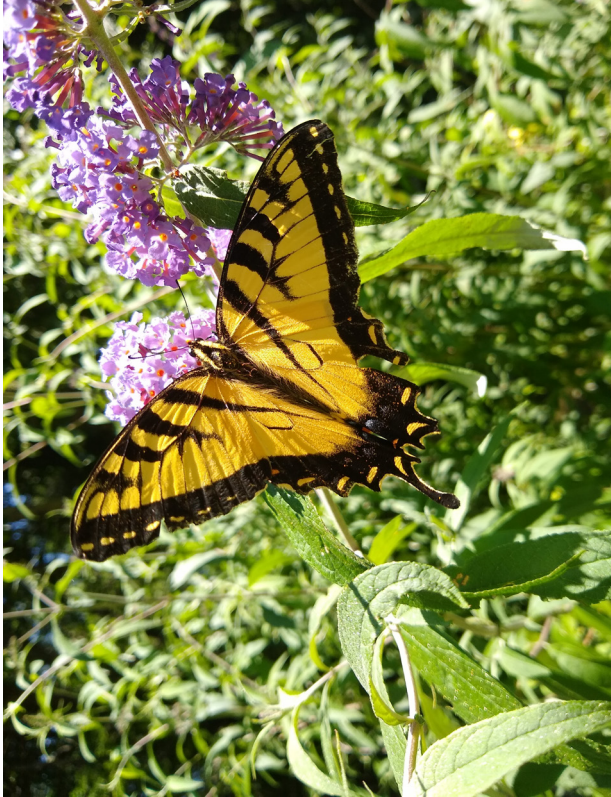
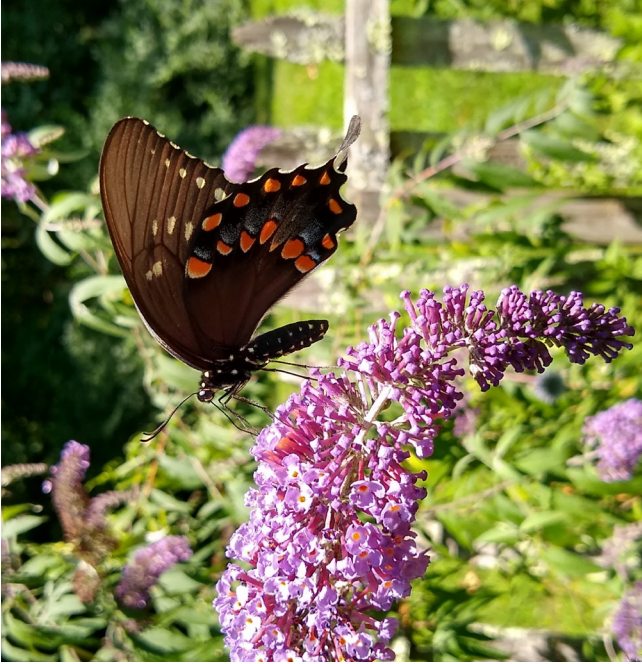


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No. 186 Serving the inhabitants and environment of northeastern Connecticut and beyond

Looking Up:

Martyrs and Movies

By Bob Grindle

Legend has it that on the night of August 10th, 258 AD, young Laurence, a deacon of the early Roman Catholic church and well-known for distributing church resources to the needy, lay dying as a result of his martyrdom by fire at the hands of the Roman emperor, Valeria—he had refused to recant his beliefs in the face of powerful forces. Coincidentally, the Perseid meteor shower was peaking over the dark skies of Rome on that fateful night, and was referred to for centuries thereafter—at least in much of Europe—as the “fiery tears of St. Lawrence.” The Perseid Meteor Shower is still one of the must-sees of the early August night sky. Nearly one thousand, seven hundred years after the death of St.Lawrence, a young Steven Spielberg was so inspired—or so the story is told—by the early August meteor shower under the breathtakingly starry skies of Arizona when his family moved there in the 1950’s, that most of his movies have included meteors streaking across darkening skies at tense or critical moments...think “Jaws” and “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.”

A simple streak of light. One moment twinkling high in the sky and then, suddenly, darting across the night and disappearing into the horizon...as if a star really had just fallen. There is something that tugs at the deep reaches of our humanity, almost a whisper—that, just maybe, we are a part of all that is going on around us—while lying here in the field in an almost sensory trance, enjoying the cosmic slo-mo light show overhead, playing out to the nightnature sounds of breeze-rustling leaves, insect night music jazz tones driven by a searching-for-love urgency that forms the perfect auditory undertone to the occasion-



August 12-13; There will be very little interference from the rapidly waning Moon and as nighttime deepens into early morning the meteors (shooting stars) will become more frequent. Lay on your back so you can see nearly the whole sky.

al soundburst of predatory creatures with less dreamy agendas, my mind wanders across the fertile delta of our species’ existence that has washed down from the wide river of our history. Somehow, despite an almost unfathomable disregard for the very forces of nature that gave rise to everything that exists...somehow, humankind has managed to create beautiful structures and music and art and literature and institutions that invite us all to imagine that the evolutionary track we are on is special. Perhaps it is.

Still lying in the field, enjoying a rather hallucinatory drift as my imagination scampers from the science of how stars actually work, to wondering just where the Swift-Tuttle comet that gives rise to the Perseids is right now and then to the NEOWISE project that looks for Near Earth Objects...I am struck by how easy it is to chase the things we see and hear and touch and feel across the landscape of truth and into the make-believe enchanted forest of magic and fancy and fairytale and darkness. Nightshadows of twisted branches and distant sounds of moaning wind or love-seeking wild things become scary vectors of imaginary horrors. Comets, seeming to hang still in the night or early morning sky while travelling tens of thousand of miles per hour, become signs --of religious

or political or societal portent. Why wouldn’t an aboriginal member of our species, while feeling the earth tremble beneath her feet or the mountains belch firey smoke and molten rock, hold fast to the certainty that the gods or demons of the world were unhappy with something.

Perhaps, despite a modern existence that often does not seem to have advanced far beyond the chaotic, violent, ignorant, superstition and disease-ridden past of our primitive ancestors, enough of our species will take refuge on the imaginative and upward-looking shoulders of those who went before and firmly believed that the human family showed some promise...enough of our species who understand that, as Confucius observed “Humans are basically good, but easily corrupted by poor leadership...”, and enough among us will continue to work to keep that perpetually flickering flame of

human progress and promise alive. Reality has the delightful characteristic of moving forward no matter what we humans do though, and as planet Earth approaches the trail of comet debris left by Swift-Tuttle’s last pass through our solar system in 1992, we will certainly be treated to another optimism-for-the-future-of-the-human-race-creating meteor shower. Looking up into the night sky can do that!

August begins and ends with Saturn and Jupiter dominating the evening sky; playing aerial one-upsmanship with the Moon. The Moon, of course, wins, but as the darkness deepens around 9:15 or so, the display is worth a look. It’s a good thing the Full Sturgeon Moon peaks on the 3rd of the month, because by the 11th, the Moon is into the last quarter and doesn’t rise until nearly midnight, so it won’t interfere too much with the Perseids in the Northeast sky. Still, by the wee hours of the morning of the 12th, the Moon will be high in the sky and no doubt will wash out a bit of the show. No matter, as the Moon sets into the West the meteor show will go on until the Sun starts to cast its predawn glow, and don’t despair if you miss the 11th, or the 12th, or the 13th; by the 17th of August, the Moon will have waned to total darkness and meteor showers normally linger for quite some time. No need to wait for a special time to get outside and look up. There is magic in reality and it shouldn’t take Covid 19 or Black Lives Matter or meteor showers or fireworks or some special celebration to get us out. Stay safe and well and enjoy this last full month of the summer of 2020.

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

On our cover - Clockwise from upper left: Photo of a Monarch butterfly on milkweed by Deanna King of Hampton; Photo of a Black Swallowtail butterfly on butterfly bush by Donna Drasch of Ashford; timely art by Scott E. Rhoades of Mansfield and a photo of a Tiger Swallowtail butterfly, also by Donna Drasch. Thank you all.

Neighbors
P.O. Box 430
Ashford, CT 06278
phone: 860-933-3376
email: neighborspaper@yahoo.com
website: neighborspaper.com

Tom King, Editor & Publisher
Dagmar Noll, Calendar Editor
Steve Woron, Mac Guru
Marisa Calvo, Graphic Design

Writers: Delia Berlin, David Corsini, Phoebe Godfrey, Bob Grindle, John Murphy, Dagmar Noll, Dennis Pierce, Mark Svetz, P.K. Willey, Steve Woron, Tom Woron, Loretta Wrobel

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

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| - Greg Abate Quartet (Jazz) | - Spiritual Medium, Maura Geist | - Eric Sommer (Americana) |
| | - Keyboardist, Bob Malone (Rock) | |
| | - AJ Jansen Band - <i>The Outlaw of Women Country Show</i> (Country) | - Steve Katz, Founding member of Blood Sweat & Tears and The Blues Project (Rock) |
| | - Luke Hendon (Gypsy Jazz) | - Sally Rogers (Folk) |

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Where Is Our Country?

By Loretta Wrobel

For several months I have been imagining that the worst, the most egregious has happened and our country will move closer to sanity and democracy. I am now totally digesting that this is utter folly. Something more horrifying than the last shocker happens again and again.



A friend, whose parents grew up in South America, remarked disgustedly that our country feels like South America in the 1950’s. We were expressing our inability to comprehend the events in Portland, Oregon, where federal agents were driving around in rented unmarked vans and picking up peaceful protesters or anyone who resembled a protester. I am dumbfounded. What does a protester look like? Is it clothing, looks, fierceness in their eyes, or perhaps just a person who is walking down the street when the unmarked van drives by?

It is unconscionable what is unfolding in our pandemic-battered country this summer 2020. Federal agents acting like the “Junta” in Chile, grabbing people off the streets and those people disappearing. What happened to us? What have we become?

I thought in the early spring that dealing with the virus and facing the staggering health crisis with exploding hospitalizations, ventilators, inadequate supplies and a leader saying that “Everything is fine, we have this under control” was the nadir. Ha, was I mistaken!

As more folks were infected, as more were unemployed, as less were able to get tested or receive results, I acknowledged everything got worse. However, this was only the beginning of the nightmare, as the ugly reality of racism reared up and threw more shockers at our vulnerable bodies. A hope glimmered as unprecedented numbers of concerned citizens took to the streets, especially vocal young people of many colors, spelling out the truth to the world. Even during a pandemic, we heeded the call and donned our masks, signs and Black Lives Matter became our rallying cry.

Ours is a nation supposedly founded on the rights of Americans to protest and speak their beliefs without fear of incarceration, arrest or intimidation. I gasp as I see a picture of the federal agents in Oregon in full protective gear rounding up people on the streets. How did we get to such madness?

Each day brings more trauma and unimaginable abuse of power by our government in the name of law and order. The federal government is taking control of our freedoms, telling us they are making our cities safe. What? The presence of federal troops has caused the local elected officials to tell the Feds to leave. In response, our chief tells us there will be more troops pouring into more American cities to restore order and stop the leftist radicals. I do not feel safe when government troops invade our cities. Do you feel safe? This is tyranny. As a nation, we must pay atten-

Invasions

By Angela Hawkins Fichter

As if avoiding the epidemic is not challenging enough, my garden has been invaded by terrorist rabbits. Why do I call them terrorists? Because just like human terrorists, they know no bounds. I love flower gardening. These rabbit invasions started in June, when the flower garden is full of blossoms. They have been eating the flower buds of plants. I hired a Hampton gardener to grow poppies for me from seed under grow lights in her home because poppy seeds have not successfully germinated in my soil. I carefully planted each seedling she grew, but as the flower buds were ready to open, the rabbits ate each one of them. The rabbits started devouring my garden with the carnation seedlings I bought through a garden catalog. The seedlings grew to healthy plants and set their flower buds. As the first bud was ready to open, snip by Mama Rabbit.

That angered me so much I asked a Mennonite friend if he had have-a-heart traps. He said he did, and he set them up for me on the lawn

between the strip of woods that the rabbits come out of and my garden. He baited them with carrots. The rabbits came into the traps, ate the carrots, left thank you notes and exited the traps, all without setting them off. One day I actually saw a rabbit eating a carrot at that part of the trap that is opposite the opening into the trap. She climbed over the platform that is supposed to close the trap door when she ran to the end of the trap where the carrots were. She watched me suspiciously since I am a Congregationalist, not a Mennonite. She stayed at the end of the trap with the carrots, and I shoved the trap door shut fiercely. Somehow she seemed unfazed and just kept eating carrots. I called the trap owner, and he came over after work to pick up the trap and let the rabbit out of the trap, but far away from my garden.

When I lived in Scotland, my husband grew the vegetables, I grew the flowers, and the cats ate the rabbits. The last of my cats died last fall. My husband set have-a-heart traps for the woodchucks. When they were caught, my husband drowned them in the cage

tion, even if we are furious, even if we are scared, even if we see no solution. We must show up.

It is time to stand for equality, sanity and cooperation. Pay attention to what is going on in your community, your State and your Country. An election is coming up in the fall and America decides which path to walk. What kind of government do we want? How do we treat all of our citizens? How important is equality and justice? We are not arguing a concept. We are deciding how we live with each other, how much justice we want in our country, and whether we will survive as a democracy.

As I am writing this article, I am drawn to a news clip about Greta Thunberg. She received the Gulbenkian prize for Humanity, which was one million Euros. This translates into 1,161,145.00 American dollars. Greta was awarded this prize for her ability to mobilize the younger generation around the climate crisis. This seventeen-year-old activist promptly donated the money to organizations and projects working on the frontlines to help people affected by the climate and ecological crises. This made me breathe a sign of relief, as this person is a true leader.

I next hear of the line of mothers in Portland, Oregon, standing up to the federal agents in bike helmets and goggles and fighting to retain our democracy. I see Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez deliver the verbal blast on the floor of the House speaking the words “Representative Yoho called me, and I quote, a f**king b*tch.” I see how the world is shifting, and we are facing a cataclysmic crossroads.

The role models we have been waiting for are here, everywhere, just look around. With the growing power of the Black Lives Movement speaking of the horrors of racism, the new wave of female legislators speaking out against male abuse and misogyny, and the wall of protesters not stopping until we abolish white privilege and begin to address racism in our country, we are moving in the direction we must to create a just and sane world.

We can all help end the insanity, disrespect, bullying, lies, and hateful behavior by standing behind our beliefs. There is an election soon. Vote. There are conversations sponsored by NAACP, RAW and other organizations. Join in. There are injustices that you witness. Speak out. There are young children. Talk with them and listen to them.

Yes, a terrifying and bizarre time to be alive. At the same time, it is compelling and electrifying to be witnessing a revolution in action, behavior, and thinking. You can participate in helping us move to another level, choosing to elevate everyone, and not leave behind brown and black skinned people, women, queer folk, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people who have always survived with bare crumbs. You may be the leader your neighbors are waiting for. Don’t miss the opportunity. Seize the moment, as those of us with white hair did in the 60’s. Another chance presents itself, and you can have a starring role. We must use our outside voices in order to restore our country and allow democracy to prevail.

in a nearby brook. Cruel? No, not when you are an organic vegetable grower, and your wife blanches and freezes all those vegetables. It was merely execution of a vegetable thief.

So my Mennonite friend oiled the traps in the hope that would make it easier to catch the rabbits. But the rabbits are atheists, so they continue to go in, eat some carrots, leave and then eat my flowers for dessert. They stopped leaving thank you notes. In fact, after the traps were set up, in revenge they then ate all the leaves and blossoms off of two new plants for my garden. I am kind of shy, so I have been afraid to ask my Mennonite friend if his traps are not merely have-a-heart, but actually pacifist. Should I ask him? Unless they are pacifist traps, I do not really see any point in trying to convert the traps from atheist to a meaner denomination.



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Willimantic, Now and Then:

Life and Love in the Time of Cholera

By Mark Svetz

I apologize to the great Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, but his enigmatic title has become my own identifying phrase for the weirdness of life these days. We talk calmly among ourselves about whether schools should open in the fall. We have to meet our friends in the driveway because we don’t feel right about entertaining indoors. Some of us are visiting our parents through the glass at nursing homes, or seeing our grandchildren only through the computer screen. This is Love in the Time of Cholera.

If I know anything, it is that love, even in the time of cholera, is still love; and living in the time of COVID-19 is still living. Right now I am in the mood to celebrate love and life.

When this pandemic began, back in March, I had been animated by my work on Miriam’s treehouse for quite a while. I hope Garcia Marquez would approve of the Quixotic passion of this project. It started, after all, when my granddaughter Miriam was overseas with her family for six months. The only way I could dull the loneliness of missing Miriam was to do something in service to her. Although the treehouse grew in my mind, progress was slow in the real world until this spring. Then a pandemic left some of us with time on our hands. Gregory and I spent a few days working together on it, and my fantasy took life.

Another circumstance that has animated my life for the past 10 or 12 years is the Friday afternoon gatherings that have happened every week in our living room or back yard, depending on the weather. We call these gatherings happy hour, and we have something to eat, seasoned with conversation. That ended with our last gathering on March 6. As the weeks without happy hour stretched into months, there was a hole in my life.

As I was longing for those conversations, wondering if they could start again, it occurred to me I couldn’t just decide to do this on my own. Every one of us must have different fears and different levels of fear. A few weeks ago, I started to talk to our friends, wondering how they would feel about getting together again. The irony struck me that we would need many discussions before we could resume our conversations.

We would start with fewer people. I would serve no common dish; everyone would bring their own snacks and drinks. When we finally did get together, my old friend Mike Pastore even brought his own chair. It began to seem possible, and three or four weeks ago we did it. We can only be outside, we all agreed, so



if it rains Friday, it won’t happen. We are having our happy hours again, and I will tell you that my world seems a little more right. Love in the time of Cholera. These are two symbols of my existential reckoning with this corona virus that has turned so much of our world upside down. The treehouse is my spirit, rising Phoenix-like from the ashes of my confusion and depression. Proof that this battered old body can still make a dream come true. Perhaps this new happy hour is the “new normal” I hear people talking about. It was different than our former experience, but we had a great conversation last Friday. When we first started having these gatherings, I called it “face-to-facebook,” because I sensed that I was falling out of the loop with some of my friends. I really just wanted – then and now – to have conversations with people I care about.

In this, I’d like to think my dilemma about our happy hour applies all over the world, where people are deciding how far they want to go. We all have to weigh the

risks and think about what’s important to us. Just the other day, our family talked about what it would mean if Miriam goes to school in the fall. It seems I don’t mind some increased risk if it means Miriam can get back to school, which she loves. I hope we can all make our choices in discussion with our friends, family and neighbors. It is what I have come to love about happy hour. We have become a place where each of us can share and make sense of the world

around us. It’s not always easy. The truth is very slippery; it takes a lot of talking. I take heart that the conversation has started again.

Of course now we have our conversations with a really cool treehouse as a backdrop. Part of the treehouse is a tall A-frame structure, in which I have made a “secret” loft where Miriam can climb and be by herself. I am still working out the details of ladders, shelves and places to peer out from behind. The other day Miriam told us the secret of a good playground is having a hard place to climb into. It seems my passion is leading me in the right direction. Love in the time of cholera.

I have faith that our happy hours will continue. They might never be exactly what they were, but they will be. There is great comfort in that. There is comfort also in knowing that whatever they become, it will be the result of conversations and choices we all make together, with the backdrop of our lives and loves. That is Love in the Time of Cholera.

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



Covid Tightrope

As the world walks a thin tightrope
between faith and fear
the most primal need is to hold
our loved ones near.

Our invisible enemy continues to march on
waging war across all barriers
while taking souls at will,
to a place beyond.

Chaos and panic will only feed the fear.
Holding on to faith and hope, however
will make one thing perfectly clear
and that is that prayer, humanity
and science will ultimately persevere.

Lynda Bowen

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

Years ago, I started writing car care articles. The idea was to inform the motoring public of things that could happen to their vehicle. My goal was that prevention would help to keep folks on the road and instead of waiting until something happened to the vehicle. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Times have changed the automotive industry with the onset of the CoVid 19 virus. The automobile manufacturers stopped producing vehicles and started making products to help the healthcare industry combat this virus that has touched the world. The part suppliers are starting to see the impact that this virus is having on their inventories. We have found that some repairs are taking us longer due to the availability of parts. This problem will not go away anytime soon. It will take time for the automobile manufacturers to produce and restock inventories. The upside to this is that vehicles at this time are being driven less. Please remember to start and drive your vehicle at least once a week and check fluids and tire pressures at least once a month. If you own more than one vehicle and one is not being driven, be sure to alternate vehicles to keep the battery and other components in working order. This will help to keep your repair costs lower.

The last thing this month is a personal note. My heart goes out to all small businesses that have been lost because of this virus or the senseless destruction by the problems our country faces. The dreams, time, and investment that small business owners put into their business is a terrible loss to the community, employment, and a tax loss to our government. Small business is the backbone of this country and what helps to keep it running smoothly. Whenever you can support small businesses in your community so they remain a part of it.

Our Community Calendar

Compiled By Dagmar Noll

450-1464 dmangum617@gmail.com

August 1, Saturday
Community Food: Willimantic Farmer’s Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Produce, plants, maple syrup, and herbal products. Please wear masks and social distance. Jillson Square, Willimantic. Info: willimanticfarmersmarket.org

August 2, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmer’s Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Seasonal produce, fruits, cheese, meat, syrups, honey, baked goods. Please wear masks and practice social distancing. Pompey Hollow, Rt 44 across the street from Town Hall. Info: Loretta, birdeye123@charter.net
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. Non-sectarian, Buddhist-style sitting meditation, teaching and sharing. Info: 860-

August 8, Saturday
Community Food: Willimantic Farmer’s Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 8/1)

August 9, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmer’s Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 8/2)
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 8/2)

August 15, Saturday
Community Food: Willimantic Farmer’s Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 8/1)

August 16, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmer’s Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 8/2)
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.

(See 8/2)

August 22, Saturday
Community Food: Willimantic Farmer’s Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 8/1)

August 23, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmer’s Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 8/2)
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 8/2)

August 29, Saturday
Community Food: Willimantic Farmer’s Market, 8:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. (See 8/1)

August 30, Sunday
Community Food: Ashford Farmer’s Market, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. (See 8/2)
Meditation: Willimantic Mindfulness Sangha Meditation (Online), 6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m. (See 8/2)

Skill Share: Learn to Make Herbal Vinegars, 4:00p.m. - 5:30p.m. \$15. Hands-on class. Learn to make a white wine mixed herbal vinegar and a spiced apple cider vinegar. CLiCK, 41 Club Rd, Willimantic. Register: 860-786-7907 or Clickwillimantic.com
Wellness: Buti Yoga in the Orchard, 6:00pm-7:00pm. Donation. Dynamic practice combining asana, primal movements, cardio,plyometrics, tribal dance, and deep abdominal toning. CLiCK, 41 Club Rd, Willimantic. Register: 860-786-7907 or Clickwillimantic.com

CT Green Energy News

Submitted by Peter Millman

If knowledge is power, I wasn’t feeling very powerful a few years ago when I decided to advocate for the clean energy transition at the state and local levels. I had a poor sense of the people and organizations working in Connecticut and only a vague understanding of the programs and policies in place and under development.

The internet is a pretty handy tool and slowly I began to find websites, studies and newspaper articles that helped fill in the many gaps in my understanding of the policy landscape here in Connecticut. Especially helpful were online newspaper articles. Generally, I got as much out of a two-page article as I did from a 173 page report and in far less time.

So about three years ago it occurred to me that other advocates were in the same position, wanting to know more but having to spend a lot of time figuring out how to find information. Thus was born the CT Green Energy News, a weekly compendium of news articles that focus on projects, programs, and policies happening here in Connecticut. Sometimes because a nearby state is doing something particularly relevant to Connecticut, or because I can’t find enough Connecticut oriented articles that week, I look outside our state. But generally, Connecticut is the focus.

I hope you learn something from the stories you read here...and then put your newfound power to good use.

Welcome to the CT Green Energy News, a weekly digest of stories that has been condensed into a monthly format for NEIGHBORS readers. To read the full stories online, just Google the titles below. You can also subscribe to the free weekly email newsletter by contacting Peter Millman at peter.millman7@gmail.com.

News and events for advocates of clean energy, energy efficiency, and climate action at the state and local levels, focusing on Connecticut. Brought to you by People’s Action for Clean Energy (PACE) and Eastern CT Green Action (ECGA)



Can clean energy power CT’s economic recovery?

CT Mirror “While states like Connecticut included the solar sector in their stay-at-home ranks – contributing to what would become a more than 620,500 loss of clean energy jobs nationally by the end of May – Massachusetts kept its solar people working.”

The Future For Connecticut’s Trash Remains Uncertain

WNPR. “After years of debate and study, the future of Hartford’s aging trash-to-energy facility is finally

beginning to crystalize. And Connecticut’s trash future may end up looking a lot like a step into the past: sending garbage to landfills.”

15 states [including Connecticut], DC will collaborate on 100% electric truck sales by 2050

Utility Dive. “...a multi-state approach “is required” given the “significant challenges around higher upfront costs, range, weight, charging time, and infrastructure deployment” for commercial EVs.”

Connecticut’s vehicle fleet should be all electric. There’s no reason to wait.

Hartford Courant. “Many will wonder who’s going to pay for this investment in our sustainable future. Any answer needs to keep the fuller picture of the true cost in mind. Electric vehicles have a lower total cost of ownership than gas and diesel-burning vehicles, and they don’t externalize costs to society in the form of air pollution and greenhouse gases.”

Closing MIRA plant gives Connecticut an opportunity to adopt zero waste policies and fight environmental injustice

CT Mirror. “In Connecticut, food waste and other organics make up about 33% of the waste stream. This can be eliminated by diverting organics into composting or anaerobic digestion facilities. Another 40% of trash is paper, plastic, glass, and metal, which can be captured by improved recycling efforts.”

Ed. Note: This article, by Ashford resident Susan Eastwood, appears in its entirety on page 8.

Connecticut green bonds offer residents a chance to fund war on climate change

Energy News Network. “...the program is intended to inspire a collective public effort on behalf of combating climate change in the same way that the federal government’s sale of Series-E bonds during World War II tapped into a sense of patriotism to support the war effort.”

The Declining Role of Natural Gas Power in New England

Acadia Center. “Over the next decade in New England, gas will play a much smaller role in electricity generation. As a result, existing gas-fired plants will be underused, and new plants, as well as new supply infrastructure like pipelines, will be unnecessary.”

Upcoming Events

For a more complete listing of clean energy events, visit the PACE online Calendar. You can also subscribe to the Calendar.



85 Flat Rock Road

By Dean Williams

My grandfather Weeden was born in 1871, just a few years after the Civil War. (Many people don’t even know about that war.)

Okay, how about this: the Briggs family wanted to have a home built for them on Flat Rock Road, which actually was a dirt road. Work began in 1697, first, by picking a site on a small knoll, so in the summer a breeze would keep the mosquitos away. But there’d be no home without water, so men started digging wells. It took about three weeks per well, what with digging and gathering flat stones.

When they were deep enough to hit water, the stones were used to form a circular pattern, one layer at a time. As the well was being formed, dirt was added until they reached the top. Now the water was tasted. The first well tasted like sulphur. Ditto the second and third. Finally, the fourth well was a success!

Now construction could

begin. The men cut down a large pine tree, three oak trees, and a very large Chestnut tree. Using a large saw (from England) the men began cutting an oak tree into floor joists, large beams, the roof rafters, and the sill. Then the pine tree was cut into long, one-inch-thick boards for the floors. The chestnut tree was cut into thick planks that would be used for partitions that separated one room for the other. Lath was nailed to the planks, which were then plastered.

Finally, the Colonial home was completed in 1770!

And guess what: my parents bought that exact same Colonial house, two barns, and 90 acres in 1940. And the place was still on a dirt road, until late-1945, when WWII ended and the town of Plainfield had the dirt road tarred.

Some of my happiest days were at 85 Flat Rock Road in Plainfield, Connecticut.

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The Fishers of Hampton

By C. Dennis Pierce

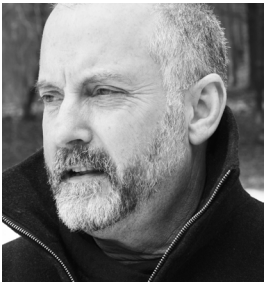
I like surprises. I have been writing this column for quite some time and when I have an opportunity to visit a farm and it truly takes me by surprise, I realize why I appreciate the Quiet Corner of Connecticut. This month our Publisher, Tom King, provided me with a lead for a farm in Hampton, Organic Roots Farm.

I have lived in Connecticut for many years but I was not familiar with Old Route 6. I headed east on Route 6 heading to Hampton and I took a left onto, Old Route 6. Following the numbers on the mail boxes I passed I was not sure if I was on the right path. Crossing over Main Street in Hampton, I noticed that Old Route 6 began again in the middle of town. Bearing right, and traveling a few miles down the road I saw the sign for the farm posted on the side of the road. I turned off and entered the lane and to the side, majestic white pines created a wall between the main road and the property as if they were holding back some great land that has yet to be discovered. Once past the grove of trees I arrived at the nicest farm that I have ever experienced in all of my travels. In front of me was a well-appointed farm stand with a tent to its right (more about the tent later). I was greeted by Rosetta, who together with her husband Sam, own Organic Roots Farm. While we were waiting for Sam, who was working in a lower field to return, Rebecca showed me around with her youngest son, Ben. Rebecca explained how they arrived from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and shared with me the history of the farm. Later, by doing some research I also found some additional information regarding the farm’s history.

The original owner of the property was David Fox, who operated a mill along the Little River. In 1827 David left the farm to his son, Anson. The farm was later passed on to Josiah and Jackson Horace who owned it from 1834 to 1877 and again to John Smith from 1877 to 1887. Here there is a gap where I could not find the lineage but it picks up again in 1969 where the Ostby’s began a Christmas tree farm, Popover Hill, which they operated for over 30 years. Rosetta said that it was the place that residents of Hampton would always go to get their annual Christmas trees as they celebrated the holidays.

The Fishers have lived on the farm for a little over two years. There, with their four sons, they have recreated an old New England farm with a variety of crops, animals and their most recent project, growing mushrooms. If you recall I mentioned earlier the tent next to the stand? There, their son was drilling holes into long logs and planting mushroom spores. The logs were then moved to an area where they were neatly stacked in a cross pattern and above a misting system was installed to keep the logs moist on dry days to encourage the mushroom growth.

As Sam joined us and we toured the farm you



can tell that both Rosetta and Sam were proud of their accomplishments. My observation of the farm was, “if God wanted to create a farm it would be Organic Roots Farm”. With the help of their four boys the Fishers have created a tidy, productive farm that not only provides sustenance for the family but allows them to offer fresh produce from their stand and also by selling at local Farmer’s Markets. They sell at the Brooklyn Market on Wednesday evenings, the Canterbury Market on Tuesday and the Putnam Market on Monday. Their own stand is open Monday through Saturday from 11:00am to 5:00pm. The farm provides a residence for ninety chickens who produce a plethora of eggs, a drove of pigs with some named “Bacon”, “Pork Chop”, and “Scrapple” and one singular pig, named Petunia, who was the runt of the litter and is now the family pet.



Sam and Rosetta Fisher and sons, left to right - Max, Spencer, Adam (rear) and Ben. Dennis Pierce photos.

Sam shared that they were thankful for the pond on the property that helps irrigate the gardens. Rosetta added that it also was a benefit to have it for their sons so that they could cool off after a long day helping their parents. The farm consists of thirty-five acres but currently the family is farming on three acres. Most of the property is designated conservation land. This season the farm is growing twenty varieties of heirloom tomatoes, sweet corn, zucchini, yellow squash, eggplant, various melons, “young orange” sweet peppers, and bell peppers to name just a few items. There produce is being grown on land that has not been treated thus, while not certified organic, it is truly organic through good agricultural practices. On our tour I was impressed with the extensive rows of potato plants. The Fishers line the rows with buckwheat which helps attract potato bugs, a hinderance to the plants. As Sam and Rosetta looked over their property and their four sons, they smiled at me and said, “yes, we are truly blessed”.

While they do not have a farm website or Facebook site set up yet you can reach the farm by calling 860.336.8823. You can also find out about what is being



Max Fisher and Petunia.

offered at the farm by downloading the “What’s Fresh” app from the Apple app store. I would encourage all, as you are cooped up and ready for a local adventure, to go visit the Fisher’s farm. Enjoy the soft breeze that rolls through the valley and say “hi” to Petunia (she’s the lucky one!).

Since watermelon season will soon be upon us, I have added this month a recipe for Agua de Sandia or better known as watermelon water. Watermelon is a delicious and refreshing fruit that’s also good for you. It contains only 46 calories per cup but is high in vitamin C, vitamin A and many healthy plant compounds.

Agua de Sandia

Ingredients:

- 1/8 medium watermelon. To portion the watermelon, cut it in half lengthwise and then cut one of the quarters in half. Use 1 of the small pieces to prepare this drink
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2-gallon water
- 8 mint or spearmint leaves

Instructions:

- Cut the watermelon into chunks and remove all the seeds.
- Place the cut-up watermelon in the blender with 2 cups water and blend until smooth. (about 30 seconds)
- Pour the blended watermelon into a 1/2-gallon pitcher and add the cup of sugar.

Stir vigorously until the sugar has dissolved. Serve lightly chilled or over ice. Garnish each glass with a mint leaf. Reduce the quantity of sugar if you prefer a less sweet drink.

Unfortunately, the dog days of summer are here for a while. Did you know that this phrase describes the sultry part of the summer, which is supposed to occur during the period that Sirius, the Dog Star, rises at the same time as the sun: now often reckoned from July 3 to August 11th, a period marked by lethargy and inactivity. Lastly, thanks to all who are keeping each other safe. Please remember to wear a mask while out in public. Let’s help stop the spread of COVID-19.

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...

What Those Living With Asthma Can Do to Manage Their Condition

(StatePoint) Asthma is a lung disease that makes breathing difficult for over 24 million Americans. While there is no cure, proper management can help those that live with asthma lead a normal, healthy life.

Education plays a key role in making this happen. Here are four important questions and answers about asthma self-management education from the American Lung Association:

1. What is asthma self-management? The best medicines and best healthcare providers in the world can only do so much to help you manage your asthma if you are not also doing your part. For this reason, self-management is essential. “Self-management” refers to the things you can do for yourself to keep your asthma in control, have fewer asthma symptoms and better enjoy life. Here are seven major steps to asthma self-management:
- 1) Understanding asthma and breathing.
- 2) Talking with your healthcare providers.
- 3) Learning about and how to use your

- asthma medicines.
- 4) Making changes in your life to prevent asthma problems.
- 5) Knowing your asthma symptoms and keeping track of them.
- 6) Checking your airways with a peak flow meter.
- 7) Knowing what to do when your asthma is out of control.

2. What are the benefits of participating in an asthma self-management program? Completing an asthma self-management education program can improve your knowledge about your specific type of asthma. It can also help you feel more confident in monitoring your symptoms, working with your healthcare providers, and in using your asthma medicines correctly. These programs can also improve your ability to avoid or reduce exposure to your asthma triggers. All this can potentially

result in fewer symptoms, asthma flare-ups, missed work or school days and emergency department or urgent care visits, for an overall improved quality of life.



Participants also develop problem-solving skills for when asthma symptoms worsen and learn how to make lifestyle changes to avoid asthma triggers, including stress management, staying active with exercise and avoiding tobacco smoke. Through these programs, participants develop self-advocacy and communication skills for working

with healthcare providers.

4. Where can I turn for asthma self-management education? The Lung Association offers asthma programs to help you learn asthma self-management skills, including the adult-focused asthma self-management program, Breathe Well, Live Well, and two pediatric programs, Open Airways For Schools and Kickin’ Asthma. These programs are designed to help millions of Americans with asthma learn the skills to make lifestyle changes that will improve symptoms and quality of life. Additionally, the Lung Association offers a self-paced online program called Asthma Basics, which is a first step to learning more about the disease. Asthma Basics is ideal for people with asthma, or anyone caring for someone with asthma and is available at Lung.org/asthma-basics. To access these resources and learn more about lung health, visit Lung.org. Asthma, if uncontrolled, can have serious consequences. However, knowledge can empower those living with asthma to take more control of the condition and improve their quality of life.

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

The Flirtations

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: the Flirtations, a South Carolina trio who recorded in England and became favorites of that country’s Northern Soul scene.

Sisters Ernestine, Shirley and Betty Pearce, along with Lestine Johnson, formed the Gypsies in New York City in 1962. (They had moved there from their native South Carolina.) Two years later, they signed with Old Town Records and released their debut single, “Hey There, Hey There.” It got some local airplay but otherwise did nothing. However, the group’s next release, “Jerk It,” made the national R&B chart, reaching #33 in June of 1965. Soon after, Lestine Johnson left the Gypsies and was replaced by Viola Billups.

After signing with a new label, Josie, in 1966, they became the Flirtations and released “Change My Darkness Into Light,” which garnered little attention. The group’s run of luck did not improve with a move to Festival Records, which released a pair of unsuccessful singles on them. Betty Pearce then quit the act, reducing the Flirtations to a trio.

In 1968, Ernestine, Shirley and Viola decided to try their luck in England. That fall, they signed with Parrot Records, home of Billy Fury, the Zombies, Tom Jones, and Them (featuring Van Morrison). Their sole release for the label was “Someone Out There,” which made the British “Bubbling Under” chart and became a #25 hit in the Netherlands.

By the end of 1968, the Flirtations had moved on to Deram, where they became labelmates with Cat Stevens, David Bowie, and the Moody Blues. Their first release for the label became their biggest hit. A frantic Motown-styled dance-rocker with a distinct Merseybeat influence, “Nothing But a Heartache” made England’s “Bubbling Under” chart and became the trio’s second hit in the Netherlands, where it peaked at #36. A U.S. release in early 1969 produced additional success. It reached #34 on the Billboard Hot 100—though, inexplicably, it missed the Soul chart)--and did even better in certain regional markets. In Boston, for example, “Nothing But a Heartache” was a #3 smash.



The follow-up was an autobiographical number called “South Carolina,” which only reached #111 in Billboard. Their first release of 1970, “Keep On Searching,” fared even worse. The Flirtations made the Cash Box chart at #96 with “Can’t Stop Loving You,” though it became a much bigger hit for Tom Jones. After a half-dozen singles, the Flirtations left Deram in 1971. The following year, Viola Billups quit the group to embark on a solo career. She performed both as Vie and as Pearly Gates. Her replacement in the Flirtations was Misty Browning (soon followed by Loretta Noble).

In 1972, the Flirtations became the resident vocal group on the BBC TV show, “It’s Cliff Richard.” For the remainder of the ‘70s, they put out singles on Polydor, Mojo, and RCA. None of that material came out in the U.S. In the ‘80s, they recorded Hi-NRG tracks like “Earthquake,” “Read All About It,” and “Back On My Feet Again.” (The latter reunited Viola Billups with the Pearces.) “Earthquake” became a hit in South Africa, reaching #6 in 1984.

In England, “Nothing But a Heartache” was used in an ad campaign for KFC. In 2007, an English D.J. team called the Freemasons did a remake of the song with vocalist Sylvia Mason-James. Meanwhile, the Flirtations became favorites on the Disco and Northern Soul scenes of England, New Zealand, and Australia.

Charted U.S. singles:

- “Jerk It” (as the Gypsies, 1965) R&B #33, Pop #111
- “Nothing But a Heartache” (1969) Pop #34
- “South Carolina” (1969) Pop #111
- “Can’t Stop Loving You” (1970) Pop #96

Three years of change, reconciliation and healing in the Quiet Corner

By Christine Pattee

In our politically purple, demographically white, Quiet Corner of the state, a remarkable change is taking place. Leah Ralls and a core group of Calvary Baptist Church members revived the Windham/Willimantic Chapter of the NAACP, and in just three years, membership has exploded to over 150. Although leadership is predominantly Black, chapter membership is mostly white, with members from Coventry to Killingly; from Woodstock to Norwich.

President Leah Ralls has a real gift for bringing together a truly diverse group of folks committed to social justice and looking for an opportunity to put our skills to work for betterment of the community. I consider myself a typical example of a white person supportive of causes like women’s liberation and gay rights, but not knowing how to make a meaningful contribution to the cause of civil rights in the here and now. A 2018 Martin Luther King Jr. memorial event at Calvary Baptist Church brought me to join our local chapter.

The chapter’s first significant action was to address the 2017 incident in Scotland, when First Selectman Daniel Syme and a group of white men were photographed in front of a huge Confederate flag. Leah went to Scotland and achieved more than a

political retraction. She communicated so successfully that the First Selectman had a significant change of heart and after retiring from office, he hosted an NAACP presentation on racism and slavery at Scotland Grammar School that was attended by hundreds of participants, mostly white.

From its inception, the chapter has addressed racially charged episodes in Willimantic and Killingly schools. The Killingly Redman mascot debacle got nationwide coverage, but a year previously, the NAACP Legal Redress Committee had met with teachers and the school board to address persistent bullying of one of the few black students at Killingly High School.

In February 2019, Kyrone Sands, a mentally ill black man, was shot to death by police after a car chase from Norwich to the border of Willimantic. The state investigation of this incident ended unsatisfactorily, but it was clear at the time that dozens of shots were fired by both Willimantic and the State Police. It was a tense time in relations between NAACP and the Willimantic Police Department, led by Chief Roberto Rosado. Yet, at the Black Lives Matter rally held in Willimantic on June 5th, Willimantic police were on stage and Chief Rosado had an important role as speaker. I love this story of reconciliation and healing in the face of racial injustice. I do not love the fact that two white men, An-

drew Samuolis and Peter Manfredonia, both known murderers, were captured alive by police while a black man who injured nobody is dead.

Virtually every little town in the Quiet Corner has had its own Black Lives Matter demonstration, with hundreds of mostly young, entirely peaceful demonstrators waving a remarkable plethora of personally lettered signs. These demonstrations are organized by local high school and college students, but often ask for speakers from the NAACP. In my home town of Coventry, organizer Gabriella Veerasammy, who spoke about her own experience of racial taunts and slights as a student at Coventry High School, quoted a young black woman, head of a college NAACP chapter, and got cheers when she said her first priority was “Get out and vote!” When Gabriella asked how many in the audience were registered to vote, most of the hands went up, and that’s where hope for change in the future lies.

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Flying with Manta Rays

By Delia Berlin

Once upon a time, I flew with manta rays. We were in the water, of course, but their movements were akin to flying. Although I had no wings to emulate their graceful dance I joined in, just a few feet above them. I followed their group, uninvited but seemingly welcome. Swimming above the huge rays felt like flying, and I can usually replay a brief clip of this old experience in my memory, for a momentary burst of peace.

The unrelenting sequence of unprecedented tragedies plaguing the year 2020 continue to fill us with uncertainty, anxiety and dread. I find myself wanting and needing momentary bursts of peace quite often. Fortunately, I seem to have a virtual library of memories to draw from. Most of these involve nature and animals, and quite a few relate to events that took place in the tropics.

For many years, mostly from my youth spilling into middle age, I spent some time each year somewhere in the Caribbean. Usually, these were excursions planned to provide some respite from the long and cold Connecticut winters. I took most of these trips with David, although I had already taken several of them before I met him. My experience with many Caribbean destinations, coupled with David’s dislike of crowds and tourist attractions, led me to research and find great unspoiled places for our birdwatching and snorkeling vacations. Over time, we enjoyed many.

One of my most memorable trips of this kind was to the island of Bonaire. Practically undiscovered for tourism at the time, several decades ago, Bonaire is one of the Netherlands Antilles. Only 50 miles north from the coast of Venezuela, Bonaire is surrounded by a ring of coral reefs. It was described by travel books as a birdwatcher’s paradise, because many migratory bird species stop there for a welcome break along their migration routes. Then, most of the island was a nature preserve, with only one hotel and a small group of cottages at a diving club. The hotel was on the beach, but the cottages were described as located by the water in a more remote location. With that description, we booked a room in the hotel.

Getting to Bonaire was complicated. There were no direct flights, which may have partially explained the lack of tourism. After several connecting flights, we arrived to the island and checked into our destination. We immediately did a little birding and, from the start it was rewarding. Everything else seemed fine, until the sun went down.

Sundown paved the way for the arrival of mosquitos in droves. We thought that our hotel room would give us shelter and relief until morning, but we were mistaken. The room was, perhaps, the place where all the mosquitos had come from. We spent a miserable night, but we managed to live through it without getting malaria. In the morning, the previously white sheets had morphed into a red polka-dotted pattern. We had probably become anemic. We had to get out of there and fast.

Fortunately, Captain Don’s Diving Cottages had a vacancy. Our cottage was lovely, just like a little house, with its own ocean-view covered patio with a hammock. The entire scuba club was in park-like grounds, by the sea. There was an ample raised sand deck by the water, with a long wooden pier to get into the water. At the end of the pier, the water depth was only two or three feet, so it was very easy to start swimming or snorkeling from there. Captain Don was actually running the place and, believe it or not, he had a wooden peg leg. During our stay we learned that his missing leg had been eaten by a shark. History or



legend, we are still not sure, but that was the only explanation floating around.

If the birding was spectacular, snorkeling was even more stunning. One couldn’t put eyes in the water without seeing an incredible wonderland. It was surreal. The turquoise waters were teeming with large parrotfish munching on coral, schools of squid, angelfish, clownfish, anemones, eels... We were enchanted. The water was clear, allowing for great visibility. The sand was pink and the temperature warm enough to allow for snorkeling without wet suits for up to an hour at a time.

A few days after arriving at the cottages, we heard that twenty minutes by boat from Bonaire, there was an uninhabited island called “Klein Bonaire” (or “Little Bonaire”). We were told that because this island was further away from Venezuela’s coast, it was subjected to much stronger surf in the open ocean. Due to this and the lack of humans, snorkeling there was reportedly particularly good, with many more fish that had adapted to the strong surf by growing much bigger. The island had no fresh water and no buildings of any kind, but we could pack a picnic and arrange for a boat taxi that could take us there in the morning and gather us in the afternoon. Neither David nor I are particularly fond of taking high risks. But somehow, we made arrangements with a small motorboat captain, took the choppy ride to the island and spent a day in Klein Bonaire without any worries or cares. After all, everything works out while in love in paradise.

Soon after the boat and its Dutch captain disappeared into the horizon after dropping us off on the beach, we noticed that, in addition to no people and no fresh water, the island had no trees. Fortunately for us, someone had built a small wooden shack with pallets on the beach. It wasn’t fully enclosed, but it was enough to seek some merciful shelter from the beating sun.

Just like Bonaire, Klein Bonaire was surrounded by a ring of coral reefs. Anyone who has ever snorkeled will appreciate how special this is. One can swim to the reef and observe countless wonders, while staying always within the reef and the beach. It’s easy to get distracted and disoriented under water, so this configuration awards a unique feeling of safety and control. Snorkeling in Klein Bonaire lived up to its reputation. Our day there flew by, and before we got anxious about our ride back the Dutchman and his boat reappeared on the horizon.

The memories I recall when I need a burst of calm are purposely brief. I replay a few seconds of a mental video, flying over a school of rays. Deeper exploration of these memories would exacerbate my anxiety, instead of providing calm. How did David and I, who had responsibilities and dependents, risk being left on a deserted island in the tropics, without any significant amount of water, food, first aid supplies or means of communication? Why did we trust that a complete stranger would return to take us back? Could we have encountered sharks, scorpions, snakes, or any other dangers, while completely defenseless and unprepared? From my perch today, I have no answers for these questions, but since I already watched the movie, there is no need to freak out – it ended well.

I have many other calming memories of Bonaire and other islands in the Caribbean, a magical place often too beautiful to feel real. Given the growing challenges posed by climate change, environmental stress and the pandemic, I doubt very much that I will visit these places again. As I long feared, I already heard through others that many of these places are now a mere shadow of what they once were. I better hang on to what I can still remember. As the saying goes, “nadie te quita lo bailado.”

Opinion

Closing MIRA plant gives Connecticut an opportunity to adopt zero waste policies and fight environmental injustice

By Susan Eastwood

When we talk about racial injustice, we must put environmental injustice near the top of the list of concerns. Connecticut’s urban communities of color are burdened with pollution from traffic congestion, aging housing, toxics from manufacturing, and the dumping of the state’s trash to be incinerated in their neighborhoods. Eighty percent of U.S. waste incinerators are located in environmental justice communities. The aging MIRA waste incinerator in Hartford is a prime example.

The May 28 decision to close the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) incinerator in Hartford will impact waste management throughout the state; more than 50 towns ship their trash to MIRA. The towns have balked at the cost to renovate the 30-year-old incinerator, \$333 million, which would increase fees per ton by 42%. MIRA’s decision comes after repeated breakdowns of the old plant and years of debate over how to go forward. While the state could come up with the funds needed, this would be a huge investment in an outdated, polluting plant and this solution is not supported by Gov. Ned Lamont’s administration.

While closure of the plant presents a dilemma for Connecticut’s waste management, it is a real opportunity to implement zero waste methods and reduce the amount of waste by up to 90%.

In Connecticut, food waste and other organics make up about 33% of the waste stream. This can be eliminated by diverting organics into composting or anaerobic digestion facilities. Another 40% of trash is paper, plastic, glass, and metal, which can be captured by improved recycling efforts. Further reductions can be made by educating individuals in ways to use less, or disincentivizing with “pay-as-you-throw” policies.

Manufacturers can be influenced to be more responsible with product stewardship laws and public pressure. Our legislature could ban non-recyclables, incentivize recycling, require manufacturers to use less packaging, and find non-toxic alternatives to chemicals like BPA that make products unsafe to recycle. A good start would be to pass the proposed Bottle Bill upgrade which would take up to 400 million bottles out of the waste stream annually, if the bill is amended to include wine and liquor bottles, 60% of the glass tossed.

The remaining trash must be dealt with. Landfills do leak, but newer barriers are much better than in the past. Even trucking trash to out-of-state landfills, while not a palatable solution, is less damaging to the environment than incineration. Incinerators are extremely toxic, emitting gasses like nitrous oxide (NOx), carbon dioxide (CO2), and ozone depleting CFC-11. The burning process produces dioxin and benzene in both the emissions and the ash. They burn materials that contain highly toxic metals, including cadmium, mercury, and lead, as well as synthetic chemicals, like PFAS, that have many serious health impacts, including cancers and birth defects. The result is a concentration of toxins in the ash.

This toxic ash is trucked across the state, to an ash landfill in Putnam, a low-income community in Northeastern Connecticut. The landfill is located on the Quinebaug River, which feeds water sources all the way south to New London and Long Island Sound. Every day, truck after truck dumps loads of ash into piles to be covered with tarps until it can be buried. Residents testify that the ash is often blown into neighboring properties and the water. Rather than expanding the dump’s capacity, as currently proposed, we should be planning alternative ways to dispose of our trash.

Less is more, and the most efficient solution is to implement policies to reduce our trash. Now is the time to support zero waste goals and vigorous efforts to achieve them.

Susan Eastwood is chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force.

This article first appeared in the CTMirror online newspaper.

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

How the Coronavirus Changed Everything about Economic Policy

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



This month, as we switch gears from July and mid-year planning, we want to focus a little closer on how the COVID pandemic has changed the world around us. Our bipartisan congress and the Federal Reserve have developed fiscal and monetary policy to try and mitigate the damages caused by the pandemic, as well as continue to support the nation and its citizens.

The coronavirus crisis has turned into the biggest threat to the global economy at least since 2008. The big difference this time around is that a surprising consensus had emerged about what to do about it. Indeed, the specific characteristics of the COVID-19 outbreak give it the power to change economic policy forever. In this article, we will look at the details of some policies, as well as how it differs from policies in the past.

Fiscal policy response

There were three major fiscal policy responses to the seemingly overnight development and surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Congress came together to create bipartisan legislation in order to keep Americans, who suddenly found themselves out of work, in their homes and provide food for their families.

On April 21, 2020 the \$483 billion Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act was passed. The legislation includes forgivable Small Business Administration loans and guarantees to help small businesses that retain workers continue to provide paychecks and make payments to keep their businesses open (rent, bills, etc). There are also funds set aside to help hospitals and expand virus testing.

An estimated \$2.3 trillion (around 11% of GDP) makes up the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economy Security, or CARES, Act. The Act includes a one-time stimulus check, expands unemployment benefits and funds to provide a food safety net for the most vulnerable, allocates \$100 billion for hospitals and \$150 billion in transfers to state and local governments, and provides international assistance, among many other provisions.

The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act and Families First Coronavirus Response Act provide virus testing, transfers to states for Medicaid funding, development of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics, support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention responses, 2 weeks paid sick leave, up to 3 months emergency leave for those infected (at 2/3 pay), food assistance, and much, much more.

A typically divisive congress came together to deliberate and develop a necessary response to the pandemic – that’s quite a change.

Monetary policy response

The Federal Reserve has deployed all the tools developed during the liquidity crunch 12 years ago—including facilities to support banks, companies, and currency swaps with other central banks. Crucially, this comes amid a wave of spending pledges by governments—the biggest shift in economic policy since the 1970s, when fiscal stimulus was abandoned as a primary tool to stabilize employment.

To support the US economy and financial markets, the Fed implemented policies to support: near-zero interest rates, financial market functioning, encouraging banks to lend, corporation and small business assistance programs, policies to help households and consumers, along with

supporting state and municipal borrowing and cushioning US money markets from international pressures.

Arguably, the coronavirus cash crunch isn’t nearly as strong a challenge to officials’ understanding of economics as 2008 was. Yet the global financial crisis only truly shifted the reach of what central banks could do, not governments. Now, almost all officials and economists seem united in pushing for a new mind-set. What has changed?

What makes this series of policy different than before?

Part of it has been brewing for a decade, in which neither inflation nor huge public debts have proved to be the problem — dispelling the idea that currency-printing Western governments can ever go bust. Even before the virus hit, Donald Trump in the U.S. and Boris Johnson in the U.K. had put the lid on austerity policies.

But the change also has to do with what Polish economist Michał Kalecki wrote in his famous 1943 essay “Political Aspects of Full Employment:” A reason why subsidizing consumers is resisted by businesses against their own self-interest is because it goes against the moral principle of “you shall earn your bread in sweat.” The coronavirus crisis is special, though, in that it is an external, amoral force that has hit the “real” economy first. Damage to financial markets and indebted consumers—two groups often seen as questionable by business leaders—has been a consequence of the crisis, not its cause as in 2008.

Furthermore, the inevitable hit as factories started to shut down could be seen well in advance and is expected to last for a finite length of time, which helps make the case for temporary government assistance.

Looking to the future

Though we are not on the other side of the COVID pandemic, a lot can be said for how our bipartisan Congress and The Federal Reserve worked to produce policies that would help Americans through the crisis. There are still plans in the process of deliberation and approval, though at the end of the day, we can see already how economic policy will be changed from here on out. For more information about the CARES Act, assistance for those affected by COVID, and how to Live Well – Feel Well this summer, visit our website www.whzwealth.com/covid19-resources. If you’re interested in financial planning and achieving your goals, call us at 860-928-2341 or email us at info@whzwealth.com.

Authored by Vice President, Associate Financial Advisor, Leisl L. Cording CFP®. Securities and advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network®, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Registered Investment Adviser. 697 Pomfret Street, Pomfret Center, CT 06259, 860.928.2341. <http://www.whzwealth.com> These materials are general in nature and do not address your specific situation. For your specific investment needs, please discuss your individual circumstances with your financial advisor. Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice, and nothing in the accompanying pages should be construed as specific tax or legal advice.



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The Spelling Test

By Scotty Opperman

Long ago Joey Smith was a buddy of mine and we had a few things in common. We were both in the second grade, we both had the same mean old lady school teacher, and we both did not do well on spelling tests. We also lived in the same neighborhood and every day we would meet at the corner and walk to school. In those days we would walk home for lunch and then walk back to school for the afternoon session. Walking to and from school four times a day gave us plenty of time to prepare for the next spelling test, and our preparations did not include being study mates and studying extra hard like you may have already thought all good second graders do.

You see we knew that the next spelling test would be on a Tuesday afternoon after lunch break and we did not want to take that test. The plan was to go home for lunch as usual but on test day before going back to school for the afternoon test we would ask our mothers for some plastic sandwich bags that we needed for an afternoon school project. What the bags were really for we were going to a different neighborhood instead of school where we knew that a basement had been dug for a new house. In that part of the country where we lived the top soil was very deep and black and also sometimes there would be a vein of golden yellow clay maybe a few inches wide running through this rich black earth. We would go to this newly dug basement and find that vein of clay and scratch the clay out with our hands and take it home in the sandwich bags to make things out of clay.

On test day after lunch, meeting Joey at the corner with the sandwich bags in our pockets and only a little doubt in our minds that we could pull this off, we went in to action. The plan was to walk our regular route but very slowly so that by the time we almost got to school all the other kids would have passed us and there would be no one to see where we changed our direction. When we got to where we would make our turn and head towards our

clay mine that’s where our plan started to fall apart. All of a sudden we see Joey’s mom at the corner in her car, she sees us and we freeze. She quickly pulls over and stops and runs out of the car and rounds up Joey and I am just standing there watching and waiting for my turn to be grabbed and shoved into the car with Joey, but she never even looks at me, it’s like I am invisible and I need to make a decision quick. I am not going to turn myself in and she’s not my mom and apparently I am nothing to her, so I turn and run.

Now I am alone and on the run and need to make a new plan on the fly in case Joey talks. Suddenly I start to feel scared, things in life don’t always work out as planned. I am only in the second grade and now I am being hunted and need to find a place to hide until school is out and then I can stroll back home like its been a normal day once I see the other kids walking home after school. So I decide the best place to hide is in my own front yard behind the bushes where I could keep an eye out for kids walking home then I would know its time for me to walk in the door.

I start the long walk home and I am almost to where I turn to go down my street and then I see my mom in her car coming around the corner. The way she is powering that ’53 Plymouth in the turn, my mind sees a gold sheriff’s star on the door and a flashing red light on the roof. But the star and flashing light is only in my frightened imagination and the car is real and so is my mom. I quickly decide, in an optimistic way, that maybe there is a chance she doesn’t see me so I run to the closest house and crawl under the bushes that are in the front of the house where I know that no one could pull me out. Well, I was wrong. She did see me and she did stop the car and ran up to where I was hiding. There was no way she could crawl in and get me so she commanded me to come out from under there. Knowing there was no escape now, but still not willing to give myself up, I tried the only thing I could think of and that was to say in a rather weak voice, “I am sick”. She didn’t fall for that and told me that I was going to be sick so there was nothing else to do but come out and face what

was next.

We walked back to the car and I expected she would open the front door and I would sit in front with her, but instead she opened the back door and I got in. I don’t remember what was said on the ride back to school, but I do remember that riding in the back seat alone seemed unusual to me because normally I am in the back seat with my brother and sister fighting over who gets a window to sit by. With my thoughts to myself I was starting to feel pretty comfortable with all the extra room and being chauffeured to school. I didn’t mind, and I thought, for now this isn’t so bad.

We get to the school and go right to the principal’s office. There we are told to go to my classroom. As we are walking down the hall I noticed how different it was to be in the hall during class time. It was very quiet with no kids running around and darker with all the classroom doors closed. Outside my classroom, Mrs. Murphy, Joey’s mom, and someone I didn’t know was in the darkened hallway talking very quietly. I expected my first round of trouble to start there but instead my teacher calmly told me to go into the classroom. What I found in the classroom was complete chaos and excitement! I had never seen my classmates so excited and having so much fun in mean Mrs. Murphy’s class. It turns out that to our classmates, Joey and I were the heroes of the day! They were celebrating because we had disrupted the afternoon, and the spelling test was cancelled until another time.

I don’t remember how the eventual test went for me or what my parents said to me that night, but I do remember how happy I was to be out of Mrs. Murphy’s second grade class at the end of the year. Later I found out my third grade teacher would be Mrs. Hoyt. She was another old lady teacher, but she drove a new red Corvette to school every day, so I knew that she just had to be a fun teacher.

Risk Management for Dummies Normies

By Adam Meikle

What is risk management? As an academic field of study it is in its infancy, since risk is difficult to describe, categorize, and measure. From a common sense perspective, it is very easy to understand. For example, if you have two cars, and you park them both under the same tree, a falling limb could damage both cars. If you park the cars under different trees, the odds of both cars being damaged are much lower. That is risk management in a nutshell.

Risk is a part of most fields of study, including law, engineering, and finance. It is easiest to study in the context of finance, because most goods and services can be measured in dollars or any currency, and it is therefore easier to measure risk in dollars because risk is essentially the possibility that a good or a service will be lost.

How does it matter to the rest of us? Here are a few examples, with a little bit of theory.

1. Simple risk prevention anyone can do for free:

What if you have a sudden loss of income? How will you pay your bills? Here’s a trick: Keep your credit card minimum payment below your available cash advance amount. Then, if you have to essentially skip a payment one month you can take out a cash advance and make your minimum payment.

This is a very bad thing to do on a regular basis, because cash advance fees will add up quickly, but if you really had to skip a few credit card payments, it would be a simple solution.

Here’s another idea anyone can do: Don’t keep your change in one place. Instead of having a big jar full of coins you

might consider spending on movie night, drop your change in all sorts of places: Drawers, in the car, in a few different jars, piggy banks that are difficult to open. If the change is easy to bring to the bank to deposit it will be easier to spend. You won’t go digging around your home to buy popcorn and movie tickets but you will dig around for a mortgage payment.

In both cases, the risk of suddenly not being able to pay bills for a month is reduced by taking a few simple actions and checking your credit card limits.

2. Get a second job

Just as you wouldn’t park both your cars under a dead tree during a severe thunderstorm, you wouldn’t want to lose all your income if you were laid off. Have a second source of income and reduce the risk. This is normal advice from any personal finance pundit. However, unlike example #1, this isn’t free. In most cases you would need to give up something or pay something to reduce the risk of loss of income.

Perhaps your employer doesn’t want you to moonlight and you would need to get permission or find a new primary job. In either case you might take a pay cut in your first job. That loss of money would be the price you would pay to remove the risk of losing your job. You would be paying that price directly to your main employer. Any time you avoid or remove risk, ask if there is a price you need to pay. It may not be obvious what it is and there may be no price at all because some risks can simply be avoided.

In fact, avoiding risk can actually get you paid. If you drink and drive, you pay real money for the drinks and the gasoline and you also take on the risk of killing or injuring yourself or somebody else. By

not drinking or not driving you save money and remove the risks associated with drinking and driving (this is not legal advice of course, merely an analogy).

If you found yourself drunk, and suddenly needing to go somewhere, what do you do? Call a taxi or a rideshare service. The fee you pay is what it cost you to remove the risk of injuring yourself or others by drunk driving. It really is that simple.

3. Roadside Assistance and the Federal Government

The price to remove many risks has already been paid. Don’t pay again. Consider your credit card. Perhaps you have been traveling and your vehicle breaks down or you lose your credit card and need a new card delivered to you or an emergency increase in your credit limit.

You might have an elite charge card that comes with special services such as a travel concierge who will send you emergency airline tickets, a new card, and guarantee your hotel bill while you wait for the card.

Or you might have a typical credit card with a telephone number you can call and ask for help.

What is the difference? Well, an elite credit or charge card usually earns the issuer significant fees from its use, such as annual fees, commissions on purchases, and interest payments from the cardholder maintaining a balance. Some of these fees are dedicated to cardholder services, especially emergency assistance.

A normal credit card can come with similar services at the discretion of the bank or the customer representative but usually the bank won’t go out of its way for a cardholder who isn’t very profitable for the bank. How can a cardholder be more profitable to a bank without spending more money on fees or interest? Help reduce the

bank’s costs.

Your credit limit is not imaginary money that will appear out of thin air when you swipe your card. Your bank is guaranteeing to pay for your purchases and it must have much of that credit limit available in cash in the bank to pay. Where does that money come from? In some cases the bank either borrows it from another institution or has an agreement to borrow it at the time you spend your credit. This money is not free. It isn’t secured by anything and the bank pays high interest on it.

A better place to get money to loan you for your credit card purchases would be on savings deposits. You can make your bank more profitable if you open a savings account along with your credit card account. The bank loans the money out for credit card purchases and only has to pay the savings rate to the original lender (you!). But wait! Isn’t that like parking two cars under the same tree? What if the bank has a problem? If the bank goes out of business I might not have a credit card or a savings account. Shouldn’t I keep my savings account in a different bank?

Yes, you should, except for one thing: The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation will insure your savings account. If the bank goes out of business you will receive your entire savings balance (up to a limit) in full. The risk has already been removed, and you already paid a fee to remove the risk when you paid federal taxes. What are you getting for the fee you paid? Well, if you take advantage of the reduction in risk and open a savings account along with your credit card, you might get additional cardholder services.

Park cautiously!

Our Supposed Democracy: ‘Ever Not Quite’

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

“Let’s make it clear that we will protect protesters without the use of violence. We will shine a light of the unjust narrative being thrown around.” – Beverley Barnum, Wall of Mom’s organizer



In last week’s *New York Times*, Michelle Goldberg writing in an Opinion piece asked if, given the snatching and detaining of civilians by unmarked federal agents in Portland Ore., we can call it “fascism” yet. She goes on to discuss the work of Yale historian Timothy Snyder who a month after Trump was elected published his best selling book “On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.” In it, Snyder writes “Be wary of paramilitaries.....When the pro-leader paramilitary and the official police and military intermingle, the end has come”, as in the supposed end of democracy and the solidification of something more akin to ‘fascism’.

As readers you have hopefully been following in the news that Trump ordered federal agents to Portland to supposedly bring order to the protests there that began in solidarity with #Blacklivesmatter. These federal agents who come from both the Department of Homeland Security and from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, have, according to Lt. General (retired) Mark Hertling writing for the *Washington Post*, “...seized, searched, questioned and even detained people on the streets of Portland, Ore. American citizens have seen agents from unidentified organizations, wearing military-style uniforms and markings suggesting they are “police” — but with no names or insignia identifying their agencies — use unmarked vehicles to abscond with detainees”. In addition, those who have been picked up, have not in fact been formally arrested or told why they are being held or when they will be released. In short, they are denied any due process or given any sense of what is happening or why and consequently what they experience is nothing sort of *terror*, as Mark Pettibone, a 29-year-old demonstrator who was pick up in this manner, told The Washington Post in an interview.

Perhaps the fact that such glaring violations of citizen / human rights are also happening to white people, who have privileges that normally protect them from such experiences, is making other whites sound the alarm that the ‘end has come’. Yet if we are honest about our nation’s history, the idea that this is new and constitutes a radical shift from our ‘supposed democratic roots’ should be critically evaluated. As such, the ‘seizing, searching, detaining’ of innocent people by those who are not ‘named, identified’ for reasons that are ‘not stated or understood’ makes me think of the many similar incidents in our nations domestic history (and of course our international war mongering) that I feel compelled to list some of them here. For every time we act as if violations of people’s dignity, rights, and freedoms committed on the part of our government / nation are *new*, we limit our understanding of the complexity of our history and we fail to grasp the reality that most nations are like the ‘curate’s egg’, meaning they are ‘good’ in parts, as in they serve the interests of some of their citizens but never all. Likewise, the United States has been democratic in parts, has offered equality and freedom to some but never to all, which is of course the reason for the national #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations, including the ones in Portland.

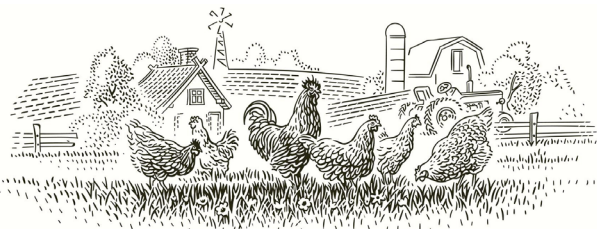
And so in the interest of the #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations, if we begin with the history of the Atlantic slave trade and we can recognize the severity of the actions under analysis, as in the ‘seizing, searching, detaining’ of innocent people by those who are not ‘named, identified’ for reasons that are ‘not stated or understood’. Such detention was as we know a life sentence and an experience that must have evoked extreme terror for its duration. This dynamic would not have stopped for those made slaves, as in there was never a time when their lives,

their destinies or their bodies were in their own hands. This dynamic did not also stop once ‘freed’ and in fact still has not stopped in that those in power be they white civilians, police of any race or federal agents can still evoke terror over those whose black and brown lives are deemed not to matter.

Likewise, in our history and up to today, for many Native Americans this too would have been a familiar pattern of being ‘seized, searched, detained’ by those who are not ‘named, identified’ for reasons that are ‘not stated or understood’. Many indentured servants and immigrants to this nation would also have known this experience at differing times depending on their nations of origin and their religion, but certainly in the early days the Irish, the Jews, the Polish, the Italians all would have had experiences of terror by not knowing who / what / where or why in terms of their experiences with those in power and those who did know. And of course at times the Chinese and then the Japanese when they were rounded up and put in interment camps must have felt a total loss of control and their sense of personhood. More recently, post 9/11 Bush instituted through the creation of Homeland Security, that includes U.S. Customs and Border Protection the domestic ‘seizing, searching, detaining’ of innocent people who happened to be Arab, Muslim, non-citizen by those who are not ‘named, identified’ for reasons that are ‘not stated or understood’. Many such individuals were / are held without means of communicating with family or legal representatives in federal detention centers. Finally, there are examples of those at our southern border, including children who have been ‘seized, searched, detained’ by those who are not ‘named, identified’ for reasons that are ‘not stated or understood’.

None of these past examples are stated to lessen the significance of what is happening in Portland, or elsewhere in the country, including in our many secret detention centers internationally. Rather it is a wake up call that we stop prematurely mourning the supposed loss of ‘our democracy’ to the ‘supposed arrival of fascism’ and take seriously the reality that our democracy has always been as William James stated “Ever not quite”. Nevertheless, the achievement of democracy should remain the goal—one that requires on-going struggle and bravery as exhibited most recently by #BlackLivesMatter, the ‘Wall of Mom’s’ and all the others who have recognized that we are not there yet...So, may we continue to ‘Shine our lights onto the unjust narratives’!

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Horticultouring the Berkshires

Roadtrip to the Bridge of Flowers

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

Finally... with the cautious reopening of the region, we can drive farther in New England. When the Bridge of Flowers is reopened, how about a “horticultour-ing” daytrip to less social density out of doors?

THE BRIDGE OF FLOWERS is a One-of-a-Kind horti-cultural wonder in Western Mass. Drive two hours north-west from the Last Green Valley in Connecticut’s quiet corner to a traditional New England garden -- in the middle of a river! -- in Shelburne Falls near the Mohawk Trail (Route 2), densely planted on an abandoned rail bridge.

Once a bridge of rails, it is now a 400-foot long garden of annuals, herbaceous perennials, vines, shrubs and trees, 18-feet wide over five arching concrete spans. Built in 1908 to carry freight north over the Deerfield River from Shelburne Falls, the advent of trucking bank-rupted the railroad by 1927. New technology a century ago.

The bridge was unused and unsightly until the Shelburne Falls Women’s Club took charge with Antoi-nette Burnham’s vision and 80 yards of loam -- delivered in April 1929, six months before the Wall Street Crash. Route 2 was already a “Shun Pike”.

Shunpiking avoided turnpike tolls and has come to mean shunning major highways for scenic drives along bucolic country roads – like the **Mohawk Trail** used by Native Americans of the Five Nations to traverse the Con-necticut and Hudson River valleys.

I first visited the Bridge of Flowers on Memorial Day 2011. A town parade marched near the garden on a bridge with Girl Scouts at the rear... unlike the gender’s leading role on the abandoned railway.

The women gardeners of Shelburne Falls took advantage of soil depths from 2.5-feet at the top of the concrete arches, to 9-feet for deep-rooted woody plants where spans extend down to the water. The dense com-binations of color and texture in flower and leaf were exemplary in the spring-summer transition. It certainly did not seem like a narrow bridge.

Over 500 types of perennial flowers and woody plants (and some annuals for color in shady spaces)) are planted for USDA Cold-hardi-ness Zone 5a, the cold side of Zone 5; minus 15 to -20 degrees F. average low temperature for a winter. Perhaps a warmer (zone 5a) in global warming. Many plants have identifying labels and the website also lists plants and bloom times:

Bridgeofflowersmass.org/on-the-bridge

Plants are suitable to the colder inland side of the Bay State, so can be used in the warmer zone 7a of Boston (which has warmed a half-zone in the last quarter-century) where the average low tempera-ture might reach a balmy + 5 degrees F. All can be planted in upland eastern Connecticut landscapes (perhaps zone 6b in global warming), slightly colder and hotter than Boston, and we must mind browsing bunnies and deer out here in the Last Green Valley.

TREES Surprisingly, there are several ornamental trees out on the river. A mature **Crabapple (Malus)** that had bloomed in early spring is at the middle of the bridge with a tree-like **Wisteria** vine twining like a snake on the railing. **Apple Serviceberry (Amelanchier x grandiflora ‘Autumn Brilliance’)** is a multi-stem favorite from Minne-sota to Massachusetts with early spring flower and showy fall color. **Fringetree (Chionanthus virginicus)** and **Japa-nese Snowbell (Styrax japonicus)** were newly planted. No trees were blooming the end of May, but an autumn visit to the Berkshires would provide leafpeeping.

Berkshire trees start chang-ing around October 1st, peaking near Columbus Day. Perhaps nowhere else in America -- in the world! -- are fall colors as spectacular as in New England, in Massachusetts on higher elevations of these mountains. Notably **Red & Sugar Maple (Acer rubrum & saccharum)**. Take any backroad.

First color is higher, often near water... rivers, streams, swamps and lakes. Farther west on Route 2 in North Adams, Mount Greylock (the state’s highest peak at 3,491’) might begin to turn color mid-September, then the brilliant yellow, orange and scarlet hues spread downslope.

EVERGREEN SHRUB A large-leaf **Rhododendron catawbiense (‘Boursault’)** was blooming with large pink flower trusses opening from darker buds, near a charming sign entering the walkway from the east side where more parking is available. Not many broadleaf evergreens do well on this windy exposure in the middle of the river, but the rhododendron is well sheltered.

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS & VINES A large white-flow-ering **Honeysuckle (Lonicera)** is a fragrant draw. Decid-uous **“Summer Azaleas”** (also of the genus **Rhododen-dron**) were already blooming on Memorial Day, one an eye-catching orange, perhaps **‘Gibralter’**.

A white (and herbaceous) **Siberian Iris (I. siberica ‘Snow Queen’)** fronted a pink-to-red flowered **Azalea**, perhaps **‘Frank Abbot’** or **‘Jane Abbot Pink’**, an attractive couple when co-planted hand-in-hand, root in root. **Hydrangea** was barely in bud.

White and pink blooming **Clematis** vines with large flowers were clambering onto a pink-flowering **Weigela florida ‘Wine and Roses’** spreading though the fence with burgundy leaves.

Chainlink fencing allows views of the Deerfield River, and vegetation spreading through the fence is visible from off the bridge, attracting visitors, so it certainly works here. One could otherwise cover chainlink with fast-growing, fall-flowering **Sweet Autumn Clematis (C. paniculata** aka **C. terniflora**). Michael Dirr (in his Manual of Woody Landscape Plants) calls it “a ram-pant, ravaging vine” in Georgia, but in Connecticut, Boston or the Berkshires, it is simply vigorous, floriferous and fragrant in fall. IMHO. Swirly seedheads also have winter interest.

HERBACEOUS Perennial flowers offer more color through-out the growing season than shrubs and trees, and are well-or-chestrated on the Bridge with its woody bloom. Herbaceous plants die to the ground each winter, but emerge each spring and continue to display bright contrasts with successive flowering all sea-son-long.

Bridge gardeners are especially fond of Iris (me too). Tough plant and leaves stay attractive all sea-son unlike daylily. **Siberian Iris**

(**I. siberica**) is repeated often on the bridge, as **‘Blue King’** and dark purple **‘Caesar’s Brother’**, buds soon to open), with dark blue **Larkspur (Delphinium)**. Already blooming was Beaded Iris (**I. germanica**), a purple-white bicolor with larger flowers than **siberica**, with purple spikes of **Lupine (Lupinus)** and a white **Columbine (Aquilegia)**. Whites and blues go with any hues.

Pink **Bearded Iris ‘Beverly Sills’** was timed with a lat-er-blooming **Peony (Paeonia)** only in pink bud when visit-ed. Bearded Iris is a showy stalwart of the traditional New England garden, but the rhizomes are subject to disease and borers, thus less reliable than the mat-rooted, narrow-leaved and small-flowered (more elegant to my eye) Siberian Iris. Peony roots are also tuberous but very, very tough; they often need cutting with a sharp shovel to divide. Transplant



at the right depth to ensure bloom.

Drifts of **Ornamental Onion (Allium ‘Globemaster’)** had 7-inch softball-sized globes of many, many tiny star-like lavender flowers. **Threadleaf Coreopsis (C. verticilla-ta)** with feathery foliage was not yet budding, but will continue to flower yellow until September once it starts. One could weave the yellow Coreopsis or blue **Russian Sage (Perovskia atriplicifolia)** within Allium bulbs (also spring-blooming, summer-dormant **Daffodil / Narcissus**) to hide the yellowing leaves of dormancy. Or accept signs of decline in respect for the aging process. **Bleeding Heart (Dicentra)** can rebloom sporadically with watering until summer dormancy, gone by September.

Abundant flowering as with Coreopsis was still to come in summer. True **Lilies (Lilium)** are very colorful -- pink, red, orange and yellow -- and often fragrant as the purple-red-pink and white **‘Stargazer’**. They bloom atop a tall single stalk of leaves that convert solar energy via photosyn-thesis to sustain the plant. Best to NOT cut back much of the stalk because the bulbs continue to store ener-gy. Cut at the top leaf; if unsightly to your eye, stalks can be obscured within fuller plants.



Stargazer lily. Brian Karlsson-Barnes photos.

Use airy **Russian Sage (Perovskia)** to hide stems. The tiny blue flowers are neutral (as white) and play well with others. Its dry-tolerance tolerates root competition, so it can be a useful weaver around brightly contrasting flowers if desired, blooming late summer into fall.

An autumn visit to the Berkshires can still provide herba-ceous delight, such as the tall white-flowering wands of **Actaea** (formerly **Cimicifuga**)... and there’s the famous leafpeeping.

FOLIAGE Leaf color and texture contrast well in shady borders. Bright green **Dicentra** contrasts with a silvery green-veined cultivar of **Heuchera**; dozens are available with purple, red, orange and yellow leaves.

The lacy texture of Maidenhair Fern (**Adiantum pedatum**) combines with variegated **Hosta**, **Lamium maculatum ‘White Nancy’**, and yellow **Hakone Grass (Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’)**.

AND A GEOLOGICAL WONDER Downriver fifty yards from the Bridge of Flowers are over 50 ancient glacial “potholes” that were ground out of the granite bed of the Deerfield River by the whirlpool action of spinning stones in rushing meltwater over centuries. Potholes range from 6-inches to 39-feet round, a world record!

(Note: The concrete Bridge of Flowers will certainly erode faster than the granite riverbed... a glimmer in glacial time... so hurry to visit this horticultural wonder AFTER the pandemic. The bridge path is too narrow for social distancing and is closed until the State of Massachusetts allows reopening.)

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Master gardener/designer, Chaplin



Two weeks ago, I encountered a man and a woman waist-deep in the weeds that had taken over the garden at the Town Hall in Chaplin. They are volunteers who didn’t want to be identified. Today -July 25 - I took these photos of their results. The Purple Coneflowers were covered with bees and a Tiger Swallowtail which is the CT state butterfly. Other plants blooming without being buried in weeds are the wildflowers yellow Tansy and white Queen Anne’s Lace, deep red daylilies, pink garden phlox, and even tiny johnny jump-ups. Photos and text by Carol Davidge.

Wildlife Habitat Protected in Pomfret

Submitted by Michael St. Lawrence, President, Wyndham Land Trust

POMFRET CENTER—Pomfret’s wildlife habitat just got a helping hand thanks to the acquisition of land by the Wyndham Land Trust.

The 9.5-acre property acquired by the Wyndham Land Trust sits on Harrisville Road in Pomfret and is adjacent to their existing Aicher and Holzer preserves. The three parcels combine to protect a total of 220 acres of valuable forest and farmland in the heart of Pomfret. The property belonged to Pomfret realtor Cici Cole who passed away in December of 2019. Local residents were alarmed when For Sale signs appeared in May, and they realized that the fragile habitat could quickly be replaced by house lots. The neighbors banded together with conservation-minded citizens of Windham County, the Town of Pomfret, friends of Bird Conservation Research Inc., and the Wyndham Land Trust to raise the funds to purchase the property.

“It was heartening to see the community pull together in a short period of time to protect this valuable land,” said Wyndham Land Trust President Mike St Lawrence. “It was an example of how a group of people with a common vision can make a difference. Future generations will thank them for their foresight.”

“Through acquisition of this land, a contiguous band of natural habitat now exists,” said Bird Conservation Research Director Robert Craig. “The importance of parcel size for the protection of wildlife has been demonstrated by multiple studies and is a key principle in the field of conservation biology.”

The land trust recognizes the importance of local agriculture and plans to preserve the open fields that cover much of the new property.

“We will work with a local farmer to keep the large field in hay,” said Andy Rzeznikiewicz, the land manager for the land trust. “In the small field we will work with the American Chestnut Foundation and the State University of New York to raise chestnut trees that might show resistance to the blight that decimated them across the country 100 years ago.”

The Wyndham Land Trust was formed in 1975 and now protects over 4,500 acres in Northeastern Connecticut. The work of the all-volunteer group is possible through the generosity and dedication of its members and donors.

To learn more about the Wyndham Land Trust visit wyndhamlandtrust.org. You can also follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

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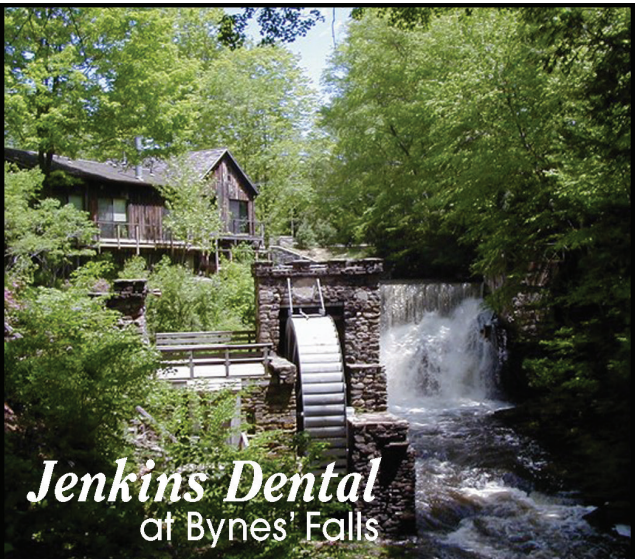
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Death by President

By Dan McGinley

I miss my days as an environmental scientist, working alone deep in the woods mapping wetlands, tracking endangered species, and sometimes taking tree inventory, but there was an insane moment back when George W. was in the White House, visiting Connecticut on a Friday morning in April, 2008.

I had a great assignment during that time, tagging wetland flags with a Trimble GPS data collector near Bradley International Airport - in the woods where I wanted to be - slightly annoyed by nearby air traffic drowning out warblers and some raucous jays. I was working in a swamp just northwest of the Air National Guard runway system when all hell broke loose, my life nearly snuffed out like a fly getting blowtorched.

Picture if you will a man dutifully bent to his task, hunched over a data collector trying to mark flags with GPS signals as the sound of a helicopter grows louder and louder . . . and louder. No worries at first because - well - it’s a busy airport, nothing to see here until swamp water starts raining upward into your face, and a drumming prop motor tries to blow your eardrums into oblivion.

I started road rage swearing and shielded my eyes from the water, looking up to see a man in the door of a large black helicopter, checking me out through the scope of an assault rifle.

I froze and stared, thinking that after everything I’ve been through, this is how I finally die; this is how my baby daughter loses her father, getting drilled in the head by a Secret Service agent working for George W. Bush. Really? Seriously?

The seconds seemed like hours before he abruptly raised his weapon, gave a little wave, and flashed a “thumbs up” while - soaking wet and emotionally trashed - I quickly flipped him off and spit swamp water out of my mouth.

Later it occurred to me that the Trimble backpack and long tubular antennae resembled a rocket launcher, except for the circular white receiving dish at the tip, protruding above my head. That little plastic saucer may have saved my life.

About twenty minutes later Air Force One roared over the treetops, slowly descending toward a runway somewhere to the southeast.

I flipped him off (to be consistent) and continued with my work, having just been the victim of some actual swamp draining by the president’s helicopter pilot, and target practice for a very observant agent.

And thinking about this got me thinking about authority in general, how some bad politicians and police sometimes abuse their positions and turn innocent citizens into victims. And really . . . what if I was a person of color? Would I be fished out of the swamp with a real rocket launcher tossed in to cover their tracks? Yeah, these scenarios are to be considered during our trying times of national review.

Another case in point: Several months ago the hounds were acting up and I went out to find a Connecticut State Trooper at one of our front gates, standing on the top step of a stairway leading down to the driveway.

The officer asked if my dogs were friendly, and I asked him to meet me down in the drive, because Bridgy and Gigi might turn his pants into cheesecloth and draw fire, which would not go well for us on several levels (welcome to Possum Holler, officer).

So I went to see what he wanted, and learned that a complete stranger had accused me of backing into her car at an exit in Manchester, before taking off from the “scene of an accident.” She had given him my plate number.

Never happened.

I invited the officer to inspect the vehicle, and he took detailed pictures, satisfied that there was no collision, and then dropped a bomb.

“Can you go to Hartford and talk to the officer in charge of this case?”

Why did I ever agree? Why why why?

After everything I’ve seen out of Minneapolis and all that is going on now, I regret not challenging this insane request.

I regret not saying, “You’ve seen the car, and you can clearly see that it wasn’t in an accident. So why would I ever waste my time going to Hartford, unless your fellow officer doesn’t believe you or your pictures?” Again . . . what if I was a person of color? The police were nice and

civil, but there was still this entire “prove your innocence” aspect that bothers me. How about they prove I’m guilty? They had the accuser’s name on some paperwork I was given in Hartford; Google Earth revealed a beautiful mansion in Bolton with a landscaped swimming pool and luxurious acreage. The car was a Mercedes. Really? Seriously? I may have been an excuse for something she did on her own, but I’ll never know.

Why did I succumb to some inane desire to prove my obvious innocence? Sweet Jesus.

But wait! It gets better!

It’s 1982 - I’m out in Minneapolis - the epicenter of police brutality, where George Floyd was executed, and my cousin Bobby is getting married.

A Minneapolis policewoman pulls us over because there’s a feather hanging from the rearview mirror of my cousin’s car by a tiny “alligator clip”, which is often used as a device for holding joints or roaches, if you smoke pot.

She called it “drug paraphernalia”.

I made an offhand joke to my cousin about taking the 5th, so . . . she calls in backup, frisks me down, asks a bunch of questions when she sees my Massachusetts license, and threatens us with jail.

Over a feather and a silly remark.

“Why are you out here?” she asks.

“He’s getting married tomorrow,” I tell her. “Unless of course, we’re in jail over a . . feather.”

After much debate among the gathered forces (now three police cars), they let us go with a fine and bogus citation.

So now I’m going out to Minnesota again for a long overdue family reunion. I will be quiet, diligent, and forthright. I will avoid breaking the law in every possible way, which is kind of second nature these days and what most of us strive to do.

Yet, in the end you managed to find me and change my view, coming out to the woods for a bogus accident claim, and nearly assaulting and incarcerating me over a feather. A feather. If this is what happens to reclusive law-abiding citizens who rarely cross paths with tax paid law enforcement, I can’t even imagine being a minority crossing paths on a daily basis. Not even close.

But if by chance I encounter the kind of law that resembles a large canine lifting its leg on me, I will not allow that to happen. I will question and challenge and take them to the test, because trust has been broken, and they must be held accountable.

I get it; there are good cops and bad cops and everything in-between. There are real heroes in blue, and some are my friends. But there is a hiring and training system that is absolutely flawed, and this flawed system allows for others to abuse their “power”.

So my message is clear and simple to people in law enforcement or armed services or political office, because you are part of our country, and reflect our (hopefully) improving evolution:

Don’t. Tread. On. Us.

Because in the end, you are us; our sons and daughters and brothers and sisters and everything in-between. We raised you or were raised with you or by you or related or not, but you are part of this nation and reflect our belief and values. You are us, and we will not allow you to stray from the righteous path or improving evolution of this country, if we can possibly help it.

So if you are asked to do something against your own people and follow orders because of a uniform or “superior” (is that still a thing?) or a misguided politician, you may want to reconsider that chain-of-command. You may want to study the rise of Nazis, because you may have just signed-on for your job, but you never, ever signed on to turn against your own people.

I won’t ever “go to Hartford” again, and I really, really miss those beautiful wetlands. Maybe it’s where people like me belong, after-all.

Sisters

By Lucy MacWilliams

I guess starting off with ones first memory is a good way to begin. This first memory is very vivid. I can see myself as if I was looking down on the scene from the kitchen cupboards! Hands on my hips- defiance on my stubborn little face- blonde wisps of hair getting in my way...

“No, I don’t have to take a bath with her! I won’t and you can’t make me!” After all just last night my father, whom I adored, told me how big I was.

To backtrack a bit “Her”, was my little sister Jane, who at the time had just had a birthday. She was now the same age as myself. Two years old. No we are not twins, we are just 11 months apart. Her Birthday is in May. Mine is in June. By the way, I was 35 years old before I figured out how “She” got to be the same age as myself for a month and why “Her” birthday was first when I was the oldest.

So now back to the kitchen scene. My sister Jane in the sink, bubbles everywhere, happily playing. Mom trying to be reasonable seven months pregnant, (Good thing I didn’t realize that little fact). Poor woman had four children in four years. At least the other two knew their places. They had birthdays after mine! Yet again I’m off on a tangent. I’m a Gemini. I promise we will get through this tale.

. Mom being patient...”You never minded taking a bath with Jane before, you like to play in the water with her. “

“I am too old to take a bath with her. I’m older and bigger and I’m not going to do it.”

Mom being more patient...”Oh, I am sorry for you but you are going to do it because I said so.” Mom had a way of lifting her eyebrows that said “ Hello, do what I tell you, now.”

Well, not today. Lucy was not going to deal with her little sister today...” I will run away.”

“You try that and you, young lady, will be very sorry.” With that, the eyebrows lifted a bit more and the little vein on the side of her neck did that puffy thing. At two years, eleven months old you really don’t notice those things. It’s later that one remembers. “ Don’t even think about it!”

She didn’t even get all the words out and I was off like a shot right out the front door, down the steps, out the entryway door, across a huge field stone walkway, over the driveway to the east field. As Mel Gibson so pertinently said it, “FREEDOM”. It didn’t quite work out the same way for me.

What I didn’t see was a seven month pregnant woman whipping my two-year-old sister out of the sink, setting her on the floor, sopping wet, little lips in a pout with a confused frown watching as her Ma dashed out the door after me. This, was a turning point for both Ma and myself. A match of wills. A winner take all. Mom knew she had to catch me. Poor thing.

Looking down I could see my little red Keds, one after the other, pounding in front of me. Fists pumping in front of them, hair no longer a bother as I fought through the spring air. Then, I heard the screen door slam shut. “I need to look back”, I said to myself. She was chasing me... Who’d have thought!

“Oh well, Ma is so much bigger than me, ha! I can zig, I can zag.” I thought, feeling rather smug and confident. “ I’ll just give another look-see.” She had one hand holding a massive stomach and the other holding massive breasts. “ It’s OK I thought. I can pump my arms and run so fast, just like daddy taught me.”

“She can’t be chasing me?” I looked back again to check. “She is chasing me. Well, she’ll never catch me. Look how strong and fast I am... I’d better check again!” Now, it’s amazing that you can keep going straight ahead while you look back. Every time I got closer to the edge of the field, she got closer to me. It’s a frantic time when you see the end is near. Who knew she could pick me up with one hand by the shoulder and whoop me with the other, all in midair. This continued all the way back into the house by the way. A much longer distance than one would see now...

I got a glimpse of poor Jane, standing, naked in the entryway door. We locked eyes. Complete empathy transpired between the two of us.

As mom approached the fieldstone walkway Janie, in sheer terror, flew into the kitchen taking up a corner spot by the cupboard. She was facing the cupboard, head buried in her hands of course because then no one would see her.

I was finally put back in the sink. Jane was tender-

Why I Don’t Write Poetry

By Bill Powers

As a child I was a handful for my teachers; and in retrospect, I can understand why. I had great difficulties learning, especially while sitting in a traditional class-room. I was easily distracted; easily frustrated; had a short attention span; and was restless, impatient, with major problems organizing. To the credit of these teachers, I was able to read and write but with some difficulty. The nuns used various disciplinary methods to manage and remedy my case of a kid with “ants in his pants.” They were under the impression that my behaviors were characterological in nature. Fortunately, my self- esteem was bolstered on the playground, ball field, in the pool or gym. My ability to concentrate evolved by working on my stamp collection and playing checkers – something I loved and excelled at. These activities helped me feel good about myself; and, to an extent, counterbalanced how I felt about my slow academic progress.

One Friday afternoon, when I was nine years old, my teacher told the class about a regional poetry contest. The assignment was optional and entries were due on the following Monday morning. She suggested that we write about whatever was special, whatever we loved. Immediately I knew what I would write about.

Earlier that year I tried out for the boys’ choir and made it. We would practice three times a week, learning to sing hymns in Latin. This was all in preparation for an upcoming Advent; and especially, singing at midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Being part of the beauty and the pageantry that Christmas Eve had been an incredible experience and would be the “special” thing about which I would compose my poetry.

It was stormy outside for the entire weekend before my poem was due; and, it most assuredly helped me to focus on writing since there was no opportunity to play outdoors. I worked steadily for hours each day, finding words that rhymed and sentences that expressed what was in my heart – several words enlightened me as I consulted my dictionary to energize my expressions. It was intensive work, very intensive; but exciting and stimulating. It meant revising, seeking the best words and rewriting until it was just right. Here is what I wrote:

I was a choirboy at last
And I attended my first midnight mass.
The doors of the Cathedral were thrown open wide
And crowds of people were going inside.
I was tense every moment till mass had begun
And the glory of God was about to be sung.
The air our song did greatly fill
And all the people were quiet and still.
We marched down the aisle in robes red and white
And I was the happiest boy on that holy night.

That Sunday night when I was writing, my mom, who had witnessed my struggling for a poetic expression, encouraged me from time to time as I wrote. I could tell she liked it when I read it to her. I saw tears in her eyes. She said she was proud of me. In the end, that was what really mattered.

The next morning I excitedly brought it to my teacher’s desk. My teacher picked it up, quickly read it; frowned and said, “You didn’t write this – go to your desk” as she crumpled it up and threw it into the wastebasket!

Bill Powers lives in Windham and is a retired counselor and public school teacher, including special education.

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

Frozen Shoulder

By Nicole T. Smith, L.Ac.

Finding it difficult to reach for things on the upper shelf? Unable to lift your arm as high as you used to, and want to? Are you being woken up at night by pain in the shoulder?

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Department of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Zhejiang Hospital of TCM, Hangzhou, China.

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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The U-Haul Parking Lot Changed My Life

By Grace Preli

Sometimes I think about how many views there are, how many square feet on earth there are to be in. How much we are able to see in a day, in a year, in a lifetime. How much do we see on a day to day basis that is the same? Do we take what we pass by each and every day for granted? I think sometimes that I do.



I am still amazed, after the majority of my life spent based in Eastern Connecticut, to discover new hiking spots, new parks and new fun things to do. There is so much that this world offers. So much we have the opportunity to see, and also, so much we will not.

These musings came to me in the U-Haul parking lot on route 66 while waiting for my partner to come out of the store. I was looking out across the parking lots and the sun was shining just right and I thought to myself, wow, I’ve never appreciated this different view, I’ve never really seen this before.

It has always fascinated me to think about spatially where on earth I’ve been. As a kid it was my mission to climb every single tree on our property. I climbed many, and scared my parents to death because of it, but I was unable to climb or even touch every tree. There are places in and around my childhood home I have rarely ventured... way back in the darkest corner of the basement or in the muckiest part of the wetlands where we keep the bull cow.

There are layers to how we interact with the world around us. I think about all the places we frequent. Some, we have an intimate knowledge of. We know every trail in that park, we know that store inside and out. We know what this house and that house look like because our friends live there. Then there are the places we see and have some knowledge of but no real connection or intimacy with. We might go to that church for a wedding, or this cafe one time but we don’t know everything they have to offer.

Think about how many parking lots you drive by, will you ever have occasion to park? How many rivers and fields will you pass and never stop to explore? You could live in one place your whole life and never see everything there is to see, never talk to every person, never see all the views, never put your feet on every inch of earth available to you. There are the places, even maybe in our own yards, on our own streets that we will never know. I might live my whole life and never go to every convenience store, restaurant or gas station in town.

Think about even the layout of your home. I think about how many years cumulatively I spent on the farm, in my bedroom, in the same classrooms at school, at the same parks. I think about how many days, months, years maybe I have spent sleeping or sitting or walking in the same 2,000 square feet of earth.

What about you? Do you ever move your bed? How about your desk, kitchen table, porch chair or TV? If not, how many hours do you spend in the same few square feet of this planet? Think about all your time, all your travels where have you spent the majority of your time? Imagine if you could map it all out, where on this planet would those lines on the map be?

What are the effects of my limited ability to see every thing possible in this world, let alone my own town or home? I think it is so important to be changing your views or seeing and trying new things as much as you can. I think being able to even look at a restaurant or street from a new vantage point offers much to the viewer. Can you get up high, climb to the steeple of the church one day? Can you hike a different trail at your favorite park? Can you take a different route to work? Even just mixing it up a little bit let’s us see more of the world, let’s us in on so many new exciting things.

I also think it is incredibly important to appreciate the places and spaces and views that are constant in your life and appreciate truly how special it is to see your home that you love so much or drive to your favorite beach, or eat at that favorite restaurant.

How truly cool is it that we get to experience the same square feet and square miles of earth over and over again. How cool is it that these places we love change every day too! They stay familiar to us but maybe the light looks different or as the seasons change and we get to appreciate our special places in a different way. And then too, how wonderful is it that we get to traverse this planet to our hearts content, always finding new places to explore and experience!

These thoughts have me wanting to make two changes and they both are about perception. I want to appreciate the wonderfully constant views and spaces and places in my life. I want to be present with the people I love, with the things I love to do and in the places I love to go. And I also want to always be open to new views, new spaces and new places. I challenge you to do something different today or this week after reading this. Can you change up your view a little bit? Can you go to a favorite place but do something just a little bit different so the experience is both new and familiar for you? I think you will be well rewarded, I know that I certainly have been.

Statues of Limitations

By Donna Dufresne

A large crowd gathered in the city streets, raising their voices and shouting “Black Lives Matter!” and “I Can’t Breathe!” The crowd was demanding systemic change and an end to racism. Before long someone had toppled the statue of a 17th century slave trader who helped to create the wealth of the city’s past. They rolled the bronze statue down to the docks and dumped him into the bay.



This was not a scene from Savannah Georgia or Boston Massachusetts. This particular protest took place in Bristol, England. With vigils and rallies flaring up world-wide in recent weeks, it appears that George Floyd’s desperate cry, “I can’t breathe” has become the shout heard round the world. Once again the world is watching us, waiting for America to live up to their dreams. An America which has certainly fallen off its own pedestal since the “divider in chief” occupied the Whitehouse.

Statues do have their limitations as historical markers, especially in a society which has undermined the teaching of history and forfeited truth and science for propaganda and doublespeak. It is downright amusing how those who lean toward the right have accused the protestors and especially the statue tippers of being Orwellian using quotes from the book 1984. It is not surprising during these highly divisive times that both the right and the left use George Orwell as the poster boy for their causes. However, George Orwell wrote “1984” in response to the Soviet Union and the rise of totalitarian governments. He despised totalitarianism, dictatorships and fascism. Surely, if there was a dystopia in the making it began in 2016 when America took a sharp right turn and put a megalomaniac in the Whitehouse. Despite what the “president” says, those who are exercising their first amendment rights, protesting systemic racism and demanding equal justice are not the ones we should be worried about.

When the Constitutional amendments were written the drafters of this democratic republic wanted to make sure that the United States of America would never fall prey to a tyrannical king again. They naively assumed that anyone who became president of the United States would work with the three branches of government and respect the checks and balances derived to prevent dictatorship. The first amendment gives American citizens freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right of the people to peaceably assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

If anything, the occupant of the White house is leaning toward fascism and autocracy behaving more like a banana republic dictator than an American president. This was evident when he tried to invoke the use of the military to turn against peaceful protestors equating them with thugs and looters who should be shot, and threatening life sentences for those who are tearing down statues.

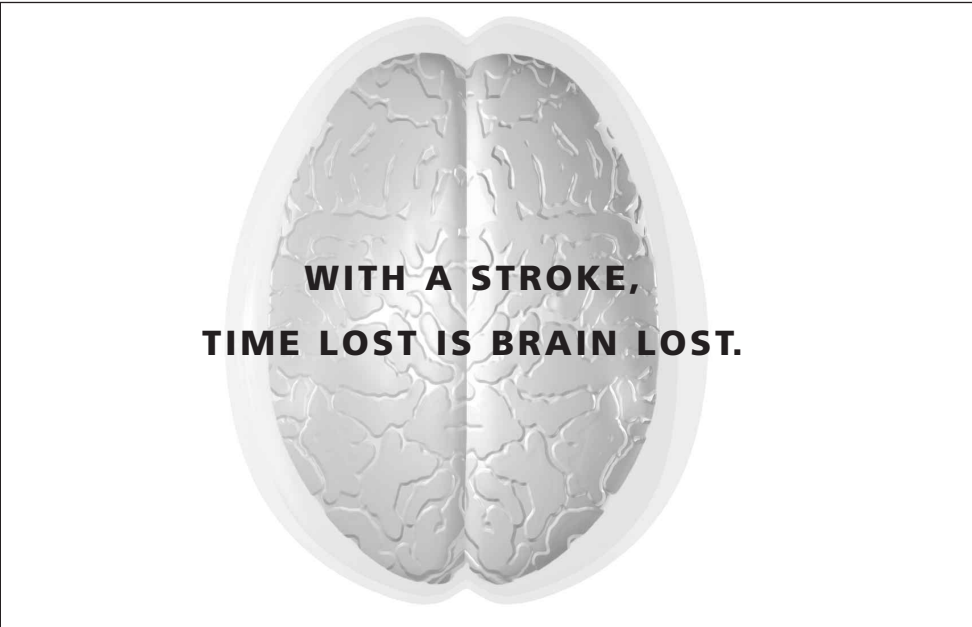
And what about those statues? As with the confederate flag, these are not battlefield monuments erected in honor of the unfortunate boys and men who fought in the Civil War. Confederate statues were deliberately erected during the Jim Crow era in the South, during the period after reconstruction when white supremacy flared up. The stat-

ues were blatant reminders that war would continue to be waged against African Americans through a white supremacist ideology and apartheid policies. Many of the statues were erected in the 1920’s, another period of deep racism, anti-immigrant rhetoric and anti-Semitism. The monuments are really an expression of America’s monumental flaws when it comes to living up to the dreams set forth in the constitution. They represent a system of injustice and hatefulness toward the ideals of democracy. Like the present, the movement toward fascism and hate became a world-wide problem, and when America sets the tone, the rest of the world follows. It took less than a generation for the hole torn in the fabric of moral justice to be filled by someone like Hitler.

If you visit Germany, you will not find any statues of Hitler or Nazi flags. They were removed by the Germans in acknowledgement of the mistakes that were made during the fascist Nazi regime. They were removed because the real revisionist history was written by the Nazis and forced upon the public in the art and statues that celebrated an Aryan race. The confederate statues were imposed upon us in much the same way by white supremacists in a Jim Crow South which deliberately re-wrote history to reinforce the great white lie that African Americans were somehow flawed by nature. In America, we refuse to admit that slavery was a mistake and we continue to live with that big old white elephant in the room. The history of slavery was re-written with a white supremacist lens which omitted the fact that African Americans have lived with 400 years of racial oppression; and that slavery was not a choice. Captives were brought here against their will and forced to do hard labor without pay. So, it is no wonder that misdirected anger has toppled a few white supremacists off their pedestals – not because we want to “erase history”, but because we want to tell the whole story. You can tell a lot about a culture by what they choose to feature in their public art and whether history is based on primary documents or used as a tool for propaganda. The old “battlefield honor” for the confederate flag and statues is a weak argument for continuing the myths of a few white terrorists from the South. After all, I doubt many New Yorkers would be in favor of erecting statues of the terrorists who attacked the Twin Towers.

That all being said, I don’t think we should be wasting our time debating statues when the real focus should be on structural racism and engaging in conversations about reformation. Unfortunately, the issue behind the protests has been hijacked by a handful of mostly white liberals who toppled a few statues, and those uber progressives who want to ride the coattails of the Black Lives Matter movement. These shenanigans have given the Trump propaganda machine more fodder to sow division. Now, rather than having a frank and sensible discussion about reforms, Americans are riled up by false narratives about revisionist history, anti-police, and anarchy.

All I can say is that we white Americans seem to have the attention of a flea when it comes to supporting black and brown people. If we really want to do something about racism, we need to learn to listen to the black and brown community and follow their lead. We need to stay focused on our own work of becoming anti-racist as opposed to non-racist, while learning to disrupt subtle racism when we see it. In this moment, in this time we need to acknowledge that black lives do matter because black lives are in danger and we need to stop taking everything personally.



Suddenly Summer

By Debra Gag, Retired Art Teacher

The sun was grueling and I stood waving goodbye to the children as they boarded their buses one June, not so long ago, on their last day of school. Some dashed out of line to hug me hard, and I kissed the tops of their heads, gave them one last smile. As their art teacher I knew every last one of them, all 500. It wasn’t a feeling of good rid-dance. They were all somebody’s baby so I’d treated them as I would want my own to be treated, and I was well loved in return. Images of their projects danced in my memory as they paraded by. They had all put their hearts and souls into their creations, and I had done my best to exhibit every-one’s work with dignity, proudly matting, labeling, then carefully arranging their little masterpieces on walls and shelves; making signs to explain the theme and the goals in order to educate the parents and anyone who cared to look. As the last bus rolled out I noticed the cherry red roses blooming profusely below the Center Road School sign. They had grown exponentially since the PTO parents, with dirt on their knees, planted the small bushes there several years ago. My own yellow daylilies transplanted from my home gardens bobbed their cheerful goodbyes there in a row along the school’s foundation. The swallows from nests under the entryway poked their heads out noticing the sudden silence and inactivity. I shielded my eyes from the sun and drank in the sky view, a royal blue, cloudless. The heat waves were jiggling up over the tarmac and with the children gone the cicadas trilled in unison, a staccato chorus of high decibels. Sweat trickled down my back and the tall grasses in the field beyond the playground swayed as I closed my eyes to welcome the gentle breeze. The other teachers that were on bus duty sashayed back into the school to gather their belongings and meet with the others at Poncho Loco on Route 30. They had elicited the help of their students all week to clean and organize their respective classrooms. They were done. I didn’t have that luxury as I had taught all my classes until the very last day. The students expected it, grades one through five, 100 kids a day, until 3:30 on this hot Friday afternoon in June. I took in one last sweeping view of the daylight sky and turned back to the entrance. On this last day of school I stayed late to clean my room, later than any other teacher, which was status quo except for maybe Mrs. Chase, grade two, another diehard perfectionist.

I trudged up to the third floor, room 40, across from the ESL and Music classrooms. Mine was a messy subject utilizing lots of materials and visual aids. I liked a clean orderly room, and on the last day everything had to be boxed up and organized so counters and floors could be cleaned over the summer. The custodians Russ, Al, and I were well acquainted, good buddies. They’d been invaluable to me these last 180 days and over the years, helping with deliveries, ladders or lifting. I enjoyed the after hours vibe of the empty school where we’d swap stories or jokes, taking breaks in the staff lounge, sharing snacks. I loved the silence of the empty hallways, my footsteps echoing off the walls. On the last day of school it was different; there was more closure than just getting my room ready for the next teaching day. I didn’t focus for long on the fun I’d be missing at Poncho Loco’s. I would work until my bones ached because today walking out of the school would be final, and the next day I would awaken to summer vacation.

The moon was rising over the Strong Farm, my million dollar view. I took a picture with my phone. The town had grown up around this farmstead, now preserved

by the Connecticut Farmland Trust, another reason why I adored my classroom with its three picture windows over-looking the meadows and yellow barns that featured cows at first, then sheep the years after the cows were gone, turkeys in the fall. Al the custodian was in my doorway as if he sensed I was done and I was; I was spent, exhausted, achy. He’d be there with Russ one more hour before lock-ing up, and offered to watch over me as I walked to my car in the darkness. We called out goodbye and wished each other a good summer. The crickets were singing now and the school looked ready to sleep with only a few lights on and would wink off at ten o’clock, about the time I would be pulling into my garage.

Bedtime came early that night and I didn’t know it, but I spent the night dreaming. I arrived at school, parked near the playground, got my school bag and hefted it up to my shoulder. I looked down and to my dismay I was in my nightgown, horrified until I remembered I had some of my old clothes to donate bagged up in my trunk. I rifled through and found an acceptable pair of pants and a somewhat matching blouse. I gathered my wits about me and entered the school. I had a showcase to finish before my first class. In my dream, just as in real life the showcase was 13 feet long and 6 feet high. There were 5 of these in the foyer of the school. This was the one closest to the office, the most visible to all who entered. Al brought me a stepladder and I climbed, struggling on my own to staple 4 rows of 6 matted and labeled watercolor paintings featur-ing animals in their natural habitat. Russ walked by with his pushbroom just in time to help me install a heavy glass shelf in the middle. I asked him to let me into the boiler room where my pottery kiln was. I unloaded the shelves gingerly and placed glazed clay animals on a metal cart and slowly wheeled them over to the showcase. Other teachers filtered in stopping to chat and admire the student work as they made their way to their respective classrooms lugging their own weighted bags and handcarts. I set up the ceramic animals in charming arrangements, pigs facing pigs, turtles with turtles and so on, checking the bottoms for the stu-dents’ etched names so I could set up a tent fold label for each. The students’ buses rolled in and I felt the pressure to finish. Only the signs were now left to do with 12 tape rolls on the back of each so they’d adhere well.

4TH GRADE WATERCOLORS
ANIMALS IN THEIR HABITATS
DRY-BRUSH, WET-ON-WET, AND WET-ON-DRY
TECHNIQUES
and
5TH GRADE GLAZED CERAMIC ANIMAL SCULP-TURES
WITH ATTENTION TO TEXTURE AND DETAIL

I was panicked now as I rushed up the flight of stairs to my room on the top floor. I switched on the lights. Where were all my desks and chairs? Half of them were gone and the ones that were left were haphazardly ar-ranged. I looked up at the clock and then to the door. It felt like a nightmare when I realized my first class of the day was lined up waiting to come in.

Perhaps my racing heart awakened me. I was alone in my bed, disoriented. I looked at the clock. 9:30. I smelled the coffee. Summer! I think I’ll take my coffee on the deck in my bathrobe. I felt myself relaxing. Without this summer break, I might have gone mad!

Sisters continued from page 14

ly lifted away from the cupboard and placed in sink next to me. I was crying so hard, very exaggerated, head tilted back looking at the ceiling, eyes closed reliving the entire situation. When I decided it was OK to look down there was Jane, with her sad brown eyes and little hands reach-ing out to me. We hugged right there in old soap and cold water. “She” would be my best friend, forever.

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9 Ways to Become a Weather Expert



(StatePoint) Weather impacts a range of decisions we make throughout the day, from what to wear, whether to bring an umbrella, when to head out for a jog, or even if you should evacuate the area in an emergency.

Having access to the most accurate weather fore-casts, news and information, and being able to make sense of it, is essential. That’s why the experts at AccuWeather are sharing nine ways to use their newly designed app to enhance your life:

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2. Plan ahead. Planning ahead? AccuWeather provides weather forecasts 45 days out, including historic and trend data breakdowns for each day, giving you a holi-stic view into the future and the peace of mind to plan that camping trip or to set your outdoor wedding date.

3. Know right away. Get informed automatically of what you need to know and when you need to know it with push notifications. Opt in to receive real-time severe weather alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS) and other sources, which can help protect you and your family from weather emergencies. AccuWeather’s mobile apps process NWS severe weather alerts faster than any other source, which is critical when lives are on the line and every second counts.

4. Manage allergies. Don’t let seasonal allergies ruin your weekend. The app’s Allergy Outlook displays daily projections of common allergens in a single, scroll-free list, so you can decide whether to skip that Saturday afternoon picnic in favor of something indoors.

5. Be productive. Outdoors and on the job? Let your crew know if they need to layer up with the help of the exclusive AccuWeather RealFeel. Combining tempera-ture, plus additional factors such as wind speed and humid-ity, precipitation, cloud cover and sun intensity, this feature provides a proprietary measure of exactly how the air feels outdoors specific to where you’re positioned, so you can keep your worksite productive, protected and comfortable.

6. Get historical. A Location Search feature allows you to check historical weather trends and long-term pro-jections in any given destination, so you can start dreaming about your next vacation as soon as you book a ticket. You can even save your ‘Favorites’ and ‘Recent’ locations for easy access to weather forecasts at work, home and school, or track the local weather of loved ones.

7. Catch sunrise. Want to catch that beautiful sunrise on the last day of your beach vacation? The app’s Today’s Details section lets you know exactly when the sun will rise and set each day, as well as how long each day and night will last.

8. Stay safe behind the wheel. Plan in advance to avoid inclement winter driving by using the 5-Day Precip-itation Outlook and the 24-Hour Snowfall Forecast located on one map screen. The map includes a range of additional features, including Radar, Satellite and Temperature Con-tour, so you can understand all conditions at play.

9. Be prepared. If you live in an area regularly impacted by severe weather events, utilize AccuWeather’s video content, weather trends articles and tips curated to help you adequately prepare for a variety of catastrophic events.

To download the app or learn more, check the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

“With accurate information, you can gain the confidence you need to make better informed decisions for your life, business and family’s safety,” said Kurt Fulepp, AccuWeather global chief product officer, who led devel-opment of the app



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The Plot and Sub Plots

By Felix F. Giordano

First of all, let’s backtrack a bit to establish a foundation for who we are. I have often heard other writers introduce themselves in writing classes as “aspiring authors”. I have always been troubled by that terminology and how so many people buy into the subtle negativity of that phrase.

An “aspiring author” is someone who has not yet made the conscious decision or commitment to write. If you have begun writing a short story, poem, book, attended or plan to attend a writing class, or a writers group, then the term “aspiring author” does not apply. You are an author, nothing less.

It doesn’t matter if one class member or group member has written a dozen books and another class member or group member has a loose-leaf notebook with a partial first draft of a book. In writing classes and writer groups we are all equal partners and we all can learn from one another. We need to understand who we are and accept the positive affirmation that we all are authors.

I think it’s important and appropriate to set the record straight on how we view ourselves in our craft before we begin talking about plots and subplots. The plot and subplot components of our stories are powerful and the driving force behind our stories. They are what move the story along. Unless we affirm to ourselves that we are authors we may not be prepared to utilize the self-confidence and conviction that are inherent in us as writers to develop substantive plots and subplots.

“The Plot and Sub Plots” of our story are the glue that keeps our story coherent, meaningful, and interesting. Without plots and subplots our stories would be dangling snippets with no purpose or direction.

In basic terms the plot is defined as: “what the story is about”. It is the reason why our protagonist does what he or she is driven to do. There does not need to be logic involved in the plot, nor a reward. Often the plot can lead to dangerous circumstances which in turn, gather the reader’s interest in the story and hopefully keeps them reading onward.

When an author considers what story to write, the plot can either be story-driven or character-driven. An example of a story driven plot is a bank robbery and the attempts by law enforcement to bring the criminals to justice and for the criminals to stay one step ahead of the law. The characters in the story can be nondescript because the spotlight is not on any one character but on the bank robbery and its consequences.

The plot of that same story can instead be modified to character-driven if we change the focus from the bank robbery and the cat and mouse efforts by law enforcement versus the criminals to how the crime affects a family member belonging to one of the criminals or a bank employee or bank depositor. In this way, we insert a personal angle into the story and the plot becomes dependent on how the robbery influences and involves the characters in the story.

An example of this is to reflect on the many historical war stories that have been written. Whether it’s the Trojan War, the French Revolution, or WW2, we know the basic plot. However, there have been myriad stories written about these wars and many with a different angle to the plot either character-driven or story-driven about an isolated battle. It’s these different angles that make each of these stories meaningful, interesting to read, and be able to stand on their own.

Whether we decide to develop our plot as story-driven or character-driven, we need to ensure that the plot makes the story a true page turner. We can do this by beginning the story with a bang or a compelling situation that will evolve as the story unfolds. Each successive scene should build upon itself. The scenes can be either informative scenes or action scenes. It doesn’t matter when they occur as long as they move the plot forward. There are no rules as to how many of each type you should insert into your plot or where or when they should appear. Traditionally, the plot alternates between informative scenes and action scenes. Spacing informative scenes throughout the plot allows readers a break between the action scenes and also provides them with answers to questions that arise during the development of the story arc. One of the awe-inspiring moments in a plot is when we either feel the emotions of the characters or when we sense something that the character doesn’t yet suspect. When that happens we know the author has done his or her job in formulating the plot. We want to develop the plot with increasing tension, grief, joy, horror, or suspense until it overwhelms the reader at the conclusion of the story and makes them cry, laugh, cheer,

or gasp in wonderment.

Sometimes a plot can be dysfunctional such as if the plot falls flat, doesn’t move the story forward, or lacks believability. You will know if that happens because it will just not feel right or a fellow writer that you’ve shared your work with will let you know. That doesn’t mean that you have to can the manuscript. Like I mentioned before in the story-driven versus character-driven plots, you can use the technique of modifying the plot to insert different aspects of the story and enhance the narrative.

A plot about an adolescent’s coming of age story may begin to seem mundane or directionless if it’s too close to what we sense is a normal life. Where is the interest in reading about what we perceive to be a common existence? However, if you wish to make the plot more interesting, insert a complicated love interest, a family tragedy, an environmental disaster, or an overcoming of odds. Then the plot will come alive with complexity and depth.

Often authors will insert subplots into their stories to give their readers a more intricate read. The subplot may have nothing or everything to do with the plot which we’ll now call the main plot.

In my first novel, *Montana Harvest* my protagonist, Sheriff Jim Buchanan needs to discover who is responsible for a series of missing persons across a number of western states. This is the main plot, find the alleged killer (the antagonist), and then bring him or her to justice.

One subplot of *Montana Harvest* is Jim’s familial relationship with his niece, Alma Rose. A long buried family secret is threatened to be exposed by the unwitting actions of the antagonist.

A second subplot of *Montana Harvest* is the pregnancy of Jim’s wife and the direct actions by the antagonist which will ultimately affect that pregnancy.

Weaving subplots into our stories will provide our stories with much more substance and richness. Think about our own lives. If our lives were only about our families, or only about our jobs, or only about our hobbies they would be fairly one-dimensional. But our lives are much more than that. They are about all of those, our families, our jobs, and our hobbies. That is what makes our lives fulfilling. We should expect nothing less from the stories that we write.

Let’s look at examples of subplots. If you choose to write a romance novel and your plot is the relationship revolving around one couple, insert a subplot along the lines of say, an unfilled career aspiration of one of the main characters. If you want to write a crime novel and the plot is about finding a serial killer, go with a subplot that exposes corruption in the city government which ties in some way with the motives of the serial killer. Or if you’re writing science fiction or horror and your plot is the eventual destruction of a monstrous threat, consider using a subplot where the protagonist has a vulnerability that needs to be corrected before he or she can save the world.

The bottom line is to develop a main plot that is fascinating or remarkable and bring in subplots that will endear the reader to your characters. Weave the subplots in such a way that they either enhance the main plot or help develop your characters. They can even standalone themselves and provide lessons for the reader or serve as a prequel for your next book.

We defined “The Plot and Sub Plots” as part of The Elements of Writing, and I hope I’ve piqued your interest in writing. 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: Cliffhangers

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4 Ways Science Exploration Can Shape Students’ Futures



(StatePoint) The impact of scientific exploration has vastly shaped the world we live in, and in this challenging time, it has never been more relevant than it is today.

As families navigate the new reality of working and learning from home, there’s an opportunity to think creatively about how children learn and explore science. Parents and educators can turn to project-based activities to combine learning with fun, help kids stay curious and occupied while also providing an avenue to put their passion for problem solving to good use. In short, science exploration can positively fuel, nourish and encourage the great minds of tomorrow.

According to the 2019 3M State of Science Index, 59 percent of the world’s population believe scientific advancements will benefit future generations. Beyond paving the way toward vibrant career opportunities, a STEM education can shape a young person’s mind and transform their future in these fundamental ways:

1. Active learning instills confidence. Whether it’s positing a new hypothesis or learning a new programming language, the process of active learning required by STEM pushes students out of their comfort zone and creates an environment where taking calculated risks is encouraged. Becoming comfortable with taking risks to solve problems and learning from these outcomes builds confidence. These skillsets can be applied to any future challenges a student may need to navigate.
2. Problem solving encourages creativity. Who says STEM can’t be creative? Problem solving forces outside-the-box thinking and hones creativity. Without creativity, innovation is impossible, making this an invaluable quality that can translate into all areas of life and work, particularly in fields using cutting-edge STEM principles.
3. STEM helps students develop key life skills. From communication to decision-making to teamwork, STEM learning helps students develop practical skills inside and outside the lab. Fortunately, this learning can happen independently. Anyone can turn their home into a laboratory by visiting, youngscientistlab.com, a free resource offering science project ideas and step-by-step directions for grades K-8. Whether students collaborate or work independently, they’ll feel accomplished after finishing projects.
4. Young scientists can make an impact on tomorrow’s world. Educational science programs encourage students to think about tomorrow’s challenges today. Some programs even offer exciting opportunities for students to put their ideas and theories directly into practice. For example, the 3M Young Scientist Challenge, hosted in partnership with Discovery Education, offers students the chance to be named America’s Top Young Scientist. The national science competition for students in grades 5-8 gives young inventors a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work closely with a 3M scientist, compete for a \$25,000 prize, and learn new skills.

Last year’s winner, aspiring microbiologist, Kara Fan, 14, invented a first aid liquid bandage using nano-silver technology to reduce the risk of superbug infections caused by antibiotic overuse. Fan is a great example of what can happen when science skills are applied to making a positive difference in the world.

“I entered the challenge because I wanted to show my invention of the nanosilver liquid bandage to more people. I think it is important for more people to be aware of the antibiotic-resistance bacteria crisis and do something about it,” says Fan, who worked with her 3M mentor for several months to refine her invention.

Now open, this year’s challenge asks students to identify a problem in one of six categories—health, safety, mobility, environment, energy consumption, or community—and come up with a unique innovation to improve lives for the future. To learn more, and for important dates and deadlines, visit YoungScientistLab.com/challenge.

STEM learning can shape students’ futures, and ultimately make communities safer and healthier. Be active, be bold, and explore opportunities outside the classroom that will instill a lifelong love of STEM learning.

Hiding Behind the White Cloak of Spirituality

By Donna Dufresne

This morning I meditate on John Lewis and how his feet never stopped marching toward truth and justice. John Lewis, a man of deep faith, a black man who believed in the vision of America and what we were meant to be. John Lewis who believed in non-violence – not to be confused with passivity. Ever patient yet never passive, his words guide us even after death. We should continue to follow his lead.

What strikes me as most remarkable is that John Lewis saw no dichotomy between religion and politics. His moral compass was firmly set on the arc of justice and every time he was knocked off that rainbow he climbed back up. John Lewis would never cloister himself in a monastery and pray that all the evil in the world would just go away. He was not born with that kind of privilege. Instead, he kept on walking, kept on talking, kept on marching, driven by a lot of prayer and a lot of faith. John Lewis would not be silent.

After a lifetime of silence many white women of a certain age (myself included) have suddenly wakened to the fact that we have been complicit in digging the deep trench of systemic racism. We might call ourselves activists, environmentalists, progressives. We may have marched and protested in Washington for various causes. We probably considered ourselves to be non-racist before we heard the term anti-racist and learned the difference. But we also spent our youth with our heads contorted up our asses in yoga poses while endowed with hypervigilance about our organic diets and political correctness. We went on retreats and sometimes orchestrated them, believing that holding the world in the “light” would be enough and that we could somehow change the world by refusing to give attention to the forces of evil collecting souls in dark corners of the Earth. It all seems preposterously elitist in this era of White Fragility. In the very least, our inability to recognize and speak about racism is yet another symptom of our white privilege. After all our lives and the lives of our children are not on the line. We do not live in food deserts. We can afford to bury our heads in the sand.

Meanwhile, that old Jim Crow flew up from the South and infiltrated the whole country in the form of prisons, substandard housing, failing infrastructure for basic human rights like clean water, and unequal education (the pipeline to prisons). In addition thanks to the Trump administration, we are burdened with a growing police state driven by implicit bias, racism and anti-immigration rhetoric. While we sat on our lily-white pedestals meditating on peace the world had been going to hell in a hand basket. If ever there was a time to use our voice and privilege and rise up for the greater good, it would be now. And imagine, if you will, how different the world would be, how much further we would have become in God’s imagining of love and light, had the people of Germany risen from their cloak of spirituality and spoken up against Hitler and the Nazi regime. This is another one of those pivotal moments when we should get off our yoga mats and cross the white line erected by mega churches to just say “ENOUGH”.

Just as the German Protestant churches in the 1930’s were slow to condemn Hitler, the conservative white evangelicals in the United States have been slow to condemn the Trump regime. They overlook his racism, his



Georgia Rep. John Lewis near the statue of Martin Luther King Jr. in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., earlier this year. At StoryCorps in 2018, Lewis talked about meeting King in Montgomery, Ala., at 18. Contributed photo.

flawed character, his vile and hateful rhetoric having sold their souls for the possibility of a Christian Nationalist State. As in Nazi Germany, those who do not overtly support Trump have chosen prayer over politics and maintain a neutral silence. Unfortunately, silence has consequences. The consequence in Germany was the systematic murder of 6 million Jews. In the United States, white evangelicals who remain silent about racism and turn a blind eye toward Trump are complicit with the murder of black and brown people and the racist policies of the Trump regime.

But silence and complicity are not limited to the conservative factions of Christianity. It took eight minutes and seven seconds of a knee pressed to George Floyd’s neck to wake up the sleepy hollow of white America. Liberals, progressives, radicals, atheists, agnostics, and dabblers in New Age spirituality do not get a free pass when it comes to racism. We are all guilty of turning a blind eye, and we are the big old white elephant in the room. It does not matter how many peace marches and protests we have under our belts. What does matter is that we speak now as allies to black and brown communities. It also means that we might have to listen for a change and follow their lead rather than taking over and sucking up all the oxygen in the room.

It’s true that What the World Needs Now is Love Sweet Love, as that old song from the 60’s told us, and reactive anger and hate will not lead us to win-full solutions to systemic racism. But neither will passive thoughts and prayers. I do not think the parents in Sandy Hook Connecticut were reassured by the “thoughts and prayers” sent by gun toting NRA supporters and politicians and the rest of us who were too scared to stand up to them. The real work of social justice is a delicate dance between centered guidance and witness. Contemplative action and non-violent protest requires us to do our inner work on the spiritual, emotional and intellectual level while engaging with the world. I am sure that Martin Luther King and John Lewis would agree that it is not enough to hide in a hermit hut transmitting love in a bubble. God does not want us to be passive when it comes to doing the work of justice. We can practice nonviolence and still follow the mantra of love while we march, protest, sing, shout and pray for a more equitable kingdom on Earth.

3 Home Exterior Projects That Combine Beauty and Performance



(StatePoint) Will you be completing outdoor home renovation projects this season? To maximize your investment, consider these project ideas, which combine beauty and long-lasting performance:

Smart Landscaping

Landscaping is a fundamental aspect of curb appeal. A beautiful design has the power to boost your home’s resale value. What’s more, certain landscape choices may last longer and can even potentially protect the structure of your home.

Make the smart and environmentally-conscious choice of sticking with native species, which are more likely to thrive and grow a strong root foundation, helping protect your property in the event of flooding. Select fire-resistant plants that can also act as buffers during high winds.

A Complete Roofing System

You don’t have to wait for leaks to appear before you consider a new roof. Missing, damaged or curling shingles are not only an eyesore, they can also be signs of leaks to come. The age of your roof itself can be a guide as to when it’s time to consider an upgrade -- homeowner’s insurance companies generally assume an asphalt shingle roof will last about 20 years.

When it comes to beauty and performance, a new roof can be one of the best investments you make for your home, that is if you select durable products that will protect your family for years to come. Homeowners should know that they don’t have to sacrifice style for strength and durability. For example, new Timberline HDZ shingles from GAF, North America’s largest roofing and waterproofing manufacturer, combine the style, class and design of America’s best-selling shingles (Timberline HD with even better protection thanks to a new innovation called LayerLock technology. The technology offers contractors a faster, more precise installation and ultimately, better strength and performance of the roofing shingles.

For greater peace of mind, homeowners should also consider complete roofing systems (shingles and accessories) with a strong warranty. Just be sure to check the fine print, especially if you live in an area with high winds. While many roofing products do come with wind warranties, there are often caveats with regard to wind speed limitations. Timberline HDZ shingles come with an available GAF WindProven limited wind warranty, the first wind warranty for roofing shingles with no maximum wind speed limit. The brand’s shingles that feature LayerLock technology, such as HDZ, qualify for this warranty when installed with four qualifying GAF accessories.

Durable Windows

Today’s high-performance window options can dramatically improve your home’s energy efficiency, provide better sound-proofing and weather resistance, and offer tilt-in capabilities for easier cleaning and maintenance. Some manufacturers offer customization options with regards to grille patterns, window shape, interior and exterior frame colors and glass types, making it easy to find options that complement your home’s style while providing performance features you value.

This season, make smart home upgrades that offer you both greater curb appeal and greater peace of mind.

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Hope

August

August is ripening grain in the fields blowing hot and sunny,
the scent of tree-ripened peaches, of hot buttered sweet corn on the cob.
Vivid dahlias fling huge tousled blossoms through gardens
and joe-pye-weed dusts the meadow purple.

-Jean Hersey

By Tom Buccino, EC-CHAP

And to think we are rapidly approaching August... the summer’s finale. While the seasons remain constant, we near a 6-month mark of *living differently*.

EC-CHAP does not present political views nor assume a position of bias. We exist to elevate the arts and raise a cultural awareness to those we serve. Period.

That said, these extraordinary times have fostered different views to EC-CHAP’s articles this month. Rebecca Zablocki, Artist-In-Residence, and Director of the *Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery*, shares the idea of “Creating Space” from an artist’s perspective during this current time. Tyler Hall, Curator of the *Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum*, begins a multi-part series about the life and experiences of a local family during the 19th Century. And here, I will briefly share thoughts of “Hope”.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought hardship and loss to many – the passing of friends and family, financial loss and failing businesses, and social isolation. The impact of this terrible virus, combined with increased violence, dissonance, questions of leadership, and social unrest we see and hear on the daily national news, appears to present a loss of hope for what is to come.

The idea of integrating the concept of *hope* in our Performance based article came to mind while watching CBS *Sunday Morning* this past weekend. Ted Koppel interviewed two Pulitzer Prize recipients, Kathleen Parker and Anna Quindlen, along with commentary from others discussing *The State of the Union* (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-state-of-our-union/>). What hit me hardest and most importantly, the conversations were framed around the question, “Is the US hitting bottom?”

The *Sunday Morning* article highlighted 1968 being a “terrible year” for the US, citing it as the bloodiest year for US casualties in Vietnam; the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy; and battles between police and anti-war demonstrators during the Democratic Convention in Chicago. Kathleen Parker stated, “I think our parents certainly felt that it was never gonna be the same again... and that’s how I feel now. I feel great despair.” Quindlen, a high school student in 1968, commented (that), “In addiction, counselors say all the time that people don’t stop self-destructive behavior until they’ve hit bottom...and sometimes I wonder if this is the United States of America hitting bottom in some ways; and that therefore, what history tells us is, from hitting bottom, we can only go up.”

I personally remember the events of 1968; but for some reason, they didn’t have the same impact on me then, as the current state of affairs have on the “older me”... For me, Koppel’s conversations and the realities of despair, depression, anger, and a dwindling sense of hope we are witnessing really struck a nerve. All this causing me to pause for a moment. A single word came to mind: *Resilience*.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *Resilience* as:
1: the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress
2: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change

(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience>)

US history speaks loudly to resilience. As a young country we have faced and overcome many hardships. As a nation, we have persevered, and in most instances, following difficult times have come to a better place. There is no reason to expect otherwise. We absolutely, positively, cannot lose *hope*.

As one of many organizations going through these difficult and uncertain times, we have shared the pain – financially and emotionally. In June, EC-CHAP advertised that The Packing House will” reopen in the fall. July’s ad read that we “*Plan*” to reopen; and this month’s ad reads we “*Plan*” to reopen in the fall. We have already been notified by a couple touring artists that all of their bookings on the east coast have been formally cancelled (other than ours to date); and that financially it would be difficult to travel for just one gig.

We will be initiating an online survey to solicit your thoughts and recommendations regarding our reopening plan for The Packing House. We invite you to visit our homepage where you will be able to access this survey by August 1st (www.thepackinghouse.us).

Until we meet again - we will continue to offer a selection of monthly *virtual* events.

*“Listen to the mustn’ts, child. Listen to the don’ts.
Listen to the shouldn’ts, the impossibles, the won’ts.
Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me...
Anything can happen, child.
Anything can be.”*

— Shel Silverstein



PARTICIPATE IN EC-CHAP’S VIRTUAL TALENT SHOWCASE

We would love to include local and regional artists to share in our virtual events, and invite you to participate. All events are free to the public.

CALLING ALL acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform in our *virtual* Talent Showcase! Here is an opportunity to showcase your work together with other “creatives” STREAMING LIVE in our VIRTUAL SETTING. Test ideas and concepts; and receive comments.

Our Talent Showcase is designed as a platform for local and regional performers to share their talent in front of a live audience. Showcases are NORMALLY scheduled at The Packing House on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, October through June. We will safely resume this schedule when we are able. Until then, we are offering a virtual Talent Showcase which will be prerecorded and streamed live each month.

If you would like to perform in our monthly *virtual* Talent Showcase, please call for instructions to submit your video and be placed on the schedule. You may have up to 15-minutes to present your work, and we encourage anyone - of any age - to share your talent.

We will compile your videos and present the August Talent Showcase as a LIVE Stream on Thursday August 20th at 7:00pm. **Please call 518.791.9474 for information and be placed on the schedule. The deadline to submit your video is August 13th.** Join us for an evening of “talent sharing talent”! Virtual Access at: www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming the day of the show.

If you have missed our virtual Live Stream offerings, you can view them on our YouTube channel at: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE7849dIweGDhNCQvAEa8wQ>).

*“When we love,
we always strive to become better than we are.
When we strive to become better than we are,
everything around us becomes better too.”*

— Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist

The Packing House plans to reopen in the fall 2020. Please visit our website for upcoming virtual and live performances and events: www.thepackinghouse.us.

The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery RE-OPENED on July 25th with “*Continuation*”, a collection of two and three dimensional pieces by local and regional artists. This show will be on public display Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm, July 25th through August 29th.

The **Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum** will reopen soon. Please check our website for reopening dates and times: www.ec-chap.org.

We leave you with the following:

*“But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough
can you see the stars.”*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Creating Space

By Rebecca Zablocki

space /spās/ *noun*
the dimensions of height, depth, and width within which all things exist and move.

If you are an artist, you know how important the element of **space** is when you are making art. Creating space within your work or using positive and negative space to create an image or sculpture is just one of the basic steps in creating a work of art. If you are an artist, you also know how important the space around you is; the space where you create your art work.

Another definition of space: A continuous area or expanse which is free, available, or unoccupied. This definition does not ring true when it comes to studio space for artists. Having enough space to create, the right space or any space at all, is a task in itself. Throughout the current pandemic and during quarantine, many artists gained space within their lives and schedules and were able to stay home and create or fine tune their home studio practice. Some did so by creating a schedule or ritual for themselves each day, creating more structure and allowing themselves to take advantage of their time. Others took this time to beautify their studio space. Some tips we received were dedicating an area strictly to art making, decluttering and finding objects of inspiration that spark joy. Are you looking to create a home studio? Perhaps color coding your supplies, buying a house plant or placing works of art from other artists will help you to create that space. On the other end of the spectrum, many artists lost their studios during the pandemic or were unable to create. Stay home orders and stressors, whether they be emotional, health, social or financial have caused many small businesses to fall dormant and many have had to close their doors.

Sometimes we are able to find creative spaces in the cracks and crevices of our lives or tiny studio apartments, but for some of us it seems impossible, even prior to the pandemic. The act of being creative can be very difficult, when you do not have the proper facilities. Opportunities such as workshops and artist residencies like the one we have here at EC-CHAP, exist to provide workspace to artists that need it. While space can feel like a luxury to some, depending on the style or medium of work you create, the second definition, a continuous area or expanse which is free, available, or unoccupied is truly put to the test. Artists that work in nature or create public art, whether they are plein air painters, muralists or sculptors, see the world as their studio. Finding endless opportunities and places to create; sides of buildings, park benches, trees and even open fields can become a workplace.

Taking up space in less of a physical sense, and more on the topic of taking up room in a culture, is another way that



space comes into play. After the death of George Floyd, human rights or the lack there of, are at the forefront of our minds. Being that artists often speak out against the issues of the world, it is the perfect place to call out the current issues, but the art world is no exception. Inequalities and systemic racism plague the arts. This is a time to share and honor the art of BIPOC and reevaluate the missteps that have been made in the past to create change. The defining of cultural appropriation and appreciation and efforts such as the social media campaign #AmplifyMelanatedVoices and calls to share the art of black artists are helping to open the eyes of some who have been denying or blissfully ignorant to the inequalities in this industry. This is a time for those of us who have been taking up space in the world to honor those who have been denied that space.

Whether the space be physical, limited, endless, cultural, positive or negative, space is a tool and an opportunity. Space can be found through artist residencies, incubators, collectives, calls for art, galleries, going out into the world or creating your own place to create at home. Find your own rhythm and take your time, give yourself the space you need. Whether that be sitting back to relax, finding inspiration and discovering other artists, or going out into the world and making something big, something bold or something brand new to you.

Rebecca Zablocki is the EC-CHAP Artist-In-Residence, and Director, Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery. You may contact Rebecca at: community-gallery@ec-chap.org



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To all our contributors-

Thank You!

Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, this paper would not exist.

T. King, Publisher

A Glimpse into 19th Century Connecticut: The Chittenden Family of Mansfield (Part-1)

By Tyler Hall

EC-CHAP’s Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum is working diligently to investigate, record, and share the unique local history that has transitioned from common knowledge, to sparsely elaborated government records, and passing mentions in local papers. As time progresses, priceless stories and photographs are lost, recollection fades, and the fabric of the community perpetually evolves. Lifeways become harder to imagine, and people - who once traversed the many struggles of life just as we do today - are too often reduced to hollow and mysterious names. In this multi-part series, the Gardiner Hall Jr. History Museum will be utilizing public records, newspaper articles, and collaborating with surrounding museums to piece together the story of a family who - nearly two centuries ago - carved their stories out of the same land that we know and cherish today.

The life of Sarah Ophelia Chittenden of Mansfield, Connecticut, is a study of the unique hardships that plagued individuals and families during the tumultuous 19th century. It is a tale of a blossoming marriage shattered by civil war, life as a single mother during a time of great unrest, and perseverance in the face of adversity. Sarah, and those close to her, would be forced to navigate the insecurities, misfortunes, and injustices of a country plagued by the ever-present threat of unemployment in an age before Social Security, the shortcomings of an undeveloped and often misguided healthcare system, and the life-altering effects of war that veterans, and their families, continue to endure. Ultimately, a strong sense of duty to her children, an unwavering support system, and her own steadfast resolve would grant her a long and rewarding life.

Sarah’s story begins with her father, Samuel Chittenden - and with Mansfield, Connecticut’s crucial role in America’s silk thread production. In the early years of 1830, a young man by the name of Samuel Chittenden arrived in Mansfield from his home in Malden, Massachusetts. He was drawn to the Connecticut’s innovative and rapidly expanding silk industry. At this time, Connecticut was the national leader in silk production. Mansfield was particularly well known for its success, having decades prior been one of the first towns in the state to effectively propagate the Mulberry tree - the sole food source of the silkworm. Touted as a low maintenance, high return investment, Mulberry trees quickly grew to dominate the town’s rolling hills, and stone-lined orchards. Just a few years prior - in 1827 - the town’s first silk mill, and the nation’s first successful silk venture, The Mansfield Silk Company, had been established. Samuel quickly became settled, solidifying himself as a member of the small agricultural commu-



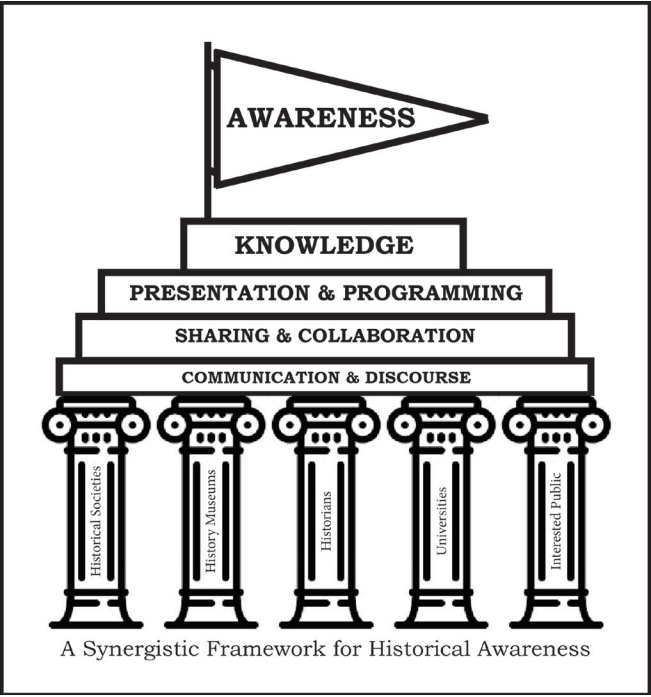
nity numbering nearly twenty-five hundred. The first few years he prospered, reaping the benefits of generations of prior planning and experimentation. The promise of silk’s continued prosperity had drawn Samuel Chittenden to his wife, Mansfield local Sarah B. Davis. The two were married in Windham, Connecticut, on April 7th, 1833.

Tragedy struck between 1833 and 1834, as a devastating Mulberry blight spread throughout Connecticut. Hundreds of thousands of trees failed, and speculative fortunes were lost. Mulberry’s promise, and the generations of planning and planting, had evaporated seemingly overnight. While Mansfield’s silk mills would experience only a momentary setback - they would begin to import silk and prosper well into the early 20th century - Samuel’s dream of a simple and stable life in Mansfield had been shaken.

The Chittenden family entered a long period of uncertainty. Samuel and Sarah spent the next decade chasing work where it could be found. The couple traveled to Stafford, Chicopee Falls, Waterbury, and New Haven. Samuel began what would become a long-held tradition of short visits to his brother Charles in Boston. It was during his stay in New Haven that Samuel finally found reliable work as a gunsmith. The family once again felt at ease, as Samuel earned decent pay, accumulating a small measure of wealth. Samuel and Sarah Davis had their first two children, Emily Ann in 1835, and John Ebenezer in 1837. The couple’s third and final child, Sarah Ophelia Chittenden, was born March 30th, 1841, during a visit to Mansfield. As Samuel worked, Sarah Davis was able to remain at home, caring for their young children. The couple would remain in the New Haven area for many years, nurturing their son and two daughters.

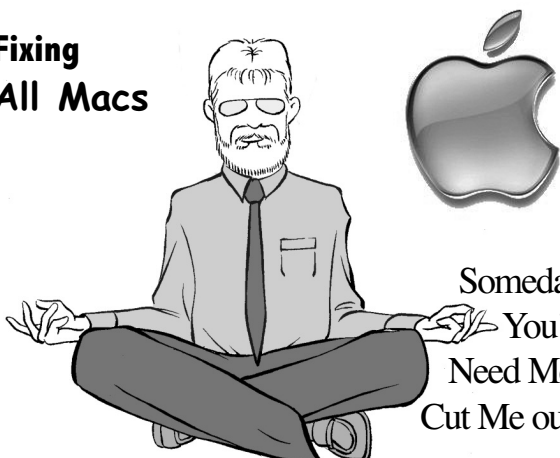
Sarah Ophelia Chittenden, daughter of Samuel Chittenden and Sarah Davis, would tie together the stories of a struggling, transient family from Mansfield, and one of Willimantic’s revered Civil War veterans - John T. Moulthrop. The Chittenden family would settle in Windham, and the cloud of the American Civil War would tragically shape young Sarah Ophelia’s future, as we will explore in the next installment.

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



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Step 3: dryout

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came through the top (keys) turn it over but fast. There are "trays" under the keys that can block liquid but if you turn it over slow, you can defeat the purpose. If you can, pull out the power adapter, unscrew the bottom and disconnect the battery. Contrary to popular belief, rice does not "draw" out the water. If you just sit it in rice you just give the water more time to kill the components. While you are waiting it's corroding. If you happen to have a silica gel or other absorbent pack handy those do work in absorbing moisture, but it is better to be actively trying to rid the moisture.

Step 2: Get the Liquid Out

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pensive repairs is that people will try the unit. It will kinda work. So they keep trying when if they would have let that one sit and dry out without the battery plugged in-it probably would have been fine...

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Steve Woron is an artist and Mac technician and lives in Vernon CT. Contact him at (860) 871-9933 leave a message, or illstudio@snet.net. He also has been doing desktop publishing for 21 years. He also scans slides and negatives professionally. See his ads to the left. See DrMacCT.blogspot.com

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Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors Manager Passes Industry Exam

POMFRET CENTER, CT (JULY 2020) — We are proud to announce Holly Wanegar, Manager, Client Operations & Analytics has passed her FINRA® Series 7 exam. FINRA’s Series 7 exam — the General Securities Representative Qualification Examination (GS) — assesses the competency of an entry-level registered representative to perform their job as a general securities representative. The exam measures the degree to which each candidate possesses the knowledge needed to perform the critical functions of a general securities representative, including corporate securities, municipal securities, investment company securities, variable annuities, direct participation programs, options and government securities.



Holly Wanegar. Cont. photo.

Holly joined our team in June 2019 from People’s United Wealth Advisors. Before working at People’s, Holly worked at Bank of America and U.S. Trust Wealth Management. Holly has over 8 years of client service experience working with high net worth individuals and organizations. As part of her career development goals at Weiss, Hale & Zahansky (WHZ) Strategic Wealth Advisors, Holly passed her FINRA® Securities Industry Essentials (SIE) exam in November 2019 and most recently her FINRA® Series 7 licensing exam.

Holly assists WHZ clients with operational and administrative needs in collaboration with our advisors to ensure the best client experience as we execute our strategic Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well process. In addition to leading our Operations team, Holly provides critical support to our Investment Committee with analytics related to investment portfolios and works with our Chief Investment Officer to implement portfolio and investment strategies.

We are happy for Holly on achieving this career milestone.

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

Without your submissions of writing, poetry, artwork and photographs, this little paper would not exist. T. King, Publisher

Where to find the Neighbors paper

- Ashford**
Terry’s Transmissions
Hope & Wellness
Ashford Spirit Shoppe
Wooden Spoon Restaurant
Ashford Post Office
Babcock Library

Brooklyn
Brooklyn Post Office
Baker’s Dozen Coffee Shop
The Ice Box

Bolton
Bolton Post Office
Subway-Bolton Notch

Chaplin
Chaplin Post Office
Pine Acres Restaurant

Columbia
Saxon Library
Columbia Post Office

Coventry
Highland Park Market
Meadowbrook Spirits
Coventry Laundromat
Subway
Booth and Dimock Library
Song-A-Day Music

Eastford
Eastford Post Office
- Hampton**
Hampton Post Office
Hampton Library

Lebanon
Lebanon Post Office

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

Mansfield Center
Lawrence Real Estate
Mansfield OB/GYN
Mansfield Library
East Brook Mall

Mansfield Depot
Thompson’s Store
Tri-County Greenhouse

Carpe Diem-Seize Your Life!

By Jabez Manning and Grace Preli

If I told you, right now, to pick one thing that you’ve wanted to do for a while, one thing that you’ve been putting off or haven’t got around to, would you do it? Would you make a start on it for yourself today?

Do you know what’s holding you back? There’s only one thing that holds people back: fear! We fear failure and we fear the unknown. There’s a simple solution to our fear: asking for help from someone who knows.

We are not meant to do things alone. We are not meant to live a life of struggle and suffering, never having our wants or dreams met and realized. When we work together and when we ask for help much of our fear disappears.

Here at Manning Enterprizes to make our dreams, our wants and our needs, for ourselves, our employees, our friends and our customers a reality, we try and make things easy, pleasurable and sustainable.

Not everything in life is going to be easy. Okay. But when you work together, when you share together in life, in your building project or in making your dream a reality, you benefit greatly in that collaboration. Having someone we love in our life support us, cheerlead us and give us a helping hand when we need one is one of the best feelings in the world. You might not know how to do something, but I’m sure you can find someone who does. You might not know what direction to head, but there’s someone who can help you get started on the right path for you.

Taking action should feel as easy and pleasurable as spring sunshine on your face or a kiss from your lover. You should look back at your progress and feel warmed by your accomplishment. Do you want to sustain something in your life that is difficult, painful or unrewarding? It’s not about spending all of your life energy struggling to do something, it’s about doing things with grace and ease. It’s about finding ways to put in focused effort and have the outcome be rewarding.

For everything to be completed, it needs to be started. For anything to be built, you have to make the first cut, hit the first nail. For anything to grow, you have to plant it. It doesn’t matter where you are in life, with your project, with your dreams or with your to-do list. You can start to build with love and support and help from others. You can start right where you are, just ask.

Hammer your thumb and have some fun!

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Mashamoquet

Sweet little brook that I follow.
How do I find thee today?
Your waters speak and bring me softly to your edge.
There I see how you have made your own pathway
through the tall timbers with a rushing self assurance.
Not lost or forlorn and carrying no desire to be anything
but what you so beautifully are,
you sparkle and catch the light around you.
Where are you going and what do you gather along the way
to share at the end of your meandering journeys?
I will follow and ask little from you.
Shall I remove the days from my feet
and share the coolness of your shallows?
...for it is there, in the midst of your acceptance,
where we will hear the music of on unaltered awareness together.

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



Our Neighbor’s Photography



Hitching Post by Bill Hoboth.



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