (Ezekiel 37: 1-14) I had left my husband and gave a rebirth of my dream. But, by now I had lost everything, my car, my house ... I was in a homeless shelter with my kids.

But God is good. The wonderful people at the shelter went above and beyond to help me, and someone at church lent me a car 'til I was on my feet. I made promises to my kids.

*SWS: How on earth do you go from homeless to Hot Oven Cookies?*

*SC:* I met Paul Silva from Valley Venture Mentors (VVM) who convinced me to pitch a cookie truck (which I named Violet) business. I knew nothing about business. But from this came my purpose: to create an obtainable, sustainable business, by which I mean obtainable, affordable to start, sustainable; will deliver a sufficient cash flow with reasonable hours to allow a single parent (which is always in my heart) to start and run it (NB Sheila has the ultimate goal of franchising Hot Oven Cookies to bring this plan to full fruition).

I got a grant, started with cookie delivery, corporate catering and selling out at the Holyoke farmer's market!

I was finally sharing the cookie love with purpose and achievement!

And then VVM asked me to be in their accelerator program, SPARK, I developed a business plan, opened my first Hot Oven Cookies shop in 2018, moved to Springfield in 2020 and now we have Westfield, too, which my daughter runs.

Eventually, I'd like to open a shop toward Lee or Pittsfield (NB, STRONG pitch for Otis was delivered here!) and I'd like to do a hub and spoke business model; make the dough in Springfield and ship to the shops for baking. We also sell our ready to bake dough and ship it around the country!

*SWS: I can't tell you how much I admire your strength and faith, especially in yourself. Thank you.*

(And yes, I went home with a dozen different cookies. My favorite was the guava, but that's me!)

Take a short drive to Westfield (or a longer drive to Springfield) and try some of Sheila's cookies. They are creative, soft and made with purpose and love. What more can you ask of a humble cookie? ☺

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Music students in Mr. Flower's class learning about a new baritone horn donated to the school.

Photo: Frank Tolopko



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We invite submissions, news tips, photos, comments and suggestions including letters to the editor. For consideration they must be received by the **15 of the month prior to publication.**

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**Prepared by Sue Brofman**

*For inclusion in the Calendar,  
please send notices to*

**[oobservercalendar@yahoo.com](mailto:oobservercalendar@yahoo.com)**

**Note: Check events calendar  
[townofotisma.com](http://townofotisma.com) for up-to-  
date notifications/cancellations.**

## APRIL

### NOTE:

- Otis Town Hall is open from 8 am – 3 pm, Monday - Thursday.**
- Otis Library Winter Hours:**
  - **Wednesday – 11 am-5 pm**
  - **Thursday – 12 pm-6 pm**
  - **Friday – 11 am-5 pm**
  - **Saturday – 9 am-1 pm**
  - **Closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday**
- Rec Center – Temporarily Closed**
- Farmington River School Closed April 17 – April 21 for April Break**
- StoryWalk, children and adults will enjoy a reading of “Rachel Carlson” a Rookie Reader, while taking a walk on the Farmington River Trail, the StoryWalk will be up through April 8.**

Sat., April 1 - 7 pm, **Wanda Houston Band**, Knox Trail Inn. Call **(413) 269-4444** for information.

Sat., April 1, 8, 15 (**cancelled**), 22 and 29, 9:30 – 10:45 am, **Mat Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 16+, Kripalu Yoga, all levels, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, [otisrec@verizon.net](mailto:otisrec@verizon.net)**

Sat., April 1, **Easter Egg Hunt**, 10 am,

The Easter Bunny Will Be Here! A separate section for children under 3 years of age, Otis Town Hall

Mon., April 3, 10 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Haircuts**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Mon., April 3, 7 – 8 pm, **School Committee Meeting**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Mon., April 3, 5:30 pm, **Forum Hosted by the Berkshire Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby**, on federal and state climate legislation benefits and how the towns and cities in the Berkshires can access these monies. Among the panelists will be Paul Mark, State Senator. This event is free, Pittsfield's Berkshire Innovation Center, 45 Woodlawn Ave., Pittsfield, contact Pauline Banducci at **[pbanducci@gmail.com](mailto:pbanducci@gmail.com)** or **(413) 645-2035**.

Tues., April 4, 11, 18 and 25, 8:30 am, **Inspirations at <https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis>, Viktoria Seavey**, jumpstart your day with clear intention, centered inspiration and positive imagination, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, [otisrec@verizon.net](mailto:otisrec@verizon.net)**

Tues., April 4, 11, 18 and 25, 10 am, **Otis Play**, parent/child playgroup best for children infant – 5 years of age, this is a free program, no registration required

Tues, April 4, 8 am – 5 pm, **Nominations Papers Deadline**, Last day and hour to submit nomination papers for the Annual Town Election on May 23, 2023, Otis Town Hall

Tues, April 4, 8 am – 5 pm, **Caucus Request Deadline**, Last day and hour to request your name to be placed on the caucus ballot for the Annual Caucus on April 11, 2023, Otis Town Hall

Tues., April 4, 11 am – 12 noon, **Historical Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., April 5, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Traveling Foot Nurse**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**

Wed., April 5, 10:30 am, **Exercise Class for the Aging Body**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **[eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 6, 13, 20 and 27, 8:30 am, **Inspirations ONLINE** at <https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis>, **Viktoriya Seavey**, jumpstart your day with clear intention, centered inspiration and positive imagination, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541**.

Thurs., April 6, 13, 20 and 27, 10 - 11 am, **Chair Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 12+, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Thurs., April 6, 12 noon, **Council on Aging Out to Lunch** at Michael's Restaurant, 5 Elm Street, Stockbridge, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email **eilabell2@aol.com**

Thurs., April 6, 6 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board/Finance Budget Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., April 10, 4 -5 pm, **Board of Assessors Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., April 10, 7 - 9 pm, **Planning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., April 11, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., April 11, 7 - 8 pm, **Caucus**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., April 12, 10:30, Exercise Class for the Aging Body, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 13, 4 pm, **PTA Meeting (Zoom)**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Thurs., April 13, 6 pm, **Otis Library Meeting (In person and Zoom)**, inquire at **info@otislibraryma.org**

Thurs., April 13, 6 - 8 pm, Town of Otis

**Select Board/Finance Budget Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., April 18, 6 - 9 pm, **Conservation Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., April 19, 12 noon - 2 pm, **Council on Aging Potluck Lunch** with guest speaker Attorney Paula Almgren, Elder Law, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., April 19, 6 - 7:30 pm, **Cultural Council Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 20, 8 am - 12 noon, **Citizen's Petition Deadline**, Last day and hour to submit a citizen's petition for a town meeting article, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 20, 6 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board/Finance Budget Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 20, 7 - 8 pm, **Notice Otis Events, "Symphony of Courage,"** a short documentary film and lecture on Afghan music students re-located to Portugal, lecture by Lesley Rosenthal and Jessica Lustig, register at **www.otispreservationtrust.com**, Otis Town Hall

Fri., April 21, 11 am - 12 noon, **Council on Aging Brown Bag Program**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., April 24, 9 am - 2 pm, Council on Aging Hairdresser, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Tues., April 25, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., April 27, 6 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board/Finance Budget Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

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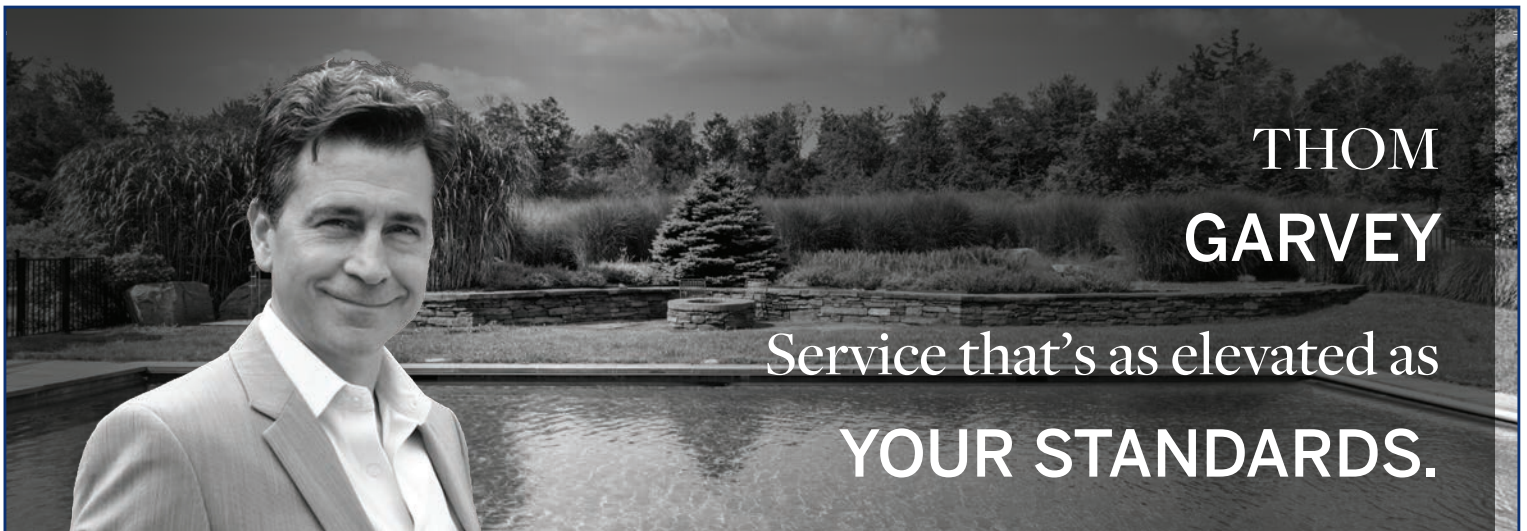
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