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Annual Meeting

Chamber Hall of Fame Induction

Please Join Us

Thursday, April 6, 2023

11:30 a.m.

Torrington Country Club, 250 Torrington Road, Goshen

Keynote Speaker



**Governor
Ned Lamont**

Hall of Fame Inductees



Carol Crain
*Primerica
Financial Services*



Paul McLaughlin
*Northwest
Community Bank*

Election of Directors

Michael Rooke PhD, *Northwestern CT Community College*
 George Logan, *Aquarion Water Company*
 Stephen Ivain, *Chorus Angelicus*

Recognition of Retiring Board Members

Alan Colavecchio, *Colavecchio Design*
 Kathleen Katrenya, *Torrington Savings Bank*
 John Seagrave, *Barron Financial Group*
 Richard Whitbeck, *Innovative Health Concepts*

Lunch Options:

- Chicken Italiano (GF)
- Grilled Sirloin (GF)
- Seafood Stuffed Sole
- Penne Primavera (Vegetarian)

Thank you to our Sponsors



\$45 NW CT Chamber Members - \$60 Non-Members.
 Please RSVP via email to info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

RSVP by March 31, 2023

Questions or special dietary needs? Call 860-482-6586

*From the Desk of Our
President & CEO*

JOANN RYAN



Collaboration is Critical

I came across an article found on the website that I had saved: In Today's Process-Driven Workplace, Collaboration is King published by W.P. Carey. The commentary refers to a book written by Evan Rosen, The Culture of Collaboration: Maximizing Time, Talent and Tools to Create Value in the Global Economy. It supports the belief that no one reaches success or positive results without collaboration.

The elements that are evident when collaboration works are noteworthy and listed below with an explanation of how the Chamber, with the support of many others, is proving that businesses must work together.

Trust: Belief in others and confidence in their talents is vital in our efforts to improve the economic climate. One of the most powerful Chamber initiatives is the collaboration with the NW Regional Workforce Investment Board and the Next Gen Partnership. It is also beneficial that we are working with the Danbury and Waterbury Chambers.

Sharing: Facilitating a project or giving out information on how something is accomplished is critical to the success of many programs. We are so pleased with our new home at 59 Field Street with a Conference Room available to our members and other organizations for private meetings.

Goals: The Chamber's goal is prominently hanging on my bulletin board so that we can determine if all that we do will "promote growth while enhancing the quality of life in NW CT."

Innovation: No longer can business maintain the status quo. We have been forced into a ZOOM world that is efficient and effective. I still miss the personal interaction but thankfully our office is equipped so that hybrid meetings can be held on a regular basis.

Constructive Confrontation: The exchange of ideas and differing viewpoints is vital in making decisions and reaching consensus. Please join us on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Government Relations Committee meeting. The committee is working on the 2023 Legislative Agenda available on the Chamber's website and in the office for you to review.

Communication: We believe strongly in getting our message out to everyone through newspapers, radio, TV, web, email and networking. The Chamber's monthly newsletter is on the website filled with everything you need to know.

Collaboration will certainly drive your business. Let us follow these cultural elements and continue to work together to prove that collaboration is critical and valuable.

Welcome Karen Kuhl

Our new Director of Programs & Events

Index

Ads	Page 4
Ad Pricing	Page 20
Calendar	Page 23
Chamber News	Pages 14-21
Committee Reports	Page 19
Corporate Partner News	Pages 4-5
Member in the Spotlight	Page 13
Member News	Pages 7-13
New Members	Page 7
News and Notes	Page 22
Premier Members	Page 7
Special News	Page 3



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Torrington, CT 06790
p 860.482.6586 • f 860-489-8851

JoAnn Ryan, President & CEO, joann@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

Karen Kuhl, Director of Programs & Events

karen@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

Pamela LaRosa, Director One-Stop Workforce Operations,

pam@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

Sharon Kunay, Administrative Assistant,

info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

Norma Jean Sweet-Loverin, Accounting,

accounting@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

DJ Murphy, Membership Sales Representative,

membership@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

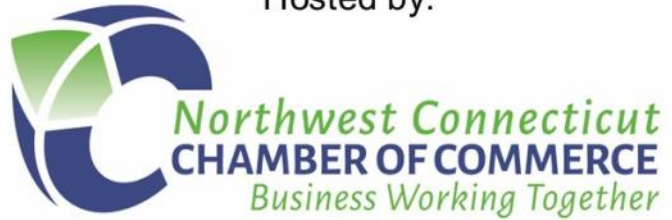
nwctchamberofcommerce.org

Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/nwctchamber

Special NEWS



Hosted by:



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

CITY HALL AUDITORIUM (2ND FL)
140 MAIN STREET, TORRINGTON

JOB SEEKERS

The Job Fair is **FREE** for attendees and open to the public

Hundreds of job openings in a wide range of industries

Bring multiple copies of your resume and dress for success!

Visit nwctchamberofcommerce.org for a full list of participating employers



Media Partners:



BUSINESSES

All industries and businesses welcome!
\$100.00 for companies looking to hire!
Includes table and lunch for employers

To reserve a table, email JoAnn@nwctchamberofcommerce.org



BUSINESS
with
BREAKFAST

Join us at our morning roundtable discussion

BUSINESS *with* **BREAKFAST**

Enjoy easy networking over a light breakfast. Each attendee will then give a 30-second “commercial” for their business followed by a brief presentation by our host.

Tuesday, March 28, 8:00 a.m.

Hosted by



Ebner Camps

456 Birge Park Rd, Harwinton

Join us for a Special Ribbon Cutting

Tomorrow Looks Great From Here



We're here to help you reach your financial goals, now and in the future.

PERSONAL | BUSINESS

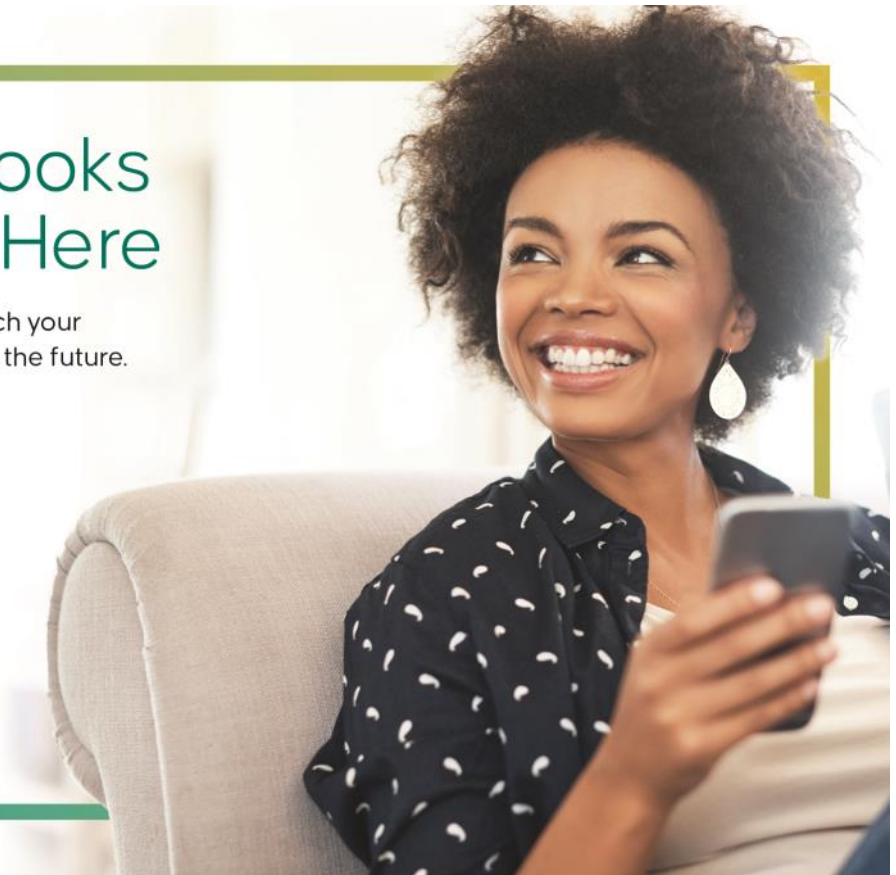
Visit us online, give us a call, or stop in and see us!



Torrington Savings Bank

TorringtonSavings.Bank
(860) 496-2152

EQUAL HOUSE LENDER | MEMBER FDIC





Francesca Kracht Named Senior Vice President, Chief Risk Officer

Francesca Kracht was named Senior Vice President, Chief Risk Officer of Thomaston Savings Bank. Kracht transitioned into this role following the retirement of former SVP, Chief Risk Officer, Nancy O'Donnell.

Francesca joined the Bank 15 years ago as Assistant Vice President, Compliance/BSA Officer. She has held various positions of increasing responsibility throughout her time with the Bank. Francesca most recently served as Vice President, Senior Project Officer, and had been in that position since 2016. In her new role, Ms. Kracht is responsible for oversight of the Bank's Risk, Compliance, Bank Secrecy Act/Anti-Money Laundering, Project Management and Information Security areas.

"I am pleased to have Francesca move into the Chief Risk Officer role. She was not only an integral part in establishing our Project Management area but also provides dedicated leadership to the Risk Department. Very well deserved, congratulations!" – Stephen Lewis, President & CEO, Thomaston Savings Bank

Francesca played an instrumental part in completing the Bank's core conversion in 2013 and spearheaded the formation of the Project Management area of the Bank's Risk Department in 2016. She was named a New Leader in

Banking by the Connecticut Bankers Association in 2017 for her outstanding work at the Bank and is a graduate of the Connecticut School of Finance and Management.



**Francesca Kracht, SVP,
Chief Risk Officer,
Thomaston Savings Bank**

Francesca is an active member of the community serving as a Board Member for the Town of Litchfield Board of Ethics and The Paige J. Batten Memorial Scholarship Fund. She previously served on the Board of Litchfield Tri-Town Youth Baseball & Softball Little League as well as the Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce. She resides in Litchfield with her two children Olivia and Russell.

About Thomaston Savings Bank

Established in 1874, Thomaston Savings Bank is one of the strongest state-chartered mutual savings banks in the state. Headquartered in Thomaston, the Bank operates 15 full-service branches throughout western Connecticut. The cornerstone of their business philosophy is

building long lasting relationships with customers by providing financial services of the highest quality and value. For over 140 years, Thomaston Savings Bank has helped support the goals, dreams and future of its customers by remaining committed to community.

To learn more about Thomaston Savings Bank and all the services they offer, visit ThomastonSB.com.

Congratulations Francesca!!!



FREE PROGRAM STARTING March 1!

Make 2023 the year you QUIT SMOKING FOR GOOD

Join our proven and effective interactive classes:

- Learn about the physical, social and emotional impact of smoking
- Discover the benefits of a smoke-free lifestyle and healthy nutrition
- Follow individualized goals and quitting techniques
- Certified facilitators to encourage and support you every step of the way

Classes will be held from 4-5:30 pm in the Memorial Building Conference Room at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
540 Litchfield St., Torrington

FREE 7-WEEK PROGRAM – ALL COURSE MATERIALS ARE INCLUDED!

Wed., Mar. 1	Wed., Mar. 8
Wed., Mar. 15	Mon., Mar. 20
Wed., Mar. 22	Wed., Mar. 29
Wed., Apr. 5	Wed., Apr. 12

FACILITATORS:

Sandra Markus, RCP
Respiratory care practitioner

Carla Angevine, RDN
Registered dietitian nutritionist

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Call Sandy today at 860.496.6538 for information and to register

Congratulations PRIA!!!

For the 2nd time in 4 years, Torrington’s own PRIA Healthcare has been named one of Hartford Business Journal’s Best Places to Work in CT, and this esteemed recognition is a testament to the incredible team. By celebrating their core values each day, PRIA provides a supportive and collaborative environment for employees, enabling and encouraging professional and personal growth beyond what they ever thought to be possible. Above competitive compensation and a robust benefits package, they truly appreciate their employees and understands that the organizations success is supported by the people that power them. PRIA is dedicated to, and passionate about the health and well-being of the (growing!) team.

Vital to the successful commercialization of over 50 medical devices since 2012, PRIA Healthcare is the industry-leading partner of innovators in MedTech and Life Science. PRIA’s renowned experts in reimbursement strategy and health care economics provide exceptional support to medical device companies by navigating often challenging and otherwise uncertain reimbursement pathways, determining the coding, coverage, and payment for market access and adoption of new technologies.

To learn more about the people of PRIA and for opportunities to join their award-winning culture, visit <https://www.priahealthcare.com/careers>.

NW CT Chamber's premier network building event featuring opportunities to gain new contacts & build your lead base while enjoying delicious hors d'oeuvres & visiting our host's location.

BH
BUSINESS after HOURS

Wednesday
Date
5:00-7:00 p.m.

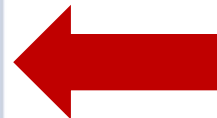
Hosted by
YOUR BUSINESS NAME

Sponsored by
Your Logo

Your Company Address

RSVP ONLINE AT NWCTCHAMBEROFCOMMERCE.ORG/CALENDAR

Interested in hosting a Business After Hours?



Your Business and logo could be listed here

Send us an email to schedule a date:
info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org
Or Call: 860-482-6586.

Premier MEMBERS

- [Brandywine Living at Litchfield](#)
- [Commercial Sewing, Inc.](#)
- [Cook Funeral Home](#)
- [Eversource Energy](#)
- [Keystone Place at Newbury Brook](#)
- [Seitz, LLC](#)
- [Senior Advocate Services](#)
- [T&M Building Company, Inc. and Torrington Downtown Partners](#)
- [UCE Fine Builders](#)
- [Webster Bank](#)

Welcome New Members

- Josh Ivain Creative, LLC
www.joshivaincreative.com
- Connecticut Community Foundation
www.conncf.org
- PRIA
www.priahealthcare.com

Shel Myers of KAINEN ESCALERA & McHALE

presents

2023 Legal Updates

- ✓ Our Legal Updates seminar is limited to 20 participants. This event is always a full house.
- ✓ Connecticut has signed and/or voted several new laws that will impact employers throughout the state.
- ✓ Please register and attend this seminar regarding the latest details impacting Human Resources.

DATE

Thursday, March 9th

TIME

5 pm to 7 pm

REGISTRATION

Submit

COST

Payment

NWCTHRA members:

Free

Non-Member: \$20.00

The emphasis of Mr. Myers' practice is defending employers in state and federal court and in administrative tribunals on a variety of employment law issues, including claims involving age, disability, sex and race discrimination, sexual harassment, invasion of privacy, free speech, defamation, wrongful or retaliatory discharge, breach of contract, wage and hour violations, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation and family leave act matters.

He counsels employers on a range of employment issues including employee handbooks, drug testing, employee discipline and payment of wages. Mr. Myers also served as a Law Clerk (Intern) to U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Thomas P. Smith.



PDC

2 SHRM PDC's

MORE

INFORMATION

Website

nwcthra@outlook.com

203-339-2219





CHAMBER DISCOUNTS JUST FOR YOU

Staples is a proud supporter of local small businesses and as a Chamber of Commerce member, you have access to exclusive offers every time you shop in store. Refresh marketing materials, restock your workspace and so much more.

20% off your in-store Print & Marketing Services order.

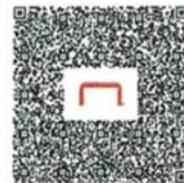
- Signs, banners and decals
- Business cards and collateral
- Disposable menus and more

10% off your in-store purchase of regularly priced items.

- Markers, envelopes, boxes and tape
- Furniture and desk accessories
- Coffee, snacks and more

Plus, earn on every purchase with Staples Rewards®. Not a member? [Sign up for free.](#)

Ready to start saving? Scan
the QR code to enroll today.



Chamber member discounts are valid on in-store purchases only and cannot be applied to online orders. To redeem, provide your Staples Rewards number at checkout. Valid once per day.

Member **NEWS**

Small Business Seminar

Mindfulness and Mental Fitness was the Small Business Seminar provided through the NWCC Entrepreneurial Center on Tuesday February 7th. The picture on the left is of the breakout session where we identified behaviors that can sabotage our relationships with others. By identifying these behaviors, we can be aware when they start to show up and then quickly diffuse them. This seminar was taught by Career & Mental Fitness Coach, Jackie Ross.

To learn more about the small business seminars, please visit www.nwcc.edu/entrepreneurial-center-northwest-connecticut or call John Fiorello at 860-738-6444.

NORTHWEST STARTUP HAPPY HOUR



*A place for
entrepreneurs
and the like*

**CONNECT - RELAX
NETWORK - REFRESH**

1st Wednesday each month

5-7PM | SALT 2.0 | 84 MAIN STREET | TORRINGTON

Member NEWS



Northwestern Offers Microsoft Office Training

The Office of Workforce Development at Northwestern Connecticut Community College will offer an in-person, six-week **Microsoft Office Training** course Mondays and Wednesdays, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. from March 6 to April 12, 2023 in Founders Hall Annex, room 011, 4 Park Place, Winsted.

The course will focus on integrating comprehensive computing skills to introduce students to the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary to achieve proficiency in the Microsoft Office software suite. Exposure to computer operating systems, file management operations, computer concepts, and vocabulary are included as integral elements to understanding

the Microsoft Office applications environment. Students will examine productivity and computing procedures in the workplace and academic settings, enhance their computer skills, and be able to critically apply these skills in various situations.

The cost for the program is \$950. Limited partial scholarships may be available including SNAP scholarships for qualified individuals.

For more information, or to register for this program, please visit nwcc.edu/msoffice.

Northwestern Offers QuickBooks Bookkeeping Training

The Office of Workforce Development at Northwestern Connecticut Community College will offer an in-person **QuickBooks Bookkeeping** training course Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. from March 6 to April 12, 2023, in Founders Hall Annex, room 011, 4 Park Place, Winsted.

The hands-on course will introduce students to entry level bookkeeping principles and procedures. Students will examine case studies from the text and identify ways to streamline bookkeeping activities. In addition, practical examples will be examined to better understand bookkeeping and its application in small and large companies. QuickBooks will be incorporated to further help students achieve bookkeeping software knowledge.

The prerequisites required to attend the course are basic clerical skills, computer competency, and high school level reading and math skills. Students who successfully complete the course can receive an industry recognized credential of *Intuit QuickBooks Certified User*.

The cost for the program is \$950. Limited partial scholarships may be available including SNAP scholarships for qualified individuals.

For more information or to register for this program please visit nwcc.edu/quickbooks.



Member NEWS



355 Goshen Road
P.O. Box 909
Litchfield, CT 06759-0909
Phone: 860.567.0863
Fax: 860.567.3381

50 Miry Brook Road
Danbury, CT 06810
Phone: 203.791.1904
Fax: 203.778.8076

www.edadvance.org

No-Cost Mental Health Awareness Training in Western Connecticut

EdAdvance, in collaboration with project partners Apex Community Services, Greenwoods Counseling and Referral Services, and Western CT Coalition, provides *Mental Health First Aid*, *Youth Mental Health First Aid*, *Teen Mental Health First Aid*, and *QPR Suicide Prevention Training*. These trainings are open to community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, schools, veterans, family members of active service personnel and veterans, current and future health care professionals, educators and other school personnel, those serving individuals at risk of substance use disorder, and the general public **at no cost** to participants.

Mental Health First Aid Trainings are certification programs developed by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Learners can choose to meet virtually, in-person, or as a blended model where they complete a portion of the training as a self-paced online course, followed by a multi-hour, instructor-led training. The instructor-led portion of the blended model can be scheduled as a Zoom video conference or as an in-person class.

- ◆ **Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** is a 7.5-hour certification class that teaches adults how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges, offer and initiate help, and guide an adult to appropriate care if necessary. We offer MHFA customized for college students (including future health care professionals and educators), veterans, active military and their families (focusing on military culture and unique risk factors) and Older Adults (focusing on unique experiences and needs of adults over age 65). MHFA is for any **adult** who wants to be better prepared to help individuals experiencing a mental health challenge.
- ◆ **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)** is a 7.5-hour certification class that focuses on early identification of mental health issues in adolescents, protective and risk factors, and how to safely initiate appropriate connections to services. It includes recognizing and responding to crisis and non-crisis situations and teaches how to reduce stigma around mental health. YMHFA is for any **adult** who works, volunteers, or intersects with youth and adolescents, and is especially helpful for middle and high school teachers and other school personnel.
- ◆ **Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA)** is a 4.5-hour certification class split over 3 days (1.5 hours each day) and is for **students** in grades 10-12. Teens will learn how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges in their friends and peers. They will learn about the impact of school violence and bullying on mental health and how to seek the help of a responsible and trusted adult. tMHFA is for high schools and youth-serving organizations and may be scheduled fully in-person or as a blended model.

QPR is a 1.5-hour **suicide prevention** training program (virtual or in person) designed to teach “gatekeepers” who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide, the warning signs of a suicide crisis, and how to respond by following three steps: **Q**uestion the individual’s desire or intent regarding suicide; **P**ersuade the person to seek and accept help; **R**efers the person to appropriate resources. QPR is the most widely distributed gatekeeper training program in the world. QPR Training, if in-person, may be scheduled at a site selected by the group of participants. **QPR Training is open to both adults and high school students.**

These no-cost mental health trainings are made possible through a generous grant from SAMHSA. Mental Health First Aid programs are valued at \$170 per learner.

For more information or to schedule a training workshop, please contact: Diane Cassidy, MHAT-WCT Program Coordinator, at cassidy@edadvance.org or 860.567.0863 ext. 1252. We are happy to work with you to schedule a training workshop that meets your group’s specific needs.

Chamber Member **IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

The Little Engine that Could: Merritt Clarke Store

The Story of a Successful 100-Year-Old “Brick and Mortar” Business
in the Northwest Hills of Connecticut

By D. L. Reynolds

“Well, not exactly an engine” Yvonne Gilyard of Merritt Clarke Store says. “It’s really a 1928 AA Ford Peddling Truck that started it all” she says with a smile.

In 1923, Merritt Clarke – son of Will Clarke who ran a Dry Goods store in Bantam in a building that still stands today across from the Bantam Arts Factory - launched out on his own from 1083 Bantam Road, the farm property he owned, hayed and raised some beef cattle on. He travelled in many directions throughout northwest Connecticut in his peddling truck, as far out as 30 miles from Bantam, offering farmers and others durable, high quality work wear and boots – names like Sweet-Orr, P.F. Flyer, Goodrich, Pendleton and Woolrich.

When World War II came along, he used gas rationing stamps to continue travelling to his customers to fill their vital clothing and footwear needs. Mid-point through the war, however– around 1943 – he could not get new tires for his truck (as the rubber was going to the war effort), so Merritt Clarke innovated. He backed his peddling truck into a small barn in the rear of his residence, built shelves along the interior walls, put a furnace in the building, and started his first brick and mortar store. He then had his customers coming to him – all of the folks who’d come to rely on his high quality, right-priced clothing and footwear.

Fast forward to 1979, when my late husband and I met Merritt and became good friends and neighbors with him. We also fell in love with the property, a small farm where the fields were hayed twice a year and several beef cattle – and a pony named “Donna” - grazed the fields. At one point in one of our many conversations with Merritt, we asked him for first right of refusal if he were to ever sell his property.

In 1993 we bought the small farm and clothing business from Merritt’s widow, Gertrude (“Gert” as she was known by friends and family). Merritt had passed away the year before – 1992 – at the age of 92! From our new home – including the circa 1830’s farm house which served as Merritt’s residence – we ran an antique lumber business, and kept the little, popular Merritt Clarke Store going. We soon realized how much a large contingent of working people in the tri-state area had come to rely and depend on Merritt Clarke Store for their clothing and footwear. We also realized that to make the Store a go, we needed more room to expand to include other clothing lines.

In 2000, we purchased the adjacent property on which a classically designed building which was erected in 1795 was located. The building served as an Inn in its early days in “Bradleyville” (as this section of Bantam was called), became a private residence and then apartments prior to our ownership. We proceeded to gut the building – leaving all of the hand-hewn timbers – and built a signature staircase to the second floor of antique Hemlock Timbers and re-purposed floor boards from a de-commissioned covered bridge in Vermont. We also built the signature wrap-around porch with classic columns to complete the renovation for the third iteration of the Merritt Clarke Store.

It’s been quite a journey from the successful Bantam Dry Goods business where Merritt was under the tutelage of his father, Will, to the launch of his own clothing and footwear sales from his brand new 1928 AA Ford Truck, to the present business now located in the historic former 1790’s Inn next to his homestead and farm.

So, yes, you might say that the Merritt Clarke Store – a 100-year-old story – is very much akin to the “Little Engine that Could”. Surviving the Depression years and innovating through World War II, and evolving in recent decades to the two floor, full-service store with multiple work and casual clothing lines and footwear – and now having survived a global pandemic – it has been quite a ride for this “Little Engine”.

Yvonne invites you to experience and enjoy time-honored customer service, and quality work & casual clothing and footwear, at the Yellow House with the White Columns at 1101 Bantam Road (Rte. 202) in Bantam, Connecticut. Business Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (860) 567-9221 or on [Facebook](#). “Bring a younger friend or family member to discover the vintage vibe and many offerings at Merritt Clarke Store!”

Of additional interest: The original Merritt Clarke Dry Goods 1928 Ford Peddling Truck (“The Little Engine that Could”) is happily running and driving along after a “tune-up” in the summer of 2022. It will be at the Store on select Saturdays throughout the 100th Anniversary Year, as we continue to serve our customers from Northwest Connecticut and Tri-State area.

Chamber NEWS



We're back!

Young Professionals Organization

The NWCT Chamber Young Professionals Organization is excited to invite local young professionals, ages 21-40, to come to our first networking event in a long time!

Wednesday March 22, 2023

5 PM - 7 PM

Salt 2.0

84 Main St, Torrington

It's free!

For more information, contact the Chamber at 860-482-6586 or Info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

YPO is sponsored by  Conquest [creativity. marketing. technology.](http://creativity.marketing.technology)

 [Register Here](#) 

Interested in hosting a Business with Breakfast?




Join us at our morning roundtable discussion
BUSINESS *with* BREAKFAST
 Enjoy easy networking over a light breakfast. Each attendee will then give a 30-second "commercial" for their business followed by a brief presentation by our host.
 Tuesday, Month Date, 8:00 a.m.
 Hosted by
 Your Company Name
 Your Address

Your company name, address, and logo could be listed here.



Send us an email to schedule a date: info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org
Or Call: 860-482-6586.

Chamber NEWS



Healthcare of 2023 has followed the same pathway for product development for the last 20 years. Our programs of choice have spiraled from first dollar coverage and limited deductibles to high deductibles and co-insurance with out-of-pocket expenses reaching over \$5000. Increased contribution of employee and employers have reached an expensive track well over the means of the employee and employer.

The Chamber Insurance Trust and the *North West Chamber of Commerce* are pleased to announce the formation of a new healthcare program to lower the costs and improve the wellbeing of its members. As carriers are announcing double digit increases in costs and reducing benefits, the **Unified Healthcare Program** has positioned itself as a cost effective solution with multiple program choices that the consumer needs to maintain quality care.

Please join us to launch this new program with the NW Chamber of Commerce:

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 8:30am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89288325736?pwd=cDliSjBKUEt5REpFZktMdzlQV2RKdz09>

Meeting ID: 892 8832 5736

Passcode: 134224

We, the *Chamber Insurance Trust* are a recognized, trusted leader in the Health Insurance Industry for over 34 years who brought strategic, affordable Healthcare to the state of Connecticut.

This plan will offer the following benefits:

ACA compliant MEC Health Benefit choices that include access to daily care at a fraction of the cost, national provider access through PHCS network and no claims responsibility for the group-- rates are set for 12 months.

Offering a tax-advantaged **HRA account** (Health Reimbursement Arrangement) that is funded by the employer dollars to pay employee expenses not covered by their health plan.

A **Health & Wellness Plan** that provides the employer pre-tax FICA savings of \$500 for every enrolled employee.

Services made possible by: 

Call Steve Glick at 800-953-4467 to learn more!

Chamber **NEWS**

Hello Friends!

My name is Karen Kuhl and I have recently joined the NW CT Chamber of Commerce on February 21, 2023, as the Director of Programs and Events. As you all know, Lauren Zordan resigned from this position recently

and she has left a pair of gigantic shoes to fill! It is my pledge to work diligently to fulfill my new responsibilities and to be an active participant in the many programs that the Chamber supports. This professional move for me is like coming home as I have been a member of this wonderful Chamber since 1998 and I love it here! The staff, the Board and the many wonderful members have always been

kind to me, and I have forged many amazing friendships along the way. My professional history includes over 30 years in the senior health care industry where I wore many different hats. My experience ranges from holding positions as the Director of Community Outreach; Director of Adult Day Centers; Director of Business Development; Social Services Coordinator in a skilled nursing setting and most recently as a Senior Living Advisor. As I move forward in my new position, I will put my life skills to work! I am excited to see what the future holds for me, and I truly look forward to working with all of you once again. Lastly, I'd like to send a very special thank you to JoAnn Ryan for having the confidence in my skill set to bring me on as fellow NW CT Chamber of Commerce team member!

With the warmest of regards,

Karen

2023 LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

MEET AND MINGLE WITH STATE AND LOCAL DELEGATION

MONDAY, MARCH 27TH

7:30-9:00 a.m.

Hosted and Sponsored by Community Health & Wellness Center
469 Migeon Avenue, Torrington



[CLICK HERE TO RSVP.](#)

Brought to you by Northwest Connecticut's Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Committee.



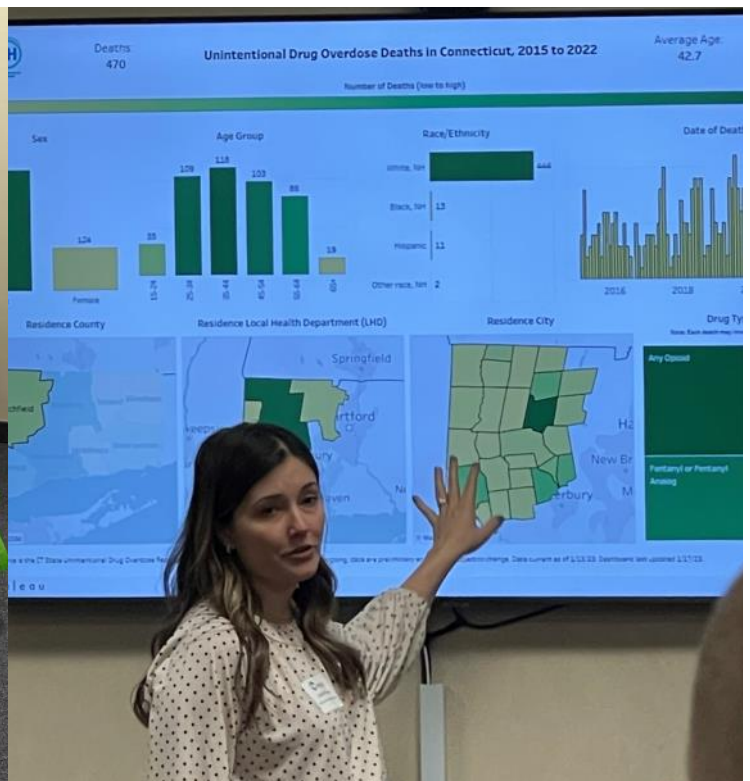
Business After Hours

at

The Torrington Area Health District

Hosted By

The Litchfield County Opiate Task Force



A very special Business After Hours was held at the Torrington Area Health District, hosted by the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force on Wednesday, February 15th. Tasty non-alcoholic mixed drinks were served along with a charcuterie board. The Litchfield County Opiate Task Force is a community collaborative working to reduce the harm caused by the overdose epidemic in the Northwest corner of Connecticut.

Lauren Pisto giving a very informative overview of the alarming number of unintentional drug overdose deaths in the Litchfield County area, and the numbers are increasing. The statistics were gathered between 2015 and 2022. The majority of the deaths were people of white ethnicity between the ages of 35 - 44. The highly dangerous drug, Fentanyl, was found among them. Free naloxone kits were available for attendees.



Chamber NEWS



Paulie Arena (left) shakes hands with Learn at Lunch presenter, Matt Stevenson.

Learn at Lunch

Matt Stevenson from ServiceMaster Albino presented a very interesting Learn at Lunch: Hoarding, the Hidden Disorder.

Hoarding may not be what you think it is. There's a big difference between a hoarder and a collector. Having a lot of, "things", does not necessarily make you a hoarder. Hoarding is a Psychological Disorder.

Hoarders are often very intelligent people, such as a doctor. They may know that a piece of paper is in a pile, but it's not accessible.

Signs of hoarding include: Too many cats, garbage bags piled up inside the house, holes in the floor, bathrooms that aren't functional, mold damage, structural damage to a home, attachment to their stuff, they have plans to repurpose old and broken things, and they don't think there's anything wrong.

When the house is finally cleaned out, if they don't get counseling, they will start hoarding again.

	Name of Topic
	Presented By: Your Company Name and logo
	Date and Time

If you have an idea for a Learn at Lunch topic
or
If you are interested in hosting a Learn at Lunch

Email: JoAnn@nwctchamberofcommerce.org
or Karen@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

LEADS LEADS LEADS

The purpose of the Chamber Leads Groups is for members of each group to form alliances with one another to identify prospects and foster increased business; ultimately growing their customer base through a supportive network. Enrollment is based on a "first to respond" basis due to the format permitting only one individual per industry. At each Leads meeting, members are allowed to share details on their business, provide testimonials/referrals to other group members, and each meeting concludes with a 15-20 minute focus on one member or a beneficial activity for the group.

LEADS LEADS LEADS

Leads Group I meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month at noon. The co-captains of the group are John Seagrave of Barron Financial Group and Lisa Ferris of Brooker Memorial. Another leads group might be forming soon. Keep watching the newsletter for details.

If you would like information on participating in Leads, please email JoAnn@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

Chamber NEWS

Committee Reports

Government Relations Committee:

We want to thank both Stephen Ivain and Sharon Kunay for helping us to make the transition for hosting our monthly meeting zoom calls. Now that Lauren is no longer with us, Stephen has stepped up to help us out and we are truly grateful for that. Also I need to thank our lobbyist Mike Rell for filling in for me as I had a few technical difficulties getting on the call.

We are still making revisions to our legislative agenda as per your input. G.R. lobbyist Mike Rell gave us a pretty healthy assessment of the current state of the state. We

have surpluses in both our rainy day fund and in the general fund. The governor's tax cut proposals at this time are getting support from both sides of the aisle.

All of our reps were present except Rep Horn who was still in Hartford working in committee.

We hope to see you at our next meeting as we give updates on Business Day in Hartford and the Governor's attendance at our annual meeting!! Until then, stay well and be blessed!!

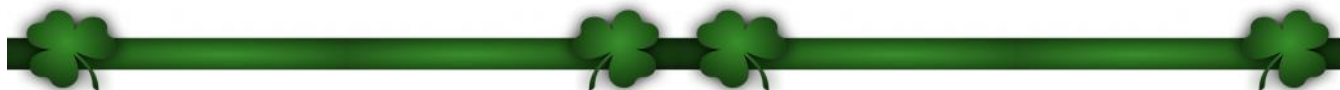
— Jacque Williams

Health Council:**The Northwest Chamber Health Council**

Our March Health Council meeting is schedule for **Wednesday 3/15/23 at 8:00 AM.** This will be a hybrid meeting at the Chamber office but we will also offer Zoom access as usual. We encouraged you to attend in person if you can.

Our speaker for this meeting will be Aileen Meehan, Community Engagement Officer with the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Aileen will speak about the mission of the Foundation and how they strengthen communities across our shared service areas. Please join us as we work together to build a more productive Health Council for Chamber members.

[RSVP at koconnell@geercare.org](mailto:koconnell@geercare.org) or call 860-824-3868



Chamber NEWS

During the Pandemic, our Chamber had offered FREE advertising to help support our members. January 1st, we will reinstate our reduced ad pricing structure to enable us to better serve you.

PROMOTE YOUR COMPANY WITH THE



Northwest Connecticut
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Business Working Together

DON'T WAIT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE MEMBER ONLY BENEFITS!

CHAMBER NEWSLETTER

Display Advertisements are available to Chamber members. Deadline is the 15th of the month. Submit ad in JPEG or PNG format to info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

Cost:

Full page (7 1/2" w x 9 1/2" h) - ~~\$250~~ **\$125**

1/2 page horizontal (7 1/2" w x 4 1/2" h) - ~~\$150~~ **\$75**

1/2 page vertical (3 1/2" w x 9 1/2" h) - ~~\$150~~ **\$75**

1/4 page (3 1/2" w x 4 1/2" h) - ~~\$75~~ **\$50**

Business card (3 1/2" w x 2 1/4" h) - ~~\$50~~ **\$25**

Member News and **Member in the Spotlights** may be submitted for inclusion in an upcoming newsletter and will be placed on a first-come, first-served basis. Bites should be approximately 100 words in length. Spotlights should be approximately 250 words in length and may include a logo or photo. Deadline is the 15th of the month. Email information to info@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

Cost: Complimentary

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Display Advertisements are available to Chamber members in the Annual Business & Membership Directory. Ads should be submitted by the 15th of February. Information and pricing are available by contacting JoAnn Ryan at joann@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

CHAMBER EXCHANGE – MEMBER TO MEMBER E-MAIL BLAST ADS

The Chamber sends e-mail blasts to all members with special offers and advertisements. These e-mails are sent separately from the standard member e-mails and are specially identified as offers from members. Members are able to place one ad per month. Ads can be linked to a website or FaceBook page. The e-mail distribution list exceeds 1,500 individuals. Ads should be submitted in JPEG or PNG format and should be 7" wide x 3-5" high. The fee is \$50 per ad. To schedule your Chamber Exchange ad, contact JoAnn Ryan at 860-482-6586 or joann@nwctchamberofcommerce.org

MEMBER TO MEMBER

Present a **Member to Member Workshop** to fellow members and highlight the products and services of your business. Utilize the Chamber's conference room, obtain a set of mailing labels, receive a 1/2 page advertisement in the newsletter and an email to the membership promoting the workshop. Contact JoAnn Ryan to schedule at joann@nwctchamberofcommerce.org.

Cost: ~~\$300~~ **\$250**

Chamber Space Rentals



Conference Room - Conference Style (seats up to 28)



Conference Room - Classroom Setup (seats 20-25)



Library - (Seats up to 6)



Reception Area - (Seats up to 8)

Member Room Rates: 8 am – 5 pm, \$35 for the 1st hour, \$20 per hour thereafter
 5 pm – 10 pm, \$45 for the 1st hour, \$35 per hour thereafter

Non Member Room Rates: 8 am – 5 pm, \$80 for the 1st hour, \$55 per hour thereafter
 5 pm – 10 pm, \$125 for the 1st hour, \$100 per hour thereafter

*After hours (5 pm – 10 pm) rates also apply to weekend use.
 Corporate Partners of the Chamber may utilize the conference rooms at no charge.
 Premier Members of the Chamber may utilize the conference rooms at half price.*

Projector, Whiteboard, and Flip Chart are available at no additional charge

News and **NOTES**

Struggling to pay your electric or heating bill? We have programs to help.

For more information on these assistance programs, scan the QR code below, visit Eversource.com/billhelp or call us at 800-286-2828. We'll work with you one-on-one to find the best program for you.

Protection from Shutoff for Hardship Customers

For qualifying gas or electric customers experiencing financial hardship, service cannot be turned off between November 1 and May 1.

Medical Protection

If you or a member of your immediate household has a serious or life-threatening medical condition, you may be eligible for protection from service disconnection for non-payment. Please call us at 800-286-2828 to learn more or enroll.

Matching Payment Program *(For electric heating and gas heating customers)*

Reduce your past due balance with affordable monthly payments.

Call us at **800-286-2828** or visit **211ct.org** to find your local community action agency to enroll and apply for state energy assistance funds.

Once enrolled, Eversource will match your payments, plus the amount of energy assistance you receive on your account, down to a zero balance.

If you receive public assistance benefits, your payments can be reduced to as low as \$50.

New Start *(for electric customers)*

Have your balance at the time of enrollment, eliminated in as little as 12 months.

We'll establish a monthly payment for you based on your usage.

Make your scheduled New Start payment, and a portion of your balance at the time of enrollment, will be eliminated or "forgiven," reducing the amount you owe each month.

Home Energy Solutions

Reduce energy use and stay comfortable for less with energy-saving upgrades. You may qualify for an energy assessment and services like air sealing at no cost, up to 100% off approved insulation, and additional services at a reduced cost. Please call 1-877-WISE USE (947-3873) or visit Eversource.com/billhelp for an application.

To be eligible for income-based assistance programs, your household income must be at or below 60% of the State Median Income:

2022-2023 Income Eligibility Guidelines

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Income Level	\$39,761	\$51,996	\$64,230	\$76,465	\$88,699	\$100,933	\$103,227	\$105,521
Household Size	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Income Level	\$107,816	\$110,110	\$112,404	\$114,698	\$116,991	\$119,285	\$121,579	\$123,873

Other Help:

Operation Fuel: **860-243-2345**, Operationalfuel.org/gethelp
 United Way Infoline: **211**
 Public Utilities Regulatory Authority: **800-382-4586**

Scan here for more information





Upcoming **CHAMBER MEETINGS & EVENTS**

- Mar. 1 - Wow Advisory Committee - 9 AM
- Mar. 2 - Membership Committee - 8 AM
- Mar. 7 - Small Business Council - 8 AM
- Mar. 8 - Leadership Northwest Session #6 - 8:30 AM
- Mar. 9 - Government Relations Committee - 8 AM
- Mar. 13 - Leads I - 12 PM
- Mar. 15 - Health Council (Guest Speaker Aileen Meehan from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation) @ NW CT Chamber, 59 Field Street, Suite 120, Torrington, 8 AM
- Mar. 16 - CIT: Introducing a New Unified Healthcare Program, 8:30 AM via ZOOM
- Mar. 22 - Job Fair @ Torrington City Hall, 140 Main St. Torrington, 10 AM—2 PM
- Mar. 22 - Young Professionals Networking Night @ Salt 2.0, 84 Main Street, Torrington, 5-7 PM
- Mar. 23 - Board of Directors Meeting - 8 AM
- Mar. 27 - Legislative Reception @ Community Health & Wellness Center, 469 Migeon Avenue, Torrington - 7:30—9:00 AM
- Mar. 27 - Leads I - 12 PM
- Mar. 28 - Business with Breakfast **with Ribbon Cutting** @ Ebner Camps, 456 Birge Park Rd, Harwinton 8-9 AM

Save the Date

- April 4 - CT Business Day @ The Bushnell, Hartford**
- April 6 - Annual Meeting @ Torrington Country Club, Goshen, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**
- April 19 - Financial Reality Fair @ Lewis Mills High School, Burlington**
- May 24 - Read Aloud Day**
- June 14 - Great Giveaway Business Showcase @ Torrington Armory, 4-7 PM**
- June 21 - Leadership NW Graduation @ Torrington Country Club, Goshen, 5-8**
- June 29 - Celebration of Success @ The Inn at Mt. Pleasant, Torrington 5-7 PM**
- October 6 - WOW! Forum @ Warner Theatre, 82 MainSt, Torrington, 7:45 AM - 4:00 PM**

Newsletter Submissions:

Please send us your newsletter submissions by the 15th of the month. Beyond that date, we cannot guarantee that it will be in the following month's edition.

Thank you.