Early in March, the members of the Pack 19, Den 3 Cub Scouts converged on a local Hanover home workshop to learn about *Sialia sialis*, more commonly called the Eastern Bluebird. The scouts and their parents constructed fifteen birdhouses, and learned the proper use of claw hammers, screw drivers, and also learned how to tell an Eastern Bluebird from the more raucous and more commonly seen Blue Jay, by looking at illustrations and by listening to the different calls of each bird.

Den 3 is led by Den Leader Stuart Woronecki. Cub Scouts in Den 3 are Marcus Gada, Daylen Miner, Sean Rappold, Andrew Tolliver, and Jack Woronecki, all of whom hold the rank of Tiger.

Each scout took home at least one or two birdhouses, written instructions on the installation of bluebird houses and plans for how to build additional bird houses, and observed the cleaning out of several nest boxes that had been inhabited in the previous season. Bluebird houses are designed so that the box can be periodically opened so as to clean the nesting box by removing nest materials from the previous occupant, and in some cases removing the occupants that have wintered over, typically field mice. Late winter or early spring is the time to clean out the nest boxes for the early arrivals. Bluebirds have been spotted in Sprague already this season.

What you can do to attract bluebirds: There are many websites dedicated to informing the public about the Eastern Bluebird. One website that is a good place to start to obtain information and plans for birdhouses is the State of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection website. When you open to the DEP page, type "bluebird houses" in the "search" box, and it will call up everything you ever wanted to know about Eastern Bluebirds, including plans for your own bluebird house. Or, you can simply head out to one of several farm or hardware stores in the area to purchase a house already made.

*The bluebird carries the sky on his back.*

-- Henry David Thoreau *Journal* [1841]

~Submitted by Richard Waterman

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**EARTH DAY MARKET and CELEBRATION**

April 26, 2008, Saturday

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At the River Park, off Route 97, North Main Street, Baltic (where the Salmon Fishermen fish)

Farmers’ Market made up of local and area folk Artisans, musicians, Haiku and Poetry readings, Tree plantings Entertainment from before there was TV for kids of all ages

Drumming and all around fun celebrating Earth Day!

Come down for a day of celebration and support to make this a fun event.

We are open to any local musicians or artisans who want to join us in celebrating.

For more information about participating call Don Boushee at (860) 822-9808 or E-mail donaldboushee@sbcglobal.net

*Sponsored by Sprague’s Conservation Commission*
Fellow Veterans,

On Feb. 26 only a few members of American Legion Post 85 met at the Senior Center. Attendance was directly affected by the inclement weather that night.

American Legion District CDR Tom Foley attended and continues to give advice and support for our post. He brought more insurance applications, which are now available at Town Hall.

He also informed the post that information for transportation for disabled veterans is available from Congressman Courtney's Office. Call (860) 886-0139 regarding transportation to the veteran's hospital for appointments and other needs. Ask for Mr. Ed Burke.

Another point of interest is the American Legion is presently developing a veteran assistance program. The program is designed to assist all veterans recently returning from service. More information will be available at upcoming meetings. First Selectman Cathy Osten has pledged to work with CDR Tom Foley on developing this program in Sprague.

Osten informed attendees that the Town of Sprague is in the final planning phase to honor World War II veterans. District CDR Tom Foley and the members in attendance pledged to support this upcoming event. More information will be forthcoming.

Members agreed that post meetings remain informal until there is larger attendance and more interest. The post has grown and more members are planning to sign up. The present goal is to have approximately 40 members on the roll so that the charter can be maintained. We are a few short of that goal but are vigilant in efforts to increase membership. In April we would like to begin considering nominations for the various offices. We would like to be a functioning post with officers before Memorial Day. That's a goal we would like to make with help from the Town and surrounding area veterans. Tell your friends and relatives just returning from the service to consider joining our ranks.

We will continue to post updates in Our Town. The next Meeting will be held April 22 at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center. If you have any questions, please contact me at (860) 822-6945 after 5 p.m. or via e-mail address at tcoletti@yahoo.com.

~Tom Coletti
AL Post 85 Member

Eligibility requirements for the American Legion membership require of a copy of your DD 214 Form, service in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard during 9/20/90 to the present; 12/20/89 to 1/1/90; 8/24/82 to 7/31/84; 2/28/61 to 5/7/75; 6/25/50 to 1/31/55; 12/7/41 to 12/31/46; 4/6/17 to 11/11/18. Merchant Marine Veterans are eligible for WW II service. A $30 membership fee is also required.

The Park and Recreation Committee holds its regular meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in the courtroom on the second floor of the Town Hall. We are currently seeking new members.

Anyone interested should submit a letter of intent to the First Selectman's office, at any of the meetings, or e-mail noreenfoley@sbcglobal.net.

I would like to once again thank Eric and Cascades for their generous donation to establish a skateboard park. We are encouraging input from the youth of Sprague especially the "skateboarders". Feel free to drop by a meeting or e-mail Noreen Foley. I would also like to take this time to thank our First Selectmen, Cathy Osten, for all the support and assistance given to the Park & Recreation Committee, as well as Don Boushee from the Conservation Commission for all the support he is giving the committee, and a chance to have both committees working together on different events and projects.

The Big S Tag Sale will take place on Saturday, May 10, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Blanchette Field, in Baltic. Cost is $10 per space. The fee will be waived for any church or school wishing to hold a fund raiser there. Contact Noreen. Anyone interested should submit a letter of intent to the First Selectman's office, at any of the meetings, or e-mail noreenfoley@sbcglobal.net.

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LYME DISEASE SUPPORT GROUP

Hello everyone,

I want to thank everyone who came to our first meeting. It is so gratifying to finally connect with so many wonderful people after years of trying to get in touch with others dealing with this disease. It was a really good meeting. We had eight people, including myself. All had valuable information to share. Some talked about their frustration with getting treated and difficulties with getting family members to realize their limitations (or to realize that they might have it also). We shared a copy of the Burrascano guidelines and discovered that use of steroids (i.e., steroid shots for injuries) can have negative effects with Lyme sufferers. (See Burrascano guidelines for details.) I handed out a request for feedback as to how they would like to see the group develop and what kind of information they would like to learn and have covered. I think it was a very positive meeting. Our next meeting will be April 3 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in room E260 at Backus Hospital.

Future meetings will cover (among other topics) dealing with negativity from friends and family, Jarisch-Herxheimer reactions, and how to turn the tide and start feeling better.

I am working on starting another support group at Day-Kimball Hospital and one at L & M Hospital. Date and times will be announced once we are underway.

Thank you for your input and I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Kimberlee Pappa, Chapter Chair, Eastern CT Chapter, Lyme Disease Association, LDAECC, (860) 303-9020; easternctlda@yahoo.com; lymediseaseassociation.org

Celebration of Reading at Holy Family

The Academy of the Holy Family is celebrating reading at an Open House Wednesday, April 9, at 7 p.m. This “Night of 1,000 Stars” will be held in the school’s newly renovated library in the basement of the AHF classroom building.

Residents of Sprague are invited to attend and hear Baltic’s own children’s author, J. A. Osowski, read his tale, The Ant with Red Pants. Residents are also invited to read a favorite poem or passage from a book for five minutes each. There are 10 slots available for readers. Please call the AHF convent to reserve a reader’s slot, indicate attendance and to arrange handicapped access.

Come and enjoy an evening of listening, even if you don’t plan to read. Holy Family Academy is located at 54 West Main Street, Baltic. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

Access to the library will be the side entrance to the classroom building, which is across the driveway from the front of St. Mary’s Church. Handicapped access is available behind the convent building. Please let the Sisters know if you require accessibility: (860) 822-8241.

Commissioners complete Extension courses

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System recently announced that Jan Settje, Conservation Commission; Sandor Bittman, Planning and Zoning Commission; and Jean Macht, Zoning Board of Appeals, have completed the core sequences of courses in the Connecticut Land Use Academy program. This series provides a solid foundation for service on community land use commissions. Courses completed include: Roles and Responsibilities of Land Use Commissions; Legal Requirements and Processes in Land Use Decision-Making; and Map Reading for Site Plan Review.

OUR TOWN STAFF

Sprague ~ Our Town is a free monthly publication of the Town of Sprague, serving the communities of Baltic, Hanover and Versailles. Primarily funded by the Town, support is also provided by paid advertisements. Opinions expressed in Sprague ~ Our Town are not necessarily those of town officials or the community at large, but solely reflect those of the writer. Submissions may be edited for clarity and format as necessary. Libelous or obscene materials are not permitted.

Editor: Amy Lynn Reifsnyder
Editorial Assistant: Colette Hoffman
Production Staff: Jeannette Bastien; Al Hoffman, Cecile Gagnon, Rita Grenier, Al Grenier, Barbara Robitaille, John Ellis, Joe Osowski, Richard Waterman, Ruth, Dennison Allen, and whoever else wanders through the room the day we collate.

Feel free to volunteer! Good storytellers welcome. Information: (860) 456-1082.
Hello once again fellow Sprague citizens. Here we are in the beginnings of Spring. I am excited with anticipation for the sight of all the flowers and blooming trees screaming to come to life at the River Park and around our town. We will continue, with the help of our eager conservation volunteers, to further our beautification efforts of the park. The arrival of the salmon fisherman is a true sign of spring. Another exciting event coming to the River Park will be on April 26. The Conservation Commission will sponsor an Earth Day Market and Celebration. It will feature a Farmers Market of local and area folks selling their goods, musicians, artisans, local folks, tree plantings, spruce ups and all around fun. Please come down for a day of celebration and support to make this a fun event. We are open to any local musicians or artisans who want to join us to celebrate. For more information about participating call Don Boushee at (860) 822-9808 or e-mail donaldboushee@sbcglobal.net.

On another note we are also continuing our work up at the Mukluk Preserve. We are finishing up marking the boundaries and mending the fence from winter damage. Our next work day will be on Sat April 12. Meet at the cabin at 8 a.m.; work until noon. Thanks to all of the volunteers who have once again donated their time and energy. Also there will be a team of us going up to Hartford to meet with the Commissioner of the DEP to discuss the progress of the clean-up and our options as we progress.

I would also like to welcome Dave Heg as a new member of the Commission. Thank you for joining the team. There are two more openings for members. Please come to our next meeting on Monday, April 14 at 7 p.m.

Postal rates to increase

United States Postal Service services and products will be increasing on May 12. Prices for a first class letter will be 42 cents per one-ounce letter and 27 cents for postcard postage. Additional costs will remain at 17 cents for each additional ounce, but the non-machinable surcharge will increase to 20 cents (this applies to square greeting cards and bulky cards with music boxes and other metallic inserts). For more information on price changes and other services visit www.usps.com.

Weight Watchers coming to town.

Interested in joining Weight Watchers? Meetings will be held Fridays at 3:30 p.m. in the media center at Sayles School. The cost of the 12-week program is $152.

For more information, contact Kelli Shrewsbury at (860) 822-8264, ext. 142.

Mukluk Hikes

Dress accordingly

Bring water

Sunday April 20
10:30 a.m.
from the Grist Mill.
PLANNING AND ZONING

The Commission holds its regular monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the courtroom on the second floor of Town Hall. The agenda is posted on the bulletin board in the town clerk’s office on the Monday immediately preceding the meeting. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend. Members of the Commission are Shawn Bittman, Kord Jablonski, Joe Osowski, Paul Piezzo, Arthur Spielman, Jr., Gerald Stefon, and Richard Waterman. Alternate members are Kathleen Boushee, Mick Collins, and Christian Mueller. The Commission employs a part-time planner and consultant, Tom Seidel of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, and a zoning enforcement officer, Joe Smith. An audiotape, as well as written minutes of the Commission meetings, is available at the Town Hall. Additional is available at: www.ctsprague.org

HEALTH SCREENING SCHEDULE

VNA East of Mansfield Center offers the following screenings.

Blood Pressure Screening:
- Wednesday, April 2, Andover Old Fire Department, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; Willington Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.; Thursday, April 3, Florence Lord Marlborough, 11 a.m. to noon; Tuesday, April 8, Marlborough Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.; Wednesday, April 9, Chaplin Senior Center, 9 to 10 a.m.; Sprague Town Hall, noon to 1 p.m.;
- Tuesday, April 15, Hebron Senior Center, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.; Lebanon Fire Safety Complex, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; Wednesday, April 16, Scotland Town Hall, 12:30 to 1 p.m.; Ashford Senior Center, 1:30 to 3 p.m.;
- Thursday, April 17, Columbia Beckish Senior Center, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; Marlborough Town Hall, 2 to 3 p.m.; Tuesday, April 22, Franklin Senior Center, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Adult Health Screening:
Includes blood pressure, cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, blood glucose, earwax, and foot care. Blood pressure screening is free; other services have a nominal charge. Call (860) 456-7288 for appointments, costs, and information on other services.

From the Desk of the First Selectman

Just a quick note to update you on upcoming Town events and concerns.
The Town’s sidewalk/streetscape project on Main Street in Baltic is fast approaching. Again this project will be starting in early spring and finish by the summer.
Please plan on joining us on Saturday the 29 of March for a lively Earth Day. This event will allow us to spruce up in anticipation of warm lovely spring days.
The next joint meeting of all boards and commissions is scheduled for April 15 at 6 p.m. Each commission or board’s vision of the Town will be shared to ensure we are moving forward together.
In addition we will be having a Public Hearing on April 21 to determine which direction the Town would like to move in regarding the next small cities project. We need to apply in May for this next project.
I enjoyed my trip to Washington, DC; it is a privilege to represent you at our nation’s capitol. I met with Congressman Courtney who is working diligently to help us with our desperate water concerns.
As always it is my pleasure to work with all of you to restore, refurbish and bring Sprague to its deserved glory. Please look at the Community Calendar and find some time to attend a meeting; agendas are posted in Town Hall. If you don’t have the time to volunteer right now, come and get informed about the issues that will affect you and your family.

Cathy, First Selectman


Ah, Spring is upon us. Flowers are blooming, trees are budding and the grass will soon need mowing. Hopefully, this month will be a good month to get new trees planted. I’ve ordered flowering trees to plant on the bank between the River Park and the Head Race canal and on the river bank by the gazebo and maples to plant along Route 138. The three trees from the fall seem to have “wintered over” OK and will also get planted this month. The trees at the river Park will be planted during the “Earth Market” and Earth Day celebration. Any and all assistance is accepted.

Another “blooming” rite of Spring is garage, tag and yard sales. And...all the signs that typically go with those sales. For those folks that are “new” to town, as Tree Warden I choose to enforce the state ordinance that strictly prohibits the attaching of signs of any kind to any public trees or telephone poles along town road right-of-ways or on any town property. This not only protects the trees and the public (from 3” nails sticking out of poles along sidewalks) but also helps keep the town more pleasant to drive through and to be in. I recommend putting small stakes on the edge of the road or using the metal frame signs to advertise your sale.

While on the subject of signs, there are still some signs around town that are on public trees or poles. “Drive Slow”, “Cat Crossing”, “No Littering”, “No Trespassing” and “No Hunting” are some of the signs that need to be moved.

A reminder as folks get outside and start “sprucing up” yards – no trees within the town right-of-way may be removed without written permission. Cutting down public trees to improve views, avoid raking or any other reason is prohibited. If you have a tree you think needs to be removed, contact me or the First Selectman for an assessment of the tree.

~ Dave Gustafson

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of appeals meets the first Monday of every month when we have business. We are in need of more members. We have 4 of the 5 members required and we need 3 additional alternates.

Our purpose is as follows:

To hear and decide where it is alleged that there is an error in any order, requirement or decision made by an official charged with the enforcement of the Zoning regulations; hear and decide all matters including special exceptions and special exceptions under section 8-2g upon which it is required to pass by the specific terms of the zoning by-laws, ordinance or regulation; and to determine and vary the application of the zoning by-laws, ordinance or regulation in harmony with the general purpose and intent and with due consideration for conserving the public health, safety, convenience, welfare and property value solely with respect to a parcel of land.

The above was an excerpt from the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-6 in part.

Current members are Ray Arpin, Chairman; Dave Petrowsky, Secretary; Jean Macht, Ray Bernier, Regular Member.

At this time I would like to thank Kevin Generous for seven plus years of dedicated service to the ZBA serving several years as secretary. His thoughtful concern and insightful input will be sorely missed. Kevin leaves a regular member term that expires May 1, 2010.

Persons interested in becoming a member of the ZBA should submit a letter of interest along with a resume if one’s available to the Board of Selectmen for consideration.

~ Raymond P. Arpin, Chairman
AUCTION! AUCTION! AUCTION!

To benefit

Boy Scout Troop 19

Saturday, May 10, 2008
at
Baltic Fire House
Route 138, Baltic

Nelson Courtemanche,
Auctioneer
Refreshments available

Information: Harry Segerstrom Sr.
(860) 822-6235

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

Scholarship money is available for students of Holy Family Academy. Eighth grade girls who want to learn, go to college and who exhibit good behavior may apply. Contact Sr. Mary Loreto, SCMC, Academy of the Holy Family, 54 W. Main St., Box 691, Baltic, CT 06330-0691; www.ahfbaltic.org, (860) 822-9272.

Coming Soon!
Meet your neighbor:
Lori Trombley, Senior Coordinator for the Town of Sprague.

Arthur Basto Archaeological Society

Friday, April 25, 2008
Sprague Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: John Pfieffer
"Pirates and Privateers of CT"

HYDRANTS TO BE FLUSHED

Todd Hastings, superintendent of Sprague Water and Sewer Authority, announces the Authority will be flushing hydrants during the week of April 21. Water pressure may be reduced slightly and a little discoloration of water may occur during this procedure. The Authority regrets any problems this may cause but the system must be flushed periodically to maintain quality water and to insure hydrants are operable in case of emergency. If you have any questions, call (860) 822-3005.

FROM THE EDITOR:
Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. The writer's name, address and a contact phone number must be included with each submission. Because the focus of Our Town is community events, there may be times when there is simply not enough space to run opinions.

Submissions may be e-mailed to
OurTownNews@gmail.com,
or mailed to Town Hall, P.O. Box 677, Baltic, CT 06330. I can be reached by telephone at (860) 456-1082. Thanks again for sharing your news and events with Our Town.

~Amy Lynn Reifsnyder

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

MONDAY, MAY 26
12:30 PM

SUPPORT OUR VETERANS
To the Editor:

I know why you are tired the first of April, 31 days of Marching. As I have watched the news each morning before going to teach my Seminary lesson, I have felt sadness. Many things bring this feeling. The one I want to talk about today is teen drivers. We have lost too many young men and women to car accidents. I started to think about when I was a teen driver. Do cars today have too much power and go too fast. I had cars that would go 120 miles per hour. Do the youth of today want to show off more than when I was a youth? I do not believe today’s youth are a whole lot different than we were. Will more laws cure the problem? More driver training before they receive their license? Here some of my thoughts. Each of us has someone whose example we look to. Have you ever noticed how many people do not even slow at a stop sign let alone stop? There have been many times that someone has passed me on Main Street, Baltic, as soon I we came to the Rock (Pine) Pond because I was driving about the speed limit (25mph). As an adult we need to set proper examples. I believe today there are also something other things that are different. There are many more cars and trucks on the road at any given time. We as a people are always in a hurry. We need to slow down and enjoy life. Organize out time and have fun. This is all the time we have in this life. Remember the life you save may be mine. Take some time to go for a walk at the Mukluk Lands or the Reservoir Property and enjoy Spring.

Dennison Allen, Versailles

To The Editor:

How do you determine what’s in store for your future? There is no telling for certain, however the choices you make today play a significant role in your eventual outcome and legacy. The opportunity exists for us to gamble on our future constantly. We can walk into any convenience store and drop down our hard earned money in hopes of striking a Mega-Double-Tripler but more often than not end up a dollar short in our pocket-books when we’re grocery shopping. How about going to the casino and slipping quarter after quarter in a slot machine that promises super riches but just leaves us with a buzzing in our ears and our eyes unable to adjust to natural light. The lottery and casinos promise us that we can’t win if we don’t play with what little resources we have or with our future, for that matter. A similar desire exists for those who wish to offer the Mukluk property to private development or contractors in search of quick tax relief. Those who wish to gamble away a near pristine land abundant in wildlife, naturalistic activities, history and biodiversity for a one in one million pay day should first consider the future before acting on their impulses. Creating a green corridor up the Shetucket, preserving land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational use to enhance tourism are long term benefits to the town of Sprague. Benefits of Mukluk that have the best odds and don’t require the luck of the draw.

David Heg, Sprague
The Sprague Senior Center is welcoming all young seniors in the community to enjoy health services, programs, trips, informational presentations, luncheons and social time with friends. Stop in and visit, we want to give something back to you! Transportation is available. Also, did you know that you can receive nutritious meals delivered right to your home? Eligibility requirements include: aged 60 or over, homebound due to illness and the inability to drive during recuperation time. If this sounds like you or someone you know please call 885-2745 for more information concerning the TVCCA Meals on Wheels program.

HEALTH NEWS

- **THE VNA (VISITING NURSES ASSOCIATION) WILL BE AT THE SENIOR CENTER**
  for Blood Pressure Screenings on Wednesday, April 9th from 12-1
- **Dr. Walter, the Podiatrist will be here on Tuesday, April 22nd**
  from 12-3. Call his office for an appointment @ 1-800-599-4797
- **Beltone New England will be here on Wednesday, April 9th from**
  1-4pm to check hearing aids and batteries. No appointment is necessary. This is a free service for seniors.

LUNCHEONS

WE WILL BE HAVING A “SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT SPRAGUE” CATERED HAM LUNCHEON ON THURSDAY APRIL 17TH, 2008 @ 12:00PM. THE PRICE IS $6 PER PERSON. USE THE SIGN UP SHEET AT THE CENTER OR CALL AHEAD. OUR SPEAKER WILL BE CHELSEA GROTON BANK ON BANK FRAUD @ 1:00PM

Computer classes for Seniors are now being offered at the center.
Call today 822-3000x203

The next Smile meeting will be Thursday April 24th @ 1:00pm ~ Rose Levine from the Alzheimer’s Association will be our speaker @ 2:00

~ SENIOR CENTER COMMUNITY CAFÉ ~

The senior center is open M-TH from 9-4 and Friday from 9-12:30
Meals are served daily at a suggested donation of $2.50 and salads $3.00. Please call Denise Lance, Meal Site Manager at least 48 hours in advance for your meal reservation @ 822-3000 x 210.

Registration for trips will begin on April 1, 2008