

Have You Heard ...? Back to School and More

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Categories : [Around Town](#)

Tagged as : [Have You Heard 2017](#), [Have You Heard?](#)

Date : September 6, 2017



Here's the low down on what's up around town:

What the first day of school on Thursday looked like at Royle and Holmes:

XL Catlin, a global property and casualty insurance company with an office in Stamford's South End, has awarded an \$8,000 grant to Person-to-Person, which the agency will use for its [scholarship program](#).

Many of the students receiving scholarships are the first in their families to attend college, said Ceci Maher, executive director of the charity. A total of 80 percent of the students P2P helps go on to graduate from college — a rate a well above the national average of 26 percent for college students from low-income households, according to P2P.

Not only is the company giving money, but employees from XL Catlin regularly volunteer at Person-to-Person.

Did you know that [TripAdvisor.com](#) reviewers have rated the [Maritime Aquarium](#) as one of the top 20 aquariums in the U.S. and No. 1 in New England? (No, that doesn't mean that the aquarium in Norwalk is better than the Mystic Aquarium or the New England Aquarium in Boston, but something good must be going on there.)

Face it: If you bought eclipse glasses, you're not going to find an opportunity to use them again (unless you're the object of Carly Simon's scorn, taking a flight in your jet up to Nova Scotia), so why not recycle them? Somebody else could have some fun with them, too.

["Astronomers Without Borders"](#) is hosting an eclipse glasses donation program," according to the Darien Library emailed newsletter. "They'll send your glasses to schools in South America and Asia for their eclipses in 2019. The eclipse glasses are only certified as safe to use for three years, so they won't be useful for the next U.S. total solar eclipse in 2024."

You won't remember where you put those glasses seven years from now, and they won't be safe. Give 'em up.

Bring your eclipse glasses to Darien Library's front desk between Wednesday, Sept. 6 and Wednesday, Sept. 13. The library will handle mailing them to the organization.

Join State Rep. Terrie Wood and invited guests from AARP's Fraud Watch Network for a presentation on the "Con Artists' Playbook" at the Senior Center from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 18.

Wood will also explain major acts affecting seniors that passed during the 2017 legislative session. For more information, call 860-240-8700 or email Terrie.Wood@housegop.ct.gov.

On Tuesday, Sept. 19, New Canaan–Darien & Rowayton Magazine will present The 2nd Annual Darien's Best Bartender Contest, in the town's scenic Grove Street Plaza from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Local mixologists will design signature cocktails and entertain attendees, who will have the opportunity to sample drinks prepared with select ingredients and vote for their favorites. The cocktail with the most votes will be featured (along with photos of guests and competitors) in the November/December issue of New Canaan-Darien & Rowayton magazine, which is sponsoring the event.

The event will also have live music and seasonal light bites prepared by chefs from a variety of local restaurants, including The Waters Edge at Giovanni's, Center Street Public House, Darien Butcher Shop, Jimmy's Southside Tavern, Estia's Back Porch Cafe, Fjord Fish Market, Rory's Restaurant and The Melting Pot.

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Liquor will be provided by Valor Spirits, and water will be provided by exclusive water sponsor VOSS Artesian Water. Sponsors also include William Pitt - Sotheby's International Realty, Helen Ainson, Le Boudoir and The Gardener's Center and Florist.

A portion of ticket proceeds from Darien's Best Bartender Contest will benefit The [Community Fund of Darien](#). Limited tickets are available for Darien's Best Bartender Contest. Tickets purchased in advance are \$25 each, or \$30 at the door. To purchase tickets, please visit [NewCanaanDarienMag.com](#). The rain date for the event is Wednesday, September 20.

Here's what Darien Land Trust's Saturday, Aug. 26 "Farm to Table" outdoor fundraising dinner at Waterbury Field looked like:

An email to constituents from state Rep. Terrie Wood (a Republican representing Rowayton and part of Darien) has some advice about contributing to the Hurricane Harvey relief efforts in Houston:

The images of distress and suffering from the aftermath of flooding in Houston resulting from Hurricane Harvey are gripping, and if you're like me, you want to know what you can do to help out.

Just as this catastrophe has brought out the best in some people -- who have risen to the challenge to show their charity and humanity -- so it has also brought out the worst -- those who would prey on both the disaster victims and those who want to help them. Unbelievably, there are many scams out there looking to fleece those who wish to donate and the flooding victims who have already lost so much, through scams.

If you want to help, please donate only to trusted and reputable charity organizations. Please do not donate over the phone to solicitors who have called you.

Two great organizations you may consider making a contribution to, are Americares, and the Greater Houston Community Foundation. Links to both are found below.

Both organizations have very fine reputations and are experienced at helping in crisis. They have the expertise to meet the demands/challenges of collecting the and distributing aid to those individuals and families impacted.

Lastly, if you want to volunteer to help down in Texas, do not self-deploy. You can contact your town's emergency services director to coordinate with them.

If you are a doctor or a nurse, please coordinate with the [State Department of Public Health](#) concerning dispatching emergency medical services to the area.