

March 2020

A little paper big on community

FREE

Neighbors

No. 181 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

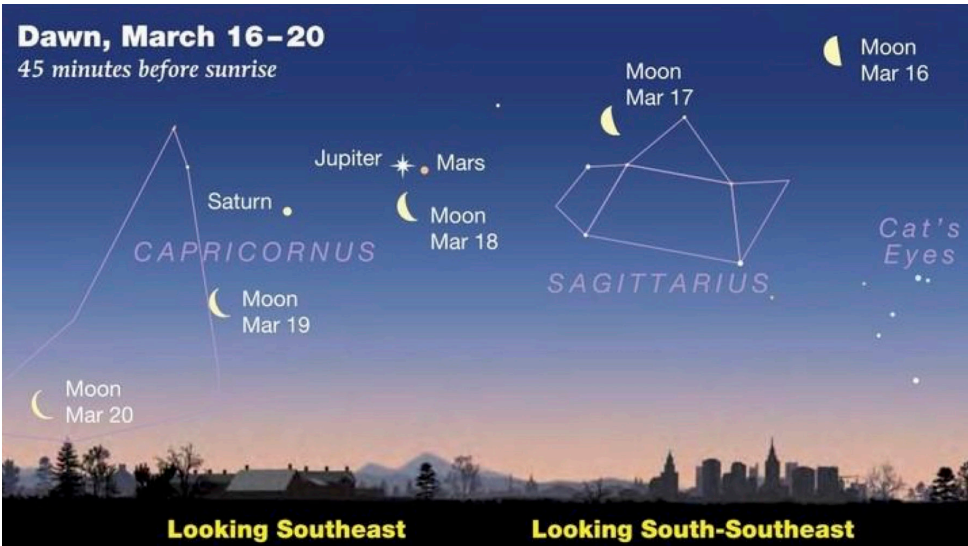
Looking Up:

Revising Expectations, or Where “Things” Come From

By Bob Grindle

As an amateur potter I spend a lot of time looking down, concentrating on a lump of clay that is spinning on a wheel, imagining, or at least trying to imagine the bowl or vase or pot or platter or maybe just a bit of art I’d like to fashion. Seasoned potters will occasionally suggest you let the clay decide...I’m not there yet, maybe never will be, but whomever or whatever the “force” is with in this circumstance, that infinitesimally tiny bit of our planet, that clay I am working with, changes from a simple piece of soft, kind of slimy, amazingly shapeable hunk of clay into a...”thing.” I know, not a very descriptive word—“thing.” But after ‘throwing clay’ with some very skilled potters and seeing how the nearly-pros can take a near disaster and turn it into a surprisingly useful, sometimes beautiful but always unique work, that has not only a personality but a sort of stage presence, the word “thing” takes on a kind of generic: anything-something-nothing-everything vagueness to it that is almost as atmospheric as a jazz club, or the Addam’s Family parlor.

Yesterday, as I was pulling a pound and a half of cool, gray, almost dough-smooth clay up into a cylinder that I was hoping to fashion into a honey pot, my mind wandered for just an instant and wham—a finger just slightly where it shouldn’t be and the cylinder became a rather oddly shaped piece that just secondsa earlier had been perfectly centered, nicely balanced and comfortably living up to expectations. How often that happens in life. The random change of some sort: it could be a change of a



trip’s destination, the decision to call an old friend or take a walk instead of which movie to see or book to read or which variety of seed to plant or should we take the back road or main road or, perhaps, it’s just a finger out of place or a small change in tonight’s dinner menu...whatever it is that causes us to look up from what we’re doing and smile just a little at how humbly, and quickly, a change in life’s direction and progress can be felt, whatever that is, it is nice to know that living up to expectations is a moving target and subject to continuous revision. It is also nice to think that the same clay that gardeners can hate because it’s so damn hard to grow things in, is a potter’s delight.

There is no need to revise expectations while looking up into March’s night sky. Venus, about as bright as it ever gets, continues to dominate the dusky start of night in the western sky, just below the Pleiades (plee’ a

deez), and in the southeast predawn skies Saturn, Jupiter and Mars play a kind of Ecliptic tag with the Moon, Sagittarius and themselves throughout the month. Quite often during the winter, the clearest skies are accompanied by the most frigid temperatures and it becomes hard to want to spend much time outside unless the viewing is really special, but after the time change on March 8th which nearly coincides with the Full Worm Moon, it gets easier because despite the meteorological indecision that the month can bring, there is the pick-me-up of Spring’s official start. Can anyone not feel the rising rush of a slightly better attitude about the continuity of life when the first buds of forsythia and crocus are starting to bloom and the red swamp maple buds swell and maybe especially when those hauntingly longing for safe landing after a grueling journey cries of the flocks of Canada geese echo down from star filled skies. As Orion passes across these wood-smoke scented nights hurrying toward his eternal pursuit of legendary glory and love, it is sobering to think that whether pondering the endless and ever more understandable stars and Cosmos over our heads, or trying to shape the limited while ever more difficult to understand life within our grasp, we are grappling with the same problems that have puzzled our species almost from the beginning. Minus, perhaps a few diseases...thank you science. Be well, and enjoy the coming season, a true harbinger of much that is beautiful in New England living.

Bob Grindle is a Windham Hospital Retiree and 2017 ECSU graduate who concentrated in Astronomy.

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Every 2nd Thursday!
March 12th | 7:00pm

“EC-CHAP FILM SERIES”
“School of Rock” (PG-13) 2003
Friday, March 13th | 7:00pm

“EC-CHAP INFORMATION EXCHANGE MEETING”
Thursday, March 10th | 7:00pm

All proceeds go to support:



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Cover photo: Southwestern shoreline with swans swimming off the southern tip of Mamacoke Island, shortly after sunrise. Photo by Mark Mathew Braunstein. Read Brian Karlsson-Barnes’ article about the island on page 10.

This is our time on earth.
What are we doing with it?

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The Purpose of Neighbors:
-To encourage reading
-To provide a place where ideas, writing, artwork and photographs of area residents can be shared
-To encourage people to get involved in their communities
-To begin to solve national and global problems on a local basis
-To provide useful information
-To serve the inhabitants and environment of our region

Neighbors is published monthly by Neighborspaper LLC. Thomas A. King, member

Neighborspaper LLC is a member of the Ashford Business Association.

Neighbors is printed by Rare Reminder Inc. in Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

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Over A Century of Feminism

By Loretta Wrobel

While reading about the history of our Country in *These Truths* by Jill LePore, the word “feminism” suddenly jumped from the page and grabbed my eyeballs.



Apparently in the 1910s, due to a generation of strong, self-sufficient women, the term feminism was coined to describe these New Women who mostly were college educated. This fierce group of passionate souls were outspoken about women’s issues-- equal education, equal opportunities, equal citizenship, and equal rights. One of these well-known rebels was Margaret Sanger, who labored to offer birth control to women. Humm-m-m, does all this sound familiar??

During the second decade of the 20th century, the suffragettes regularly picketed the White House and took to the streets to demand suffrage. They organized, went on hunger strikes and were brutally insulted and attacked for boldly demanding fairness and equality.

Here I am in 2020, a century later, and questioning the progress we have achieved in 100 years. Yes it is a fact that this year we in the US will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the nineteenth amendment that bestowed the right to vote on all women. The date the amendment was ratified was August 18, 1920. And the passage of women’s suffrage took nearly a century of protesting and women putting their lives on the line, facing injuries, incarceration, intimidation, heckling and forced feedings. These warriors of indestructible courage have my utmost appreciation, respect and admiration.

After a century of being accepted as a fully capable and intelligent human beings, women now are running for president, and one even won the popular vote in the last Presidential election. Women are seen in every occupation, and supposedly we are equal. However, women still earn less than men, white women earn around 83 cents to every white male dollar, and women of color earn less. There are 101 women legislators in the House of Representatives out of a total of 435. In the Senate 25 out of 100 are women. How does that translate into egalitarianism?

Some days I just grow weary of it all. I study the manner in which male candidates are described and treated differently than female candidates. I notice that smart, strident women are criticized and belittled. I turn toward sports and see how even in our local *Chronicle*, the UCONN men’s basketball team gets more coverage than the UCONN women’s team. I see the differences in the salaries between men and women in any sports arena. Women professional basketball players have had to stretch themselves to play overseas to enable them to make a decent salary, due to the inadequate salaries given in the WNBA. Ever looked at salaries of the NBA players? There is no need to go to another country to play extra games to supplement their income. Granted the WNBA recently gave pay increases to their top-level basketball players. However, the gap between salaries in NBA and WNBA remains massive. Reluctantly, I admit some advancement has oc-

curred. If you consider how long women have been battling for justice in the social, political and economic realms, progress appears to be moving with glacial speed. Any step(s) forward can quickly be offset by a backward flip. Where are women today in 2020 as we lumber toward the 100th anniversary of the passage of that landmark legislation?

In the America of today, white rich men believe they can make decisions about women’s bodies and determine the parameters of women’s access to birth control, abortion and their right to choose. Why are women questioned when they speak out about sexual assault? Or state that they were not treated fairly? Or are not heard or believed?

I find myself in a dilemma. Should I be ecstatic and celebratory as our nation proclaims a century of women’s suffrage, or be angry and vociferous about the small amount of equality that actually exists in our world?

Do young girls feel they are treated equally and have the same opportunities to live out their dreams as young boys do? Do women believe their skills and expertise are taken into consideration at their work place? Are women’s opinions viewed in the same light as their male associates and friends?

I like to act as if “We have come a long way” (I don’t appreciate the baby part of that phrase), and “Keep on trucking” are my mottos. At times I can accept that mindset. At other times I roar back with a fierce manifesto to that it shouldn’t take so long. Calming down, I know change doesn’t occur overnight. However, isn’t a century long enough?

The best approach is to look to my foremothers. How much patience did Alice Paul, a key leader in the suffragette movement, have while being subjected to force feeding? Ms. Paul was imprisoned for picketing, simply wanting to participate by voting for the people who were to represent her. What kind of confidence did Elizabeth Cady Stanton possess when she, an abolitionist, human rights activist, and early leader of the women’s rights movement, wrote a *Declaration of Sentiments* in 1848 and *The Women’s Bible* in 1895?

Where did Shirley Chisholm, a black women educator, author and politician, find the true grit to run for President in 1972? She said she wanted to be remembered as a woman who dared to be a catalyst for change. I venture to say she did just that!

As I run through a growing list of courageous women pioneers who did not shirk from speaking about the injustices that existed in our Country, I gain a profound respect for the persistence and stamina of those that walked before me. Women who faced threats, bullying and attacks for standing up for the truth. This gives me hope for our country and our world. One step forward, one step at a time, and a belief in the power of sisterhood. Those early feminists have paved a grand highway, and all we need to focus on is continuing on the path and not giving up. May I be remembered as a woman who felt deeply for her bright, solid, and spirited grandmother feminists who walked before me. Thanks for sowing the bread crumbs of inspiration to guide me along the path!

Our Community Calendar

Compiled By Dagmar Noll

Ed. note: Our calendar starts here and wanders through the rest of the paper.

March 1, Sunday
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting and walking meditations, teaching and sharing. Knight House, ECSU. Info: 860-450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

March 4, Wednesday
Kids: Preschool Learning with Jumpstart, 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. Ages 2-6. Reading and hands-on play. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082 www.willimanticlibrary.org
Walk: Relaxed Ramble, 11:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Easy to moderate walk on forest trails. All welcome. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 DEEP.Goodwin@ct.gov
Skill Share: Djembe Drumming

Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. Authentic West African Rhythms, all ages, all levels. Drum provided if needed. BENCH SHOP, 986 Main St, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-8331

March 6, Friday
Kids: Story Rhyme Wiggle Time, 10:30a.m. 6-36 months. Stories, songs and play time. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082
Kids: Build a Bridge, 2:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. Age 8+. Work in teams to build a bridge. The strongest
Dance: Quiet Corner Contra Dance, 7:45p.m. - 11:00p.m. Includes a 15 minute beginner workshop. Partner not necessary. BYO soft-soled shoes, lightly layered clothes and water bottle. Snacks welcome. Live caller and band. Patriot’s Park Lodge, 172 Lake St, Coventry. Info: knowdj@charter.net or 860-742-9498bridge wins a prize. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082

March 7, Saturday
Author: A Galaxy of Sea Stars, by

Jeanne Zulick Ferruolo 1:00p.m. UCONN Barnes & Noble, 1 Royce Circle, Storrs. Info: 860-486-8525 jzulferr.com
Live Music: Libby Johnson (Folk/ Indie). Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$15.00 online / \$20.00 door. Senior & student discounts. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington. Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474 www.thepackinghouse.us

March 8, Sunday
Live Music: Porch Part Mamas and The Promise Is Hope, 4:00p.m. \$25. Bread Box Theater, 220 Valley St., Willimantic. Tickets: 860-429-4220 breadboxfolk.org
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 3/1)

March 9, Monday
Kids: LEGO Fun, 4:30p.m. Ages 6+. Build with thousands of LEGO bricks. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082 www.willimanticlibrary.org
Film: “Seven Days in May” or “Dark



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Willimantic, Now and Then:

The 99%: “A Really Beautiful Idea!”

By Mark Svetz

“The goal is to put people together under the 99% umbrella and encourage them to vote,” says local businessman and activist Bill Potvin. “It’s a really beautiful idea, and it shouldn’t go away.”

Bill and his brothers own Hosmer Mountain Bottling Co., a local soda producer in the Potvin family for more than 50 years. He served as a combat infantryman in Vietnam, an experience that makes him a little possessive of the freedoms for which he believed he was fighting. That feeling brought Bill to political activism. He was especially inspired by the Occupy Movement.

“As you know, the 99% was conceptualized for the public during the Occupy Movement,” Bill continues, “and should never be forgotten.”

The concept that has so captured Bill’s imagination and passion is that a tiny fraction (1%) of the population in the US controls the lion’s share of the wealth. This tiny group of people has the power and resources to, in Bill’s words, “Rig the system against the 99%.” This fact angers Bill, as it does many of us. More important for Bill Potvin than his anger at a “rigged system,” is his understanding that he shares something with most of the people he sees. Ninety-nine percent of them are his political allies, at least potentially.

“It’s the antithesis of divide and conquer, an habitual right wing strategy,” Bill told me the other day. “If you think the system is rigged against you by the 1%, you are a 99%er!!”

Bill recommended I look at a web site called Inequality.org, and I saw an interesting fact: Three US citizens – Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos – own as much as half of the US population. According to Nobel prize winning economist Paul Krugman, “between 1979 and 2005 the inflation-adjusted income for the middle of the income distribution rose 21%, while for the top 0.1% it rose by 400%.” That trend has continued in the 21st Century.

“After three massive tax cuts, giving almost all benefits to the rich, under three Republican presidents (Reagan, Bush, Trump), we are now topping the Gilded Age in unfairness,” Bill told me. “This does not speak well for your and my generation. We failed. I keep saying to myself, ‘I served in Nam for this?’”

Last year Bill had a bunch of pins printed up with the simple message “99%.” This message is important to him. It’s a way to build a community of voters who will support candidates who recognize the significance of this disparity. Legislation has to be enacted to stop this concentration of wealth, and Bill hopes the 99% can elect a president and members of congress in the next election who will begin that process. The message is important enough



to give the pins out at his business.

“We plan on offering 99% buttons free, at our stores with a purchase, even a single cold drink,” Bill said. “They’re free, as long as you do not throw them in a drawer. Please, put it on your jacket, pocketbook, backpack, sweater or hat. and be able to describe what it means in 30 seconds. This is a concerted effort to educate and defeat King TUT.”

When I was looking at the web site Bill recommended, there was a moment when I was confused. There were a lot of numbers – never my long suit – on the pages, and I had to check a few times to be sure, but they were billions. I remember when it was great fun to sit around with friends and imagine spending a million dollars. The fun, you may recall if you ever did this, was in realizing how difficult it might be. And this was a million. I have never tried that with a billion dollars, have you? Bill has.

“One term that is so common as to lose meaning is a billion or billionaire. A whole lifetime of income from a decent job might net a person two to three million dollars total,” bill says. “Doesn’t it make more sense to restate billion for what it truly means. It’s 1,000 million. This phenomenal level of wealth has become normalized and it shouldn’t be, especially with the growth of homelessness and poverty.”

And this last bit of information is what really gets Bill going. He can’t help but see the connection between this growing concentration of wealth and the suffering of people in our community and around the world.

“We as a nation are sliding down the ladder of the ranks of nations in important parameters of successful societies, such as infant mortality rates, poverty, suicide, drug addiction and alcoholism,” he says. “In actuality, the real damage is being done by the top one tenth of one percent (.01%), those that are being allowed to use their money to influence elections and buy off politicians under Citizens United, and that’s far from democratic.”

Citizens United is a reference to a recent decision of the US Supreme Court giving corporations the same rights as people in campaign finance laws. This was a decision which prompted Bernie Sanders (currently the leading Democratic candidate for president) to tell us a few years ago that no legislation can pass in the US Congress if major corporations oppose it. This is the result of this concentration of wealth Bill is talking about, and its political influence.

So, if you see Bill Potvin around town, or stop in at Hosmer Mountain, take a minute to talk. You will probably get an invitation to join him and the rest of the 99% fighting against the 1% who are taking the democracy out of our system. Or, better yet, talk to someone you see wearing the pin.

Mark Svetz has been a journalist, activist, teacher and self-appointed knight errant in Willimantic for the last 45 years... and counting! You can read more of Mark’s writing at www.WillimanticToday.wordpress.com

Finding ‘Medications’ in Early Mill Towns

By Tyler Hall



Patent medicines, tonics, elixirs, and miracle cures swept through America during the 18th and 19th centuries. Manufacturers of these over the counter remedies could make limitless claims regarding the use and effectiveness of their products. Chemists were often secretive or deceptive regarding their mixtures, though many were later revealed to be a blend of alcohol and any number of highly addictive narcotics. Free from liability, they often claimed that product ineffectiveness or negative reactions were the result of too low a dosage. Advertisements in the form of testimonials, endorsements, and manufacturer guarantees were prevalent through the mid 1800’s, into the early 1900’s.

These cures made their way into every corner of Connecticut, including the Gardiner Hall Jr. Company Store. As travel was often difficult, time consuming, and expensive, early mill towns were largely self sufficient. Employees relied solely on the mill store and traveling salesmen to procure goods, at great benefit to the company. Though the mill in South Willington did produce some of its own remedies, an advertisement in the Stafford Springs Press, dated November 1st, 1900, directed consumers to visit South Willington for Chamberlain’s Cough Remedy.

“Mr. H. H. Black, the well known village blacksmith at Grahamsville, Sullivan Co., N. Y., says: ‘Our little son, five years old, has always been subject to croup, and so bad have the attacks been that we have feared many times that he would die. We have had the doctor and used many medicines, but Chamberlain’s Cough Remedy is now our sole reliance. It seems to dissolve the tough mucus, and by giving frequent doses when the symptoms appear, we have found that the dreaded croup is cured before it gets settled.’ There is no danger in giving this remedy for it contains no opium or other injurious drug and may be given as confidently to a babe as to an adult. For sale by E. K. Taft, Stafford Springs; H. F. Cady, Stafford; Gardiner Hall, Jr., & Co., South Willington.”



As the dangerous effects of these unregulated tonics became known, a growing number of journalists, doctors, and consumers called for government intervention. This outcry led to many meaningful, hard fought regulations targeting unsafe medicine and deceptive advertising. In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Pure Food and Drug Act, preventing the “manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs or medicines, and liquors.” Though patent medicines began to lose popularity in the early 1900’s, it would take decades to begin to combat the dangerous remedies and practices that had become staples of early American medicine.

Tyler Hall is the Curator of Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum, Board member at the Windham Textile Museum, and History student at ECSU.

Hampton Scouts Food Drive

March is almost here and that means it’s time for the annual Scout Food Drive. Every year Hampton residents open their cupboards and wallets to donate about a thousand items of food and personal care items. These are then distributed to the Hampton Food Pantry, housed at the Hampton Congregational Church, and the Covenant Soup Kitchen.

The boys and girls of Family Cub Scouts Pack 93 and Scouts BSA Troops 93 and 1093 will be distributing bags and collecting food. On Saturday, March 21, bags with flyers will be hung on mail box posts. Bags will also be available in the post office lobby for PO Box holders. On the following Saturday, March 28, donations will be collected. You can drop off your donation at the Hampton Congregational Church between 8:00 and 10:30 AM. If you wish to have your donation picked up, please call 860-208-2848 and leave your name and address. Please help us to once again make this event a success.

Donated items should be non-perishable items, such as the following:

- Cereal
- Canned Soups
- Baby Food
- Canned pastas (with and without Meat)
- Canned beans
- Coffee (ground or bean)
- Fruit Juice (bottles boxes and pouches)
- High protein items (canned fish and meat, peanut butter)
- Sugar
- Diapers (all sizes) and wipes
- Plastic grocery bags
- Lg paper lunch bags for Sunday bagged lunches
- Feminine care items
- Personal care items (soaps,tooth brushes, deodorant)
- Zip baggies
- Small and large paper plates

2nd CommUnity/ComUnidad Leaders Awards

Submitted by Itzell García and Katherine Pérez

Dear Neighbors-
We want to invite you to our 2nd CommUnity/ComUnidad Leaders Awards taking place on Thursday, March 12 from 6:30-8:30 at the Betty Tipton Room at ECSU.

It is a gathering with our community to formally honor some activists, volunteers, and businesses that help our community.

Last year when we started planning this event, we went around the community asking people to nominate the leaders who they thought were making a difference in our community.

As we went through the nominations we noticed different categories of local issues such as: immigrant rights, local history, education, community engagement, environmental justice, racial justice, and more. The people that we chose to recog-

nize have proven to be effective community leaders working on issues that affect our everyday life and we firmly believe they should be recognized and celebrated for their hard work.

We also do this activity so that the winners come together and share their experience and perspective. The individuals who are being awarded are: José Salas, Rose Reyes, Leah Ralls, Kristen Fortier, Ana María Falcón, James Flores, and José Camacho. The businesses we are recognizing as “Certified Community” are: Tacos de la Rosa, Not Only Juice, Bliss Marketplace, Yoga on North, and Eminence Ink. If you are interested in this event, please stop by and join us!

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Freddie Scott

By Dean Farrell

As host of “The Soul Express” on WECS, I play the biggest names in 1960s and ‘70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not make it big but were no less talented. This month’s column is about one such act: Freddie Scott, who had a top ten pop hit in 1963 and a #1 Rhythm & Blues hit in 1967. As Bill Dahl wrote for the “The Best of Freddie Scott” CD, “[He was] blessed with sleek pipes that grew grittier as the [1960s] progressed.”

Scott was born in Providence, Rhode Island, on April 24, 1933. He sang with his grandmother’s vocal group, Sally Jones & The Gospel Keyes, who toured England when Scott was twelve. He attended medical school at the University of Rhode Island and later at Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, but gave it up to return to spiritual singing.

Scott had crossed over to secular music by 1956. He signed with J&S Records in New York City, but his debut single, “Running Home,” did little. Scott also became a songwriter, penning Johnnie & Joe’s top ten R&B hit, “I’ll Be Spinning.” Another of his songs, “Baby I’m Sorry,” was recorded by teen idol Ricky Nelson for his 1957 debut LP.

Scott was conscripted into the military, but still recorded (unsuccessfully) for various small labels. Upon his return to civilian life, he joined the New York publishing firm of Aldon Music, located in the Brill Building. Scott recorded demos on himself, co-wrote songs with Helen Miller (who penned “Foolish Little Girl” for the Shirelles), and produced sessions by R&B singer Erma Franklin (sister of Aretha). He also released his own singles on small labels like Bow and Joy. None of them sold.

In 1962, Carole King and Gerry Goffin wrote the searing ballad, “Hey Girl,” for singer Chuck Jackson. But when Jackson did not show up for the session, they had Scott record the song instead. Several months later, it came out on Colpix Records. The single raced up the charts, going top ten in both the R&B and pop markets in the summer of 1963.

When Colpix folded, Scott moved on to Columbia. But when the decidedly pop-oriented label could not successfully promote him, Scott left the company for Bert Berns’ Shout Records. Berns, who wrote “Twist and Shout” and worked with R&B star Solomon Burke, was no

stranger to Black music.

Scott’s debut on Shout, written and produced by Berns, was the driving mid-tempo “Are You Lonely For Me.” It spent four weeks at #1 on the R&B chart in February and March of 1967. Its pop success, however, was more modest; it topped out at #39 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Scott’s career was derailed when Bert Berns died of heart failure in December of 1967. He continued to perform, but spent the next two years without a record deal. By 1970, Scott was on ABC’s Probe subsidiary, for whom he had his final R&B hit, “I Shall Be Released.” He spent the ‘70s creating ad jingles, producing reggae records, continuing to write songs with Helen Miller, occasionally acting in movies, and recording (with little success) for labels like Vanguard, Pickwick, and Mainstream. Scott was also known to perform at selected oldies concerts.

In 1989, Biz Markie sampled Scott’s “(You) Got What I Need” on “Just a Friend.” Ghostface Killa would sample it, as well, on 2004’s “Save Me Dear.”

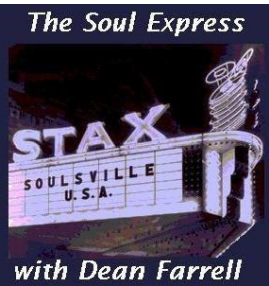
Scott recorded his first album in thirty-one years, “A New Man,” in 2001. He also performed “Brown-Eyed Girl” on the 2003 Van Morrison tribute CD, “Vanthology.”

Freddie Scott, 74, died in New York City on June 4, 2007.

Charted singles:

- “Hey Girl” (1963) R&B #10, Pop #10
- “I Got a Woman” (1963) R&B #27, Pop #48
- “Where Does Love Go” (1964) R&B #30, Pop #82
- “Are You Lonely For Me” (1966-67) R&B #1 (4 weeks), Pop #39
- “Cry to Me” (1967) R&B #40, Pop #70
- “Am I Grooving You” (1967) R&B #25, Pop #71
- “He Ain’t Give You None” (1967) R&B #24, Pop #100
- “(You) Got What I Need” (1968) R&B #27
- “I Shall Be Released” (1970) R&B #40

Dean Farrell hosts “The Soul Express” on WECS, 90.1-FM, from 9:00 p.m. - midnight on Fridays. He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and ‘70s—everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean archives his shows at <https://www.mixcloud.com/dean-fioral>. His e-mail address is soulextress@gmail.com.



Save Money with Energy Efficiency Measures

Submitted by Kate Donnelly

On Thursday, March 5, at 7 pm, the Hampton Green Energy Committee is sponsoring a presentation on Energy Efficiency as part of a film/lecture series in the Hampton Town Hall, 164 Main Street. “Learn how to save money and make your home more comfortable with Energy Efficiency measures” will be presented with speaker Leticia Colon de Mejias .

Leticia Colon de Mejias is the Founder and CEO of Energy Efficiencies Solutions (EES) a Connecticut-based full service Energy Conservation Company. EES offers comprehensive solutions to conserving energy including; home energy assessments, energy usage reports, air sealing, insulation, windows, solar, heating and cooling systems, renewable energy options, energy education, and return on investment coaching for retrofits and energy upgrades.

Mejias co-founded Green Eco Warriors (GEW), a non-profit Youth Ecology and Conservation group located in Windsor, CT, of which she is President. Leticia has authored and illustrated eight children’s books. She donates time and books to local schools and libraries.

“The Hampton Green Energy Committee has worked for a decade finding energy savings and working toward clean and renewable energy for town buildings and Hampton residents, according to Green Energy Chairperson Kate Donnelly. “We encourage people to attend our programs to find out more about how to reduce their energy consumption in their homes, take advantage of incentives for solar energy and electric cars, and watch films with solutions to the climate crisis.”

The program is part of a lecture series taking place on first Thursdays from January to June 2020. The series will examine aspects of climate change and what people can do to make a difference to achieving 100% clean and renewable energy.

Upcoming events:

Thursday, April 2, 2020 – Is your house right for solar? Solar presentation with Stephan Hartman Learn about solar possibilities for your home and how solar works. Stephan Hartman of Ross Solar Group/Con Edison Solutions will discuss how solar works, federal and state solar incentives, and flexible financing options that make solar panels more

affordable than ever. You can find out if your home is good for solar at the presentation. Ross worked with Hampton Green Energy Committee on the Hampton Solarize campaign.

Thursday, May 7 – Are you sick of fluctuating gasoline prices and costly car maintenance and repairs? Electric cars may be the answer for you. Come meet with various owners to learn all about EVs – Lower fuel costs, less maintenance, fewer repairs. Many models will be on hand and a speaker from the New England Electric Auto Association will update on the newest and best electric cars. Car Show begins at 6, presentation at 7.

Thursday, June 4, 2020, 7 pm – Film showing– “Paris to Pittsburgh” at Goodwin Forest Under the Pavilion From coastal cities to America’s heartland, Paris to Pittsburgh celebrates how Americans are demanding and developing real solutions in the face of climate change. And as the weather grows more deadly and destructive, they aren’t waiting on Washington to act.

For more information call Kate Donnelly at 860 604-4846.

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The Best Cooks Use the Best (local) Ingredients

By C. Dennis Pierce

If follow any of the food shows on television you get a sense that chefs have received a mythical rock star status. I am an acquaintance of Stephanie Izard, who is the first female chef to win Bravo’s Top Chef, taking the title during its fourth season. She is also the co-owner and executive chef of three award-winning Chicago restaurants, Girl and the Goat, Little Goat, and Duck Duck Goat, in 2017, Izard competed in the Food Network series Iron Chef Gauntlet, where she overall defeated chefs: Bobby Flay, Michael Symon and Masaharu Morimoto to obtain the title of Iron Chef. Stephanie Izard was born in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, Illinois and grew up in Stamford, Connecticut.

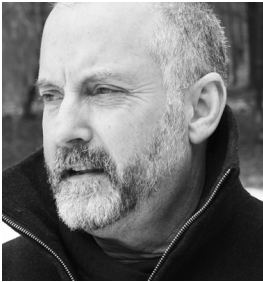
Yes, some chefs, like Stephanie, have reached mythical status and she has earned it because she understands the foundation of her success lies heavily on the ingredients that she creates with and which ultimately has a lot to do with a successful farmer. That said, I believe it is time for farmers to receive the same attention as chefs and be recognized as rock stars. Only one percent is doing the work to grow the food for the rest of us. Sure, everyone is cheering them on but we have to realize that local farmers are not successful without their customers. We have to remember; farming is not a spectator support we all have to participate by buying local.

As the neighborhood turkeys were strolling through my backyard this morning and the daybreak was just enough for me to see my dog in the blanket of darkness, I was making a mental note to mark on my calendar the upcoming, Know Your Farmer Fair, that is being held at the auditorium, in the Willimantic Town Hall at 979 Main Street, Willimantic. The event is being held on Saturday, February 29th from 10:00am to 1:00pm. This is the 5th annual fair sponsored by Windham Community Food Network. WCFN is a collaboration of merchants, farmers, organizations, and community members looking to connect local nutritional needs with local resources.

If you have not attended before I suggest that you take a break from your Saturday errands and attend this year. Plan to go early since it draws quite a crowd. As stated on the WCFN website…” Know Your Farmer Fair, is a successful event which creates an opportunity for the community to meet local farmers from across Eastern CT (New London, Tolland and Windham Counties) and look ahead to the upcoming growing season. Residents can shop the farmer’s market as well as ask about local Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSA), farm stands and pick-your-own opportunities. Additionally, there will be food and farm products available for purchase, an opportunity to get free seeds for your garden, and the chance to win a CSA share by posting your pictures of the event on social media with #knowyourfarmerfair”.

If you cannot attend this year’s event and have thought about purchasing produce by buying a share of a farm crop there are many options in the area. I have listed several in the past but a sampling can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Marketing/Marketing/CSA-Listing>

As I write this column it is about five more weeks until spring. No more coming home from work in the dark and the earthy smell of the ground permeates the air as the sunlight is getting warmer. Buying local is important but also if you are trying your hand at gardening you will find it is also calming and productive. This year you might try out a container garden or maybe even dig up a small area in your back yard. If you are looking for seeds, you can visit the Mansfield Public Library. They host a seed exchange program with a myriad of choices. If you are not bringing in seeds that were left over from your last year’s purchase, you can still go in a make a selection of seeds for your new project and then enter it their seed log so they can track what was taken. The library also has a plethora of books on gardening in case you need some startup help. Before you start your garden, it is important to have your soil checked out so you can see what additives need to be put into the soil. The university offers this service on the Depot Campus. Their contact information can be found here: <http://www.soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php>



The benefits of a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) share from a local farmer’s garden. Contributed photo.

www.soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php
I realize it is too early for rhubarb and strawberries but I could not resist sharing this recipe. The ginger and balsamic vinegar makes it stand out.

Ginger Strawberry- Rhubarb Crisp with Brown Sugar – Pecan Topping - Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:

For the crisp topping:
8 tablespoons of unsalted butter and extra to coat a 2-quart baking dish
1 cup of unbleached all-purpose flour
1/4 cup of chopped, toasted pecans
½ cup of light brown sugar
½ cup of regular oats
¼ teaspoon of kosher salt
¼ teaspoon of ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon of ground ginger
For the filling:

2 ½ C. of cleaned, quartered-strawberries
2 ½ cups thick sliced rhubarb stalks (cut ½ inch thick, about 10 ounces)
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons of sugar
3 T. unbleached all- purpose flour
2 T. of finely chopped crystallized ginger
2 t. of pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoon of balsamic vinegar
¼ teaspoon of kosher salt

Directions:
Pre heat oven to 350 degrees
Rub a shallow, 2-quart baking

dish with butter.
In a medium mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients for the crisp topping
Mix together with you fingers until topping is well blended
In another large bowl combine the filling ingredients and mix
Place filling in greased baking dish
Top evenly with topping mixture
Bake until topping is firm and brown, about 45 minutes
Let cool for 15 minutes and serve with warm with ice cream, yogurt or heavy cream.

I recently stumbled upon a great site on the internet that lists interesting facts. Did you know that that apples are more effective at waking you up in the morning than coffee? Or that the oldest known vegetable is the pea? Just amazing what simple facts, we were not aware of as we make our way through our busy life. If you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that would feature a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com. Peas be with you...

A Cappella Ensemble Announces Music Scholarship

MANSFIELD — The a cappella ensemble, Take Note!, is pleased to announce the Take Note! Antonia Brancia Memorial Scholarship. The \$1000 scholarship will be used to provide financial assistance to a qualifying high school senior or university undergraduate who will be/is majoring in the field of music at the university level. The scholarship will be awarded to a student who permanently resides in one of the following eastern Connecticut towns: Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Mansfield, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Stafford, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Willington, Willimantic/Windham or Woodstock. Toni Brancia was a charter member of Take Note!, an eastern Connecticut nonprofit a cappella ensemble that exclusively performs benefit concerts for other nonprofits, free of charge. A warm, caring person, Toni was an internationally renowned pediatric audiologist whose life was tragically cut short in 2007. Music played a vital role in Toni’s life, and she especially loved making music with her Take Note! family. The members of Take Note! have established this scholarship in her memory. Online application is available now. The Take Note! Antonia Brancia Memorial Scholarship is administered by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. Please consult their web site at <https://www.cfecf.org/Scholarships> for complete application information.

Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery-Community Connection

By Rebecca Zablocki



If you have visited the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery or read about us before, you may already be aware of our strong desire to connect with the community. We believe that artists, craftspeople and hobbyists with all levels of arts training or lack of training, have a place with us here, at the Eastern CT Center for History, Art & Performance (EC-CHAP). The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery is the perfect place for someone new to art to start their journey; whether it be observing the art, displaying for the first time, or an opportunity for a seasoned artist to display their work closer to home. We hope that all members of the community can find a way to participate with EC-CHAP through the arts. Since we first started displaying local and regional art work in the Community Gallery, we have been able to meet and help share the work of a wide variety of talented artists for public view.



The artists that we have met are not only creative and inspiring through their work but through their involvement within the larger community of eastern CT and beyond. In January and February we had the pleasure of displaying the work of Tammy Glaeser, a Willington resident, photographer and printmaker who also happens to be an art teacher at nearby E.O. Smith High School, located in Storrs-Mansfield, CT. Glaeser is one example of how developing community connections can be synergistic in nature. Each show that we host in the Community Gallery helps us to grow our community of artists larger and stronger. Thanks to this new collaboration, this March & April students and staff from E.O. Smith will be teaming up with EC-CHAP to put together a show of artwork that they have created!

Displaying the works of young artists among the art produced by their teachers and mentors is a great way to highlight the talent of these students and their ability to stand out next to the experienced artists that they learn from. It also provides an opportunity to demonstrate the varied talents of their teachers and staff members that they see every school day; expressing that the staff and faculty at E.O. Smith are not only role models within the classroom but within the community as well.

One colleague that Glaeser introduced us to is Louise Napoletano Best. Louise, a local artist, creates surrealist paintings with imaginative scenes through layering of subjects, animals, objects, scenery and people. She creates seemingly endless spaces through extremely intuitive use of value and color, whimsical transitions and deep dark spaces. Louise explains her path as an artist below:



“I started painting in 1990 after being inspired by Bob Ross; saying to myself, ‘I can do this.’ My medium was acrylic; I loved painting on a black surface, and I started making signs on old roofing slate.

I displayed my work at a local bank, and received many special orders for personalized original paintings. I began doing freelance work for a sign maker in Bolton, working the local craft shows, selling to gift shops, and teaching classes. In 1997 I burned out and needed a break. When I came back to painting I felt I had to approach it differently; I had to see, from within. Each painting inspired and guided me along my spiritual journey; my hand is painted in all of them, and each animal has a symbolic meaning that carries a message. Now I feel it is time to release them.”

We look forward to pairing the talented works of E.O. Smith Faculty & Staff with that of their students, up and coming artists. Students at E.O. Smith have been busy this semester actively showing their artwork in multiple locations. We look forward to having this not only be the beginning of a long-lasting relationship with these students and faculty members, but possibly inspiration for other area schools to become involved.

Visit this new show in the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery, located on the 1st floor of The Mill Works facility, 156 River Road, Willington, CT. E.O. Smith at EC-CHAP opens on March 7, and will be on view Saturdays 10 AM-2 PM from March 7 - April 25, 2020.

Rebecca Zablocki is the EC-CHAP Artist-In-Residence, and Director, Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery.

Henry the Hiking Cat - Part 2

By Bill Powers

This story is about Henry our tiger cat, who loved to walk with my wife and me on the Nipmuck Trail in Mansfield, CT. These walks were enjoyable for us until two incidents occurred, which caused Henry to instinctively flee from our protection. We thought that he might be lost for good. Henry had taken off when a trail runner unexpectedly came close and a week later when an unleashed dog had chased him.

Eventually, we were reunited but decided that returning again to the Nipmuck would be out of the question – simply too risky.

In an attempt to “play it safe” on future walks, we decided to trail-blaze behind our home into a wooded area that extended for miles. Here new adventures were about to begin with Henry. The terrain was not cleared – there were no paths. At first, for several outings, we walked for about a mile and returned with Henry following close behind. However, one day Henry simply took the lead as we headed out. It began a new “hiking” career for him; he was now the path finder and he earned the name “Henry, the Hiking Cat.” Our walking buddy was now becoming our hiking buddy.

Our excursions into the woods gradually became longer and longer. One day, Henry led us to a narrow old dirt road that went deeper into the terrain. To our delight the road was bordered on both sides by stone walls that were very well preserved. On the far side of the road, not far from the wall, was a large shallow pond. Henry immediately jumped up onto the stone wall which became a new avenue for him to venture farther with very few obstacles.

After a while, we came to a clearing where a stream flowed into the pond. It was a place with only a few trees. Large boulders provided a perfect place to sit and rest, have a drink and to enjoy a snack. Henry rested with us for a bit and began to explore an elevated overgrown area about 75 feet behind us. Suddenly he was gone from sight. When we found him, he was busily inspecting a depression in what appeared to have been the foundation at the site of a house. On future walks, Henry always visited this place, which helped to fuel my curiosity about the site.

One day, after several trips to this location, we were resting at the side of the stream. Henry decided to cross over to the other side. The old road actually continued on the opposite side and was easily reached because the water level had dropped. As Henry explored the opposite shore, he disappeared around a bend. We quickly followed and found him checking out a large foundation of rocks extending out to the edge of the stream. The structure was not visible from where we had been sitting. Again my curiosity was aroused. I took a photo, and we were off. Since we had already crossed the stream, we decided to continue briefly on this new portion of the old road and



Henry eagerly led the way atop a stone wall.

On another day we travelled to the end of that road and back home. That time, as we returned home, Henry was plumb tuckered out. We carried him the last hundred yards or so.

At the town hall I was able to locate the old dirt road on historical town maps. Town officials told me it had been discontinued decades earlier.

During the many trips with Henry into those woods, we had the area to ourselves. We never saw another person or a dog. Henry, our hiking buddy had made his own trail. He found an old road lined with stone walls that we absolutely loved while getting exercise. He also made other interesting discoveries.

The exploits of Henry led him to become a living legend with family, friends, and neighbors. Actually, his fame made it to the hallowed halls of academia. State archeologist, Nick Bellantoni, found that the site of the house was known already in the town archeological records but the site of the structure along the stream was not known. As a result, he came to see the site and determined it was a seasonal lumber mill.

At that time I was enrolled in a Connecticut History course offered at Quinebaug Valley Community College taught by Mrs. Bev York. For my final project, I decided to research the history of the sites Henry led us to. Using National Archives, town, county, church and State Library records, I learned about the family who once lived on the land in the mid-1800s; their names; when and where they were born, married and died; and many other details about their lives. I found where they were laid to rest and visited the place in Willington, CT.

At times our grand-daughter would join us on our travels with Henry into the woods. Henry’s feats would inspire her. Later, for a college project, she wrote and illustrated a children’s book. She titled it “Henry, the Hiking Cat.”

Bill Powers, a retired counselor and public school teacher, is a volunteer docent at the Windham Textile and History Museum and lives in Willington.

Waters”, two screenings in two different rooms, 7:00p.m. Free. 2nd Monday Film Series. Storrs UU Meeting House, 46 Spring Hill Road, Mansfield. Info: 860-428-4867.

March 11, Wednesday

Kids: Preschool Learning with Jumpstart, 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. (See 3/4)
Art: Reception, Geometric Oils and Wax-based Color Pencil Drawings by Lula Mae Blocton, 4:45p.m. - 6:00p.m. Includes drawing demonstration. Fletcher Memorial Library’s Top Shelf Gallery, 257 Main St., Hampton. Info: 860-455-1086
Live Entertainment: “Talent Showcase” – Come share your talents! Doors 6:30pm / Showcase 7:00pm. Free and open to all ages. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F”TM (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington. Call in advance to sign-up (recommended) or sign-in at the door (time permitting). 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming.
Skill Share: Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 3/4)

March 12, Thursday

Community Awards: Grow Windham CommUNITY/CommUNIDAD Leaders, 6:30p.m. - 8:30p.m. Betty Tipton Room, ECSU, Willimantic, CT.
Dance: Social Dance Series with Kelly Madenjian, 6:30pm. \$10.00 door. Enjoy a lovely evening out social

ballroom dancing including a beginner ballroom dance lesson. All levels welcome. Partners not required. The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington. Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474 www.thepackinghouse.us

March 13, Friday

Kids: Story Rhyme Wiggle Time, 10:30a.m. (See 3/6)
Film: “School of Rock” (1926, NR). Doors 6:30pm / Film Showing 7:00pm. \$5. Snacks and soft drinks available. “BYOB&F” (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington. Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474. www.thepackinghouse.us.

March 14, Saturday

Kids: Maria Sangiolo’s Interactive Music Program, 10:30a.m. Free. Followed by crafts for kids. Fletcher Memorial Library, 257 Main St., Hampton. Info: 860-455-1086

March 15, Sunday

Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 3/1)

March 18, Wednesday

Skill Share: Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 3/4)

March 19, Thursday

Walk: Relaxed Ramble, 11:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 3/4)
Kids: Pajama Story Time, 6:00p.m.

Ages 3+. Wear your pajamas to the library. We’ll read bedtime stories, do a craft, and have a snack. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082 www.willimanticlibrary.org

March 20, Friday

Kids: Story Rhyme Wiggle Time, 10:30a.m. (See 3/6)

March 21, Saturday

Hiking: Long-Distance Hike, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. 5-6-mile hike. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 DEEP.Goodwin@ct.gov

March 22, Sunday

History: Lyceum Talk at the Mill Museum: “Yellow Roses: Voices of Women Suffrage”, by Bev York, 4:00p.m. Donations welcome. Mill Museum, 411 Main St, Willimantic. 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 3/1)

March 25, Wednesday

Kids: Preschool Learning with Jumpstart, 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. (See 3/4)
Skill Share: Djembe Drumming Lessons, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (See 3/4)

March 27, Friday

Kids: Story Rhyme Wiggle Time, 10:30a.m. (See 3/6)
Kirtan: Kirtan & Heart Songs with



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The World is Atwitter

By Delia Berlin

The year 2020 ushered in a new decade to a hopeful start. That launch failed miserably. But here we are, still hanging on to hope that some good may be squeezed out of the year by its end.



Admittedly, it is very hard to write an uplifting story about anything these days. I usually try, but now I have lowered the bar. As long as I can avoid sounding completely hopeless and despaired, I’m satisfied. After all, acting optimistic during Armageddon may provoke concern instead of reassurance. So, this time I will write about my experience with social media, which, while not entirely positive, still has a very bright side.

For the last several years we have been exposed to constant negative commentary about social media. But social media is a very broad term, encompassing many different online platforms for social interaction. Although almost 80% of the US population uses some form of social media, for those who don’t, I should explain what that is. Social media can be described simply as a set of virtual networking tools to connect with others remotely, for a given purpose.

Well-known social media platforms include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. I have only used Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Occasionally, I have used YouTube, but not so much as social media, but as a video library of sorts. If you want to see a video of something, such as a parrot dancing, just google “video of parrot dancing” and, chances are, you will find multiple YouTube postings to satisfy your curiosity. While there are commonalities among all social media platforms, such as connecting users online, they differ significantly in type of users and purpose of use.

Facebook, perhaps the best-known social media platform, is used by 83% of women and 75% of men on the internet. Omnicore claims that 72% of Facebook users are between the ages of 50 to 64. In addition, 85% of Facebook’s daily users come from outside the US and Canada. India has the most users, over 270 million, followed by 190 million from the US. Most users rely on Facebook to stay in touch with their families, friends and acquaintances, by sharing pictures and personal information.

LinkedIn is used mainly for professional networking, where users are more likely to post resumes, credentials and professional milestones, instead of personal news. Therefore, this platform is also used by human resource departments and headhunters worldwide. Towards the end of 2019, according to Omnicore, it had 160 million users and 60% of them were outside of the US. The usefulness of this network is limited for someone who is not seeking employment. But it does offer a relatively easy way of staying in touch with colleagues, at least in terms of careers, and some opportunity for sharing or promoting creative activities, such as writing.

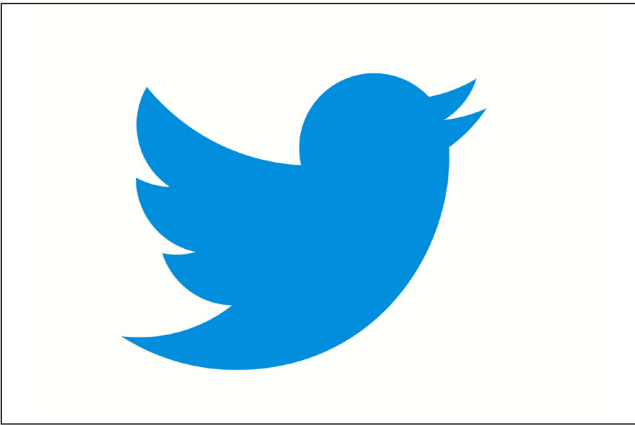
Twitter provides a way to network with others around topics of interest. It is more predominantly male than Facebook and LinkedIn. While only 22% of US adults use Twitter, there are 262 million international Twitter users outside of the US, which make up 79% of all Twitter accounts. According to Omnicore, 62% of Twitter users are under 50 years old, resulting in a younger user make-up than that of Facebook. The three countries with most Twitter users outside the U.S. are Japan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

These three examples of social media platforms should suffice to give an idea about generalities and differences. In addition, since these are the only three that I have reasonably experienced, I won’t go into the rest. And because my use of LinkedIn is limited in my retirement, I will focus just on Facebook and Twitter.

My experience with Facebook was brief and unpleasant. First, I resisted joining for a long time. I eventually gave in, because practically everyone I knew claimed that no writer could afford not having a Facebook presence. Perhaps they were correct, but I failed at establishing the right type of presence. Soon after joining Facebook, I clearly felt more stressed. In Facebook, you can invite others to be your “friends” and they can invite you as well. If you know someone, chances are they will be on Facebook and there will be social pressure to “friend” them. Soon, you’ll also face pressure to interact and respond to messages. I like my real friends and most of my acquaintances, but I disliked having to interact with most of them so frequently, often about interests we didn’t share. Of course, one can ignore postings or restrict settings to limit the circle of friends, but for me that wasn’t a good solution.

Soon after signing up on Facebook, I had a huge number of “friends” with little interest in my writing or my books. Further, many of them shared posts that I wasn’t interested in or that I disagreed with. My mood after checking Facebook was never improved. After the 2016 election it was easy for me to defect in protest by deactivating my account. I haven’t missed it.

My experience with Twitter is very different and, unexpectedly, almost entirely positive. Everyone in the US knows about Twitter, because the current president communicates by tweet. But, because more than half of his tweets are attacks, and because Twitter can provide fertile ground to spread disinformation, many don’t view it positively. For me, Twitter has been a world of wonder and possibility that continues to surprise me.



Why are Facebook and Twitter so different? One reason may be how these platforms help you build your network. The starting point for Facebook “friends” is your contacts, but Twitter, instead, departs from your interests. Of course, anyone can have good and bad contacts, as well as good and bad interests, so personal experiences will vary. But, in general, Facebook will help you connect with everyone you know, and everyone that anyone you know may know. Twitter, on the other hand, will help you “follow” and be followed by anyone in the world who shares your interests about a given topic, whether you know them or not. So, your Twitter network is formed by people who are interested in what you want to share, rather than people you know, or who may know someone that you know. Granted, there may be overlap. I personally know a few people in my Twitter network, perhaps 1% of them. But, by design, we tend to interact only around topics of common interest and there is no pressure to react to every post.

Another difference between Facebook and Twitter is that following or not following someone based on interests (as on Twitter) is not as personal as friending or unfriending an acquaintance (as on Facebook). On Twitter, for instance, if I’m followed by someone interested in baseball, I won’t follow them back because I don’t share that interest. I’m not hurting feelings, because my action is not related to the person, but to the topic. But if I knew that person and got invited to be “friends” on Facebook, I would feel pressured to accept. Regardless of the goodness of that person, I probably would end up hearing more about baseball than I ever wanted, which is exactly nothing.

On Twitter, I define myself as a writer of bilingual children’s books and short stories, who tweets about bilingualism, climate change, nature, human rights and social issues. While my initial intention was to focus on my writing and bilingualism, the urgency of daily news often tempts me to share more tweets about climate change and human rights. Yet, in spite of tweeting “eclectically” I have a network of more than 2,000 international followers, to whom I owe much.

Among many unexpected gifts from Twitter, I made a connection that resulted in a contract for a bilingual picture book. Although I never met the publisher, editor or illustrator, my book “How to Eat a Rainbow” got produced in several print and digital formats, and in dual-text in seven languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog and German. I got paid as promised and I still get royalties. Once, I approached the publisher via email because one payment seemed unusually large. I was told that an organization in California had just ordered 1,000 copies of my book. I would have had no way of knowing this. My big payment proved that there are honest people using Twitter, in spite of what we are often exposed to.

Through other Twitter connections, I got contracts for two articles about bilingual books for Teaching Tolerance, a resource for teachers produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center. I was interviewed by several blogs and websites related to bilingualism, in English and Spanish, sometimes via Skype. These sources included Adventures in Bilingual Parenting, Bilingual Monkeys, and Reto Bilingue. Another teacher resource for language learning, Spanish Playground, published an author review based on

my bilingual books and three separate reviews of my titles. Once, a fellow bilingual author had a giveaway incentive to spread the news about her books. I won a free signed copy of a wonderful title by her. When that same author published her next book, she offered to mail me a free copy, in exchange for an honest review. For full disclosure, she asked that I mention in the review that I had received a free copy from the author – an example of the ethos of my followers.

Most recently, I was invited to translate an anthology of 30 popular fairy tales and fables, for a bilingual edition by a bilingualism expert and author, who will pay me with PayPal and book copies. Interestingly, he lives in Hiroshima, Japan. He is raising his children bilingually (Japanese and English) while researching related resources and developing expertise along the way. Although I haven’t met him and our relationship focuses on a narrow slice of mutual interests, he feels to me like a friend and I trust him as if I had known him in person for years.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention some of the many other interesting Twitter contacts with whom I have developed a virtual bond. Examples include: scientists at botanical gardens in many parts of the world, who share beautiful images and information about plants; climate experts who post the most recent environmental data; animal conservationists interested in parrots, primates, ocean life, all birds, etc.; writers, who generously post poems, personal essays and stories; human rights activists who expose bigotry and injustice; talented bird photographers; people interested in improving living conditions for farm and captive animals; good humor and funny parody accounts, and much more.

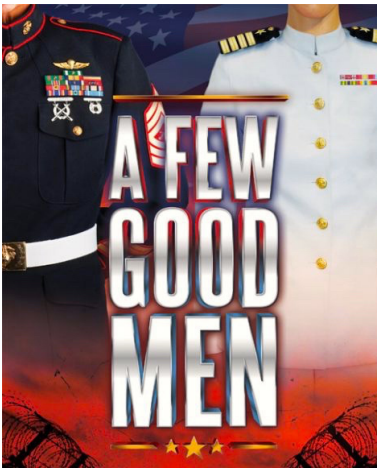
Twitter also allows me to share fascinating appropriate posts with my granddaughter. Where else can you find jokes in Spanish for school kids, videos of orangutans laughing at pranks, and images taken by space telescopes? Unfortunately, global connections also exacerbate the heartbreak caused by faraway tragedies, such as the Australian wildfires, or the Jakarta floods. When those you “know” are affected, you relate to their stories personally. But in a polarized world so full of vitriol, it pleases me that my “Twitterverse” is brimming with honest and generous people, kindness and goodwill. Imagine.

WTG Auditions

Submitted by Robin Rice

WHAT: The Windham Theatre Guild will hold Open Auditions for the May/June 2020 Main Stage production of *A Few Good Men* by Aaron Sorkin. This groundbreaking

play by Sorkin tells the story of a group of military lawyers assigned to defend two Marines in Guantanamo Bay. During the course of the trial, they uncover a high-level conspiracy designed to eliminate weaker soldiers in the name of patriotism. *A Few Good Men* had a successful run on Broadway in 1989 and went on to be produced all over the world. Tom Hulce, who originated the role of Lt. Kaffee, was nominated for Best Actor at the Tony Awards that year. NBC aired a live television broadcast of the play in 2017, complete with a brand-new teleplay adapted by Sorkin



WHERE: First Congregational Church, 199 Valley Street, Willimantic, CT.

WHEN: Sunday and Monday, March 9 & 10, 2020 at 7:00pm.

NEEDED: A total of 15 characters: 11-14 MEN/1-4 WOMEN. Auditions will consist of readings from the script. Prepared monologues are welcome. For character descriptions, go to windhamtheatreguild.org. If you have any questions, please contact Director Jim Hetrick at heyduke3@gmail.com.

SHOW DATES: May 29, 30, 31, June 4, 5, 6, & 7, 2020

Onward Into My 80s

By David Corsini

As I look forward after turning 80, there are some things that worry me. One of my worries is what to do with the art pieces I have created. In my recent retrospective show in the Potpourri Building in Willimantic, I showed 65 pieces. While these did not represent only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, it was what I thought of as the cream of the crop. Back in the studio, the “crop” included over 100 completed pieces, and many more in various stages of conceptualization.

Some of the assemblages I have made are not for sale, but many are. Some pieces in the show sold and additional pieces were sold during Open Studio in late November and early December. But I still have a large inventory of things I am willing to sell and things I am not ready to sell.

It is not only the number of pieces I have, but also the likelihood that there will be an appropriate home for many of them. In truth, there are multiple motivations behind the work I have done. Making things to sell is only one. Some of my pieces were made to make a statement about environmental issues and some were made to elicit a laugh or smile. And some, particularly the assemblages with skulls, are made primarily for my own enjoyment. I feel it is time to step back, reflect on what I have produced, make decisions about how to dispose of some pieces, and figure out where to focus my creative energy going forward. This is not going to be easy.

Another big concern, as I turn 80, is dealing with technology. I have an iPhone, iPad, a laptop computer, and a printer. I use them in a relatively simple way: email, texting, to check the news, to search for information, banking, and to write essays. I understand very little about these devices. When things do not work, I have a limited number of strategies to correct things. When these strategies don’t work, I call Delia.

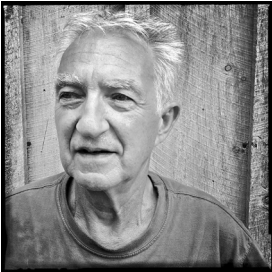
My armpits become soggy whenever I see the message, “An update is available” or any message that indicates some change in my devices is necessary. Not long ago there was a message that my iPad needed to be updated. When I clicked on the link to update, the system went into an updating spin that never completed. It was like having a washing machine stuck in the spin cycle. A half day visit to the Apple store, with Delia, was required to get things righted. Had Delia not been with me, I might still be there.

Then not long ago, for no apparent reason, my email did not work and changes had to be made. There was a number to call, so I did. I began speaking with a woman, probably in India, who, because of my impaired hearing and her accent, I could not understand. Therefore, I could not follow her directions. Again, I was saved by Delia. I know things with technology are always going to change and I worry about my ability to keep up.

Even though I am low on the spectrum of technology use, technology has its claws into me and I am anxious by my dependency on it. When I drive off without my phone, I get nervous and will return home to get it. When my computer doesn’t connect to the Internet, email does not work, or the connection to the printer is lost, I feel disorganized. It is difficult to do anything until those conditions are fixed. When I drive to a new location, I depend on our GPS to give me directions. How did I handle these tasks before these devices came into my life? And more importantly, I feel I am just hanging on by my fingertips to what is becoming old technology. Will I be able to keep up with new technology?

And then I am anxious by the scamming attempts that come via email. Every once in a while, I get a message that my credit card account needs updating or something is wrong. I am pretty good at spotting these scams. But scamming gets more sophisticated all the time, while little old aging me, gradually losses scam detection skills. For example, recently I received an email message that appeared to have come from Delia. The message said “you might be interested in this.” It was a link to an advertisement and “limited time offer” for a CBD hemp oil extract for pain. Since I do have back and leg pain and one of Delia’s brothers has tried CBD for pain, it did not seem completely unreasonable that Delia had sent this to me. Luckily, I did not go for the limited time offer and, when I asked Delia about the message, it turned out she had not sent it. Somebody had made it appear that the message had come from her email address.

I am on my third set of hearing aids and every change involves new features. My current ones are hooked up to my phone via Bluetooth. I hear better with Bluetooth



and, when I am in a restaurant, I can change settings on the hearing aids with the phone. But sometimes I turn off the Bluetooth setting on my phone and then forget to turn it back on. I am then puzzled when my phone is no longer working with my hearing aids and why I cannot change the settings with my phone. Duh! Even though I thought of going to the audiologist to “fix” this, I have not yet experienced that embarrassment.

As I go forward I know it is important to continue to find a sense of purpose. One aspect of purpose is to maintain meaningful personal relationships. I will continue to strive to be a good husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend and community member. Even though there are areas of my personal relationships that could be rated as “needs improvement” or “more effort required”, I believe I am doing fairly well in this area. Also important for maintaining a sense of purpose for me is to remain active with my art and writing for *Neighbors*.

One art activity that gives me a sense of purpose is the installation of assemblages throughout the town of Willimantic. At the present there are 20 of my assemblages around Willimantic that can be seen from the road. How many have you seen? While some of the pieces were purchased, many were donated. Since weather, particularly wind, exerts stress on these assemblages, I monitor and maintain them. Installing assemblages around town and maintaining them with the help of my grandson, is something I intend to continue.

I have heard it told that wisdom comes with age. But as for wisdom, I am still waiting and will let you know should some arrive. While I don’t have any wisdom to share, I do have some advice for those aging like me.

1. In parking lots, backup as little as possible and at the mall or grocery store, always park in the same general area.
2. When you think of something to be done, stop what you are doing and do it. You are more likely to return to something that is incomplete, than to remember to do something you intended to do later. Of course, this advice is not failsafe, as it is possible to forget what you were doing in the first place.
3. Don’t be cranky. Remember things could always be worse.
4. Hold on to railings going up and down stairs and walk where it is well lighted.
5. Don’t throw away old shoes that still fit.
6. Don’t skip.

Finally, there may be benefits to being 80. I have been practicing the following phrases that may be useful if I forget to do something, or screw up in some way:

“What do you expect, I’m 80!”
“No, I’m not going to do that, I’m 80.”
“Give me a break, I’m 80.”

How often do you think these phrases will help me out with Delia?

David.Corsini@sbcglobal.net

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Mamacoke Island at Connecticut College

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Arboretum member adding horticultural / historical interest

Mamacoke Island is an obscure, ruggedly accessible jewel of the Connecticut College Arboretum on the Thames River, two miles north of the Gold Star Bridge between coastal New London and Groton CT. Walks are challenging as trails clamber over tidal flats, outcrops, ledges, up and down hills ... with gneiss cliffs and hardwoods, and nice views of the Thames River and the submarine capital of the world.

DEEP water. Mamacoke Island is on the Waterford side across the river from the Groton Naval Base, America’s largest submarine base. SALT water. When fresh water freezes, the island’s three tidal coves (and two salt ponds west of the tracks) overwinter many dabbling and diving ducks: American Black Ducks, Greater and Lesser Scaups, and Hooded Mergansers. Great and Snowy Egrets forage edges in summer. Large bird of prey Osprey feeds in these waters.

An island, not a peninsula, Mamacoke is connected to Waterford by a walkable 4-acre salt marsh -- technically a ‘tombolo’, Italian for ‘sand dune’ -- subject to 3-foot (one meter) tides. Walk at low tide.

The Mamacoke Island Geology Tour is an online story map and reference developed by Beverly Chomiak, Connecticut College geologist and tourguide. Connecticut College Arboretum maintains the island as a conservation area. Hike is 2 hours. Stick to the trail and wear long pants for the thickets of prickers. And boots.

Access to the island is along Arboretum trails, or following train tracks north from parking on Benham Avenue, Waterford. Roadside parking GPS: 62 Benham.

While walking, consider Mamacoke’s unique timeline on the edge of America:

400 Million years ago, modern Connecticut was formed by the tectonic collision of continents that metamorphosed gneiss rock and created the structural terraces on Mamacoke Island. By 18,000 years ago, a glacial lake drained that had filled Long Island Sound with meltwater reaching up the basin that was first called the Mohegan River -- for the American Indians first inhabiting the valley 10,000 years ago.

1,500 years ago. Marsh peat began accumulating about 500 A.D. when the sea level rose, flooding the river. Today the Thames is an estuary. Brackish water rises and falls with the tides, bringing muddy silt into the coves and saltmarsh.

1646. New London was settled by Massachusetts Puritans naming the town for London, England, and renaming the river. John Rogers was deeded the island in 1647. The Thames River was a premier deepwater port for West Indies trade and a base for privateers and pirates during the Revolutionary War. The harassment of British ships caused the retaliatory burning of New London in 1781.

TO THE MARSH

Walk north on a field road, then the railway, upriver... passing the back yards of Harrison’s Landing to the right (east). Ornamental plants screen a residence from the rails, whitebarked birch (*Betula*) and evergreen holly (*Ilex*)... until Mamacoke Island rises in view. Pristine, dark and quiet against the bright bustling base across the river.

Aerially, the island is shaped like an arrow pointing upstream, or is it heart-shaped? Visiting in February, my mind turned to Valentines Day and hearts. Horticulturally, the traditional heart symbol is the fruit of *Silphium* (giant fennel plant), a likely extinct plant of the genus *Ferula* that once grew near the Mediterranean Sea, used as a condiment and contraceptive, linked to sexuality and love. Guess I’m smitten with Mamacoke Island.

1647 “Mamacock” Farm was the first registered use of the island, several hundred acres deeded west from the river for pastures, mowed fields, row crops and orchards, to the Rogers family for 198 years. John Rogers allowed Indians the continued perhaps spiritual use of a small meadow by a beech (*Fagus*) grove, a stream and a steep stone slope.

Mamacock was the native word for the island’s landform (according to Arboretum Director Emeritus Glenn Dryer, gratitude to Maggie Redfern, Assistant Di-

rector). Mamacoke became used in the post-colonial era of standardized spelling.

Director Dryer noted this conservation area with “steep, east-facing slopes of the ridge running north on the mainland across from Mamacoke Island ... some of the first land to grow back to forest on the original farm” (Arboretum Bulletin 42).

The glacial lake had finally drained. The island’s tectonic stone cliffs jut high above the dry delta of sandy gravel left by the glacial stream. Continuing flow created yet another landform -- a river terrace -- the ancestral Thames River cut into the soft delta sediment as land rose after glaciation. Terraces remained at the marsh elevation and at a higher level that slopes gently and extends long distances along the river, ideal for railways.

1848 First Train. Stopping along the train tracks -- looking north and south -- gives you a sense of the entire river terrace system, five miles from the Gold Star Bridge upriver to Gales Ferry. Gravel pits in the terrace were probably dug at this time, fill for the rail bed.

CROSSING THE MARSH

Left (west) of the railway are the steep rocky woods of Arboretum conservation land noted by Dryer, with a trail coming to Mamacoke. Area (1) of the Arboretum’s online Geology Tour begins there, west of the tracks. The trail crosses the tracks. Parking hikers join the trail on the tracks, turn right (east) toward the saltmarsh and descend 10 feet to sea level at the marsh, Area (2).

Mamacoke Marsh. Pebbles on the tidal flats where the marsh has eroded remind us that the marsh was built upon sand and gravel. The saltmarsh formed on top of the younger, lower terrace shaped by the ancestral Thames. The river removed ten feet of gravel from the tidal flats separating island from mainland. The marsh lies on top of the same gravel that was deposited by the meltwater streams - it’s just that the top layers were removed first, explains Connecticut College Geologist Beverly Chomiak (whose story map helped greatly with my tour).



‘March of Boulders’ on Mamacoke Island.

Early as 1645. In the first year according to Dryer of true colonial settlement, the saltmarsh was perhaps mowed by English settlers. The marsh has retreated about 40 feet along the stonewall since it was built, about an inch a year.

Spartina, Spartium, Sporobolus? Known as cordgrass, **Spartina** is a genus of plants in the grass family found in coastal saltmarshes, quickly forming large dense colonies. Some produce hybrids; who knows what you’re walking on.

The genus **Spartina** is subsumed into the genus **Sporobolus** after a taxonomic change in 2014, but is still commonly used. The word Spartina is derived from σπαρτίνη (*spartínē*), the Greek word for a cord made from Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*).

A vibrant bright green in summer, the saltmarsh dominates its wet level along the river, dense enough for wet walking on the herbaceous dieback in winter, or follow the old island path through new taller growth in summer.

Spartina alterniflora. Smooth cordgrass (3-5 feet) grows into water at the seaward edge of a salt marsh, enabling other habitat-altering species (as mussels) to settle, accumulate sediment and allow other substrate-building species to build at the edge. Higher-marsh vegetation



Icicles over a bedrock outcropping of Mamacoke Gneiss on the south side of Mamacoke Island. M. Braunstein photo.

moves onto the new land, the marsh accretes outward, and *S. alterniflora* moves still further out to form a new edge.

S. patens. Salt hay aka saltmeadow cordgrass (1-2 feet) is a lower cordgrass with a swirly blade pattern, visually arresting and easier to traverse.

WALKING THE ISLAND

Once across the marsh, walk south to the right along the cove (Area 3). A colonial stonewall extends into the cove (as the north cove), as Beverly Chomiak notes. Mamacock Farm likely would have used the salt hay, and stonewalls keep livestock grazing on the island out of the marsh. The end of the stonewall is seen at low tide, marking the early shoreline, and how much the marsh has eroded since the late **1600s**.

Across the cove on the flat sandy area south of the island is Harrison’s Landing, a small mainland settlement east of the railroad tracks at the end of Wilson Avenue that had three houses in **1850**.

Don’t stray into the thorny understory of greenbriar (**Smilax**) !!! Green tendrils growing out of leaf petioles quickly climb other plants. Could be worse. Michael Dirr reports “unbelievable regenerative prowess” in the Deep South of Athens GA, growing “4 to 6 feet in two weeks time.” Stay on the deer trails and rock outcrops to avoid the worst prickers.

Contributed photo.

Walk the broad southwestern arc of the shoreline, almost a beach, to a small cove and the southeastern tip so battered by the biggest storm waves that no beach can develop. Storms strip everything from the rock ledges except algae and the largest boulders.

The remote southern tips give you time to consider Mamacoke’s unique geologic and glacial history, to ponder isostatic rebound... or partisan politics on the eastern left shore and the western right... or to notice a stunted bonsai-like hackberry (**Celtis**).

Or to think about nothing at all.

RETURNING to Mamacoke when warmer to explore the forested dome of rock – Part 2.

To all our contributors-
Thank you!
Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, this paper would not exist. T. King, Publisher



The Westerlies at UConn’s Benton Museum

Submitted by Maripaz N. Shaw

Friday, March 27, 2020; 6:15pm – 8:30pm

The Westerlies Wherein Lies The Good - American Mavericks of the 20th Century

7:00 PM Performance
6:15 PM Pre-Performance Dialogue with Dr. Louis Hanzlik (American Brass Quintet & Associate Professor of Music) and Dr. Glenn Mitoma (Director, Dodd Center & Assistant Professor of Human Rights and Education)

General Admission: \$10
UConn Students, Faculty, Staff (with ID): Free
All Students (with ID): Free
Tickets available on the day of the event.
First come first serve.

“Skilled interpreters who are also adept improvisers” (NPR’s Fresh Air) The Westerlies residency was made possible by the generous support of the Filip Concert Fund. The Westerlies are a New York-based brass quartet comprising childhood friends from Seattle: Riley Mulherkar and Chloe Rowlands on trumpet, and Andy Clausen and Willem de Koch on trombone.

Formed in 2011, the self-described “accidental brass quartet” takes its name from the prevailing winds that travel from the West to the East. “Skilled interpreters who



Red tail hawk. Photo by Bill Hoboth.

are also adept improvisers” (NPR’s Fresh Air), The Westerlies explore jazz, roots and chamber music influences to create the rarest of hybrids: music that is both “folk-like and comoserly, lovely and intellectually rigorous” (NPR Music). Equally at home in concert halls and living rooms, The Westerlies navigate a wide array of venues and projects with the precision of a string quartet, the audacity of a rock band, and the charm of a family sing-along.

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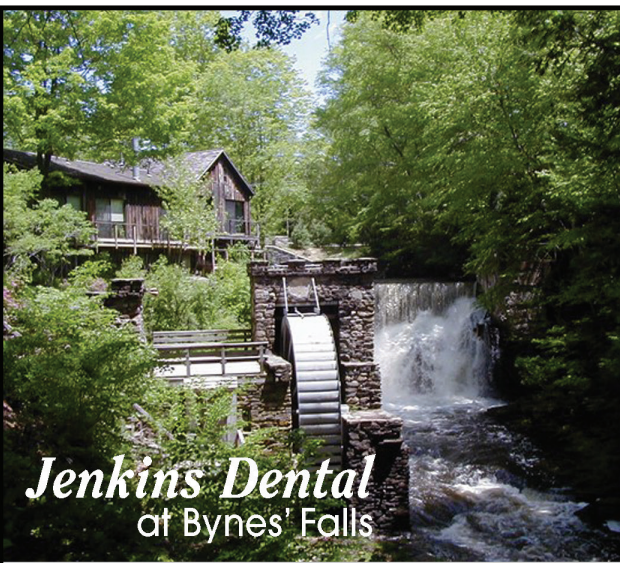
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Performing Arts



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HISTORIC VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE & EVENTS

There’s a Tunnel at the End of the Light

By EC-CHAP

March

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.”

Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

There’s a tunnel at the end of the light. Did we get your attention? A play on words as we engage March head on! In Connecticut, 2:00am on March 8th marks the beginning of 2020 Daylight Savings Time. Though we lose an hour, the benefits outweigh the risks.

So we offer this Great Plan for your consideration:

- Plan to join us at The Packing House on Saturday, March 7th, for a special evening of original music, lyrics, and sweet vocals by NYC singer/songwriter Libby Johnson (doors 7:00pm / performance 7:30pm).
- Eat In – or Take Out a tasty meal from Willington Pizza and get 15% off your entire bill by presenting your Libby Johnson ticket.
- Enjoy Libby Johnson (Folk / Indie) in concert.
- Safely return home.
- Set your clocks ahead 1-hour.
- Retire for the evening.
- Sleep in Sunday morning.
- Wake up to a bright new day (no tunnels)!

We have a full month of events as we march ahead with Americana/Blues artist Eric Sommer (March 27th), and local Folk/Bluegrass band Horizon Blue (March 28th). We also want to remind you of our Talent Showcase, March 11th (2nd Wednesday); Social Dance with Kelly Madenjian, March 12th (2nd Thursday); and EC-CHAP Film Series with the screening of the classic “School of Rock” (PG-13) 2003, March 13th.

Details for March’s events are listed below and we encourage you to visit our website frequently for additions and schedule updates: www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming. Ask at the door about our “Frequent Flyer Program” for additional savings!

Arthur Rovozzo, DJ and founder of the Saturday afternoon jazz program, “Musical Myriad”, WECS 90.1FM, also presents the final segment of a two-part article this month celebrating the sounds of New Orleans.

Wishing you peace & light!

EC-CHAP Board

EC-CHAP ACOUSTIC ARTIST SERIES

“An Evening with Singer/Songwriter Libby Johnson” (Folk/Indie). Saturday, March 7th, 7:30pm.

Artist, LIBBY JOHNSON, a familiar name as founding member of indie folk outfit “22 Brides”, is a singer songwriter whose folk/indie roots are showcased in impeccable tunefulness, gorgeous melodies and a moving live presentation. To quote “No Depression” magazine, “The hooks are unassailable, the singing and playing are felt, the arrangements an autumnal cross between Lucinda-bred Americana and kudzu-style indie rock.” Johnson’s solo discography include Annabella (2006) and Perfect View (2010). Mike Joyce, “Washington Post” writes, “On Annabella Johnson quickly reveals her chief strengths: a hazy soprano that takes on a soulful edge when it counts, as evidenced by the album’s title track; an engaging way with words”.



In his review of Perfect View, Mark Tucker, “Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange” (FAME) writes, “This is one beautiful CD.” Comparing Johnson as “...a cross of Mary Fahl, Bonnie Raitt, and Janis Ian, a quietly engrossing woman crafting songs delicate and enfolding, works grounded in the everyday but gently transcendent... Libby Johnson feels everything she writes, plays, and sings, feels it genuinely, no exaggerations, no playing to the times and masses, not a shred of compromise.”

Join us for an evening with this exceptional artist! Tickets \$15.00 Advance / \$20.00 Door.

“Eric Sommer in Concert” (Blues/Americana). Friday, March 27th, 7:30pm.



Singer/songwriter ERIC SOMMER returns to The Packing House. An unbelievable intersection of improbable influences and experiences channeled into an amazingly diverse catalog and a résumé that reads more like a musical adventure novel than a series of career bullet points.

Sommer emerged from the Boston music scene in the ’80s with a vengeance, a Folk guitarist with a percussive, open-tuning style adapted from the likes of David Bromberg, Steve Howe, Townes Van Zandt and Brit Folk legend Davy Graham. But Boston was also a hotbed of New Wave, Power Pop and Punk at that point, and Sommer absorbed those influences as well, creating a Byrdian jangle sound that earned him opening slots for national touring acts and regular bookings at the renowned Paradise Theatre.

Whether in band or one-man form (which nakedly showcases his amazing acoustic Blues guitar styling), Sommer is a living history of contemporary music and a musical force of nature. Tickets \$15.00 Advance (online) / \$20.00 Door.

“Horizon Blue” (Folk / Bluegrass). Saturday, March 28th, 7:30pm.



Horizon Blue is an acoustic Americana (folk, country and blue grass) musical group. Their performances are family friendly, conversational, and inviting. The original and well-known songs they perform have a storytelling aspect and are well received by audiences of all ages.

Horizon Blue features Monique Hill (vocals, guitar, mandolin, banjo and dulcimer), Peter Hill (guitar and mandolin), Mark Annulli (bass) and Rich Johnson (dobro). Monique is the principal songwriter. Monique’s songwriting credits include a charting international release in England, Germany, and Japan. Horizon Blue opened for Tom Rush and matt Nakoa at The packing House last April! Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$15.00 Advance / \$20.00 Door.

EC-CHAP FILM SERIES:
“School of Rock” (PG-13) 2003. Friday, March 13th, 7:00pm



“School of Rock” (PG-13), 2003, is a classic feel-good musical was directed by Richard Linklater, starring Jack Black, Mike White, Joan Cusack.

I’m sure most of us have seen this film - but you just can’t get enough of Jack Black’s (Dewey Finn) transition from loser rocker to hero music teacher that transforms a class of affluent elementary students into a cohesive team of self-confident musicians. If you haven’t seen this flick, IMDb offers this brief description: “After being kicked out of his rock band, Dewey Finn becomes a substitute teacher of an uptight elementary private school, only to try and turn them into a rock band”.

This event is a part of the EC-CHAP Film Series hosted by the Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP), a 501.3.c non-profit membership-based cultural organization. To learn more and how you can become a member, visit www.ec-chap.org. Suggested donation \$5.00.

Tickets, Reservations, CANCELLATIONS, and Contact

Tickets for all shows and program registrations can be purchased online at www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming or at the door. Unless otherwise specified, doors open 30-minutes prior to show time. Senior, student, and member discounts available.

Table reservations and cabaret seating available. Unless specified otherwise, all performances will feature Bring Your Own Beverage & Food “BYOB&F”™ - wine & beer ONLY (Not applicable to Meetings, School Programs, and First Sunday events). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. You can also bring your paid ticket to Willington Pizza House (or WP Too) for eat-in or take-out the night of the show and receive 15% off your meal purchase. If you’re feeling sassy, SPECIFICALLY ask for “The Packing House” pizza! You won’t go wrong. Visit www.thepackinghouse.us for the secret recipe.

Program cancellations will be listed on the EC-CHAP website (www.ec-chap.org), and The Packing House website (www.thepackinghouse.us). If you’re unsure, just call (518-791-9474).

The Packing House is located at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Parking is free and located onsite and across the street. For questions, program or rental information and table reservations, please call 518-791-9474. Email EC-CHAP (info@ec-chap.org) or The Packing House (info@thepackinghouse.us).

Never Can Say Goodbye in New Orleans: Part 2

By Arthur Rovozzo,
EC-CHAP Contributing Writer

Another monumentally important figure of New Orleans R&B who never achieved ‘household’ name status is the wonderfully eccentric pianist and singer Professor Longhair (Henry Roeland ‘Roy’ Byrd), the good Professor, or ‘Fess’ as many called him, developed a hybrid piano style based on the work of antecedents Tuts Washington, Champion Jack Dupree and Archibald, earlier greats from his hometown. In turn, Fess influenced the development of rock’n’roll as well as the piano approaches of pop-friendly players such as Fats Domino and the finest keyboardists in Crescent City R&B from Allen Toussaint to James Booker, plus his impact on hitmakers from Ray Charles to Dr. John to ultra-smoothie Harry Connick Jr. in undeniable. Longhair has been called “The Bach of Rock, the man who put the ‘Unk’ in Funk”, a foundation stone of the Crescent City’s soulful blues and its ear-catching groove undercurrents.

Longhair (1918-1980) came up with a piano sound



that can only be called “Rhumba-Boogie”, hard-hitting blues chording shot through with odd rhythmic accents and stutters and a big dose of Caribbean-Latin nuances. If his keyboard work is singular, Fess’s vocalizing was downright bizarre (and humorously quite fantastic). Imagine a bold, eardrum-slapping blues-shout interrupted regularly by weird yelps, note-bends, yips, whistles and yodeling. Add to all that songs that are glorious in their off-the-wall, politically-incorrect, flipped-out lyrics and you have an artist so individualistic he’s like nobody else in the universe. Longhair’s work is funny and provides unconventional fun of a kind we rarely receive from modern, too-rehearsed performers. If he sounds completely a kook, that’s perfectly O.K. because it is part of the Mardi Gras Party quality that Fess’s music excludes. Speaking of which, the Professor wrote the song “Mardi Gras in New Orleans” in 1949- it became associated with the annual festivities so closely that it’s practically the theme song for the event!

If you can get past the strangeness of Professor Longhair on initial listens, his music proves to be addictive for most people, and so enjoyable that one dose can transform and turn around a bad mood day, converting doldrums to smiles. I played his music for one friend who rapidly became such a Longhair fan that he doesn’t want to listen to other piano players now! Check out the album “Crawfish Fiesta” on Alligator if you want to hear the best, most sonically-polished Fess recording.

We have lost a number of the most important New Orleans R&B musicians over the past few years. Another whose loss is tremendous (and who was influenced by Professor Longhair) left us in 2019: pianist/vocalist Art Neville of the Neville Brothers. Folks who are familiar with the latter group may not realize that Art started to churn out regional hits when he was still a teenager, then in the mid-1960s he co-founded The Meters. This band developed into the most funky factory for generating get-under-your-skin instrumental tunes that ever emerged in New Orleans. They were able to take even the most basic, simple riff idea and convert it into a radio-ready single with an inescapable, magnetic, deep groove. Every one of the group’s short instrumentals can grab an eardrum and refuse to let it go. The Meters are often compared to the sublime and soul-drenched Memphis band Booker T. and The MGs, but the Meters were able to use their secret weapon, drummer Zig Modeliste, to out-funkify even a band of hit generators as accomplished as the MGs.

The Meters started as a quartet and added another member in the 1970s, while shifting the group focus to predominantly vocal tunes. When Art Neville and all his brothers got together for a project with their uncle George Landry and various band mates, the seeds were planted for the genesis of a family band. The chant-songs of Landry’s Mardi Gras Indian tribe “The Wild Tchoupitulas” were re-cast full-scale R&B pop tunes with driving rhythms and vocal choruses and were turned into a 1975 self-titled album; the Neville Brothers formulated their offshoot group in 1977. As you may know, these guys went on to become international stars, but their very first major-label album remains one of their best. Look for “Fiyo On the Bayou” (A&M label), just one of the many high points in Art Neville’s legend-making career, with his brothers and apart from them.

Celebrate these artists while making your winter into a much more enjoyable season with some New Orleans sounds!

The Neighbors paper
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Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This last month I took time to read the cover story of the AARP magazine. The story was about age discrimination in the workplace and it was quite enlightening. After completing the article I came to the conclusion that the people they interviewed were for the most part from big business jobs. In today’s world business both small and large are sold quite frequently. The new owners cut the fat so to speak. This means that if you have been employed for a long time, receive bonuses, longer vacations, and are being paid for all those years you have worked, you can be replaced by someone younger at less pay and benefits. I have a very good friend that had this happen to him. I’m happy to say that after quite a long time he was hired by a company for his knowledge and skill not his age.

The automotive repair industry has an ageing work force. The current age range is from 20 to 70 years old. The automobile of today is not your grandfather’s model A anymore. We need people of all ages to perform the repairs on today’s vehicles. The computer side of a vehicle is only part of the service or repairs that it will need in its lifetime. I believe the blend of young and old in the automotive work force is a necessity not an option. This last statement has worked for us in our business for 71 years and will continue.

The last thing I would like to address this month is independent extended warranties and vehicle repair insurances. The advertising and marketing has exploded trying to sell these 2 things. They usually make a statement of how high vehicle repair costs are. I’ve told my customers for the past couple of years that vehicle repair costs have risen and I don’t see it stopping anytime soon. So is vehicle repair insurance a good investment for you? Please read these policies very carefully. If you have any questions ask your repair facility for help so you pick the correct policy for your needs. Your repair facility sees the most common repair for the age and mileage of your vehicle. They also will have a history of your vehicle. This is always a plus when considering any type of repair insurance. Just be careful, read the fine print, and make sure you are getting what you are paying for.

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.



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Let It Go.

On Avoidance, Awareness and Acceptance.

By Grace Preli



Awareness breeds acceptance. This is something I am learning right now. While I would say that I have always been a self aware person, how much can you truly be self aware if you’re not actually aware? How can you know if you don’t know? The limits to what you can know or do know or are aware of do exist, yet they can continually be pushed and expanded further. I used to think I knew everything and that I was completely self aware. The two incorrect words here are ‘everything’ and ‘completely’. I know a lot, but not everything, and certainly far less than I ever thought I did. And I am aware, yes, but not completely, and certainly not as aware as I thought I was. But the thing about not having an actually upper limit to self awareness or knowledge, or acceptance, or understanding, or, well, anything, means that there is always more to learn and discover. It means we can constantly evolve and grow and change and it means that we will continually be exploring ourselves, our fellow humans and our world around us for a very long time.

If you’re familiar with the allegory of the cave, I feel, as many do, that it conjures an apt image in mind of what it means to be on the path of self-discovery. I’ve been thinking of it lately as a series of caves. You step out of one and into another. Then out of that one into another still. And you keep going, the light getting a little stronger, the understanding of all that you are growing a little more with each cave you pass through. And as you begin to find more awareness, you can begin to find more acceptance. You can’t change that you were in a cave, you can’t change the shadows that were thrown on the wall, you can’t change that stepping into the next cave revealed x to you and that you might now feel y, you can only keep going with an ever increasing awareness, and an ever increasing sense of acceptance.

Becoming aware, starting to see yourself and staying open and curious is intimacy of self and I believe that intimacy is the opposite of avoidance. Sometimes intimacy is scary. Seeing yourself and getting to know yourself, or seeing others as they are and getting to know them and sharing yourself with someone and receiving what someone else has to offer is a powerful exchange. No wonder we avoid! No wonder we choose to stay in the cave! It’s

warm there, and lit, lit dimly, but lit all the same. I think if we can get to the other side of the fear we might have around intimacy and being seen and shared, we will all be well rewarded.

Each and every person I know, has SOME fear of being seen. It doesn’t matter to what extent they are sharing themselves, to what extent they are working on their fears or feelings, every single person I know holds within them some piece, no matter how teeny tiny that has some fear of being seen, heard, accepted, loved, appreciated. Whether this fear pokes its head up in business, in school, in relationships with family, friends, lovers, whether it strikes in a visible way, or late at night, each of us holds a little piece. And for those of you who say, no! Not me! I don’t have that at all, I’m perfectly comfortable, I’d invite you to look more closely, more deeply, more kindly at those parts in you that still reside in those deep inner caves. It’s okay if nothing consciously comes up when you turn your attention to yourself, you can go digging a little bit and still might not find anything. But I invite you to just sit with it. Sit with what might be deep down inside. Sit with what might not have ever seen daylight. You might have a little piece you’re aware of, or a few you’re not. When you discover it, you will discover it. When you know, you know. When you become aware, you cannot again become unaware.

And to this last sentence, I wish to speak; is it any wonder why we may seek avoidance? For once you become aware, once you step out of the cave, you cannot so easily go back. When the light has touched what once lay in darkness, when the shell bobs to the surface of the water, it takes much effort, much force to forget, to push it back, to say no, no, I don’t want to see. You can go back into the cave, but no matter how you wish to forget, or to imagine that the firelight is brilliant and bright, you cannot forget what you have seen and what exists beyond those walls.

I think therefore that awareness and acceptance require much courage. The past cannot be changed and the future is as yet formless but there is much power in the present moment. In the present moment we can heal. We heal, not by avoiding what happened or running or hiding from it, but through our awareness and acceptance of it. The thing we can do is change our perception of it, our judgement of it, our relationship with it. We do this not with force, or with anger or a desire to be rid of it quick. We do it with as much ease and grace and power as we can. We do it from where we are now. We do it once, or

twice, or a dozen times or a hundred, for as we grow and learn, as we walk through the caves, as we become more self aware and thus self accepting, we are continually asked to reevaluate in the power and presence of our current understanding. When you know, you know. And maybe you don’t fully know now. But as more is revealed, more can be healed. The more awareness you have, the more acceptance you have, and not just for the present moment, but for all the past moments too.

I, you, we, must let go of the death grip we have on our past and do our best to loosen the past’s hold on us. It holds on because we do. It holds on because we ask it to. It holds on because we say I don’t want to lose you. I don’t want to let you go. Avoidance doesn’t help us here either. That’s us saying to the past, hang on! Maybe we mean, hang on, wait! But the past hears us as hang on, tight!

It’s okay to start to let go. It’s okay to heal from right where you are, right now. Presently! It’s okay to do all that you can in this moment. It’s okay if that doesn’t feel like a lot. It’s okay if you don’t want to. It’s okay that in many moments, you might be able to do more. You’re not many moments away. You’re not one moment away. You’re right here, right now, so give it what you’ve got. Give it what you’ve got now, no matter what it is. Awareness and acceptance doesn’t mean that it stays the same. It stays the same if you keep it the same. Want it to stay the same. And if you keep consciously or unconsciously running the same programs and the same patterns and conditions to keep it the same. Awareness and acceptance doesn’t mean that the future is restricted. It’s the exact opposite. The future is expansive. There are a million possibilities available in the given moment. What happens if you say yes? What happens if you say no? What happens if you say whatever it is you need to say right now? What happens if you do whatever it is you need to do right now?

I know it can seem scary. I know it can seem overwhelming. If you’ve been hanging on to something, it can be hard to let go. If you’ve been carrying the dead horse, it can be hard to set it down. If you’ve again grown accustomed to the dark of the cave it can be hard to step back into the light. If the future is formless it can be hard to step forward into it. I see you. What can you do right now to step a little bit more into the light? What can you do right now to get a little more free? If you’re unsure, stay curious, there’s always another way. And if you’re afraid, stay courageous and do it anyway. I love you!

Celebrating Women’s History Month

By Douglas Paul

News headlines remind us that we live at a time when women are making history every day. It’s a great thing to celebrate - simply the fact that in most parts of the world women have the opportunity to make history, and they are pushing the envelope. Sometimes it’s with government or public support, and other times it’s at great personal risk. Sometimes it’s motivated by competition or personal ambition; other times it’s impelled by desperate circumstances, or by a selfless desire to help humanity move forward.

Women are making history in sports, culture, entertainment, education, the sciences, elected government office, industry, the professions, and small business entrepreneurship. And they are winning accolades for the distinct characteristics expressed in how they interact with others. We even see a trend to reach back and embrace women of unique accomplishment from earlier centuries and publicize their achievements today.

Baby boomers probably remember learning about nineteenth century reformers, such as Clara Barton, Frances Willard, Jane Addams, Dorothea Dix, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Their ground-breaking work regarding health, prison reform, settlement houses, abolition, temperance, and women’s suffrage helped change history during times when women did not have the right to vote, couldn’t hold property, and were largely

excluded from employment opportunities.

A less well-known contemporary of these reformers was a New England woman, Mary Baker Eddy, who was born Mary Morse Baker in Bow, New Hampshire in 1821. She was married in 1843, widowed and a single mother the following year, and separated from her son in 1856. Many of these early years were spent in poor health. Motivated by a desire to discover health for herself and others, in 1862 she began to study homeopathy and other emerging cures of the time. Then, in 1866, she had a life-changing experience following a near-fatal fall on the ice while on her way to a temperance meeting in Lynn, Massachusetts. She was not expected to live.

Three days later she experienced complete healing when turning to God in prayer she read in her Bible an account of one of Jesus’ healings. Her physician, minister, and friends were stunned by her immediate recovery. Having a deeply religious spirit and a humanitarian heart, she was not content with her own miraculous healing. She spent the next three years pouring over the Bible to discover the spiritual laws behind Jesus’ method of healing.

During the following nine years she demonstrated the laws of spiritual healing that she discovered in the Bible with such consistency that by 1875 she was able to write and publish a textbook on what she termed Christian Science. Her search and discovery were spurred on by the spirit of this verse in the gospel of John where Jesus is referring to his healing works: “Verily,

verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” By 1902, at the time of its fiftieth edition, she added a chapter titled Fruitage, which contains 100 pages of healing accounts from individuals who were healed just by reading the textbook.

At heart a reformer in religion and medicine, she devoted the rest of her life to healing, teaching others to heal, founding a church based on Christ-healing, and establishing a publishing arm to support the burgeoning world-wide movement of spiritual healing she had discovered and proved effective. Her religion and medicine were formed on the same essential understanding — an all-loving Father-Mother God or Spirit as the sole creator, with spiritual sons and daughters made in God’s likeness, upheld by the laws of Love. This understanding is the healer of both mind and body.

Though less known today, when she died in 1910 Mary Baker Eddy was the most well-known woman in the world. Today, the church she founded, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts has branches in 66 countries. Her textbook on spiritual healing, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, is available in 17 languages, plus Braille. Magazines from the Christian Science Publishing Society appear in as many as 13 languages. The newspaper she established in 1908, The Christian Science Monitor, continues today in both print

and digital formats.

Most worthy of celebrating her among women who helped change history is the continuing impact her method of spiritual healing is having on lives right here in Connecticut and around the globe, as it has over the past 154 years. Thousands upon thousands of people of all walks of life have found physical healing from every disease known to mankind. Others have been released from addictions of all types and freed from the grip of fear, hatred, greed, envy, grief, poverty, suicide, violence, and other tragedies and disasters. Health, peace, happiness, love, self-worth, and satisfaction have been found or restored.

Biographies on the remarkable life of Mary Baker Eddy can be borrowed or purchased at the Christian Science Reading Room located at 870 Main Street in Willimantic, CT. The Reading Room is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10-1 and on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1-4.

A 25% discount on all biographies is available in March, in recognition of Women’s History Month.

Douglas Paul lives in Canterbury.

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Is Meditation a Superpower?

By Andrew F.B. Campbell, LPC

The energy that I’ve found doing meditation, you know, has been there before – only that I could access it only during good days when everything was going well. With meditation I find that it could well be pouring down rain; it is still the same amount. – John Lennon, October 4, 1967

I wonder why more people don’t meditate regularly. Meditation seems to be one of those things that most people agree is a good idea and may have even tried a few times, but don’t incorporate into their lives. As a therapist and regular “stressed out” person, I have made the effort, with surprisingly positive results, to bring meditation into my life, both personally and professionally. This article is an attempt to explore and explain that process in the hopes that other people may be motivated to do so as well.

Just like with physical exercise, meditation seems to offer the “best of both worlds,” resulting in less stress, more relaxation, more calmness, and more energy and vitality. Sometimes the benefits of meditation sound miraculous, almost like it offers a superpower. The list is seemingly endless (try Googling it); reduce stress, control anxiety, lift depression, deepen connection with self and others, lengthen attention span, cultivate creativity, increase immunity, reduce age-related problems, fight addictions, enhance self-awareness, or even just have more energy throughout the day.

Part of the reason practices like meditation may be so important to our current and future well-being is that modern living seems to have produced an environment that is the “worst of both worlds.” We are largely sedentary, moving our bodies much less than is necessary for optimal, or even good, health, and simultaneously experiencing a highly stressful mental environment (traffic, deadlines, social media, etc.) with little down-time or rest for our over-burdened nervous systems. This formula results in high levels of stress, both mental and physical, that our bodies, amazing products of millions of years of evolution in an environment sharing little with our modern world, are ill-equipped to deal with.

And our response to stress, although evolutionarily adaptive, over time, produces some detrimental effects on the body. The sympathetic branch of the nervous system (the “accelerator” of the body) is responsible for what is now known as the fight-or-flight response. When faced with stressful situations our bodies prepare to do battle or flee by increasing heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, blood flow to muscles, and releasing a cascade of stress hormones to gear up for survival. This response to stress has been linked to much of what ails us these days, from physical and medical problems like cancer and cardiovascular disease to psychological issues such as depression and anxiety (although we are more and more seeing this separation of mind and body as artificial and unhelpful).

We know exercise helps to alleviate some of the negative effects of stress, but it turns out this stress response is also effectively counteracted by regular meditation. There is a physiologic state opposite to stress, termed the “Relaxation Response” by Herbert Benson, which is an inducible (as in entered into on purpose) “state of quietude” that is equally essential for survival. This relaxed physiologic state offers the body a chance to heal and rejuvenate by engaging the parasympathetic branch of the nervous system (the “brake” on our minds and bodies) and creating an environment within our bodies where the effect of stress can be mitigated. It is even arguable that the Relaxation Response, and a practice to elicit it, like meditation, is even more important to our present-day survival than the fight-or-flight response.

And yet, there is so much misunderstanding about what meditation is and how to do it. Meditation sounds so “out there,” spiritual, or even mystical. But I have found there is a very practical, simple, pragmatic, and objectively helpful and healthy approach to meditation that is readily accessible to anyone. So how does one meditate and reap these rewards? Great question.

Some of the best known and most widely studied approaches to meditation are traditional Buddhist practices, as outlined by Pema Chodron and Jack Kornfield, Transcendental Meditation (made popular by the Beatles in the 60’s), Herbert Benson’s Relaxation Response, John Kabat-Zinn’s Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, as well as more recent developments in psychotherapy and neuroscience such as Poly-Vagal Theory.

The real question is, what actually helps produce all of the health benefits that we hear so much about? From these time-tested and well researched approaches, the most important and effective elements can be extracted and combined into a synthesized, hybrid practice that realizes the benefits of meditation most efficiently and effectively.

So the basic instruction goes like this.

First, find a position that is comfortable for you and a place for where you can be calm and relaxed during your practice. This may be someplace safe and quite, sitting on the floor, in a chair, or lying down, anywhere that it is easy for the mind to relax and let go of distracting pulls, sounds, thoughts, or other intrusive sensations.

Secondly, find something simple and repetitive for your mind to do during your meditation practice. This may be counting, following the breath, a mantra, a body scan, or any of the many objects of focus that are commonly used in mindfulness practices. There are many different objects of focus, sometimes called a “homebase,” that will give your mind something to do other than think and plan and worry. Whatever homebase you arrive at, perhaps counting three breaths and then returning to “one” again, or looking up some typical mantras (sounds to repeat silently in your head), start to repeat this object in your mind, staying with it, and then returning to it even when your mind wanders (which it inevitably will). The point of the repetition is to lull, or bore, the “monkey mind” into a relaxed state.

Third, and possibly most important, is cultivating a passive attitude. This means not getting hung up on whether you’re doing it right, doing it long enough, doing it frequently enough, thinking in general, having a wandering mind, or any thing that is critical or judgmental in nature. When you notice your mind has wandered, just notice this and then say “thinking” or “oh, well, my mind wandered again…” And return to your homebase.

And finally, actually do the practice, whatever practice works for you, every day. The general advice is 10-20 minutes 1-2 times a day. This comes from some of the research done with practitioners of Transcendental Meditation and Herbert Benson’s pioneering work in the 70’s as a Harvard cardiologist looking at the physiologic effects of meditation.

Now, to follow this protocol, we bump into a genuine paradox. We are instructed to have a passive attitude and not get stressed out or uptight about our practice, and yet we are also encouraged to bring a level of discipline to the practice. To be loose yet focused, warm and yet firm. Or as Pema Chodron describes it, “gentle and yet precise.” We want to be easy going and compassionate with ourselves and yet disciplined enough to actually do the practice and stick with it when we get frustrated or bump into resistance. This is the part of the practice that takes practice. So, if meditation is all it’s cracked up to be, why again is it not being done by everyone all the time?

Part of my motivation for writing this article is the suspicion that people are not utilizing the benefits of meditation simply because they may just not know about them. If someone told you you could feel better, have more energy, be healthier, even get more work done, and all you had to do was do “nothing” for a little while every day, it seems there would quickly be more meditation and yoga centers than there are gyms and diet and nutrition centers. So whether you are interested in trying meditation to reach enlightenment and experience “oneness” with the universe, or just want more energy to be able to be present with what is important to you, be that friends, family, work, or play, my hope is that the information presented here will be an encouragement to explore bringing such a practice into your life.

In the end, I have “drank the Kool-Aid” regarding meditation and mindfulness practices for my own life. The most valuable thing I have observed through my experience meditating, the thing that I can’t stress enough, is how much “bang for the buck” meditating offers. Meditation offers mental and physical health benefits on par with exercise, but requiring much less, although a very different kind of, effort. But don’t take my word for it, or that of these published authors and researchers. Try it out for yourself and see what happens with your own mind and body.

As Jerry Seinfeld says of his meditation practice of over 40 years, “It’s like having… you know, your phone has a charger, right? It’s like having a charger for your whole body and mind.” I encourage anyone and everyone to join me in simply “being,” and just resting in mindful awareness as a daily practice. May this practice bring greater health, more and better-focused energy, enhanced health and well-being, and offer greater peace of mind.

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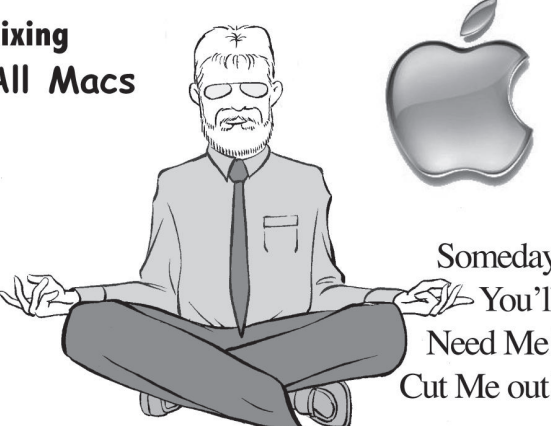
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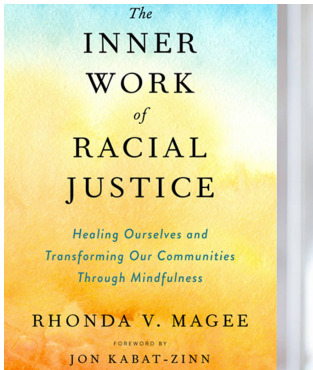
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*"We need support in the cultivation of the ability to sit compassionately with and talk about our own particular experiences with race, race related injury, and alienation. We need help developing the capacity to be able to listen to the very different stories of others with compassion; to have conversations across lines of real and perceived difference that help and heal, rather than hamper and hurt; and to exercise the will to come back for more, with increasing capacity for empathy and deepening desire for others to heal and thrive in the world". Rhonda V. Magee, *The Inner Work of Racial Justice*, 2019, p.21.*



I chose to begin with extensive quotes from two African Americans because I, as a white person, should not be the one who gets to speak first about 'racial justice', even if it is 'my article'. Both of these two authors, activists, teachers and cultural healers, hence ideological pioneers have been introduced to me in the last month and their work, their courage and quest for ways to move forward in relation to racial injustice and violence have profoundly moved me. In fact, they have both offered me invaluable evidence of the efficacy and dire need for interracial dialogue. My need for such evidence lies in the fact that calling for such conversations may not understandably be perceived as appropriate coming directly from me or anyone else who is not a Person of Color (POC). Hence my attraction to Magee and Davis' work, especially in light of UCONN's most publicized and recent racist incident but of course not its only one. In fact, racial micro-aggressions are an on-going daily experience for students and employees of color both on campus and in the larger society. For despite conservative rumors to the contrary that most universities are bastions of leftist and radically progressive *practice*, as opposed to merely ideologies, the opposite is closer to the truth. Certainly, most campuses to various degrees depending on departments speak the language of inclusion, diversity, equality and protection for those who have been historically marginalized. However, when it comes to actual practice, to representation in hiring and to the ability to offer more than mere reactive responses then the conservative right has nothing to fear for we are substantially failing to offer something distinctively new. But for the sake of this short article, I seek to focus on one from last October involving two young white males who were recorded by a student of color yelling the N-word.



The incident happened over a weekend so when I next met with my classes the following Tuesday, I offered opportunity for discussion. The overall sentiment from those students willing to speak (a mix of white and student of color) was that the two students should be held accountable and should be punished. I listened and wrote ideas on the white board and then I proposed that the education of the two white males had failed them (the fact that they are nursing students appalls me) and that perhaps a less punitive approach incorporating dialogue might promote understanding and healing. This was not seen as a favorable idea among the students, especially the students of color, given the understandable level of frustration, hurt and anger they were feeling and no doubt continue to feel and not just those who were in my class but throughout the UCONN campus and the larger society. Additionally, in our society the model is always to blame, punish and remove that which we deem undesirable, while perpetuating the illusion that we too do not have a 'shadow



Contributed photo.

What did happen was that the two young men were arrested and charged under Connecticut's 1917 Ridiculing Law that "makes it a misdemeanor for anyone who ridicules or holds up to contempt any person or class of persons, on account of the creed, religion, color, denomination, nationality or race of such person or class of persons." Needless to say the law is under scrutiny as being Unconstitutional and the young men themselves have garnered support from a conservative group called the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) and are now filing a law suit against UCONN. As such, it is safe to conclude that as a university we have failed to teach or offer them (or others on campus who support them) any insight as to why yelling the N-word in public (or anywhere for that matter) is deeply disrespectful and even frightening for POC, nor have we begun to help them unpack their desires to engage in such racist behavior in the first place. In fact, all we have achieved is to make the racial divide deeper because we have failed to engage in any campus wide dialogues between "adversaries" as Davis proposes. Additionally, we have failed to, as Magee recognizes, "...*help and heal*...", rather, we have merely



What this will look like on UCONN's campus has yet to be seen, but recognizing, as Magee and Davis have done, the need in all our schools, institutions and communities is a start. Moreover as I have tried to do here, whites like me who seek to work for racial justice, must make sure that we act as allies *with*, not as saviors or leaders to, POC, moving beyond our 'white fragility' to spaces of authentic *solidarity*. Yet to get there we must start, as Magee so eloquently states, by listening, "... *with increasing capacity for empathy and deepening desire for others* [and ourselves, as she also explores] *to heal and thrive in the world*". And from the act of listening on both sides, *whites* must also move to acknowledging, owning and apologizing for the depth of harms done both by us as individuals and by the institutions and society from which we have benefited and continue to do so. Only then does it seem that the inner and outer work of racial justice can begin to be achieved.

Michael Steinberg, Black Rain Press

Perhaps the story of this book began with my mother. Midge, as everyone called her, was a nurse, and long before feminism, cell phones and networking, spent significant amounts of time talking with her women friends on the phone. In our home in the small town of Niantic in shoreline southeastern Connecticut on Long Island Sound, there wasn't a whole lot of privacy, and Midge's conversations were broadcast around the house with little regard for who overheard her.

As time went on and my ears got larger and more curious, I couldn't help but notice that the topic of cancer was becoming increasingly prominent. Maybe this was because her big sister Grace had died of breast cancer long before her time not that long before, a story that would be repeated all too many times in our family.

In 1970 a nuclear power plant began operating on Niantic Bay, only about five miles across the Sound from our town beach, where we spent lots of time, especially during the summer. The nuke plant produced lots of electricity, and, as we would learn, lots of radiation as well, which regularly was released into our air and water.

This plant was aptly named Millstone, because it was built on the former site of a gigantic granite quarry, where my Scottish great-grandfather George Kirk had toiled. For me, like many of my contemporaries, my consciousness was first raised about nuclear power by the Pennsylvania Three Mile Island nuke's meltdown in 1979.

Later I discovered Dr. Ernest Sternglass's groundbreaking book *Secret Fallout: From Hiroshima To Three Mile Island*, which named Millstone as one of the worst nuclear plant in the nation. In his book Sternglass reported that large releases of radiation by Millstone in the 1970s had led to spikes of cancer deaths in surrounding towns after Millstone started operating.

In a 1978 report, using public information, he determined that from 1970, when Millstone started operating, until 1975, cancer cases in New London, just east of the plant, increased 44%, and in Waterford, site of the plant, they went up 58%. Similar spikes occurred for the state of Connecticut as a whole, as well as in downwind Rhode Island. Such increases did not occur in more distant New England states.

Sternglass's report also determined "that the types of
continued on page 19

Flavia Krishna & Gershone, 6:30p.m. - 8:30p.m. \$20. Bhakti Center, 750 Main St. Rear, Willimantic
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March 28, Saturday
Skill Share: Game of Logging Certified Training: Chainsaw Training for the Novice and Amateur, 8:00a.m. - 4:00p.m. \$120. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. RSVP: 860-455-9534 bbernard@ctwoodlands.org
Skill Share: Spinning Bee, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Drop-in spinning, knitting or other fiber art. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org
Community: Facing the Climate Emergency Together: A Community Workshop, 3:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. sponsored by Sustaining All Life (sustainingalllife.org). 549 Storrs Rd, Mansfield Center (junction of Rte 89 & 195 at the First Church of Christ). No registration needed. Info: amy@amykstudio.com

Live Music: Horizon Blue (Folk/Bluegrass). Doors 7:00pm / Show 7:30pm. Tickets \$15.00 online / \$20.00 door. Senior & student discounts. Snacks and soft drinks available. "BYOB&F"™ (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required). The Packing House at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington. Info and table reservations call: 518-791-9474 www.thepackinghouse.us

March 29, Sunday
Live Music: Mad Agnes and Hugh Blumenfeld & Faithful Sky, 4:00p.m. \$25. Bread Box Theater, 220 Valley St., Willimantic. Tickets: 860-429-4220 breadboxfolk.org
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation, 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 3/1)

March 31, Tuesday
Kids: Spinning Reflective Art, 6:30p.m. Ages 8+. Create a unique hanging art piece. Willimantic Public Library, 905 Main St, Willimantic. Register: 860-465-3082 www.willimanticlibrary.org

Why We Need to Close the Financial Literacy Gap for Women

Submitted by Leisl L. Cording, CFP®, Vice President, Associate Financial Advisor



As many of you, our dedicated readers, know, Jim Zahansky, Principal/Managing Partner, has historically authored a column each month. Jim has welcomed me, Leisl Cording, Vice President, Associate Financial Advisor and Laurence Hale, Principal/Managing Partner to contribute our knowledge of the industry to you. Jim, Laurence, and I will alternate authorship throughout the year, sharing our experience and unique strategies to encourage you, our dedicated readers, to Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.TM

March is Women’s History Month, and we have never felt more empowered than we do today. There are more female CEOs in the Fortune 500 than ever. Women are running for office in record numbers. More women are pursuing entrepreneurship. Women are earning more bachelor’s degrees than men. More working mothers are the primary or sole earners in their households. The list goes on and on. Why is it then, that when it comes to financial planning, women face a unique set of challenges? In recognition of Women’s History Month, we’ll be exploring those challenges and the strategies to overcome them.

The 2019 Women, Money, and Power Study, commissioned by Allianz Life Insurance Company, found that, while the past several years have put a spotlight on female empowerment, women are struggling to make progress with financial literacy. “These findings were quite surprising because women have come a long way when it comes to our roles in work and family, yet we don’t feel prepared financially,” said Aimee Lynn Johnson, vice president of financial planning strategies, Allianz Life. “This begs the question, at a time when women are accomplishing so much, why aren’t they feeling more empowered about their financial future?”

For women to achieve true empowerment, it is imperative to close the financial literacy gap. Here are some fundamental reasons why:

Women live longer

According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, the average male life expectancy is about 76 years, while a woman’s is a little over 81 years. That means that retirement planning is even more critical for women. Health care is another financial concern. Of the 5.3 million people aged 65 and older who have Alzheimer’s, 62% of them are female, according to a report by the Alzheimer’s Association. By the time a woman is 75 years old, there’s a 70% chance she will need assisted care at some point during her life. Rising health care costs, coupled with long-term care costs increasing at a rate higher than inflation, will require women to plan ahead financially.

Women control the purse strings

Projections indicate that women will inherit 70% of future wealth over the course of the next two generations. That excludes the increasing amounts they earn on their own. Women already own more than half of the investable assets in the U.S., and by 2030 it’s estimated that women will possess about two-thirds of the nation’s wealth. With women poised to control the majority of the assets, we owe it to ourselves to learn how to manage them properly.

Women deserve economic equality

On average, a woman today earns between 80 to 82 cents for every dollar a man earns or \$9,308 less annually. Over a lifetime, this adds up to \$456,092. Women tend to make less, spend an average of 12 fewer years in the workforce, and as a result, have lower lifetime earnings (which means smaller Social Security payments). By understanding how to manage personal finances, women will be better able to make informed economic decisions over the course of their lives. Also, women will have a better grasp of their worth in the marketplace. Ultimately this information can help to reduce the gender pay gap.

Steps women can take

In the past, women may have taken a less active

role in household financial decision making. But, for many, those days are over. Today, women have more financial responsibility for themselves and their families, so it’s critical that women know how to save, invest, and plan for the future. Here are some strategies women can consider:

Take control of your money. Create a budget, manage debt and credit wisely, set and prioritize financial goals, and implement a savings and investment strategy to meet those goals.

Become a knowledgeable investor. Learn basic investing concepts, such as asset classes, risk tolerance, time horizon, diversification, inflation, the role of various financial vehicles like 401(k)s and IRAs, and the role of income, growth, and safety investments in a portfolio. Look for investing opportunities in the purchasing decisions you make every day. Have patience, be willing to ask questions, admit mistakes, and seek help when necessary.

Plan for retirement. Save as much as you can for retirement. Estimate how much money you’ll need in retirement, and how much you can expect from your savings, Social Security, and/or an employer pension. Understand how your Social Security benefit amount will change depending on the age you retire, and also how years spent out of the workforce might affect the amount you receive. At retirement, make sure you understand your retirement plan distribution options, and review your portfolio regularly. Also, factor the cost of health care (including long-term care) into your retirement planning, and understand the basic rules of Medicare.

Advocate for yourself in the workplace. Have confidence in your work ability and advocate for your worth in the workplace by researching salary ranges, negotiating your starting salary, seeking highly visible job assignments, networking, and asking for raises and promotions. In addition, keep an eye out for new career opportunities, entrepreneurial ventures, and/or ways to grow your business.

Seek help to balance work and family. If you have children and work outside the home, investigate and negotiate flexible work arrangements that may allow you to keep working, and make sure your spouse is equally invested in household and child-related responsibilities. If you stay at home to care for children, keep your skills up to date to the extent possible in case you return to the workforce, and stay involved in household financial decision making. If you’re caring for aging parents, ask adult siblings or family members for help, and seek outside services and support groups that can offer you a respite and help you cope with stress.


Protect your assets. Identify potential risk exposure and implement strategies to reduce that exposure. For example, life and disability insurance is vital to protect your ability to earn an income and/or care for your family in the event of disability or death. In some cases, more sophisticated strategies, such as other legal entities or trusts, may be needed.

Create an estate plan. To ensure that your personal and financial wishes will be carried out in the event of your incapacity or death, consider executing basic estate planning documents, such as a will, trust, durable power of attorney, and health-care proxy.

Women have the right to be represented

Financially literate women have the strategies to grow their wealth and use those assets to contribute to causes they believe in. That includes having a more significant stake in political and social movements, as well as the ability to financially back charitable causes. Closing the financial literacy gap may also allow women to support and invest in female entrepreneurs. This will help to fuel economic growth by building a broad consumer movement of support for women-owned businesses.

Investing in women’s financial literacy is the key to achieving economic and social equality. As women become leaders across the world, it’s vital to ensure that they have access to a robust and meaningful financial education. With greater economic self-sufficiency and empowerment, there are no limits to what we as women can accomplish. At Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, we work alongside all of our clients to develop their unique and strategic plans, and we value the importance of em-



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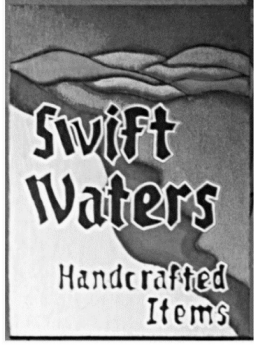


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The Elements of Writing

By Felix F. Giordano

If you are a writer, want to become a writer, or don’t even see yourself as a writer but are curious enough to take a leap of faith and find out what it takes to become one, then read on.

When most people see the title, *The Elements of Writing* they may visualize a set of basic instructions on how to write. It may be a course offered at a local college or a book they came across on Amazon.com. These assumptions are rooted in our brain that one must already have made a commitment to become a writer. I want to speak not just to those of you who are writers or who are considering becoming writers but more importantly, I wish to reach out to those of you who never envisioned becoming a writer.

But let’s take it back a few steps. As you know there are more people who are not writers than those who are. My vision of *The Elements of Writing* has more to do with what constitutes a writer. I’m speaking of developing the confidence in yourself and establishing that crucial drive to become a writer.

They say that writing is a lonely endeavor, but it is also a universal practice. Ever since human beings began to communicate, we’ve had stories to tell. Whether describing needs, wants, ideas, danger, love, hate, compassion, or simply entertaining others, storytelling has been the mechanism of choice. We all tell stories whether we realize it or not. That is the art of communication.

I believe that anyone can be trained to become a writer. There is room at this table for everyone. It simply depends upon one’s ambition and drive. What writers do is take their ideas and put them onto paper or record them for others to read or listen to. What differentiates many of us from famous writers is IREPEDO (instruction, resolve, engagement, practice, elements, determination, and opportunity). Let’s go through these one by one.

#1 – Instruction is important because it introduces us to professional writing. Whether it’s a class at community college, adult education, or your local library, please sign up and be exposed to an experienced lecturer and other writers. If you love to write, when you become immersed in a world with other writers you will discover that you are transported to a familiar and supportive place. If you find that it doesn’t work for you, the least that the class may have accomplished is to get you out of the house and away from the TV and recliner and introduce you to a new set of friends.

#2 – Resolve is what distances us from wishing to accomplish something to actively pursuing our vocation and moving forward. Don’t listen to those who say you can’t become a writer. Writing does involve discipline and it is a solitary endeavor but it’s easy to become frustrated when obstacles are placed before us. If your desire is to become a writer, your only deterrent should be the limits of your own dreams. We can accomplish anything we put our minds to.

#3 – Engagement is when we meet with other writers and share our unique talents and common aspirations. The only way to build upon our successes is to constantly learn from other writers through their trials and errors. This helps us discover what works and what doesn’t, what to pursue and what to avoid. Join a local writer’s group, meet other writers, adopt steady writing habits by engaging with other writers, learn what makes others become better writers. Conforming to deadlines, critiquing other writers’ work, and accepting constructive criticism from other writers makes you a better writer. It’s amazing sometimes to learn what others see in our work that we are oblivious to. If we only use our families and friends to critique our work, we may never become a good writer. Every writer would like

to hear a colleague say, “Wow, that’s great, it’s going to be a best seller.” But that doesn’t help us grow as writers if all we hear are accolades. Learning what we’ve done wrong, how it can be better, the style and techniques that others use in their writing is more important than boosting our own self-esteem. False compliments veiled within the fear of offending the writer helps no one.

#4 – Practice involves a writer’s mixture of stubbornness, attention to detail, research, listening to others, the enjoyment of sharing ideas, and gaining insight from other’s experiences. The true measure of practice is to pack away your ego, keep writing, be open to constructive criticism and learn from it.

#5 – Elements in your writing, whether you prefer to write poetry, short stories, children’s books, essays, fiction, or non-fiction are always the same. Hook the reader, create believable and enduring characters, use dialogue or narrative prose to drive the story, develop a story arc, include cliffhangers, throw in a few red herrings, and end the work with a resolution (or not!).

#6 – Determination is a virtue that all writers must have. No one becomes a good writer without facing your own detractors. Staying focused on what you enjoy doing will overcome anything or anyone who gets in the way. Because someone may criticize your work does not mean that you must modify it. Accept their comments with grace but if you don’t agree with their comments then don’t use them. After all, it is your work and you own it.

#7 – Opportunity was an elusive path to publishing. Literary agents were the gatekeepers to securing a publishing contract. You were tasked to convince them that your work would be a potential moneymaker for the publisher. Literary excellence was secondary to profitability. The more money that an agent or publisher could make on an author’s work, the more likely that that agent or publisher would be able to compete with their rival agents or publishers and stay in business. That is why someone like a Hollywood star and their ghost writer automatically receives a publishing contract with an advance for their scandalous life story. Some readers gravitate to true stories about people’s tragedies and sadly, it sells. On the other hand, an unpublished author, even having all the literary skills in hand and possessing an engaging story, will struggle to attract an agent or publisher. Even if you did secure an agent, the signed contracts would specify royalties minus the agent’s percentage. So who are you really working for? Today there are more opportunities for writers to become successful independent authors and connect with their own specific audience. Don’t believe people who would tell you that you cannot become a self-published author. With Amazon, IngramSpark, and other self-publishers, opportunities are now available that were nonexistent only a few years ago. And the beauty of self-publishing is that you earn higher royalty rates than you would with a traditional agent. But never pay money to any agent or publisher in exchange to become published. You don’t work for them; they work for you.

We defined the elements of writing and I hope I’ve piqued your interest in writing. As I mentioned earlier, storytelling is inherent in us all. It is who we are as social human beings and we all have stories to tell.

Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 6,000 and has had more than 3 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. Felix is also an organizer of the Eastern Connecticut Writers (ECW) at the Willington Public Library. To find out more about ECW, go to this link:
<https://easternconnecticutwriters.blogspot.com/>
Next Month’s Topic: The Hook

Pelvic Pain

By Robert Gildersleeve, M.D.

Pelvic pain is a problem we encounter with our patients all too often.

Pelvic pain frequently occurs in young women within a year or two after periods start. Pain can be from many sources, and treatment is typically started for painful periods with NSAIDs (medicines like ibuprofen) and birth control pills. This treatment can be very effective in controlling what doctors call primary dysmenorrhea (painful periods without other abnormalities), but if pain is not substantially improved, it deserves additional investigation as it may be due to endometriosis or other pain inducing conditions. In fact, two-thirds of young women with pain unresolved by medical therapy will be diagnosed with endometriosis when they undergo laparoscopic surgery. This number may also be an under estimate as many times endometriosis in young women has an atypical appearance that varies from the classic lesions found in non-adolescent women. Unfortunately, pelvic pain due to endometriosis can go unrecognized or under-treated for years.

Endometriosis is a condition that involves the growth of a normal tissue (the endometrium is the normal glandular lining of the uterus) that is growing in an abnormal location. Most commonly, endometriosis is diagnosed using laparoscopy, a minimally invasive surgery technique allowing careful inspection of the pelvis, and if necessary, complete removal of involved regions. Endometriosis glands are as active as the glands in the uterus, only outside their normal environment, causing inflammation, bleeding and pelvic pain. Endometriosis leads to scarring and fibrosis of the normally smooth surfaces of the pelvic organs and walls. It can lead to pain with periods, sexual intercourse, bowel movements, and urination, as well as causing infertility. Left unmanaged, pelvic pain due to endometriosis becomes constant and persistent, not just occurring during the time of periods (and the week or so prior).

Accepted treatments for endometriosis include hormonal management, attempting to suppress growth of endometriosis lesions. Some medical treatments can be fraught with significant side effects, and can be difficult to tolerate. Surgical management may be a more useful management strategy. This is clearly true for women attempting to conceive, and many specialists (including me) believe that when surgical excision is done correctly (with removal of all areas showing evidence of abnormal tissue) pain relief is more complete, and disease resolution is more likely. If you have questions or concerns about pelvic pain or endometriosis, please feel free to contact us and speak to one of our endometriosis specialists. 860-450-7227

Dear Reader-
Please consider contributing to Neighbors- Write an article about a person you admire or a local program you believe is important. Take a photo of a friend, loved one or pet. Write a poem or a piece of flash fiction. These pages would be full of press releases without submissions from local residents who care about each other and their community.

T. King, Publisher

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Sun: 8:15am – Worship & Bible Service
9:30am – Celebration of Holy Eucharist
Tue: Yoga in St. Paul’s Community Room 10:00am
Tue: The Pilgrims Way 4-5:30pm
Every 2nd & 4th Sunday – Community Breakfast served following 9:30 service
Every 3rd Sunday of each month - birthday celebration with cake after service.

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cancer that rose most strongly in Connecticut were exactly those that had been found to be most sensitive to radiation, those being respiratory cancers (37% increase), pancreas cancer (32 % jump), and breast cancer (12 % spike). Another Sternglass finding was that rates of infant mortality (death within the first 30 days of life), which had been declining nationwide during the 1970s, began climb in Connecticut and Rhode Island after Millstone’s startup.

Spurred on by Sternglass’s findings, I decided, as an investigative journalist, to update his research while living in San Francisco in the mid ‘90s. I went to the University of California San Francisco medical library and consulted more recent volumes of government compiled Vital Statistics, collecting data on mortality, cancer deaths, infant mortality and such. Then I plotted the results on graph paper and sent a copy to Dr. Sternglass. Soon thereafter I heard back from him. He congratulated me on my work, then told me, “Your findings confirm out worst fears.”

That’s all I needed to hear. In the summer of ‘95 I returned to Niantic, where my two sisters lived (and still do) determined to write a book about Millstone.

Once back home, I began to learn that Millstone had other serious problems besides causing cancer and killing babies. Its three nuclear reactors were regularly closing down due to gross mismanagement resulting in explosions, leaks and other dangerous accidents.

A number of principled whistleblowers were coming forward to address deteriorating conditions at the plant, some publicly. Some media picked up on this, finally resulting in several of the whistleblowers appearing on the cover of Time magazine in February 1996.

A group of concerned local folks sprang up to question Millstone’s increasingly dangerous practices, myself among them. This was an unprecedented development in the “Submarine Capital of the World,” where most of the nations nuclear submarines were being built. We called ourselves the Citizens Regulatory Commission.

As for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the mounting adverse publicity about Millstone finally nudged it into action. As each of Millstone’s 3 reactors was inevitably forced to shut down, the NRC, which had habitually acted like the nuclear industry’s lapdog rather than watchdog, allowing restart ASAP, now kept them closed, subjecting the reactors to much closer scrutiny.

Unit 1 never restarted, but the NRC eventually let other two reactors resume operations. And they’re still going, still releasing potentially killer doses of radiation into the environment. Unit 2, which started up in 1975, is almost 45 years old. Nuclear reactors were designed to last only 40 years. The third reactor is 33 years of age.

Dr. Sternglass remained my mentor as I was writing Millstone and Me. In early 1998, epidemiologist Joseph Mangano along with Sternglass a founding member of the Radiation and Public Health Project, released an updated study about Millstone’s horrible disease causing legacy.

Mangano found that since Millstone opened in 1970, “About 2500 excess cancers have occurred in New

London County site of the nuke plant. Unfortunately 800 of those cancers were fatal.

Mangano also determined that in the ‘50s and ‘60s the incidence rate of cancer in the county was 8 % below the state average, rising to 2% below from 1979-84, and 2.5% ABOVE the state rate in 1989-91.

Mangano also found “in Millstone’s first 14 years the county cancer mortality rate was 11% higher than the nation’s rate compared to the ‘50s and 60s.”

As for specific kinds of cancer in the nuke plant’s first 14 years:

- leukemia cases in children under 10 were 55% higher than the state rate, the kiddie leukemia death rate being 45% higher.
- the thyroid cancer rate rose twice as fast as the rest of the state’s after 1970.

In the four towns closest to Millstone, East Lyme (which Niantic is part of),Groton, Waterford , and New London female cancers were 20% higher than the state rate, including cervical cancer (26% higher), ovarian (35% greater), and uterine cancer (29% higher).

Malignant melanoma (a skin cancer) in the four towns was 65% higher than the state rate.

But despite all this damning evidence the NRC let reactors 2 and 3 restart, and still allows them to give off doses of death. Meanwhile public officials at all levels all still going allong for the ride, while too many of their constituents are going to the graveyard before their time.

As for me, I have no reason to believe that this situation will begin to change until Millstone permanently shuts down. Both my sisters are cancer survivors, one of two kinds. It wouldn’t be hard to compile a considerable list of people we knew who didn’t survive.

And so I’ll end this report the same way I concluded Millstone and Me in 1998:

“So until I get beyond family, friends, shimmering memories of childhood and quivering ones of coming of age, and love for that particular stretch of the sea, the Sound, whose eastern point my great-grandfather searched for granite, and where long before that Nehantics (indigenous people of the area) gazed out over its perfect blue waters -not until I get over all that will this game be over for me.

And that’s why for myself, and for so many others in the place I come from, in a certain sense, one that ebbs and flows like the tides in Niantic Bay, in ultimately tragic, unresolved and maddeningly ways, each of our stories, the unborn, the passed on, the inconceivable, will forever be about Millstone and Me.”

Sources: Secret Fallout: From Hiroshima To Three Mile Island, Ernest Sternglass; Millstone and Me: Sex, Lies and Radiation in Southeastern Connecticut, Michael Steinberg; Radiation and Public Health Project, radiation.org.

Where to find the Neighbors paper

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| Ashford Terry’s Transmissions Hope & Wellness Ashford Spirit Shoppe Wooden Spoon Restaurant Ashford Post Office Babcock Library | Hampton Hampton Post Office Hampton Library |
| Brooklyn Brooklyn Post Office Baker’s Dozen Coffee Shop The Ice Box | Lebanon Lebanon Post Office |
| Bolton Bolton Post Office Subway-Bolton Notch | Mansfield/Storrs D & D Auto Repair Holiday Spirits All Subway shops Bagel Zone Storrs Post Office Mansfield Senior Center Starbucks Storrs Comm. Laundry UConn Bookstore-Storrs Ctr. Changs Garden Rest. Liberty Bank Spring Hill Cafe Nature’s Health Store Mansfield Supply |
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Neighbors March 202019



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Acupuncture for Infertility

By Nicole T. Smith, L.Ac.

For a woman that desires to be pregnant, infertility issues can be frustrating and disheartening. Traditional medical treatments use drugs and hormones that produce side effects, including hot flashes, irritability, mood swings, feeling down, headaches, restlessness, stomach pains, bloating, weight gain, nausea, and vomiting.

Rather than negative repercussions, acupuncture treatments can result in benefits, such as feeling more positive, improved sleep, balanced hormones, and an increase in energy, not to mention improving reproductive function in both females and males.

When should acupuncture for infertility start? Ideally, before drug intervention occurs. For the woman that decides to try acupuncture first, she may save herself a lot of grief and money that can be incurred from IVF. Also, acupuncture can prepare her physically and emotionally to handle the impact pregnancy has on her body, leading to decreased risk of pregnancy symptoms such as nausea, constipation, pain, and depression.

If a woman is currently in an IVF protocol, or wishes to use both acupuncture and IVF, acupuncture given before and after embryo transfer can improve the rate of pregnancy and live birth and can alleviate the uncomfortable side effects of IVF. Even with a history of failed IVF treatments, success can come quite rapidly when combined with acupuncture, as I have seen firsthand in my practice.

Fertility treatments can place varying levels of stress on a couple, which work against increasing fertility and can take away joy. During each acupuncture treatment, the body releases endorphins, natural calming internal hormones, which relax both mind and body.

Pregnancy is a decision that has life-long effects on a woman, both for her, and her baby. A healthy start is the best start.

Nicole T. Smith, L.Ac. is a Board-certified and licensed acupuncturist located in Scotland, CT. Visit her site at: www.ThePamperedPorcupine.com. 860-450-6512.


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