



Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year." As we welcome the new year, let's take a moment to reflect on all the joy experienced within our community in 2023 and then look ahead to the wonderful new opportunities for connection we have before us in 2024. Make your New Year's resolution to take Emerson's advice and approach each new day as an opportunity to deepen friendships, try new activities, and find joy in time spent with others. When you're lucky enough to live where your friends become family, then it's easy to make every day the best day of the year. Stay Pomperaug PROUD!

Warmly, **Kevin Moshier**, *Executive Director*

Residents Enjoy Holiday Décor from Different Eras on the **Webb Deane Stevens Museum Trip!**

One of the most beautiful holiday displays in the area is at the Webb Deane Stevens Museum in Wethersfield, Connecticut. This preserved historic site celebrates the robust legacy of the American spirit and is owned and operated by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Connecticut. Members of the NSCDA are all direct lineal descendants of prominent colonial settlers. During the holidays, the museum decorates the estate with décor from different eras. Pomperaug Woods residents recently took a docent-led tour of this beautiful historic site.

"The docent took our group through all three houses representing different time periods from the mid 1700's to mid 1800's," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "Every time I go, I learn something new. And the decorations from the different eras were just beautiful."

"It was so interesting to see how they cooked over 200 years ago," said resident May Bernhard. "We saw an original fireplace with a rotisserie and cast-iron pots and kettles. There was authentic wallpaper and furniture throughout the three houses. It was all beautifully preserved."

"I'd never been to the Webb Deane Stevens Museum before," said resident Peggy Jett. "It was very interesting. One house was decorated very plainly to represent a colonial Christmas. One was decorated as a Victorian Christmas with a German motif of a tree and popcorn wreaths. And one was decorated in more of a modern age with glass ornaments and electric lights. The decorations are all beautiful but represent such vastly different lifestyles. I enjoyed the trip!"



From left to right, back row: Sandy Milkes, Judith Rowley, May Bernhard; front row: Ellie Crystal, Lyn Atkinson, and Peggy Jett.

Residents Kick Off the Holidays with **Tree Lighting** and **Menorah Lighting** Ceremonies!

The best part of celebrating the holidays at Pomperaug Woods is coming together with friends to experience the joy of different holidays at our Tree Lighting and Menorah Lighting festivities.

"This year's tree lighting was a ball," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "Larry Batter was at the piano. We served mulled cider, egg nog, and cookies. New residents are always invited to bring an ornament to hang on the tree. Santa arrives with gifts of Fascia's chocolates for everyone, and it's a big wow moment when he touches the tree with his cane and all the lights go on. And this year he brought some guests with him."



"He brought the Rockettes!" said resident Peggy Jett. "Well, it was really the Pomperaug Woods Resident Rockettes including myself, May Bernhard, Rita Kogstad, and Beverly Robertson. We hammed it up to 'Jingle Bell Rock,' with Santa joining the chorus line. It was such a fun night."

"The Menorah Lighting is another beautiful tradition at Pomperaug Woods," said resident Ida Ressler. "On the first night we hear the history of the Festival of Lights, and we sing three blessings in English and in Hebrew, thanking God for past miracles. Sherman London chooses a resident in attendance to light the candles – all religions

welcome. It is an honor and good deed to light them. We try to involve as many people as possible."

"I've been using my Hanukkah prayer book for over 50 years," said resident Sherman London. "It's nothing fancy, more of a little pamphlet really, but it's the one I used with my sons when they were little. It means so much to me that I now get to share it with the Pomperaug Woods residents who join our ceremony and light a candle. Until he became ill, Harry Kamel would sing the blessings every evening. It's really true that this

is a community where friends become family."

Friendship and acceptance are at the heart of every holiday celebrated at Pomperaug Woods.



Happy Holidays!

It's a HIT — The Pomperaug Players perform "A Run Through With Scrooge"!

Watching "A Christmas Carol" is a holiday tradition, but the Pomperaug Players put a new twist on an old story, performing "A Run Through With Scrooge."

"Resident May Bernhard founded the Pomperaug Players," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "She chooses the script, directs, and acts in the plays. She is amazing!"

Resident Joel Abramson played Scrooge. "I've never acted a day in my life," said Joel, "but I joined the Pomperaug Players and I've had a ball. All the credit goes to May for creating this drama group. I think it's healthy to push yourself to try new things and get out and socialize. That's what being in Pomperaug Players does for me."

"Our group does reading performances," said May. "We take away the pressure to memorize lines, everyone relaxes, and the performance just takes off. When you get up on stage, it's your chance to be someone you're not. It's FUN! I'd like to thank our entire cast including Joel Abramson, Fran Leili, Joe Longo, Marty Swift, Mary Ann Slocum, Sandy Bell, Janet Hansen, Yvette Mickenberg, Fred Tesch, and Lea Embree. They were all exceptional. I'd also like to thank Lisa Huebenthal and Ann Moore for their help with props and costumes, and many thanks to Floyd Higgins on piano and Marilyn Simon as assistant to the director. And finally, I'd like to thank all the residents who came to watch the show. We appreciate the support. We'll see everyone in the spring for the next Pomperaug Players performance!"



Residents Create Whimsical Victorian Carolers to Decorate the Garden Room!



A gorgeous Christmas tree took center stage in the Garden Room for the month of December, and residents contributed to the holiday cheer by creating a fanciful group of Victorian Carolers to flank each side of the tree.

Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life, spearheaded the project. "The residents in the Creative Arts class saved the brown paper that comes wrapped around their laundry delivery each week," said Lisa.

"They crumpled the paper into a ball for the head, covered it in wheat paste, and then attached it to a Styrofoam body. Each figure was mounted on a clay base, and residents created clothes and props out of paper, and then painted it all. We set them up along the windows, sprinkled a little fake snow all around, and voila, we have our very own carolers!"

Resident Lea Embree created an imposing figure, complete with white curly hair and a monocle. "I like to think he's a judge," laughed Lea. "There are nine figures altogether, and each one is so different, yet they all work together so beautifully. Lisa's Creative Arts class is so inspiring. She brings out everyone's hidden talents. I am always amazed at what we create together."

"It is great fun to be part of the class," said resident Nancy Desmond. "We enjoy each other's company so much. Lisa's creativity is the magic touch!"

**Check the calendar for the day/time of the Creative Arts class.
You never know what amazing project will be next. All are welcome!**

Resident Art Is at the Heart of the **"Make-It" Tree!**

How do you make the holidays meaningful? You make art from the heart!

"When residents put their heart and soul into different art projects in my Creative Arts class, I can't bear to part with them," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "So, I have a closet bursting with amazing pieces of art. I came up with the idea for the 'Make-It Tree' so I could show off all of these little gems. There are tiny Currier & Ives houses, and little poseable circus figures. There are delicate origami dresses, and small canvas paintings. There are even adorable miniature knit sweaters from the Needlers Club. The tree is a reminder of all the happiness to be found in this community. I hope it reminds everyone that it's up to each of us to choose to make life wonderful, make it interesting, and make it funny."



Residents took poseable wooden figures and dressed them up in paper origami dress art and placed them on the Make-It Tree, including resident Debby Cornwell's origami art. "It's great to look back on what the Creative Arts class has done over the years," said Debby. "Different people have different ideas and viewpoints, and it all comes together in a beautiful way to spread joy."

Resident Jean Berechid's origami dress art was turned into an angel tree topper. "It's like my angel is giving her blessing to all the artists who created art for the tree as well as to all the residents who take a minute to enjoy the art. I'm really honored."

"The Make-It tree might become a new Pomperaug Woods tradition," said Lisa. "It's filled with great talent and great memories."

The Shoreline Ringers Wow Residents with a **Holiday Handbell Concert!**

There is nothing like the sheer joy of a handbell concert, and the Shoreline Ringers holiday concert was a truly uplifting experience for Pomperaug Woods residents.

"The Shoreline Ringers is one of the best handbell ensembles in the region, if not the country," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "We are so lucky to have them perform just for us, right at Pomperaug Woods."



"It was mesmerizing how the whole choir was like choreographed dancers, moving from table-to-table to cover all the bells and chimes," said resident Sandy Bell. "I loved it!"

"It was glorious!" said resident Nancy Desmond. "The new director did a marvelous job!"

"It was absolutely fabulous," said resident Lea Embree. "What a wonderful way to celebrate the season with the glorious sound of bells."

The Shoreline Ringers has been wowing audiences with the magic of handbells since 2006. The group is composed of 13-16 ringers, all with a depth of experience that is unmatched in other handbell ensembles. "We perform concerts and host educational events," said Susan Ewing, Shoreline Ringer President. "Our repertoire includes everything from Bach to the Beatles to beautiful compositions written specifically for handbells. Our choir has performed a concert at Carnegie Hall, as well as concerts with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and with the US Coast Guard Band. We really enjoyed performing at Pomperaug Woods. The audience was very enthusiastic, and we hope to be back to perform many holiday concerts to come!"

Pomperaug Woods Resident Contributes to Southbury Anniversary Quilt Project!

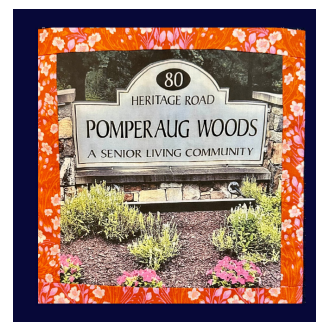


Pomperaug Woods resident, Nancy Wallace, is a lifelong quilter. When the Southbury Arts & Culture Committee invited local quilters to contribute to a special quilt celebrating the town's 350th anniversary, Nancy jumped at the chance. "Quilters were challenged to create a piece of quilting art depicting what makes Southbury so meaningful to them," said Nancy. "I immediately knew that I wanted to do a square that featured Pomperaug Woods."

"Each quilt square tells a story, intricately created with exceptional precision and geometry," said Kelly Keenan, a member of the Southbury Arts & Culture Committee.

Volunteers from the Southford Falls Quilters group assembled the quilt that measures an impressive 10 feet square. It features more than 50 squares and was framed and hung in the Town Hall beside the quilt that was created for the 300th anniversary. All of the quilters were invited to a private unveiling of the quilt at the Southbury Library, where they were each asked to speak about their quilting block and what it meant to them. "I have lived in Southbury for 11 years," said Nancy. "The first ten years I lived in Heritage Village. Then I moved to Pomperaug Woods. I love living here. It is a cheerful environment, with lots of activities and entertainment, really good food, and the staff couldn't be better. I felt that Pomperaug Woods should be represented in the quilt because they are an important part of the fabric of this community."

Thank you, Nancy, for representing Pomperaug Woods so beautifully in the Southbury anniversary quilt. You make us Pomperaug PROUD!



Everyone was Dancing in the Aisles at the Doug Feron Concert!

Pomperaug Woods was center stage for a fabulous Frank Sinatra Tribute Concert, featuring Doug Feron and his 6-piece Big Band. "Pomperaug Woods is a huge supporter of the arts," said Lisa Huebenthal, Director of Community Life. "Doug Feron performs all over the country in concert halls and jazz clubs, so it's a thrill to welcome him here to perform for the first time."

Packed with all of Sinatra's greatest hits, Doug performed favorites like "I've Got the World on a String" and "Fly Me to the Moon." The 90-minute concert was a huge hit with residents.



"It was such a fun concert," said resident Fran Leili. "So many of these songs were favorites from my childhood."

"I enjoyed the concert immensely," said resident Nancy Hubbard. "The songs written by Paul Anka were my favorite. Lisa does a wonderful job arranging these concerts for us."

"We had a ball performing at Pomperaug Woods," said band leader, Doug Feron. "They were a terrific audience. After the concert, it was a pleasure to mingle and chat with folks. Everyone was so genuine and warm. And it was a special treat that this community has a wonderful grand piano all tuned up and ready to go. Our 6-piece show band includes a keyboard, woodwinds, trombone, trumpet, bass, and drums. Instead of going with our keyboard, our pianist used the grand piano. We do a beautiful tribute to New England that features the songs, 'Autumn Leaves' and 'Moonlight in Vermont,' and singing with just that gorgeous piano as accompaniment, boy that was a kick. Thank you for a great night Pomperaug Woods!"

Join us for Technology Class with **Andrew Chapin!**

Whether you're trying to make sense of your computer, tablet, or mobile phone, there is so much to gain by putting the power of tech to work for you. Come to Technology Class with Andrew Chapin and learn how to get the most out of your tech devices!

"It's easy to feel frustrated when you can't troubleshoot a problem with your phone, laptop, or printer," said Andrew. "This class teaches you what your devices are capable of and how to solve an issue when you hit a speedbump."

Andrew's first Technology Class covered Security. "We talked about how to create strong passwords that are easy to remember," said Andrew, "what apps to download, how to delete apps you no longer need, and how to deal with scam calls so they won't get taken advantage of. In the second class we did a deep dive into the mobile phone, with ideas on how to make it easier to use. We talked about how to dictate a text instead of typing it, how to share a photo, and how to send or delete emails on both an iPhone and an Android."

The Technology Class has had a terrific turnout, with 15-20 residents attending every session. "We have a lot of fun in class," said Andrew. "And if residents have a tech issue before my next class, they can always pop into the Pomperaug Woods Computer Lab to ask my son, James, for help every Thursday 10:30am – 11:30am. We're a great team!"



Check the Activities Calendar for the day/time of the next Technology Class with Andrew Chapin. All are welcome!

Meet **Brielle Hatstat**, Pomperaug Woods' New Human Resources Assistant!

Brielle Hatstat is a people person. "I worked in accounting for a bit," said Brielle. "While I enjoyed the job, I really felt my strengths lie in working with people. I was lucky enough to join Pomperaug Woods in October as the Human Resources Assistant, and I couldn't be happier. Liz Sheehan, the Human Resources Director, takes the time to teach me, and I am learning so much. I really feel like this is the place I'm meant to be."

As the Human Resources Assistant, Brielle wears a lot of hats. "I schedule interviews for Liz, work on pre-employment documentation, conduct the New Hire Orientation, and onboard new employees," said Brielle. "I'm also part of the Employee Engagement Committee, which is a lot of fun. Right now, we're working on planning the holiday party. The culture here is so supportive, and the Administration does everything they can to help individuals succeed both personally and professionally. It's very motivating."

Brielle has also learned a lot from the residents. "Everyone here has lived such full lives," said Brielle. "Then they join the community and continue pursuing their interests, making new friends and celebrating milestones along the way. It's quite inspiring."

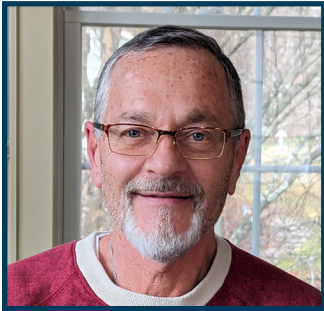
Outside of work, Brielle loves thrifting vintage clothes and going to Music Festivals. "One fun fact about myself — I own over 35 plants, ten of which are cacti that are nearly as tall as I am," said Brielle. "They may be prickly, but I see beauty in all of them!"

Welcome, Brielle. We're so happy to have you as part of the Pomperaug Woods family!



Pomperaug Woods Board Member Spotlight:

Kevin Hellriegel, Board Secretary



Board member Kevin Hellriegel has a unique connection to Pomperaug Woods. "I was the Chief Operating Officer at Heritage Village for 18 years, so I was very familiar with Pomperaug Woods," said Kevin. "I also have two family members that chose Pomperaug Woods — my mother-in-law and my father. So, when I saw an advertisement last summer seeking new members to join the Board of Directors, I felt I had both professional and personal insights that might be relevant to the conversations Board members were having."

Joining the Pomperaug Woods Board of Directors is a 3-year commitment, and Kevin likes the focus on the future. "I'm most interested in contributing to the long-term sustainability of this community," said Kevin. "I have always found Pomperaug Woods to be an incredibly uplifting place. The staff is genuine and friendly. I'm impressed with the entire operation. I want to build on that positivity moving forward. Each Board member is on a subcommittee, and I'm part of the facilities committee. That's the best place for me to share my career experience in property management. I want to help spearhead projects that will contribute to the best quality of life for our residents now and for many years to come."

Kevin has been retired for five years but is certainly keeping busy outside of his Board of Directors duties. "My wife, Susan, and I have been married for 44 years," said Kevin. "We have three children and four grandchildren, so that keeps us on the go. I spend lot of time on home improvement projects at my kids' houses. I guess property management really is my passion!"

Thank you, Kevin, for all you do for Pomperaug Woods. Welcome to the Board!

Meet the New Pomperaug Woods' Resident Council!

The Pomperaug Woods Resident Council is pleased to welcome three new members: Fran Leili, Fred Tesch, and Lyn Atkinson. They join current Council members Peggy Gloria, Mervyn Clay, and Peggy Jett. Fran Leili has been chosen as President, with Fred Tesch as Vice President and Mervyn Clay as Secretary.

The Resident Council is a vital part of the community, connecting residents to the Pomperaug Woods Administration and Board of Directors. Resident Fran

Leili is looking forward to joining the group. "I want to help maintain what is so special about Pomperaug Woods, and communicate what residents like to the Board of Directors."

Resident Fred Tesch is also excited to be a part of the Council. "My friends encouraged me to run, and I'm delighted to be able to make a contribution."

Resident Lyn Atkinson is looking forward to giving back as a part of the Council. "I asked the Council for picnic tables so my grandkids and I could eat outside together," said Lyn. "They helped make that happen. Now I get to help others with their requests."

The Council meets the first Monday of every month and is open to all residents at 9:30am to share suggestions, ask questions, or make requests. The Council then presents that input to the Administration. If you have an idea or feedback, stop into the next Resident Council meeting. Hope to see you there!



From left to right, Fran Leili, Fred Tesch, Lyn Atkinson, Mervyn Clay, and Peggy Jett. Not Pictured: Peggy Gloria



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