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March–April 2016

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Neighbors

March-
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2016



Mansfield Hollow State Park, yellow trail. February 2016.

Jace Paul photo.

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Neighbors
P.O. Box 430
Ashford, CT 06278
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: David Corsini, Phoebe Godfrey,
John Murphy, Dagmar Noll, Dennis
Pierce, Mark Svetz, 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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Gender Fluidity, Bias and Beyond

By Loretta Wrobel

Full house with standing room only! I was pleasantly floored when I arrived at Real Art Ways to hear Kate Bornstein talk on "TRANS: Beyond the Tipping Point." Kate is a trans activist, performance artist and gender theorist. I was stirred that it was a sellout. After being wowed by this speaker, I understood why people had come from all over to listen, absorb and ponder.



In our world we function with a two-party system, a two sex division, a right/wrong perspective, and a two gender reality. How many genders are there? A very intriguing question. Just as the two-party system doesn't work well on the political level, neither does the two gender division. Nonetheless, we insist on endorsing this restrictive and binding belief, without allowing the creative flair to smash open the limited perspective of two genders--male and female.

Why not open to possibilities that allow us/others to expand our horizons? Scary and amoral say some. Why accept the limitations of two categories? When I examine how stifling our binary system is, I see the foolishness of squeezing the human race into two constricted gender options, male or female.

Contemplating on how discrimination against women has denied half of our world the full expression of their essence, I wonder what kind of a world we would live in if everyone was granted the opportunity to go to the limits of their capabilities. Doesn't this all start with gender?

The following week, while watching Suffragette, a movie about the radicalization of a British working class woman in 1912, I was horrified to behold the brutality inflicted on the Suffragettes. These women believed that using peaceful negotiations had not achieved results, and only by the use of aggressive tactics would the male lawmakers be forced to grant women suffrage. I gasped at the end of the movie as I read the list of when countries legalized women's suffrage. In France, French women were not enfranchised until 1944. The same year I was born! Creepy.

Convenient to have only two genders, where one gender can easily oppress the other. As if to feed the fire, I read in "Outlook," AAUW's magazine, that women's representation in music lags frighteningly behind that of males. Women's representation in orchestras only increased when blind auditions were introduced. When Marin Alsop became the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms festival of music in London in 2013, Vasily Petrenko, a renowned conductor, reported to papers that "orchestras react better when they have a man in front of them!" Why? The answer, "a cute girl on the podium means that musicians think about other things." This in 2013. Disgusting!

Women gender bias means we impose limits on half of the world. If we had unlimited genders, how could

we discriminate? Each of us could go to where our skills, inclinations and desires propelled us. Everyone then is seen for their special uniqueness, not through a restrictive binary gender context.

Why are we wedded to this male/female gender paradigm? Who does this serve? Who benefits and who loses?

I encourage everyone to visit the AAUW web site <aauw.org/research/barriers-and-bias> and test your unconscious bias about women's abilities. Since all of us have grown up in a society with cultural prejudices, we have ingested the belief that one gender (male) has more abilities and potential to succeed in all areas, including politics, business, arts and sports. You will have the opportunity to view the results, which may surprise you. I came out moderate for men as supporters and women as leaders. For me, I see room for growth, as I too have been exposed to the cultural binary gender system and the gender bias against women.

Putting all this together, I am amazed at how essential it is to have outlaws who question our values, patterns and cultural biases. For me, it was energizing that so many folks of different ages, backgrounds and ethnicities attended Bornstein's talk on gender fluidity, compassion for differences and the importance of relieving suffering. Any societal pattern that increases suffering needs to be abolished. Kate's theory is that if all the various elements of the trans community can get along and create a vital tranny community then there is hope for the world.

I am deeply thankful that there were radical women who stood their ground and risked their lives to pursue women's suffrage. I was appalled to discover how recently countries granted women the right to vote. Switzerland in 1971, and Saudi Arabia is just now promising to grant women a place at the ballot box. The cruelties inflicted on the suffragettes in the early 1900's in both Britain and US were atrocious. Where would I be without the toils of those foremothers who gave up jobs, husbands, children and their own safety for the cause. How bold and courageous.

My hope is that we can take comfort from these pioneers--the suffragettes, the trans community, the women executives, female astronauts, and male childcare workers--who smashed through barriers, often with much emotional and physical challenge, to become who they knew they could be. Can we imagine a world without barriers so that each individual soul is encouraged to stretch to their full potential regardless of how they identify, who they love and how they look, act or talk? We can live in an open society with more compassion and less judgment, if each of us allows others to be who they are and love who they wish. I cast my vote for a healthy world where we all look at our own barriers and how we limit ourselves based on cultural misperceptions. I say Yes to diversity and to allowing everyone to claim their space, however they define it.

Now I wonder who all those people attending Kate Bornstein's lecture are going to vote for this November.

Real Estate Yin Yang

By Noah King, Realtor, ABR, SRS, SFR

Welcome to my first column for *Neighbors*. It is my intent to cover local real estate news including the ups and downs, the pleasure and pain of buying, selling and owning real estate. As a full-time Realtor at Home Selling Team I work daily with a team of 13 other full-time Realtors. The collective experience and collaboration we share has made me wise beyond my years in expertise and insight into the challenges of selling or purchasing a property in Connecticut. Have questions about real estate: Prices? Previous sales? A specific property? Financing? Home inspections? Ask away! I look forward to hearing from you and perhaps I will use your idea as a topic for a future column.

This month the big news to report is that a nonpartisan unanimous vote actually took place in the House of Representatives and it is big news in real estate circles. H.R. 3700 "The Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act" directs the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) to streamline the condominium approval process – especially for renewals of previous approvals - and also reforms how housing assistance programs operate, which is currently with long waiting lists and inefficient burdensome administration, leaving many without sufficient or adequate housing. Homeownership continues to be elusive for many—this bill is designed to make this dream a reality for more.

Essentially what this means is that FHA buyers may finally have better options when looking to buy a condominium. A key feature of this bill is that it reduces the requirement of owner occupied units to 35%. So if your condo complex is renter-heavy under the new ratio and the streamlining process, your condo may qualify in the near future. There is a very limited supply of FHA-approved condominiums in our area. For instance, Ashford Park is not currently FHA-approved which means a buyer who is best suited for FHA financing - which offers lower down payment requirements and more credit flexibility - cannot use the FHA financing to buy it. According to the management company, the current percentage of owner occupied units is currently at 37% which would meet the new FHA requirements. The lack of inventory of FHA approved condos has depressed the condo market and eliminated a very good option for new families and lower-income buyers. With all this good news, I should note, (yin yang) that this bill needs to pass the Senate. Fingers crossed.

You can reach me by email at noah@homesellingteam.com; by office phone at 860-450-8134 or mobile at 860-933-3432; by mail at Home Selling Team 452 Storrs Road, Mansfield CT 06250.

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Willimantic, Now and Then:

‘Meeting of the Bike Paths’ in a New Willimantic

By Mark Svetz

Willimantic takes its name from the confluence of several rivers in this vicinity. The Natchaug, Willimantic, Fenton, Mt. Hope and the Hop rivers join, forming the Shetucket. The name itself comes from the Algonquin word or phrase referring to that coming together of the rivers. Some have translated it: Meeting of the Waters. Later in its history, Willimantic became a prominent city in the 19th Century because of the meeting of major rail lines. Right now, I am thinking of yet a third “coming together,” this time of the bike paths that are part of the East Coast Greenway.

My bicycle – along with what my mother used to call “Shank’s Mare” – has been my main local transportation for more than 40 years here in Willimantic. When Sarah and I moved back here from Manhattan, where bicycles were also our main transportation, we were delighted to find the bike path out to North Windham, including the bridge over the Natchaug River. We bank at the Northeast Family Federal Credit Union, and it was great to have this pleasant route to get there.

I have ridden on the old Airline, now part of the East Coast Greenway, south from Pleasant Street, and Northeast from Willimantic toward Putnam. These are really nice rides, full of scenery, waterways and back yards. At several places the bike path intersects hiking trails. Sarah and I have, on a few occasions, locked our bikes to trees and walked on the Two Sisters trail, part of Joshua’s Trust. It is a wonderful walk and completely accessible to us by bicycle.

Although I am thinking about bicycles right now, these trails are great for running, dog walking or strolling. I remember one time when my old friend Tony Clark set out walking south on the airline. This was before there was an improved bike path or East Coast Greenway, so we all thought Tony was some adventurer when he called from a pub in East Hampton asking for a ride home. Now, this route offers a pretty manageable bike ride to Colchester, East Hampton, and maybe in the near future, Middletown.



I have been waiting for the bridge on the Airline path (south across the river to Pleasant Street) to be completed. As I said, we have ridden on this path, but getting to it has required us to ride on Pleasant Street where it goes into Lebanon. It is too narrow and winding, and the cars travel way too fast for my taste. The bridge solves the problem for me and I am delighted and grateful!

The actual East Coast Greenway is a network of trails connecting cities up and down the east coast, from Maine to Florida. Part of it runs from Willimantic to Bolton, and ultimately to Hartford, mostly following the old Willimantic-Manchester rail line. There are maps and a lot of information available on line and elsewhere, but what really interests me is the idea that this city that I love so much sits at the “coming together” of two of these beautiful and practical trails.

The other day, Sarah and I took our granddaughter for a walk along the new path that follows the Willimantic River from Bridge Street to Mackey’s on Rt. 66. This includes the resurfaced rail bridge crossing the river to Pleasant Street, along the Airline path. I understand the money has been secured to resurface a second rail bridge right next to Mackey’s. This, along with plans to improve the path from Willimantic west along Rt. 66 and Rt. 6, connects the paths in Willimantic to the East Coast Greenway.



Walking from Lebanon to Willimantic, across the Willimantic River on the new bridge, part of the Air Line Trail State Park. The Railroad Museum is in the distance.
Sarah Winter Photo

My friends and I used to joke, usually around a pitcher of beer, about Willimantic being the “center of the Universe.” What with the rivers and the rails all coming together here, the idea made a lot of sense to us. Now, we can add a new “coming together” in what I hope will become a major 21st Century transportation mode – bicycling.

Sarah and I stood on the new bridge the other day with six-month-old Miri in our arms. We looked at the intersection of paths in front of us. I was excited. I could imagine the signs posted in the future: Boston to the right, Hartford to the left, New Haven behind us. And of course all the towns in between would now have a major route to jobs, shopping and recreation running through their towns. What I saw was the beginnings – framework, if you will, or skeleton – of sustainable communities, connected with a sensible transportation system.

I have heard many of the planners, supporters and advocates for these bike paths speak of the tourists who will



Mark heads toward Hartford on the new Connecticut Greenways Trail.
Sarah Winter Photo

be attracted to Willimantic's shops and restaurants as they take a break from riding. We go to Keene, New Hampshire fairly regularly, when we want to get a break from work. This is my favorite bike-friendly place, with a network of bike paths criss-crossing the city. Many of the shops and restaurants offer specials to customers who ride their bikes in. It seems this might be a great way to involve the whole town in this latest "coming together" in Willimantic.

This is wonderful for the area, but I tend to think more about sustainable transportation options for my friends and neighbors here in Eastern Connecticut. I live, work and shop in Willimantic, mostly within a five minute walk of home. Sarah and I have often observed that we could live without a car – a lifelong dream of mine and part of the reason we lived in Manhattan – except for the difficulty of getting out in the woods easily, to hike, swim and camp. It's not impossible now, but I am getting older and less easy with the traffic around here.

I also see the value for my friends who choose to live outside of Willimantic. These bike paths form the spokes of an imaginary circle around the area, and might facilitate bike commuting from the surrounding town to Willimantic, ECSU, Windham Hospital, UCONN and other employers. I have a few friends who commute by bicycle. Some of them are quite intrepid and commute over considerable distance year round. I can only imagine these paths might make it a little easier for them and, more important, make it possible for many others to commute by bicycle.

The course of history has been changed by developments in transportation. I recall as a history student hearing that 17th and 18th Century cities were "designed" by cows, 19th Century cities were "designed" by horses, while 20th Century cities were "designed" by cars. In the case of Willimantic, I might say rivers and then trains designed the early city, while cars finished the job. If it hasn't been said yet, let me be the first to hope that our 21st Century community is "designed" with the bicycle in mind. I think it might work out better for us and our grandchildren.

Mark Svetz is a Tutor at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Willimantic. You can read more of Mark's writing at www.sarahwinterclothworks.com/writing.

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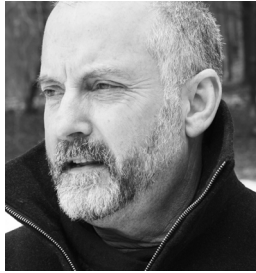
Let's Meet Our Farmers

By Dennis Pierce

How many times do you get a chance to shake the hand of a farmer that grew the vegetables that are sold at one of the large, grocery store chains? The answer is probably never. On Saturday March 19th, there is a unique event called "Know Your Farmer", which will be held at CLiCK, a Commercially Licensed Commercial Kitchen enterprise, located at 41 Club Road in Windham, CT. Tucked away behind the Willimantic Golf Course and down the road a piece, is a building that once hosted the Knights of Columbus. At this location there now resides a new entity that supports Connecticut Grown. "Grow, Cook, Share" is the mission of CLiCK. Their goal is to grow the vitality of our local economy and community by offering shared use commercial kitchens to farmers and culinary entrepreneurs seeking to create food-based businesses and to improve the health of our local community by teaching gardening, culinary arts, nutrition and other food-related classes.

"Meet A Farmer, Create A Relationship, Build Communities" is the bi-line for the upcoming "direct to the consumer", event that is being hosted by the Windham Community Food Network which is a collaboration of the Willimantic Food Co-op & Grow Windham and CLiCK. This innovative event, which is on Saturday, March 19th 2016, from 11:00am to 3:00pm invites residents, chefs, local merchants and institutional buyers to have the opportunity to meet local Connecticut Grown purveyors and learn more about fresh Connecticut locally grown ingredients. Join many other locavores in learning about the many opportunities that are available such as joining a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, finding local "pick your own" opportunities and learning more about local farmer's markets, farm stands and whole sale opportunities.

Aside from the "meet & greet" there will be children and family activities, opportunities to buy local products, a cooking demo and a class offered from 12:00pm until 2:00pm on "Planning Your First Herb Garden", with Michele Maclure. There is a \$15 fee for the class. If you are interested in attending the class please register by calling 860-786-7907.



Walk-in's are also welcome. "Know Your Farmer," is just one of the many efforts of the Windham Community Food Network. They are working to create a developing food system, indeed a regionalized food system that would be delivering both quality and quantity of local food at a reasonable price to those who are looking to eat healthier.

I have always been a big supporter of locally grown. Having been involved with food all of my life I always have been in the search of the best tasting, freshest ingredients available. I really never thought about food on a global scale. Maybe that is because I spent too much time at the "you pick" places where my head was always under an apple tree branch or in a blueberry bush. In the beginning I always thought of food politics as something that happened on a grand scale. The term always made me think of subsidies and politicians that were being swayed by lobbyists where the bureaucracy and regulations that evolved between large food corporations and elected leaders resulted in roadblocks for the average small farmer. It is efforts like "Know Your Farmer" that creates a citizen led decentralized system that breaks down all of the road blocks and allows us to embrace what is all around us.

So how do you begin besides attending "Know Your Farmer"? Try to make a commitment at home by cooking with in-season fruits and vegetables. This is the simplest way to ensure that you get great raw ingredients and support the efforts of local Connecticut farmers who really care about what they are doing. Seasonal cooking means you're preparing meals for your family using the best ingredients available. It also brings the added excitement since you always have something waiting for you around the next season's corner.

Can you buy these types of options throughout the year? Yes, you can always get your hands on ingredients, but why spend more money for inferior fruits and vegetables that have traveled from thousands of miles away? For me, I always get excited for what the next season brings. When I go to the local farmers markets I look forward to the spring asparagus, the new greens or just trekking for the wild edibles, foraging for nettles and ramps.

I have been authoring this column for several years. In addition to learning firsthand about all of the local Connecticut Grown options available to us I have also had the opportunity to meet many very talented individuals that make Connecticut Grown happen. Whether they are farmers, suppliers,



Sunflower at CLiCK

Photo by Pheobe C. Godfrey

educators, crafts people they all are committed to their trade. Stephanie Clark, Market Master for the Willimantic Farmer's Market and an active member of Windham Grows, prompted me to write this column. She introduced me to Sally Milius, the founder of Grow Windham. Sally had a conversation with Alice Rubin, Co-op Manager in the bulk section of the Willimantic Co-op one day that gave birth to the idea of Windham Grows which later resulted in a grant that funded its start up. Libby Tarleton, from Russo's Roots also contributed to the planning efforts of the "Know Your Farmer" event. Libby and James Russo have a first generation vegetable farm nestled in the hills of eastern Connecticut. They are focused on growing gorgeous, tasty fruit and vegetables for everyone to enjoy. They farm their land using organic methods, combining ecological sensitivity with techniques in permaculture to create an agro-ecological system rather than just an agricultural one. Although their focus is currently on fruit and vegetables, as they restore pastures and outbuildings, they plan to incorporate animals, herbs, honey, a nut grove and perennial crops. Their intent is to create a farm that provides for itself, for their family and for the residents of the local community.

These are the "behind the scenes" individuals whose recipe for the local movement include the ingredients called commitment, community and passion. They truly demonstrate through their efforts that to assume accountability of our food is to assume accountability of our lives.

So it's three weeks to spring. If you venture to a local farmers market or the Co-op you will find a variety of baby greens. Stop yearning for the summer and satisfy your culinary desire with the following recipe:

Spring Baby Greens with Maple Dressing, Cranberries and Apples (Serves 4 to 6)

Ingredients:

Dressing-

1/3 cup of extra virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, peeled and halved
1 1/2 Tbs. of cider vinegar
1 1/2 Tbs. of maple syrup
1/3 cup of light brown sugar
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Salad -

2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into thin strips
1 Tbs. of lemon juice
8 cups of mixed spring baby greens
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup of toasted, chopped walnut halves or pecans
3 ounces of goat cheese, crumbled

Directions:

Make the maple dressing: Drizzle a little oil in a large bowl. Add the garlic and mash it into a fine paste using the back of a wooden spoon. Whisk in the vinegar and maple syrup and sugar until well combined. Whisk in the remaining oil in a slow stream until completely incorporated. Add salt and pepper to

continued on page 45



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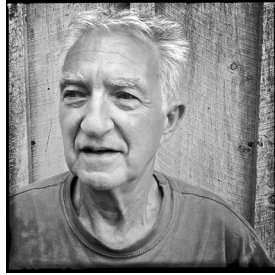
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Dovekie

By David Corsini

My friend Chuck has a bucket list and high on that list sat seeing a dovekie. A dovekie is a very small (8 inches) ocean bird related to a puffin that breeds in the high Arctic. During the winter some dovekies come south and sometimes can be seen off the New England coast.



But the most reliable place to find this bird is Newfoundland in January. When I told people I was going to Newfoundland in January to try to see a Dovekie, they thought I was completely crazy. Crazy yes, but perhaps not completely.

Over the years Chuck and I have shared many birding adventures. In addition to bird watching in New England, we have birded together in distant places like Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Churchill, Manitoba. But we had not traveled together to see birds for over 15 years. Chuck and I are now both in our 70s. In the last 18 months I have had my aortic valve replaced and surgery to remove my appendix and a polyp. Chuck has two artificial hips, one artificial knee, advancing Parkinson's and uses a walker (his "Rollator") when more than a few steps are involved. Chuck probably could not manage a trip to Newfoundland in January alone. So in friendship and hoping for the best, I was in.

While we both enjoy searching for unusual birds, Chuck is a more serious birder than I. I do not keep a life list of birds seen in North America but Chuck does. He won't reveal the number of birds he has seen but it must be extensive because his bucket list for birds included only: Dovekie, Black Rail, White-tail Ptarmigan, and Tri-colored Blackbird. We had searched together unsuccessfully for the Black Rail and White-tailed Ptarmigan. I had seen one Dovekie in Rhode Island but that bird I later learned had been found and released in the pond where I spotted it. For serious birders that type of spotting would not "count."

A trip to Newfoundland in January is a bit dicey. Our destination was St. Johns where winter weather, when there is not a raging storm, is quite moderate. But getting there, having good weather for bird watching, finding a dovekie and getting back home would take a bit of luck. We did succeed in getting there; we saw 12 Dovekies; and we did get back. We had very good luck and only a few glitches.

Chuck is a retired math professor and 30 years ago he had made friends with a math professor named Mike Parmeter who lived in St. Johns and also was interested in birds. Although Chuck had not had contact with Mike for many years, he was able to establish e-mail contact. Because Parkinson's was making it difficult for Chuck to type, I took over correspondence with Mike.

Our first sequence of good luck was that Mike would meet us at the airport in St. Johns, take us birding one day, and

put us in contact with a local bird guide. The bird guide was available and was reassuring about finding a Dovekie.

Our flight from Logan to Halifax was uneventful but our flight from Halifax to St. Johns was delayed for more than an hour. Thankfully,

Mike was waiting and took us to our hotel. Mike picked us up the next morning for a day of birding in areas around St. Johns. Early that morning Mike found us five Dovekies. These particular birds, although clearly the bird we were seeking, were rather far away and we hoped for a better look. We continued bird seeking until late afternoon through several periods of moderate snow. For Chuck and I the highlights were Pine Grosbeaks, five species of gulls, and a stop at a town park with an open water spot that was teeming with a variety of ducks.

At the town park many people fed ducks so when we got out of the car, ducks came running toward us and gathered around our feet. There were many species of ducks but for Chuck and me the most interesting were Long-tailed Ducks (Oldsquaw) and Tufted Ducks both of which we had seen back home but with a great deal of effort. Here they were nibbling at our boots.

Mike turned out to be an enthusiastic birder and knew several "hot spots". However, he had one bad habit: when spotting a bird and stopping to examine it through binoculars, he often failed to put the car into "park". From the back seat, I reminded him several times. Late in the day at one stop, Mike got out of the car to look at a bird and the car started to roll backwards. Mike was making an effort to jump back into the car but, before the open door would have knocked him down, Chuck threw the car into "park". It could have been bad.

The next day, the expert bird guide, Alvan, picked us at 6:30 when it was still dark. Off we went for a six hour bird finding tour to the south of St. Johns over slushy roads. Early in the morning Alvan found us several Dovekies that were feeding in water close to the road. These black and white "puff balls" sit high in the water but dive frequently and then pop up. We had excellent extended looks. Mission definitely accomplished! And then it was off to search for more species. First we spotted two land birds that are infrequent in Connecticut: White-winged Crossbills and Common Redpolls. Then it was on to try for ocean birds. Alvan turned out to be a medical student with a passion for birds. He drove fast but expertly on the slushy roads and maneuvered his car onto cliffs overlooking the ocean. Several times he drove very close to the edge of a



cliff and oriented the car so we could observe the water from the car. It was a bit unnerving and I was happy to be in the back seat. Several times my thoughts drifted to wondering how long it would take to get a tow truck to pull us out of a ditch or to rescue us from the bottom of a cliff- if we had survived. After one of these driving maneuvers, Alvan turned and smiled. He knew what I was thinking but he had clearly made these maneuvers before.

We found several groups of Common Eider, a White-winged Surf Scoter, some Black Guillemots, a Kittiwake, and three species of loons- Common, Red-throated, and Pacific. Adding to the joy of finding birds, we spotted and had extended looks at two mammals: a mink and a river otter. It was cold but most of our viewing was from the car.

In chatting with Alvan as we drove along I mentioned that in my retirement I was an artist who made assemblages, some of which used skulls and bones. He mentioned that he had recently found two seal vertebrae and asked if I would like them. Are you kidding? Who wouldn't want seal vertebrae? So of course I said yes. I did have some apprehension of getting the vertebrae thru security but figured I could claim they were from a cow. In any case they went thru the security scanner twice and nothing was said. I did not list them on the custom declaration form. So now I have another treasure to work with.

We were extremely lucky to have two full days of birding with excellent weather and the help of good bird finders. Most of the bird viewing could be done from the car and Chuck managed to get out of the car when necessary even under some icy conditions. But then there was the trip back.

We were scheduled to leave on Sunday afternoon at 2:30. Saturday night there was a period of freezing rain and then several inches of snow. On Sunday the airport did not start functioning until afternoon. Our plane to Halifax arrived late and

continued on page 45


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The Good Life

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

“The Indigenous goal of living ‘a good life’ is sometimes referred to by Native American people as striving ‘to always think the highest thought’. This metaphor refers to the framework of a sophisticated epistemology of community-based, spiritual education in which the community and its traditions form the primary support for its way of life and quality of thinking”. Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence, Gregory Cajete

Lately, I’ve been talking to a variety of people about what for them constitutes ‘the good life’ and how they themselves have gone about acting on their beliefs. I’ve been having these conversations in conjunction with the Reverend Hilary Greer from St. Mark’s Church in Storrs with whom I host a radio show on WHUS 91.7 called ‘The Good Life: Exploring Questions of Life Choices, Relationships and Meanings’ (airs Mondays 10.30 am). Hilary and I met last summer at WHUS’ summer radio class, as we were both interested in doing talk shows and so decided to work together and focus on this topic. We both recognize that throughout much of our culture the understanding of what constitutes ‘the good life’ has become synonymous with ‘personal wealth / professional success’, as opposed to what the Greeks, in particular Aristotle, referred to as ‘intellectual and moral virtue’ or what according to Cajete Native Americans referred to as ‘thinking the highest thought’. My reason for quoting Cajete above, as opposed to say Aristotle, is to affirm that Western thought rooted in Ancient Greece is not the only cultural tradition to theorize / philosophize about ‘the good life’. In addition, it must be remembered that when it comes to the likes of Aristotle, women, slaves, and the lower classes (including all the combinations thereof) were not seen as able to live ‘the good life’ since they lacked the intellectual capacity to do so and therefore could not practice the ‘virtues’. Fortunately, our society rooted in this Greek heritage has progressed in some aspects and as a result a female Reverend (Hilary) and a lesbian sociology professor (me) are able to host such a radio show.



Our interest in this topic stems from the point made above, which is that our corporate society has come to dominate through the corporate media and the incessant message of consumption the dialogue as to what constitutes ‘the good life, to the point where other narratives have very little public space to present an oppositional one. In my last Neighbor’s article, I wrote about the increase in ‘cultural creatives’ (see The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, 2000) within society and yet given the lack of publicity of to this topic and the larger question as to what

constitutes the good life most young people seem to have accepted the corporate narrative, as opposed to larger questions of virtues, such as personal morality and social ethics (simple put morals are seen as more personal, ethics as more social but obviously there is much overlap). So far, Hilary and I have had four quests all of whom have shared aspects of their pasts in order to explain their current life choices, relationships and meanings. Each conversation has been, in my opinion, fascinating in terms of the honesty and depth that we have shared with our guests and each other and has reaffirmed for us as co-hosts the importance of doing this work that in of itself could be referred to as ‘a good thing’, albeit a small one.

This theme of ‘a small good thing’ ties into an upcoming event at The Capitol Theater in Willimantic on March 6th, 3-6 pm sponsored by the non-profits CLiCK, GrowWindham and Windham Arts. We will be doing a partial screening of a new documentary called A Small Good Thing (directed by Pamela Tanner Boll) that follows the interrelated lives of six people. Each of these six individuals are in their own ways doing ‘small good things’ in their communities as a result of asking themselves larger questions about what does it mean to live a good, hence virtuous life. In all six cases, the answer has come back along the lines of what Cajete states about the Native American definition which constitutes “spiritual education in which the community and its traditions form the primary support for its way of life and quality of thinking”. In short, the answer, to which the likes of Aristotle would agree, is engaging in actions that benefit others within ones community, and which consequently benefit us as individuals. To make the screening of this film more personal we have invited numerous individuals from our community to share with the audience what they themselves are doing that would constitute small good things, thereby ensuring that the ways in which we define community are both diverse and inclusive. Too often, as again with Aristotle, concepts of the good life have been and remain exclusionary and homogeneous to the point where ‘one’s’ pursuit of the ‘good life’ is at ‘someone else’s’ expense. Such limited and limiting conceptions, rooted in ideologies of separateness (such as nationalism / racism / sexism / classism / religious intolerance / speciesism ...etc), should no longer be seen as corresponding with the definition of the good life in that we need conceptions that seek the collective good, which includes all life on Earth. Such ‘good’ again must be defined as ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ the highest ‘thought’ / ‘actions’, as opposed to that which contributes to our individualized and monetized personal gain. Just look at the presidential elections and see how the candidates are espousing different conceptions of ‘the good life’ – but for me only one is doing so in a way that includes all life on Earth, as opposed to at the expense of some others.

To conclude, if this is a topic of interest to you, I hope you will join us on March 6th 3pm at the Capital Theater or listen to Hilary and me on the air Monday’s 10.30am, 91.7 WHUS or find your own way of living the good life by thinking and doing the highest thoughts and actions in order to benefit all.

Don't Give Up on Music!

By Ruth O'Neil

It is around this time of year when children who started taking music lessons in the fall or joined their school band often decide to quit. It is also at this time of year when local towns begin to work on preparing the budget for the next fiscal year, often putting school music programs at risk of reduced funding. What do these two situations have in common? Plenty when it comes to a discussion of...the Benefits of Music Education! Here are a few points to ponder:

According to a recent study conducted by neurologist Dr. Frank Wilson, when a musician plays he/she uses approximately 90% of the brain. Wilson could find no other activity that uses the brain to this extent.

-The study had also shown students who took more than four years of music and the other arts scored 34 points better on the verbal portion of the SAT than those who took music for less than a year.

-Unlike competitive team sports, students in school band or orchestra can always participate. No one sits on the bench waiting for a chance to play.

-Students who participate in school music programs are 52% more likely to go on to college and graduate.

-Students in band or orchestra develop higher cognitive skills and increased ability to analyze and evaluate information.

They also learn about teamwork and conflict/resolution skills required for success in the modern workplace while enjoying the healthy, positive activity of band and orchestra with friends.

-When a child succeeds at the diverse tasks required to play an instrument, self-esteem is enhanced.

-As a student begins to understand the connection between practice and the quality of performance, self-discipline becomes self-enforcing. It may then be only a short jump to making the connection between self-discipline and performance in life.

(Above information provided courtesy of Veritas Instrument Rental.)

If you, as a parent, student or taxpayer, have any questions about these (and other!) benefits of learning to play an instrument (including voice!), please feel free to contact me. As a lifelong singer/songwriter and former public school educator, I (along with all the staff at Song-a-Day Music) remain committed to bringing the joy of music to young people. I can be reached at the Song-a-Day Music Center, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry, CT. 860-742-6878. www.songadaymusic.com.

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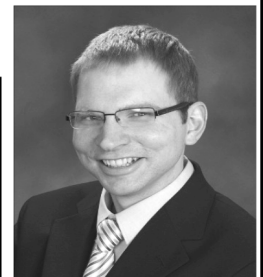
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Early Immigrant Tales

By Delia Berlin

I arrived to Mansfield, Connecticut, in 1976. I came from Argentina as a young graduate student with limited English and cultural understanding. The need to adapt quickly to a very different environment causes such heightened alertness that I remember many of my early US experiences quite vividly.

The transition was difficult. First, I left Buenos Aires when summer was about to start and arrived here, just twelve hours later, when winter was beginning. Second, Buenos Aires is a huge old city, full of amenities, cultural life and entertainment. In contrast, even now after four decades of development that included the addition of a community center and a downtown Storrs, Mansfield is a sleepy rural town where almost all activity revolves around UCONN. But at least I wasn't alone. I had come with my first husband and my parents and siblings lived just a couple of hours away in Stamford. Soon after we were admitted to UCONN as physics graduate students, we were thrilled to hear that just three or four miles from the house where we would live, there was a city. City mice that we were, we asked for directions. Surprisingly, this city was easy to reach by an easy drive down Route 195. How wonderful!

At first we thought that we kept missing the turn, but upon clarification we realized that we had actually passed by the "city" several times. Yes, the city was Willimantic, already struggling with the decline of the mills and the emergence of the new mall.

A long period of going to Boston or New York on weekends and holidays followed, until we figured out what people did around here, where the world seemed to go down with the sun at 4:15. Since there was nothing to do at night, TV helped us to get used to the American accent relatively quickly. Fortunately we had about a month of this before the start of the spring semester; our academic knowledge of English was mostly British, so it was incredibly hard to understand spoken English in this area.

We had moved into a new house, and by the time we started classes in late January we had it furnished and we had managed to obtain all necessary utilities and services. Each one was a complete adventure. Take for example, the rural mailbox. Our new house didn't have one, and being from the city we



Delia Berlin and David Corsini

Contributed photo

didn't even know where they came from... I still remember with gratitude how ours just appeared in its place one day. Pat Ferrigno, our realtor, had taken it upon himself to install it as a housewarming present. A miracle! Thank you, Pat!

We encountered that type of kindness many times in those days. Not only were people nice, but everything seemed reliable and efficient. The days of being put on hold for a service call, of having to block four hours for appliance deliveries, or even having to show identification for large purchases, were nowhere in the horizon. It was literally too good to be true. Today, I am more likely to get nostalgic for those days than for my former country.

That first winter in Mansfield was cold and snowy, so we didn't even find out until spring that our property hadn't been landscaped. We hired someone to spread soil and plant grass, and we cultivated some plants that appeared on each side of the front door. We later found out that those plants were sumac and ink berry, two common and unpopular "weeds" that any New Englander would have pulled out. But to me they looked beautiful and even today I allow them to grow in less conspicuous places, for the birds' sake.

One of my early utopian memories relates to the unconditional return policies of those days. I hardly ever buy something that I must return, but as that first spring got started, we had a problem. We needed a hose to water our new grass. We went to the big store in the mall, which then was Caldor's. We picked a hose that was on sale and headed back home.

I was in the shower when my husband came to consult: "That hose we just bought is sealed with a brass fitting at the spout end... What should we do?" Well... to me that was a no-brainer: "Cut it off!" Seemed reasonable to him too, but soon my husband was back in the bathroom: "That hose is full of holes! No wonder it was on sale! It doesn't have a single good segment!"

We were back to Caldor's in a jiffy returning the "defective" hose, and in the usual "no questions asked" way of those days, they told us to go get another one. When we picked a replacement we noticed the picture on the box, showing a watering hose neatly sprinkling the lawn through two lines of perfect holes. Of course, for that arrangement to work, the end needed to be sealed with the fitting we had just cut off. We laughed all the way home!

Also that first spring, our major advisor invited us to have dinner at his home. We had received a great deal of cultural coaching from friends and family about social rules. One of these rules related to punctuality. We were always

punctual – much more consistently punctual than the average American in the Northeast. But for dinner invitations in Argentina, you would be expected to arrive at least 15 minutes late, an unspoken understanding giving the hosts a buffer zone to get ready. Here, we were told, the rule was to arrive at EXACTLY the given time.

The afternoon of the dinner we were home working on physics problems, but so anxious about offending our hosts that we couldn't concentrate. We decided to set the alarm to leave with plenty of time. We figured that once we found the house we could drive around until the EXACT time. And so we did... At EXACTLY the time we were told, we rang the bell. Our advisor's wife opened the door. It took me about half a second to know that something was terribly wrong, and just a little longer to realize what: We had just "sprung forward" but our alarm clock had not. We were EXACTLY an hour early! Our host was extremely gracious and resisted our profuse apology and suggestion to leave for an hour – we could have used the time and so could she! I wanted the earth to swallow me as I heard her talking to her husband on the phone: "Yes, dear, yes they ARE here... yes!"

As time went on, I probably broke rules many more times than I am aware, but either people were too kind to let me know, or I was too oblivious if they tried to let me know. Times have changed, but fortunately most people here are still forgiving and accepting beyond expectations.

Willimantic is now my home. I can't imagine living anywhere else. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to feel part of it. Migrating is not easy and it's rarely done on a whim. But my own reasons for that are another story. This is the good story. It's not the breaking apart, but the growing together. How improbable and wonderful: Willimantic, my home...

"First appeared in Joint Accounts, Selected Essays by an Older Couple, Delia Berlin & David Corsini, 2016. Published with authors' permission."

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Looking Up:

Knowing Which Direction We Are Headed

By Bob Grindle

A few weeks ago the family—five of us—drove north to Lincoln, New Hampshire to celebrate a birthday. The plan was to do some hiking in the White Mountain National Forest; eat a packed lunch in the Crawford Notch or Franconia Notch area; do some more sightseeing; visit the ice castle in Lincoln; eat dinner at the marvelous Gypsy Café and drive home...a full day. It went well...sort of! We left more than a foot of snow here in Connecticut and as we drove north in the early morning hours of a Saturday morning, the snow cover grew thinner and thinner, until, by the time we got to northern New Hampshire, there was little or no snow. (Odd, that.) We had plenty of warm-weather clothing and boots for hiking in the, uh, snow, but, ah, the biting, blustery wind took some of the thrill out of hiking and reminded me of the complaint I hear most often about star gazing this time of year: it's just too uncomfortable to spend much time outside looking up.

That's too bad though, because this has been a great season for viewing the night sky. Several nights and mornings have been so uncommonly clear that even just a few minutes of time spent looking up were rewarded with being able to see clearly some of the signposts in the sky that can help to navigate one's way into the billions-of-years-old sea of stars. While I'm on the subject, let me suggest that you visit the Goodwin Conservation Center Clear Sky Chart at <http://www.cleardarksky.com/c/GoodwinCCCTkey.html?1> Goodwin State Forest, in Hampton, has some very good dark skies, but it also has a lot of trees that get in the way. The real value of this website is in the tremendous number of links to information that will help guide you to more information about making sense of the sky above.

The coming months will offer many chances to reach up and touch—visually—our celestial neighbors. In the early, pre-dawn sky through much of March, a quick look South will reveal both Saturn and Mars edging ever closer to one

another, and very near Antares, the Red Supergiant star, known to the ancients as the heart of the scorpion, in the constellation Scorpius. If you happen to be out and about on Friday evening, March 11, looking to the East you'll see the very bright Jupiter poised about half way up in the sky, directly below the sickle of stars that form the head of Leo. In fact, Jupiter will be a dominant presence in the night sky throughout March. Later in the month, the full Moon rises very near Jupiter on the evening of the 21st, and by dawn on the 28th and 29th, a waning crescent of Moon is to the upper right first of Mars, then of Saturn.

No matter how familiar I become with the positions of the stars and planets, I will always have a weakness for the Moon. It is easy to pick out and it makes for a great sign post. As well, in our celestial neighborhood—a barrio composed of billions of hydrogen furnaces furiously converting the cosmic piles of molecular hydrogen into more the complex molecules that make up everything else in the universe—this apparent pop-up of a sometimes hard to remember encyclopedic list of very important players, the Moon is like a sibling: comfortable. Traveling around the neighborhood with timeless regularity, tidal forcefulness and occasional special events, the Moon peeks and boasts its way in and out of our lives.

A thin sliver of waxing Moon very nearly balances on the fulcrum of Aldebaran in the constellation Taurus on Sunday night, April 10th, an hour or so after sunset as one looks to the West. A week later, at about the same time—9 or 10 o'clock at night, on April 16th—a now gibbous Moon high in the southern sky helps to identify the sickle that forms the head of Leo, hanging like a pendant jewel on a chain. Carry this analogy yet a week later in April, and by the full Moon of the mornings of April 24th, 25th in the southwestern sky, we're back to the constellation Scorpius. In the predawn sky of April 25th the Moon will sit almost directly over Mars and slightly to the right of Saturn. Scorpius, a constellation that can be hard to identify since it usually sits so close to the horizon, is now almost lost in

the bright light of the Moon but hasn't changed position since the moonless morning skies of early April.

Like learning a language, gaining familiarity with the stars, planets, constellations, legends and wives-tales of the heavens above us requires a steady commitment to being exposed to the culture. In a much earlier time on our North American continent, the Native American culture known as the Crow Indian Nation used the star grouping that we call the Big Dipper— they called it simply The Seven Brothers—to help locate Polaris (the North Star), which they called the Star That Does Not Move. In our modern world we rarely, if ever, need to find Polaris for any other reason than to know we can find it. As a Crow Indian on the northern plains, though, it could have been a matter of life and death and knowing which direction you were headed.

Having grown up in an area of Indiana where the clocks were never moved forward or back, I am always a bit giddy at the prospect of changing the clocks and somewhat frivolously gaining or losing an hour. May you all enjoy the coming of spring and gaining an extra hour of daylight at the end of the day. I think that's how it works, even though we really lose an hour.

Bob Grindle is a Windham Hospital retiree and a student in the Astronomy Minor program at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Willimantic Couple Publishes Books

Submitted by Delia Berlin and David Corsini

For several years now, David Corsini has been a regular contributor to *Neighbors*. His stories have developed a following and he even gets fan mail. His wife, Delia Berlin, had encouraged him for some time to compile these stories into a collection, but while he didn't seem opposed to the idea, he didn't show enthusiasm either.

Then Delia thought about reframing the compilation into a joint project, with writings from both of them. This seemed like a natural choice, since both David and Delia write much and often. Years ago, Delia published parrot care books, and more recently she has been writing bilingual children's books.

David and Delia are residents of Willimantic. Both are retired local educators. In addition to writing, David creates three-dimensional assemblages from found materials at his Moulton Court studio.

Joint Accounts and Mutual Funs are collections of biographical essays, independently written and touching upon many topics. The stories interconnect through settings and characters, sketching a picture of the authors' lives together. While most of David's stories have previously appeared in *Neighbors*, most of Delia's have not.

David and Delia are already working on Long-Term Bonds, the third volume of this series. Their books can be obtained at bookstores, online retailers and libraries.

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Pine Acres Lake in Goodwin State Forest, Hampton. January 2016.

Jace Paul photo.

Eastern Connecticut From the Trails:

Life's Questions Approached Obliquely

By Jace Paul

Of the trails in January and February, one thing can be said assuredly: they're even quieter than usual. The cold and snow keep many would-be adventurers home at their steaming cups of tea, or drowning in hours of Netflix programming. Venturing into the state parks and forests is far from most minds, and so the great white pines, laden with frigid crowns of soft powder, are appreciated by none but the odd fox in search of a meal or a mate at the crepuscular hours.

Hiking in the winter and early spring is not for everyone, but for the intrepid soul, a foray into the forests in the bleak midwinter offers the chance for a unique experience. The great stillness of a snow-clad wild compels contemplation and reflection, perhaps on life's grand questions best approached obliquely. There's beauty, of course, in a fresh-fallen carpet of white and in the swirling grey skies more common than rampant blue ones in the first months of a new year. If solitude is your desire, you'll find that in as prodigious a scale as Connecticut can ever offer. The silence of a stand of white pines after a great snowfall is pristine, expansive, and majestic. It seems that the world has come to a halt in the perfect stillness of things, and any sound at all takes on cavernous breadth in the cathedral of ice and snow. A hike in Natchaug after the blizzard in January had me puzzling about a persistent tapping sound that seemed to rattle the woods from trunk to canopy.

With further exploration, I discovered the unlikely culprit for such a calamitous sound: a humble Eastern Bluebird tapping on the bark of a Mountain Ash tree.

As you chart your own trajectory through freeze-dried ridges and dells, you can also observe where other life forms have come and gone. Winter hiking provides the best opportunity to learn about animal tracks. Snow and mud lift the veil of secrecy on the world of animal behavior and habits, and the land becomes a perfect textbook for the autodidact to educate herself about the wildlife in Connecticut. On the most commonly traveled routes, human and domestic dog tracks will dominate, but deer, coyote, rabbit, fisher, and many other tracks are there to study, too. While hiking the Salmon River trail in Colchester recently, I had the rare good fortune of tracking a mother black bear and her cub for about a quarter of a mile (more on Salmon River in the next issue).

Before you venture out on the trails, however, you'll want to take precautions in addition to those which one takes for a hike in the warmer weather. It's easy to suppose that common sense is the only guide needed when preparing for a winter hike – but common sense can lead us astray. For example, one of the most important preparations for a winter hike is to pack extra water. Many people wrongly assume that they will need less water when temperatures are cool, but in fact we need as much or more water in the winter as the spring. While we may perspire less in colder

weather, depending on the amount of clothing we have on, sweat evaporates quickly in dry air. But, more important, we tend to drink only when we feel thirsty, and our body's thirst mechanism is short-circuited in cold weather. Our body constricts the blood vessels in our extremities to conserve heat in our core, but that also raises our blood pressure – and low blood pressure due to low fluid volume is one of the primary triggers of thirst. Consequently, we are likely to lose a lot of water but not experience the sensation of thirst that should compel us to rehydrate. Bring extra water, and drink at regularly intervals (3-4 ounces every 10 minutes is recommended) even if you don't feel thirsty.

When choosing your attire, dress in layers rather than “bundling” up in burdensome winter gear. If you overdo the warm clothing, you'll over-exert yourself, perspire more, and tire quickly. Instead, put on a thin layer of insulated clothing first, then a removable sweater or sweatshirt, and then your winter coat and gear. As you exercise, you'll now be free to remove layers and add them back as needed, helping you regulate your internal temperature and minimize your energy expenditure. Make sure your feet are protected with a high-ankle, water-resistant pair of hiking boots. Moisture can readily get into your socks, especially in deep snow. Good traction on your boots will also help you navigate perilous ice patches and downward stretches of trail coated with snow. Don't forget to put extra socks, gloves, and a hat in your pack.

If you're going out in more than a few inches of snow, make sure to adjust your time commitment for a hike accordingly. Thick snow will dramatically slow your progress, and I recommend taking your regular hiking time and tripling it. Trail conditions can be unpredictable in the winter and spring, and prudence is your best sentinel against the unexpected. We've had some heavy rains and quick thaws this year, and in my travels I've encountered washed out trails, river swells making passage impossible (or requiring a risky crossing), and extensive stretches of thick mud. Downed branches and even trees – especially in March and April when rainy and windy weather dominate – are also possibilities to consider on the trail. Proper planning and the right gear has helped me complete hikes and have an enjoyable – even thrilling – experience to boot. Be mindful of the fickleness of weather in New England, and supplement your gear with affordable hand warmers (usually 2/\$1.00) and emergency ponchos (\$1 each).

In the dark of winter, we tend to become drawn into inner worlds: the warm living room, the easy study of minds at rest. The outdoors is still available to us, and whether your desire is to stay in shape or find solitude to ponder winter's eternal decree that all things must, from time to time, come to a halt, the forest is waiting for you. See you out on the trails.

Jace Paul is a writer and photographer who lives in Willimantic. He is the author of two books of verse: Eggshells & Entropy, and King's Road to Pleasant Street (and Other Poems to Nowhere,) and a number of screen projects including the series “AP Life.”

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A (Local) Alternative to Money?

By Len Krimerman

Money may be the root of all evil, but can we do without it?

Maybe not altogether, but we can perhaps diminish its most nefarious influences. That's a main aim of a whole family of novel approaches to economic activity and exchange. You may have heard of some of them: the Gift Economy, Share Economy, local currencies, community exchange systems, mutual credit, time banking, LETS (local enterprise and trade system), etc.

It's estimated that worldwide, there are over twenty thousand of these "money-free", or labor-based, initiatives. And their numbers have been increasing consistently over the past two decades. One example is the Hour World network (<https://hourworld.org/>) of some five hundred local time banking exchanges, in which almost forty thousand individuals have exchanged two million hours of labor and services.

It gets better: one of these is located right here in our eastern Connecticut backyard. It's called the Windham Area Hour Exchange, or WAHE for short. We have about 200 members, who have exchanged over three thousand hours. Last month, we celebrated our three year anniversary at Willimantic's Capitol Theater Arts Academy on Main Street.

But how do WAHE and the rest of these initiatives

get beyond money? Basically, by trading our labor. Through a common accessible list, each member lets all of the others know what he or she needs and what they are willing to offer. Yes, we're talking barter here, but not your great-great grandmother's barter, which was restricted to 1-1 exchanges. Time banks or hour exchanges enable what might be called "community-based barter". When a member of WAHE offers their labor or time, they earn credits (hours) that can be spent to acquire the labor and services of any other member, and not just that of the single person who received their labor.

For example, Jean may give three hours of piano lessons to John, but she may not want any of what John has to offer. Instead, Jean may use her credit hours to get computing guidance from Daisy or landscaping assistance from Jim. (See accompanying graphic.)

What most attracted me to WAHE went beyond its replacement of money by labor. I liked its egalitarian insistence on counting everyone's labor as equal – your hour teaching space-time physics is worth no more or less than mine mowing your lawn. And I saw the exchange as a place where people would be encouraged and compensated for both exercising their current skills and learning new ones; and where new businesses could get start-up assistance and established ones acquire new customers. Overall, the Exchange seemed to me an amazing way to bring out the volunteer spirit throughout our

The Windham Area Hour Exchange

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The core values of

- Everyone has skills
- All work should be honored and rewarded
- There is joy and benefit to both giving and receiving
- Community is built on relationships
- People deserve respect

They are all earning time dollars to be spent on whatever service they want

communities and region, since it would enable volunteers to receive tangible compensation as well as appreciation.

So why am I telling you all of this? Mainly, because having 200 members, though a decent start, is far from enough. To be really worthwhile and sustainable, our Exchange needs many more members with many diverse skills and energies to join in. My not-so-hidden motive in writing about WAHE is to invite readers of Neighbors, and all those they are connected with, to consider becoming members of our money-free experiment.

You can find out more about WAHE and on how to become a member from our Coordinator, Eva Csejtey, at 860-450-7500, ext. 7458; or at eva.csejtey@accessagency.org. And starting on April 8th, look for me on Friday afternoons behind a table at the front of the Willimantic Food Cooperative, where I'll be happy to meet and chat with anyone – whether a member, a potential member, or just interested – about the WAHE. And you can also reach me at editors@geo.coop.

UConn KIDS

Submitted by Brandy Ciraldo

UConn KIDS stands for Kids in Developmental Science. This division of UConn is an interdisciplinary organization and volunteer contact database for child development research.

Our research encompasses studies done across a number of different departments at the University of Connecticut including: Cognitive Science, Educational Psychology, Human Development & Family Studies, Linguistics, Psychology, Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences, and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. This research is carried out at either our Storrs, Waterbury, or Hartford Campuses.

Early cognitive development, peer relations, and language acquisition are a just a few among the many research topics studied by the UConn KIDS team.

We are recruiting for all kinds of children to participate in our studies. Joining the UConn KIDS contact database allows parents to be contacted about particular studies that their child or children are eligible for.

Families that participate in research may be compensated as a gesture of thanks with a gift card, t-shirt or other items depending on the research study. Feel free to ask about compensation before engaging in a study.

Participating in research can be an opportunity for some new, fun and interesting activities for children and helps to contribute to scientific discovery.

Interested families can review studies on our website www.kids.uconn.edu or reach the Child Research Recruitment Coordinator at kids@uconn.edu/ 860-486-3820.

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Save the UConn Co-op

By Suzy Staubach

As I write this, the University of Connecticut is deciding whether to let the UConn Co-op continue, after 41 years, as the bookstore for the University or to replace it with a distantly-managed corporate operator. In December, the University put out an RFP, eliciting proposals to replace the Co-op. The Co-op also submitted a proposal, seeking to continue its service to UConn and the surrounding communities. The University's decision, expected to be announced sometime in March, will impact the cultural life of all who reside within the Neighbors readership area. I, and many others, hope they choose to keep the locally owned, independent UConn Co-op.

Neil Gaiman wrote, "...a town isn't a town without a bookstore. It may call itself a town, but unless it's got a bookstore, it's not fooling a soul" The UConn Co-op serves all of UConn's campuses, but none more fully than in Storrs, with the flagship store next to Gampel offering textbooks, Connecticut's largest selection of Husky gear, computers, computer service, and supplies; and the UConn Co-op Bookstore in Storrs Center, offering a large, carefully curated selection of books, artists' supplies, and a busy calendar of events in an award-winning space.

The reaction to the possible loss of the Co-op has been strong. Thousands of community members, students, alum and faculty have signed the Change.org Save the UConn Co-op petition and left thousands of heartfelt comments. If you have not signed or left a comment, consider doing so now. Even more thousands signed the paper petition asking UConn to keep the Co-op.

Blues Without Borders, the extraordinary faculty band featuring Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Mark Overmyer-Velazquez, Harry A. Frank, Harvey Swadlow, Lewis Gordon, and Melina Pappademos will be in the bookstore Friday, March 4th at 7:00 pm for a special "Concert in Support of Our Co-op." Esteemed poets Martín Espada and Lauren Schmidt will read on March 24th at 5:00 in support of the bookstore. In between these two events in support of the bookstore, will be Thursday evening UConn Jazz performances, visits by such authors as David Leff, Adrienne Bracki Braconi, and Joe Nocera, as always the ever-popular art by Andrea Wisniewski and more. The UConn Co-op remains a vibrant and exciting place, welcoming everyone through its doors.

The UConn Co-op was formed as a non-profit, member-owed co-operative in 1975 in response to disappointment with the service of Follett, the national chain that was then operating the bookstore. The Co-op built and paid for a store in the center of campus, between Hawley Armory and the Homer Babbidge Library. Here, legendary authors such as Douglas Adams, Anne Rice and Madeleine L'Engle came to read. The store filled with so many fans after the men's first national championship, that people stood on the counters. And the Co-op began to offer computers and computer software for

sale. It was a friendly, some thought funky, bookstore set at the busiest cross walk on campus.

UConn, however, wanted this location for classrooms, and asked the Co-op to vacate its paid for building and move to new premises on Hillside Road. Reluctant to leave the heart of campus, but more than willing to be a good UConn citizen, the Co-op consented. Leaving behind its own home, and becoming a tenant of UConn, the Co-op agreed to pay the bonds for the South Parking Garage, an obligation that it fulfilled.

Bestselling authors Suzanne Collins, Christopher Moore, and our own Wally Lamb appeared at the new store. Off Yer Rockers performed and raised money for the Covenant Soup Kitchen. Many basketball championships were celebrated.

When the Downtown Partnership, a collaboration of UConn and the town of Mansfield, wanted a bookstore in the new Storrs Center, the Co-op stepped up. At the time, Leyland Alliance and UConn had entered into conversation with Barnes and Noble to build a store in Storrs Center, but B&N would only agree if they could take over the main store on campus. In other words, B&N would have come to Storrs Center, but required the demise of the UConn Co-op to do so.

Instead, at great expense, and with everyone in the organization realizing it was going to be a financial stretch with projected losses for a few years, the Co-op built a world-class bookstore with an art gallery, a black box theater shared with the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry with whom the bookstore often collaborates, and a wonderful selection of books. Business was good despite the fact that Storrs Center remained a construction zone for two years after the bookstore's opening. The array of independent boutique stores that were initially promised did not materialize. The apartments everyone was assured would attract faculty and mature graduate students instead became essentially dormitories with undergraduate residents. There is nothing wrong with having undergraduates living above the store, but it gave Storrs Center a different demographic than initially presented. Nevertheless, the UConn Co-op Bookstore at Storrs Center became a meeting place and cultural hub, which it is today.

With locally owned businesses, such as the Co-op, 3.5 times as much revenue remains within the community as with a chain. Local businesses "recirculate 47.7 percent of revenue locally, compared to 13.6 percent for chains." Local businesses are better for the local economy than out-of-state businesses.

For a few years, independent bookstores were battered by the chains, and more so by Amazon. Stores closed across the nation. Then, with the rise of e-books, pundits predicted the demise of paper books, which would further erode independent bookstores. As it turns out, however, sales of e-books reached a plateau a couple of years ago, and new adopters have declined. Independent bookstores are on the rise, with 30% more stores now than in 2009. Sales at independent bookstores are up across the nation. It turns out, people want the experience and

service an independent offers.

The Co-op is part of the greater Storrs community. Staff members are part of the community. The staff, including management and the Board, lives and works and shops here. And the Co-op gives back, contributing to the Covenant Soup Kitchen, Books for Babies, many student groups, and more. It brings authors into area schools. It jointly developed and puts on the annual Connecticut Children's Book Fair with the UConn Libraries. It brings authors to Storrs. It celebrates local authors, artists and musicians. It leads the very popular Where's Waldo scavenger hunt in which more than 20 other independent businesses in Mansfield, participate by hiding Waldo standees (which the Co-op provides) in their establishments for children to find.

The University has had some criticisms of the Co-op, such as the textbook website going down during RUSH, but that was more than a year ago and has been rectified. Other problems have been aggressively addressed. And contrary to rumors, the bookstore is solvent.

It would be a loss for the UConn community and the larger community, should the Co-op be dissolved and replaced with a for-profit, corporate entity with no real connection or commitment to our area, our people, or our history. It would not be beneficial to the community to bring in a corporate outside entity that sent most of its revenues out of state.

When Storrs Downtown was envisioned, we were all told that it would become a destination: that it would make Storrs a college town like Amherst. Yet, without unique, independent businesses, such as the UConn Co-op Bookstore, Storrs Center becomes anywhere-USA. Is that what we want?

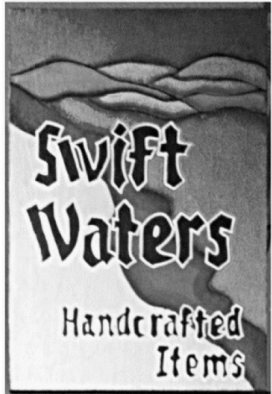
I no longer work at the UConn Co-op, but I am a customer. I buy books. If we lose the Co-op, I and everyone else in the area, will have to drive 45 miles to visit an independent bookstore. Our community is home to many readers and writers and scholars. We deserve a robust independent bookstore of our own. We have one now. Let's keep it.

Many people have been working hard, writing letters, signing petitions, talking on the phone, attending meetings, trying to convince the University to Keep the UConn Co-op. I hope, for all of our sakes, they succeed.

Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher



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Practical Permaculture

Thinking and Working, In Levels and Layers

By William Hooper

Immersed in the bountiful green depths of a flourishing permaculture garden, “abundance” echoes in the mind. Whereas a ‘normal’ garden conjures up neat rows of plants in carefully-rectangular beds, a permaculture space often means plants in every available inch, riding a line between total chaos and beautiful completeness.

Accomplishing this kind of bursting fullness, where there’s no niche left for weeds to exploit, no homogeneity to breed pests and pathogens, no speck of sun nor drop of rain wasted, it’s a long-term goal. A tool for helping achieve that goal is the “eight layers” of permaculture, which can help you visualize the way growing things can be stacked.

- 1) Canopy (highest trees)
- 2) Subcanopy (dwarf trees, tallest shrubs)
- 3) Shrub layer (woody perennials, very large herbaceous plants)
- 4) Herbaceous layer (bulk of soft-body plants)
- 5) Soil surface (ground cover crops)
- 6) Rhizosphere (undersoil layer of root crops and tubers)
- 7) Vertical ‘layer’ (climbing vines)
- 8) Decomposer layer (A layer in time, not space – everything ends up here.)

Fill a garden bed with many identical plants, all the same variety of tomato. This is ‘Pop Goes the Weasel’ picked out on the piano; there’s only one tune, one layer, all the same volume, all the same notes. This is the giant field of monoculture corn, or the lawn carefully groomed to be nothing but a single kind of grass. A single-layer planting makes inefficient use of resources; there is only a single height of material absorbing sun and water, and every inch of the soil is squeezed for the same nutrients. As repetition of a single simple tune grows tiresome to hear, single-layer monocultures exhaust soil in a few seasons without constant outside inputs.

Now plant the same bed, still with tomatoes, but a mix of varieties. Some are tall and vining, some low and bushy; some sprout early and some sprout late, red, yellow, orange, and purple. This is a group singing happy birthday; now we’re still all singing the same song (same plant), but there’s a multitude of voices, some singing higher and some lower. This is better; just as a mixed group of singers can lose a few members and still sound good, so too can a bed of mixed varieties better endure the loss of some plants. A late spring frost may kill the earliest blooming ones, but not the later-blooming cultivars, just as short-growing cultivars may thrive when a windstorm knocks over the taller, thinner plants. As a few strong voices can carry many weak ones, so can a few strong plants keep soil held in place and blunt hard rains and winds, helping weaker plants survive.

Following our musical pattern, the next step is a rock band, playing some radio-standard song. The garden equivalent would be mixed annuals, the ‘normal’ garden for most folks. Now we have distinct ‘parts’ in our music, and different species of plants in our garden. Our ensemble of plants can be positioned to reinforce each other productively. Interplanting basil among tomatoes helps deter tomato-eating pests, analogous to how a good drummer can keep a guitarist on-rhythm. All the plants thrive better if no one plant dominates, just like a band sounds best if no one member’s volume overrides all others. However, like multiple instruments all contributing to the same straightforward song, a garden of mixed annuals still often involves a single layer of plants. The plants are usually the same relative size class, many of them fruit during the same time, and they largely root to the same soil depth. Obviously, you can plant some lovely gardens in this fashion, just like there are uncomplicated pop songs we still listen to decades later. But just as music producers crank out a continual stream of ‘new’ songs like this every year to keep people tuning in, gardens like this need replanting and re-working year after year, season after season.

So let’s move on to the kind of complex, interwoven music that people still praise decades later. Think of Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” or the Beach Boy’s “Good Vibrations”. To echo those multi-layered works in garden form, imagine: a dwarf fruit tree, growing to 10’ and rooting to a similar depth, and persisting for decades. In the dim moist shade under its canopy, edible fungi sprout on ‘waste’ wood. Around its outer periphery, woody shrubs like blueberries, and tall herbaceous perennial plants like lovage (useful as a low-maintenance replacement for celery). Beyond that, mixed beds of shorter crops; tomatoes and peppers shoot up and provide welcome cooling shade for plants like crisp lemony French sorrel and reliable old spinach. Weaving around through the whole works, stone paths and living groundcovers like creeping thyme and nitrogen-fixing clovers help avoid barren soil and suppress weeds. Now our garden, like an elegant polyphonic musical composition, has multiple melodies, multiple plants, occupying multiple levels. Each layer represents another chance for the garden to get value from sunlight and rain. Under the soil, plants root to multiple depths, reducing competition and ensuring that nutrients are brought up from deep below as well as cycled efficiently at the surface level. No one micronutrient in the soil is likely to be completely exhausted, and the different plants contribute to more efficient recycling of micro- and macro-nutrients.

Our end point of design mastery is the garden-as-symphony. Like an orchestra weaving its way through the elegant complexity of a Bach fugue, where multiple tunes emerge and fade and interweave, take our garden and extend the layering to different points in time. Our top-level tree helps support a trellis of vining early peas, greening out in weather

still too cold for other plants, producing food even as they fix nitrogen to rejuvenate the soil. Baby spinach pokes up south of the tree, in the tree's warmer microclimate, as early-season flowers attract pollinators and nectary plants ensure beneficial insect populations stay high. As the season heats up, spinach plants protect young tomato plants from drying out, and later thrive in the tomatoes' dappled shade. A midsummer replanting of heat-sensitive veggies will stay cool in the shade of the full-grown warm-season plants, then thrive as the weather cools down. Now we've stacked physical layers as well as growing times, and in doing so we've further multiplied our own advantages to create favorable microclimates for ourselves throughout the seasons. Can you hear the music yet?

Remember, each layer won't necessarily be active at all times, and good designs access between three and five layers at a time; more than that tends to get too crowded. Instead of packing eight layers in one spot, devote certain areas of your garden to subgroups of three or four. Salads and sandwiches are both multilayer foods, but they aren't improved by mashing all of the layers together in one bowl.

As always, give yourself permission to experiment, and realize that no experiment fails as long as you learn. Dig deeper into resources about companion planting, successional planting, and the varieties of root structures and depths of plants in order to better overlap and layer your designs. Until next time, keep watching and keep learning.

Permaculture (from "permanent" and "culture") is a conscious approach to design and implementation of systems, agricultural and otherwise, whose goal is sustainable production over an indefinitely long timeline, without assuming constant new synthetic energy inputs or betting on future technologies to correct current mistakes.

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Clarifying Gandhi #10

Feeling the ‘Bern’ with Gandhi 80 years ago in India

By P.K. Willey, Ph.D.

“The penalty good men pay for indifference to politics is to be ruled by evil men.” – Plato

The Nation owes thanks to Bernie Sanders for educating us all on the meanings of socialism. Sanders’ example has allowed citizens to be able to put these formerly ‘politically incorrect’ words back into public discourse: resource management tools for our democratic use; no longer identified with the houses of ignoble governments. We rightly shun unjust oppression, perhaps this is what has been behind a general ‘deafness’ in understanding terms.

Democracy, ‘people’s rule’, is a form of governance, not a system of resource management like socialism or communism, which can both assist democracy in achieving its ends. Socialism, in its ideal, ensures economic justice through equal distribution of goods and basic opportunities. Communism, in its ideal, holds production and distribution of resources for society in common, or by the power of the state, for the people. It is not known if the face of the Earth has ever seen any of these ideals in unsullied operation. Capitalism thus far, relies on the market to manage resources for individual profit, and has evidentially not helped democratic governance.

Gandhi found that pressures of ‘political correctness’ or coercive popular peer pressure discouraged individual questioning of political and social trends, and were therefore detrimental to the exercise of democracy:

“The spirit of democracy cannot be established in the midst of terrorism whether governmental or popular. In some respects popular terrorism is more antagonistic to the growth of the democratic spirit than the governmental. For the latter [governmental terrorism] strengthens the spirit of democracy, whereas the former [popular or politically correct coercion] kills it.”¹

Like Sanders now, Gandhi in his time (1869-1948),

had also to address public confusion on the meaning of ‘socialism’, ‘communism’ and ‘democracy’. Back then, there was a communist party in the USA, as well as socialist. Gandhi saw the context of these terms as being affected by differing notions as to the innate nature of human beings. Speaking to an Indian audience, he said:

“Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior in the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.”²

Real Democracy is Ahimsa in Action

Gandhi presented world thought with a thorough grounding in the meaning, exercise, and refinement of democracy. A working democracy keeps ahimsa, or non-violence, non-exploitation, through the exercise of tolerance and love, at its core. Gandhi’s vision of democracy in practice meant practical reforms in social, economic, educational, political, environmental, personal, and spiritual life. Gandhi saw that a vision of real democracy as an Indian ideal, had to be re-created; the political will of the people was addled – riddled with the corruption of economic and racial domination, caste, and hierarchical issues:

“To bring this ideal into being the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based upon non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent too shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.”³



The first Indian flag, endorsed by Gandhi had the spinning wheel in its center, to place the role of the artisan in India’s new democracy firmly into the minds of all.

Contributed photo

Throughout known history, India had been a welcoming spiritual haven for those who were religiously or politically persecuted. As such, the genuine foundation of democracy was laid deep into the social ethos: tolerance and patience for vastly differing outlooks on life; a deep, deep, respect for individual liberty. Naked (sky-clad) Seekers mesh with atheists, Zoroastrians known as Parsees, put their dead in silent towers for birds to eat, whilst Hindus cremated, some worshiped the cows, while others ate them; monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry, transgender identities, all co-exist. The arenas of divergence and congruence is nowhere more unrestricted and all-embraced than India. At its core, was an authentic exercise of liberty and non-violent toleration for differing views.

Gandhi was to pull on that profoundly democratic spirit underpinning the society as India's contribution to round out the commonly understood definition of democracy into Swaraj; raising democracy to a highly ethical and morally oriented political system that extolled individual responsibility:

“The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which ‘independence’ often means.”⁴... “If Swaraj was not meant to civilise us, and to purify and stabilise our civilisation, it would be worth nothing. The very essence of our civilisation is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.”⁵

For Gandhi, a working democracy meant ethical relationships between interdependent factors of economics, the purpose of life, social governance and use of resources. He saw that a real working democracy could not bear the strain of usurping the rights of others:

“My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronising regard for the weak... Western democracy as it functions today, [this was said in 1940] is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e., without violence. Our weapons are those of Satyagraha [the power or force derived from sticking to the truth] expressed through the Charka⁶, the village industries, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition⁷, and non-violent organisation of labour...”⁸

There are two types of rights that are seen through the exercise of liberty in democracy: (#1) the right that could be abused, which came from the social guarantee of democratic rights and (#2) the right which comes to the individual by performance of duty. To accrue such rights through dutiful actions, is to exercise one's political participation in a socially beneficial and therefore personally beneficial way. It is

continued on page 43

Quiet Corner Fiddlers, eastern CT



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The Think and Do Club Wants You!

Submitted by Edmund Smith

What is the Think and Do Club? We are a group of folks who get together every week to talk philosophy. From these talks, some pretty cool thoughts happen. These, as thoughts often do, may turn into some pretty interesting, different behavior, from person life style choices to decisions to go forth and change the world.

What kind of things do we talk about?

To date, we have discussed such wide-ranging topics as global warming, evolution, the nature of consciousness, the political economy of banking, the origins of the universe, and racism. We have also begun to explore the formal branches of philosophy, such as metaphysics and epistemology. But we are not limited to any one discipline



or topic, because life itself... philosophical! So join us! We meet on Mondays 6:30-9:30pm. at the Song-a-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Turnpike, Coventry, CT 06238

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Contact us at mediamonds2006@gmail.com/860-895-7413



THE PACKING HOUSE

1870
HISTORIC VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE & EVENTS



Submitted by the Friends of The Mill Works

The 'Friends of The Mill Works', continue to host a rich assortment of live music and film showings at The Packing House. We have initiated an 'Acoustic Artist Series' and have a great line-up for the spring!

'Talent Showcase' – 2nd Friday of the Month (March 11th, April 8th). In addition to the very talented singer/songwriters and acoustic musicians joining us, we are also offering a 'Talent Showcase' and Open Mic on the 2nd Friday of the month.

Here is an opportunity for musicians, film makers, puppeteers, dancers, poets, comedians, and creative artists of all kinds to showcase their work before a live audience. Test ideas and concepts and solicit feedback. PA / sound reinforcement (up to 3-mics), and video projection provided. We encourage you to invite your friends, colleagues, grandma, second cousins, the guy next door, and everybody you know! Admission to the Talent Showcase is free and open to all ages. Doors for the Talent Showcase open at 6:45pm and the show starts at 7:30pm. We recommend performers call to sign-up in advance, however, folks can also sign up during the evening (time permitting).

Please visit our website at www.thepackinghouse.us to learn more about The Packing House and upcoming shows. Take advantage of a tasty dinner AND an excellent show! Bring your paid tickets for The Packing House event to "Willington Pizza House" or "Willington Pizza Too" on the day of the show and receive a 15% discount on your entire dinner bill!

Here's a look at what's coming up in March and April.

Lexi Weege: Concert – March 12th, 7:30pm (Rescheduled from January)

Originally scheduled for January 23rd, Lexi's concert was rescheduled due to a "snow day"... She was featured in the January/February issue of Neighbors, and you can get the full lowdown on Lexi in the online issue at www.neighborspaper.com, The Packing House at www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming, or Lexi's site at www.lexiweege.com.



Lexi Weege, singer/songwriter will be offering original selections from her latest recording "Sweet Moon". Her influence from classic jazz and blues eras will come through by her unique style in this solo performance. Lexi's acoustic piano / keyboard and vocal in this intimate setting will provide a performance you will remember.

Lexi Weege will be performing at The Packing House on Saturday, March 12th, at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$10.00.

Greg Abate Quartet – March 19th, 8:00pm

Greg Abate jazz saxophonist, flutist, composer, and International Jazz/Recording Artist continues to tour the globe over 225 days a year.



In the mid 70's after finishing a four year program at Berklee College Of Music, Greg played lead alto for the Ray Charles Orchestra for 2 years. In 1978 he formed his group 'Channel One' which was a favorite in the New England area and from there had the opportunity to play tenor sax with the revived Artie Shaw Orchestra under leadership of Dick Johnson from 1986 to 1987.

Following this experience Greg ventured out as post hard bop soloist playing Jazz Festivals, Jazz Societies and Jazz Clubs throughout the U.S., Canada, and abroad, including most of Europe, UK, and Moscow and Georgia Russia (www.gregabate.com).

Greg's newest release, The Greg Abate Quintet features the late Phil Woods, Jesse Green, Evan Gregor and Bill Goodwin (Rhombus Records). We just learned that Greg Abate was recently inducted into the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame. Greg will be joined at The Packing House by Matt DeChamplain on piano, Nat Reeves on bass, and Ben Bilello on drums. For more information on these accomplished musicians, visit www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming.

The Greg Abate Quartet will be at The Packing House Saturday, March 19th at 8:00pm. Tickets are \$20.00. This is a rare opportunity to see and hear musicians of this caliber in our area. You won't want to miss this show!

Belle of the Fall – April 23rd, 7:30pm

Belle of the Fall is back at The Packing House! Tracy Walton and Julia Autumn Ford make up this outstanding indie/folk duo. Though these two talented singer/songwriters



joined forces just a year and a half ago, they have covered a lot of musical ground since, and are in the process of releasing their debut album, "Earthbound", which will be available at this show.

Tracy Walton- 2014 and 2015 New England Music

Award nominee Best Male Performer. An accomplished bassist and songwriter who has written for Alfred Books and taught at the National Guitar Workshop.

Julia Autumn Ford- CT Music Award Nominee Best New Artist 2014 and Song of the Year 2015. Her debut solo album has gained her well deserved attention as a singer of rare talent. "It's almost freakish how good she sings. I watched her and it was hard to process that it was actually coming out of her mouth." (Joe Michelini, River City Extension).

With a March Tour to Austin TX to showcase at SXSW, New England dates planned, and a debut album out in April, one could say Belle of the Fall is a band to watch. Tracy on the upright bass and vocals, and Julia on guitar and vocals, unite with a blend of harmonies and textures that present a sound of their own, whether original or cover. Fans of the classic vocal duos like Simon and Garfunkel will surely find some new songs to add to their favorites (www.belleofthefall.com).

Belle of the Fall will be performing at The Packing House on Saturday, April 23rd, at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$10.00.



The Gather Rounders – April 28th , 7:30pm

The Gather Rounders from Portland ME is about to hit the road for their first New England tour. They'll kick things off with a show in Nashua, NH on April 21 followed by shows in Somerville, MA; Conway, NH; Providence, RI; Willington, CT; and ending in Poughkeepsie, NY.

The Gather Rounders came to life in 2014, drawing from the members' shared love for all things acoustic, folk and bluegrass and a weekly brunch gig at Gather Restaurant in Yarmouth, ME. The Gather Rounders features both talented bluegrass and folk music veterans comprised of Caroline Cotter (lead vocals), Lincoln Meyers (guitar, vocals), Eric Lee (fiddle), Ron Cody (banjo), and Wendy Cody (upright bass).

Individually and collectively they've shared stages with the likes of Darol Anger, David Wilcox, Loudon Wainwright, John Gorka, Ryan Cavanaugh, Rushad Eggleston, Jesse Brock, among others. The band tastefully blends traditional and progressive folk and bluegrass into a lush mix of sweet harmonies, inventive picking and strong grooves. They are in this year's lineup at the internationally renowned Greyfox Bluegrass Festival taking place in Oak Hill, NY on July 14-17 (www.thegatherrounders.com).

The band recently recorded two new videos of original songs by the band's lead singer, Caroline Cotter. Take a listen to both at: www.youtube.be/U7dptsJ-diQ and www.youtube.be/

zI3hMj9dHeI.

On Thursday, April 28th, at 7:30pm, The Gather Rounders will feature a two set concert at The Packing House in Willington. Tickets are \$12.00.

Tickets, Reservations, and Contact

Tickets for all shows can be purchased online at www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming, or cash at the door. Table reservations and cabaret seating available. Unless specified otherwise, all events will feature "BYOB" - wine & beer ONLY - with a \$5 cork/bottle fee (I.D.s Required). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. Doors open 30-minutes prior to show time.

The 'Friends of The Mill Works', is a non-profit group operating under fiscal agreement with the Windham Arts Collaborative. Its mission is to preserve The Mill Works as a historic landmark, and ensure its legacy of creativity and innovation continues.

All proceeds generated from The Packing House, along with donations and contributions, are used to cover performance costs, to preserve and maintain this historic facility, and to continue to improve the performance experience of our patrons. To learn more about the Friends of The Mill Works, and how you can support this project and become a member, please visit www.friendsofthemillworks.org, or call 860-487-3827 or 518-791-9474.

The Packing House is located at The Mill Works, 156 River Road, Willington, CT 06279. Parking is located onsite and across the street. For specific program or rental information and table reservations, please call 518-791-9474.

I'm Captain of the World

I'm captain of the world.
Up over the mountains, down
through the valleys I've wondered
and roamed. I've sailed far and wide across
the deep blue sea North, East, South and West
I've been all over this land.
The Seven Wonders of the World I've seen
I'm captain of the world.
My life is like the lapping of
the ocean's endlessly
searching for the pleasures of
the world.
Stopping at many distant ports
along the way, meeting and
making new friends.
Many arms have held me, many
lips I've kissed.
Then I've sailed off again through
life's many stormy seas,
till again I find a calm and
friendly port near in which
to anchor. I'm the captain of the world.

Raymond Chaput, Willimantic

Hop River Trail Adventures

By Mort Pearson

A few weeks back I was motivated to call up two of my friends and suggest a bike ride on the Hop River Trail when it was 24 F outside. It was two things which were driving this, first, I'm a pretty avid bike rider, and even though it was pretty late in the year, I was obsessed to ride some more and explore some places I had not been lately. I thought it could end up being a pretty good adventure, even though I warned my friends in the phone call that it was to be a highly exploratory adventure. We had done a wonderful ride on the Farmington Valley Greenway earlier in the year, having lunch on the beautiful Farmington River Bridge while enjoying the informal parade of society. We also did the Collinsville section of that trail later, stopping at the Collinsville Canoe Company to ogle boats and of course have lunch at LaSalles. The first motivation was, more fully, to explore a fun, new place to ride my bike and then stop and have lunch in a new interesting place.



Hop River Trail - Bolton Notch Cut

Mort Pearson photo

The other motivation was history--the history behind the rail trail, and the trains that ran on it - this is what really fascinated me, and does today. Not so much the living trains or the machinery, that is a big thrill also, but more the history and the incredible undertaking of both construction and operation of the railroad as a major business, and the impact on society of the that time. Bringing those two motivations together resulted in the three of us to agreeing to ride the Hop River Rail that goes between Bolton Notch and Willimantic. This bike ride would only be between Andover and Willimantic, because I had already ridden the rest of it, and I wanted explore what I hadn't done.

The history of rail in Connecticut is amazing to me. First of all, the archeological evidence is all around us. Can you imagine taking a train from New Haven to Hartford, then to East Windsor, then to Vernon? The first part is not so hard, but East Windsor to Vernon by train? In fact, the right of way is still there and can be easily followed, but the tracks were removed in the nineteen thirties. It is also fascinating to me that even this very day, there is a great rail right of way with rails in place, that connects Hartford and Bradley Airport, just begging for light rail service. Consider also the Waterbury-Hartford New Haven triangle, or New London to Willimantic rails which are already in place also begging for commuter rail service. It is amazing to me that with all the cars in this state... but I digress.

As I mentioned, it is really the history, and the social and economic effects that I'm obsessed by. The railroad between Hartford, Vernon and Willimantic, which is now the Hop River Trail (and State Park, depending on where you are on it) was part of a grand scheme to connect Fishkill, NY with Providence, R. I. This idea was launched in 1845, which was, of course, in the horse and wagon days. Imagine how long it would take to go between Hartford and Providence on a dirt road, little more than a double tracked pathway? Aware of all the water powered mills and widespread agriculture in eastern Connecticut in 1846, a bunch of business men got together in

Providence and decided to build a railroad from Providence to eastern Connecticut passing through Sterling, where a lot of textile industry was centered because of the water power, along with other locations. Before they even turned a shovel though, they decided to extend it Willimantic, and shortly thereafter, Hartford, then Waterbury. Wow, talk about project scope creep! One small problem - even though it's only 65 miles

between Hartford and Providence on a direct line on your GPS, the topography of eastern CT resulted in the route, as surveyed and laid out, to be 90 miles long! Construction began in 1847, and on December 1, 1849, the Hartford to Willimantic section of the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill RR was open for business. After a considerable amount of creative financing, the extension to Providence was completed by October 1854, and on the other end, the line was extended to Waterbury by 1855.

It all must have turned out OK, because by 1893 there were 14 passenger trains passing through Bolton Notch daily. By 1950 however, this had dwindled to 6 trains daily and passenger service was terminated in 1955, presumably with the advent of the car, or maybe it was Munson's store in the Notch! The end came in 1970 when Penn Central discontinued freight traffic. Sad. I can easily imagine those steam engines puffing through Bolton Notch.

I met my friends at the intersection of Rte 6 and 316 in Andover where the original RR overpass has been replaced with a wonderful foot bridge. It was cold, but otherwise a nice day. That was a good thing I guess, because we found that the trail bed, which is nicely graded with a sand-like stone dust, was frozen firm which made the bike riding easy. We were excited that this was truly going to be an adventure because when we got on the trail just east of the overpass, we were at the beginning of a big and very scenic rock cut. We continued east towards Willimantic and at the beginning it appeared to be

a very common rail path, dirt, firm, wide. Shortly, we passed through a big tunnel, running obliquely under Route 6. It was completely dark inside, and I truly experienced “light at the end of the tunnel”...I couldn’t see the ground or any of my surroundings, only the light. It was a very weird feeling for me to ride along, seeing nothing, completely on trust – I haven’t experienced that even at night. But, I didn’t hit any big holes or obstacles and we all made it out the other side.

In one of my guidebooks, I read about a culvert that had been replaced in 1912, and that it was so marked. When we came upon a suspect, we stopped, and climbed down to check it out – and – son of a gun, there it was “1912”! After duly noting the sight, we pressed on through the woods towards the rail yards in Willimantic.

More amazing things came to mind as I rode along. Who financed this? How were the RR people able to convince the investors that this was a good financial idea? I would have loved to hear those conversations. What did a business presentation look like in 1845? I imagined how all those big embankments were built and how all those rock cuts were dug in 1845. I’m pretty sure that there were no CAT D5 bulldozers or other objects of heavy equipment used. Large amounts of dirt and rock were moving around however – by shovel and wheelbarrow, powered by many immigrants making probably a few cents a day, no benefits, no vacation, no sick days, and oh, by the way, the workday was probably sun up to sun down, 6 days a week, no raises, and don’t be late! Sitting on my butt in an office is maybe not so bad!

That’s the way the workers were probably thinking at the time, too, because recall that the Great Famine was happening in Ireland, and many of those in Ireland were trying to find a better life, or at worst escape death by starvation by emigrating, and a large percentage of the roughly 1 million emigrants came to America. Consider facing that decision – stay and starve or abandon all you’ve ever known and go to a new strange land - it must have been an inconceivably agonizing, traumatic decision.

We did find, about 4 miles down the trail, a newer bridge built on the original railroad bridge over the Hop River in Columbia. The pressure treated lumber was laid right on top of the old steel with stone piers, in a similar fashion to many of the bridges rebuilt for rail paths. We continued riding east uneventfully after stopping for photos, and passed under the I-384 spur around Willimantic, on the north side, and then after a few more miles crossed King’s Road to inspect another bridge over the Hop River which had no wood, or rails, but with the ties still in place. It was not safe (and was so marked) and therefore impassable so we followed the King’s Road, Flanders Rd diversion around the unimproved bridge, and resumed the trail a little further down on the other side.

After a little more riding on an unimproved section of the original trail, we came to the magnificent bridge over the Willimantic River, which was the end of the trail. The bridge is also unsafe and impassable, but this is where the old rail trail is transformed into actual railroad, and the where Willimantic Waste Paper uses the dead end spur as a siding on which to park empty freight cars.

I figured that we could ride a little into Willimantic

and find a warm cozy place for lunch. The railroad resumed on the other side of the Rte 32 bridge across the rails, and was “live” at that point, which I thought was the Central New England railroad, one of the few remaining profitable short lines in the Northeast. It runs freight trains I think, from New London to Palmer, Ma and north.

We rode in and found a couple of good places to sit down to have some soup and sandwiches. It was totally fun, and after relaxing a bit, eating some cookies, and chatting, we remembered that we had to do the same miles backwards, and now it was colder, and getting late in the afternoon, and we had had a brush with lethargy, so we figured it was time to go, in as much as there was not going to be a helicopter come and take us back to Andover. So, go we did.

The ride back was pretty uneventful. It seemed to be a lot shorter, but a lot windier. We saw the same landmarks... strangely enough. It was colder too. We did manage to get back before dark. We did not see any large ungulates. I think we finished riding with 17 miles or so. We put our bikes away, grabbed some food and spent the rest of the evening at my house watching movies and eating dinner. What a great day!

So now I have ridden the entire 22 mile length of the trail, from Vernon to Willimantic, (not all in one sitting, however). I heard from my spies that while I was out of town, my friends went back and scouted out the old connection between the Hop River Rail Trail and the Airline Rail Trail, which now has been completely rehabilitated by CT DEEP and is nearly ready to open. I’m quite anxious to go back and do that section. Willimantic was quite a rail center in its day! The Airline Trail is another interesting adventure, at least the sections that I’ve done. CT DEEP has been busy rehabilitating that trail also, making the trail network in eastern CT one of the best in the country that I have seen. There is more, too, that is the section of the HP&F RR between Moosup, CT and Greene, R. I. which has been slowly improving in its rail trail connections with our easterly neighbor state.

There is a piece of me that wishes we still had the trains running, and the simplicity of life that goes with those days. I have to remember that back then things were very very different. I would not have the the computer that allows me to communicate instantly with people on the other side of the world, the great medical care, digital cameras, a more tolerant and enlightened society, pretty good auto travel that allows me to be across the country in 5 days with hardly no planning, and on and on. Then and now – its not better or worse on balance I think, just different.

Further reading and exploration –

The Vernon Depot website <http://www.vernondepot.com> is an excellent collection of history and photos concerning the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill RR. More great historical reference material at the Vernon Historical Society website <http://www.vernonhistoricalsoc.org>

The Rail Lines of Southern New England, Ronald Dale Karr, Branch Line Press, 1995, ISBN 0-942147-02-2. Very comprehensive history of all rail lines, extant and not, in southern New England. 1995 version is a little dated, there may be a more recent version.

Nuclear Shutdown News 2016

By Michael Steinberg, Black Rain Press

Nuclear Shutdown News chronicles the decline of the nuclear power industry in the US and beyond, and highlights the efforts of those who are working to create a nuclear free future.

Millstone and Me: 2016

Last October I returned to the place I come from, southeast Connecticut on Long Island Sound, off the Atlantic Ocean.

The region promotes and prides itself as “The Submarine Capital of the World.”

The General Dynamics Electric Boat Company in Groton, CT, has built almost all the nation’s nuclear powered submarines. These include each and every of the Trident subs, which along with nuclear missiles and bombs constitute the US “strategic forces.”

Each Trident carries nuclear missiles, each one consisting of multiple warheads that can be independently targeted. Thus Tridents are submergible Armageddons. Not far up the Thames River from the General Dynamics plant is the East Coast sub base homeport for the U.S. Navy Atlantic fleet, whose Pacific Fleet counterpart is in San Diego.

The “Virginia class” subs home-ported at these bases, mostly built at Electric Boat, (Michelle Obama was at EB recently to christen the latest completed sub to slide into the river), and carry Cruise Missiles (thankfully not nuclear at the point) that the U.S. regularly deploys to fire off at “trouble spots” around the globe.

Given these anti-social dynamics, when the US began encouraging the construction of nuclear power plants in the 1960s, it was no at one site was chosen for this purpose was Millstone Point, a few miles west of Groton. Millstone Point had been the homeland of the Nehantic tribe, whose name, Niantic, is derived from. After the White Man took the Nehantic’s land, and declared the tribe extinct (even as some were still alive), Millstone Point became a large granite quarry, where Scottish greatgrandfather came to work. Millstone granite became part of the Empire State Building and Mexico City’s Zocalo.

The Millstone Nuclear Power Plant began operating in 1970. Its design was similar to Fukushima’s. During the mid 1970s, the plant’s owner and operator, CT’s Northeast Utilities was running Millstone reactor 1, with defective fuel rods, which resulted in massive releases of radiation into the air and water, The US Nuclear Regulator Commission (NRC) knew of these releases, but said they were “within acceptable limits.”

Knowledge of these massive releases eventually made their way to Dr. Ernest Sternglass, who had been a nuclear energy proponent who worked for Westinghouse, which was building some of the first US nuclear power plants. One of these was Shippingport in Pennsylvania. At first Sternglass

believed that radioactive emissions from this nuke plant would be too low to harm people. Soon, however, He began to question this. First of all, reported releases from the plant were significantly higher than authorities had predicted.

This led Sternglass to examine vital statistics in populations living near the plant. There he found spikes in cancer rates emerging, as well in other health problems such as infant mortality and birth defects. When Sternglass reported these findings to his employer, he quickly became persona non grata in the nuclear power industry.

Dr. Sternglass went on to become professor of radiological studies at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

When Sternglass received the information about the Millstone ‘70s radioactive releases. And examined them, he became alarmed. These turned out to be the highest annual releases from a US nuclear power plant with the exception of Three Mile Island during its partial meltdown in 1979.

As with Shippingport, Sternglass analyzed vital statistics in communities surrounding Millstone. Again he found disturbing rises in death rates and infant mortality, as well all cancers and specific ones like leukemia and thyroid cancer.

Dr. Sternglass went public with his findings, and initially they caused quite a stir around Connecticut and New England. There were calls for further investigations and cries for the permanent shutdown of Millstone.

Dr. Ernest Sternglass continued his pioneering work into the effects of radiation on human health, which he reported in his brilliant book *Secret Fallout: From Hiroshima To Three Mile Island*. Dr. Sternglass died in 2014.

Instead of shutting down Millstone reactor 1, Northeast Utilities started up 2 more reactors. In the 1990s chronic mismanagement and harassment of whistleblowers landed Millstone on the cover of Time Magazine and forced the permanent closure of reactor one.

All of its high level nuclear waste, as well as that of the other 2 units, remains on site, making it a massive nuclear dumpsite as well.

Unit 2 turned 40 this year, meaning it has exceeded the years it was designed to operate. Unit 3 will turn 30 next year.

Cancer rates remain high in the region, Dr. Sternglass helped start the Radiation and Public Health Project, which continues his work and has produced studies showing that people living within 50 miles of nuclear plant are more likely to develop cancer and that after nuclear plants permanently shut down, cancer rates in populations around them begin to fall.

Michael Steinberg is a former Willimantic resident who worked at the Willimantic Food Coop. He currently lives in San Francisco.

Sources: Millstone and Me: Sex, Lies, and Radiation in Southeast Connecticut; 1998, Black Rain Press.

Radiation and Public Health Project: www.radiation.org

Joshua's Trust Celebrating 50th Anniversary

Submitted by Angelika Hansen

Join The Celebration!

It's the 50th Anniversary of Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust. Many special events are being planned throughout the year to showcase the Trust's properties in our 14 town area.

Come, explore over 20 trails accompanied by knowledgeable guides. Participants will be awarded prizes for a certain number of walks recorded in their "Passports", specially made for the Anniversary.

Attend a book signing by Rudy Favretti of his just published book "50 years of Trust" chronicling our history and mission. While there, listen to the popular jazz band "Juniper Hill Jumpers" with guest, international jazz singer, Sarah Spencer.

Tour the historic Gurleyville Grist Mill, the only stone mill of its kind in Connecticut. Visit the Atwood Farm Museum. In the Weaver's Cottage watch a demonstration of antique and weaving implements. New exhibits in the Blacksmith Shop, Pig Sty and Hen House will be open to the public for the first time. There'll be a repeat of last year's popular Cider Pressing.

The renowned choir "Take Note!" will perform at an upcoming event.

Please call the Trust at 860-429-9023, watch local publications and visit our website www.joshuustrust.org for information and ongoing updates.

Save These Dates

Saturday April 2 – at 8:00 am Join David Parry for a "Birding Walk" at the beautiful Allanach-Wolf Preserve. Directions – Rt. 14E from Windham Center, left to Back Rd., entrance on left after pond (approx 1 mile) or 14 W from Scotland, past Frog Pond to Back Rd. or Brooklyn Tpke. to Back Rd., left at Stop sign, entrance on right. #165 Back Rd. Any questions re the hike or weather email David Parry at dfparry01@gmail.com.

Saturday April 9 at 10:30 am, Carl Lindquist will lead a walk at the Two Sisters Tract in Chaplin. A forty acre forested tract with multiple stone walls, rocky outcrops and glacial erratics. After a short, moderately steep initial climb, the trail is one mile long on gently rolling terrain. Directions – Rt. 6, Chaplin, approx. 2 ¼ miles west of Willimantic Walmart store or .on Rt. 6, .8 miles north of intersection with Rt. 203/ Rt.6. The parcel lies between Quintana Memorials and the Pleasant View Motel. Park on the shoulder of Rt. 6. Look for Joshua's Trust sign. For more information, call Carl Lindquist at 860-455-9914 or email clind01@gmail.com

Saturday, April 16 at 9:30 visit the Josias Byles Sanctuary in Ashford. Connect past to present by walking the Sanctuary trail and coming to the Historic Byles Homestead for snacks, drinks and a few stories. Enjoy the 2 mile long, easy to moderate loop trail as you pass a meadowland, descend a short steep section to a stream, then travel through a bio-diverse

climax forest. We hope to be able to observe a beaver dam on the Mt. Hope River. Directions - Park at the trail entrance just across from North Vet. Clinic on Rt. 44, ¾ mile east of the Rt. 89/Rt. 44 junction. For information, contact Marian Matthews, 860-420-8544. Rain Date is 4/17/16 at 1:30 pm.

Saturday, April 23 - attend Book Signing w. Rudy Favretti of his book "50 Years of Trust". Musical entertainment will be provided by the popular jazz band "Juniper Hill Jumpers" with guest, internationally known jazz singer, Sarah Spencer. Location and time to be announced. Please, check our website, www.joshuustrust.org, for updates.

Saturday, April 23 at 10:00 am, Jim Russell will host a walk on the "Wildside" at Pappenheimer Preserve. Hike the 101 acre forest preserve, abutting Mohegan State Forest. Visit Red Maple swamp and 5.5 acre grass covered swamp. A moderate walk, leashed dogs welcome. Pre-registration required. Directions- park on left side of Rt.97 (Devotion Rd) in Scotland, 2.5 miles south of Rt. 14/Rt. 97 intersection. For information, contact Jim Russell, 860-377-3687, email james_r_russel@yahoo.com

Saturday, April 30 at 9:00 am, George Jacobi will host "Walking the Woods for Wildlife" in the Friedman Memorial Forest, Ashford – a moderate walk. He will discuss and practice deliberately walking to maximize wildlife sightings, while traversing a 2 mile loop with diverse ecosystems, including how to move (or not) and how to see and hear more effectively. No dogs, please. Directions - Take Bicknell Rd from Rt.89 to end, left on Bebbington Rd. 2 miles to small parking lot. Trust signs on the right side of the road. For information, call George 860-450-0845, 860-377-6248 or email gjfishn@gmail.com



Share Curiosity.
Read Together.

Foods and Moods

By June Hyjek

Can our moods affect the foods we eat, and the foods affect our moods?

Many of us have seen first-hand a change in our eating habits when we're bored, tired or angry. It's not uncommon to experience behavioral eating and use food as a coping mechanism for negative emotions. But we may not be aware that foods actually taste differently depending on our mood. When we're in a good mood, our ability to taste sweetness is enhanced and we're satisfied, while sour is diminished. Negative emotions heighten sour and decrease sweet, which may be why we crave sweet foods when we're in a bad mood. We don't taste the sweetness as much, so we want more.

To make the cycle more complete, what we crave and eat when we're in that funk can then impact our moods. When we reach for those high calorie foods filled with saturated fat, sugar and sodium (like fast foods, dairy, chips, pizza, chocolate or baked goods), we not only deepen that bad mood, we increase our risk of depressive disorders, somatic symptoms, cognitive difficulties and fatigue.

So how can we use food and our eating behaviors to balance our moods? Here are some tips:

Include plenty of healthy, fresh foods in your diet, like fruits, vegetables, nuts and lean proteins. These foods and spices, in particular, will increase energy and stabilize blood sugar, which impacts mood:

Almonds	Eggs	Olive Oil	Cayenne
Asparagus	Flaxseed Oil	Red Grapes	Cinnamon
Avocado	Garlic	Salmon	Tomatoes
Coriander	Berries	Kale	

Be aware of when you're eating and how the foods you eat make you feel. Awareness is the key. You can't make changes in your behavior if you're not aware of what you're doing. Also, food impacts everyone differently. Notice how the foods you eat affect you, both physically and emotionally. Keep a journal that shows how you felt before you ate, what food you ate, and how you felt a half-hour later.

Before you reach for that snack or make a food choice, check in with yourself. Are you really hungry or feeling some other emotion? Make a pact with yourself to eat only when you're hungry, and notice which foods you're craving.

Get plenty of sleep. A lack of sleep increases levels of the peptide, ghrelin, and decreases levels of leptin. Ghrelin



stimulates hunger and revs up appetite, while leptin tells the brain you're satisfied and suppresses appetite. So make sure you get those recommended seven or eight hours of sleep!

Fill your time with healthy movement and activities you enjoy. Keep a list of your top ten favorite things to do – like go for a walk, read a book, turn on the music and dance, call a friend, draw or color. When you notice you're tempted to eat from mood and not hunger, choose to do one of those activities instead.

Be aware of your moods and attitudes and foster positive emotions. Be open to new experiences and choose to be mindful of your actions. Focus on others, instead of yourself, and fill your life with acts of kindness and compassion. Being kind to others makes you feel good, and when you feel good, you're less likely to eat unhealthy foods.

If you find yourself in a bad mood, take a look at what you've been eating and what foods you crave. Making some small changes in your diet will change your mood and encourage you to make healthy choices.

As a MindBody Wellness Coach, Certified Hypnotherapist, Reiki Master and award-winning Author, June Hyjek offers extensive experience in helping clients manage their pain and stress, working with them to move through life's transitions with grace and peace. She is the author of "Unexpected Grace: A Discovery of Healing through Surrender" and a meditation CD, "Moving into Grace." Her book and CD offer hope, comfort and insights to help us move through the difficult times we all face in life. (www.aplaceofgrace.net or www.junehyjek.com) Look for her Holistic Health Column in each edition of Neighbors. June welcomes comments and suggestions for topics and can be reached at june@aplaceofgrace.net.



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Our Community Calendar

Compiled By Dagmar Noll

March 2, Wednesday

Lecture: Maria Stewart presents *Alchemy of Race, Gender and Education in Antebellum*, 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Theatre and Betty R. Tipton Room, Student Center, ECSU, 83 Windham Street, Willimantic.

Skill Share: Felting Workshop, 6:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. \$35. Create your very own needle-felted owl. Kerri Art Studio & Gallery, 861 Main Street, Willimantic. Tickets: www.kerriquirk.com Info: 860-456-8615

Theatre: *Sense & Sensibility*, 7:30p.m. Harriet S. Jorgensen Theatre, UCONN, Storrs. Tickets: 860-486-2113 Info: crt.uconn.edu

March 3, Thursday

Energy: Regional Clean Energy Forum on Shared Solar, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Find out what shared solar is, why Connecticut needs it, and what we can do to bring it about. Audrey Beck Building, Mansfield Town Hall, Council Chambers, 4 South Eagleville Road, Mansfield. Info: www.easternctgreenaction.com

Theatre: *Sense & Sensibility*, 7:30p.m. (See 3/2).

March 4, Friday

Clean-Up: Willimantic Trash Mob, 5:00p.m.-5:30p.m. Help tidy up town! Bring gloves and bags to the Crosby Lot and clean up along lower and upper Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-1878 bevishistory@yahoo.com

Live Music: First Friday with Bruce John & The Bandaleros, 7:00p.m. - 10:00p.m. \$5 cover with optional 6:00p.m. dinner for \$10. The Elks Lodge, 198 Pleasant Street, Willimantic.

Dancing: Quiet Corner Contra Dance, 7:30p.m. - 11:00p.m. \$5-10. Called dancing by Jim Gregory with music by The Cicadas. Wear soft-soled shoes and bring a snack to share. Instructions at 7:30 for beginners; dance begins at 8:00p.m. Patriots Park Lodge, 172 Lake St, Coventry. Info: 484-844-5203 or dcannell@freeshell.org quietcornercontradance.tripod.com

Theatre: *Sense & Sensibility*, 8:00p.m. (See 3/2).

March 5, Saturday

Skill Share: Grow Your Own Gourmet Mushrooms, 1:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Free. Take home a log inoculated with mushroom spawn. Yale-Meyers Camp, 150 Center Pike Rd, Eastford. Reservations: sararose.tannenbaum@yale.edu or 650-400-0709

History: *Hysterical Historicals*, 1:00p.m. Informal discussion and show and tell about Willimantic. Open to all. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

Theatre: *Sense & Sensibility*, 2:00p.m. & 8:00p.m. (See 3/2).

Dancing: Heart to Heart Charity Ball, 6:00p.m. - 11:00p.m. \$50. Buffet and dancing. Fundraiser. Tickets: 860-642-3422 Info: www.soroptimistwillimantic.org

March 6, Sunday

Hiking: Long Distance Guided Hike, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. 5-7 mile hike. Friendly dogs welcome. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

Theatre: *Sense & Sensibility*, 2:00p.m. (See 3/2).

March 7, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults). Jamming and free instruction on playing fiddle by ear. Eastford Elementary School, 12 Westford Road, P.O. Box 158, Eastford, CT. Info: 860-974-0197 tomfrench@charter.net

Philosophy: Think-and-Do Philosophy Club: *Medicine, Natural and Otherwise/Supreme Being or just Being*, 6:30-9:30p.m. A group of amateur philosophers interested in solving the issues of our time, meeting at Song-A-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878

March 8, Tuesday

Hiking: Spring Walk to Governor's Island, 12:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. 3-mile walk. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

Live Music: Quiet Corner Fiddlers, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Hear the fiddlers play at Lakeview Restaurant, 50 Lake Street, Coventry. Info: qcf.webs.com

March 9, Wednesday

Lecture: U.S. District Judge Michael Ponsor presents *30 Years on the Federal Bench: Confronting the Contradictions of the U.S. System of Justice*, 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Science Building Auditorium, Room 104, ECSU, 83 Windham Street, Willimantic.

March 10, Thursday

Skill Share: Forestry for Landowners: Map Reconnaissance & Aerial Photos, 10:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Discover what you can learn from maps and old photos of your own property. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

Art: Diana Lyn Cote, Opening Reception, 6:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. Show runs through April 16 at Kerri Gallery, 861 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-8615 www.dianalyncote.com

March 11, Friday

Celebration: Chaos & Joy Closing Party, 6:00p.m. Free! Vulturetown Arts and the Eclectic present a multimedia art show featuring dozens of local artists, filmmakers and musicians. 25 Meadow Street, Willimantic. Info: blog.vulturetownarts.org

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The Many Faces of Fatigue

By Dr. Ashley Burkman

Fatigue can present in many ways from waking feeling exhausted or feeling a crash after meals. With so many reasons for fatigue it is important find the root cause rather than reaching for a quick pick me up in the form of caffeine and sugar.

Hormone Imbalances

Thyroid hormone, the metabolism setter. The thyroid hormone is responsible for setting the energy pace of the body. While your labs may not reveal overt hypothyroidism, there can be indications in specific thyroid tests that can indicate dysfunction which can often be the crux of fatigue.

Cortisol, the stress hormone. Produced by the adrenal glands, small glands that sit on top of the kidneys. Stress in any form, from inadequate nights sleep to family stress, the body cannot differentiate. Naturally, cortisol is higher in the morning to wake you and improve vitality and to be lowest at night to allow for a restful night sleep. Often this circadian rhythm is flip flopped, causing low energy in the morning and a spike of energy before bed, making sleep disrupted and causing daytime energy to be low. Assessing and balancing cortisol can play a major role in improving energy.

Testosterone is more than a male hormone. It is essential in both men and women for energy support in addition to muscle building and bone density preservation. Often, due to lifestyle stress, testosterone can become depleted and affect energy levels.

Diet

Rollercoaster blood sugar is a key cause for energy crashes in the day, especially after eating. Foods high in sugar will spike blood sugar causing an energy surge followed by a rapid crash in blood sugar followed by a drop in energy. This up and down blood sugar can be a major cause of daytime fatigue. Navigating food choices to better support energy is essential.

Caffeine, while tempting, can be detrimental to long term energy improvement. While small amounts of caffeine can be tolerated by some, it can create an artificial energy spike, much like sugar, followed by a crash. Avoiding band-aids like caffeine for artificial energy is a must for a stable energy supply.

Sleep Quality

Sleep apnea can affect anyone of any age and body size. Apnea, meaning breath holding causing low oxygen status, will send signals to the brain there is a lack of oxygen. This sends an alert to wake up and breathe. Restless nights

sleep, snoring, morning headaches and fatigue could be due to sleep apnea. It is important to speak with your physician about your risk and if a sleep study is appropriate.

Sleep hygiene may seem trivial but holds more merit than you may think. Keeping electronics including televisions, computers and mobile phones out of the sleeping space can reduce stimulation at night. Reducing light pollution via black out shades or again, keeping electronics out of the room, help improve melatonin production, a hormone in the brain that is responsible for sleepiness. Reduce alcohol, sugar and food consumption prior to bed, all which increase risk of sleep disruption.

Medications

Several medications can contribute to energy lulls in the day. From blood pressure medications to allergy medications can cause drowsiness. Finding natural alternatives when appropriate that do not cause lethargy can make marked differences in energy.

Sleep medications, while appropriate for short-term use, when relied upon on a consistent basis can become habit forming, making sleep without them almost impossible. Rather than strong sleep aids, using nutrients that naturally induce sleep could be a better alternative.

Movement

Lack of exercise can contribute to fatigue. Sedentary lifestyles, sitting at a desk all day, have been shown to induce fatigue. Exercise simulates blood flow to the brain and muscles can increase focus stamina. Exercise also boosts positive endorphins, mood booster, further improving energy.

Nutrients

Iron helps to carry oxygen to vital organs including the brain. Hypoxia, lack of oxygen, especially in the brain, will cause a decrease in energy. The body needs iron for energy and often specific measures of iron are overlooked.

B-vitamins are water-soluble vitamins that feed the nervous system. Not only do they play a role as a cofactor in the manufacture of positive mood boosting neurotransmitters in the brain, but it also helps to support energy. B-vitamins can be finicky for absorption, making testing and supplementation when necessary appropriate.

Vitamin D is a commonly deficient vitamin the further you are from the equator. The lack of sunshine for months in the north can affect vitamin D absorption and deficiency has been linked to many health ailments including energy deficit. Supplementation is important if deficiency is suspected.

Focusing on your specific needs is essential to fighting

fatigue. Testing and supplementation recommendations are as unique as each person. While everyone endures stress in life, our reactions to it and ways we manage will differ depending on our hormone balance, diet, sleep quality, environmental influences, exercise and nutrition. Naturopathic physicians are equip with an array advanced testing, nutrient supplementation, lifestyle counseling suggestions to balance your precise causes

of fatigue.

Dr. Ashley Burkman is a licensed naturopathic physician with a family practice in Manchester, CT. All of the physicians at Connecticut Natural Health Specialists are in network with most insurance companies. For more information or to make an appointment please call (860) 533-0179.

H.U.S.H: Holistic Universal Sound Healing

Submitted by Peter and Linda Jacques

The gong is one of man's oldest therapeutic instruments, dating back to the Bronze age between 4,000 and 3,000 B.C. In its many tones is found the sound of creation, the sound of "Om". The main gong producers were Burma, China, Annam and Java. In ancient Egypt, Greece and India, the use of sound for healing was a highly developed sacred science.

One story of the making of the gong 6,000 years ago is when a Chinese emperor who had conquered an army, commanded his priests turn the negative weapons of war into symbols of peace and positive vibrations. Thus, the creation of the gong.

Another story was discovered by accident during the agricultural age when wheat had been discovered to be a food source. Ovens were carved out of huge rocks with a fire in the base to bake bread from the wheat that was made into flour. As these ovens were getting larger and hotter over time, minerals would run out of the rocks. Tin formed a molten pool on the oven floor and as the temperature rose, copper appeared. As these two metals combined together, bronze was created. When the oven cooled the circle of the hardened metal in the bottom of the oven was the creation of the gong. This could have been the start of the Bronze Age.

The gongs we play are made of a bronze alloy material consisting of 75% copper, 20% tin and 5 % nickel. The nickel is the key element that helps make the sound spiritual in nature, creating transcendental energy.

The gong was an important element in ancient times and cultures. They were used as an initiatory tool for enlightenment, etheric projection, and exorcism of negative spirits. The gongs were used to introduce the presence of spiritual royalty, kept the sick from dying, transitioning to death and possibly used in the levitation of heavy stone.

Everything in the universe is in a constant state of vibration. The sounds of the gong meet your body's vibrations to bring you into harmony and balance. The gong is a healing instrument, working through the vibrations of sound to activate your body's ability to heal at a cellular level. Physical ailments that have been healed are because that person was brought to a place of self-healing. The innate consciousness heals them.

Sound healing is the ability to repair aspects of ourselves that are out of alignment and need repair as well as

to restore us to spiritual wholeness. You may not consciously know what you need to release, just embrace the process, set the intention to release what no longer serves you and heal what needs healing. Whatever the problem, the sound will go to that place that needs it. The body will bring in it and the cells will begin to regain their highest potential of resonance.

When a person participates at a H.U.S.H gong meditation, they either lie on the floor or sit in a recliner. They bring mats, pillows and blankets to further their comfort. We begin with a verbal relaxation as the "root chakra" bowl plays in the background and the "throat chakra" bowl hovers over each participant to support the releasing of their days activities as they settle into their "heart space".

As the gongs are added the release of the rational, analytical mind unfolds. We then let go of trying to manipulate our experience and are simply present to what is happening. This is an act of surrender without effort. Our altered brain frequency provides access to our subconscious and superconscious, where energy shifts, insights and healing are possible.

Holistic sound healing approaches the body as if it were already whole and complete. The gongs and bowls fill the body with the vibrations that emphasize wholeness and resonance, awakening the memory of wholeness.

The meditations last for 1- 1/2 hours as the sound healing gently massages the molecules back into the right places, clearing blockages and restoring harmony.

Peter and Linda offer H.U.S.H. meditations once a month in Columbia and South Windsor, Unity Church. They studied with Gong masters Don Conreux and Mitch Nur PhD.

Locations: South Windsor, Unity Church, 919 Ellington Road. Meets - 3rd Friday of each month, 7- 8:30pm. Registration required by email or phone. Columbia, (address given upon registration) Meets - 2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30 - 8pm. Fee: \$20.00. Email: bewell444@gmail.com www.wholenesswithlinda.com Phone: 860-428-2097



Neighbors-
Black & white
And read all over!

Recovering from Interventionism To Become a More Effective Therapist

By Edmund J. Smith, LCSW

When I began my journey to get my Masters in social work, I was under the impression that the social worker's job was to build on the strengths of our client's to help them reach a higher level of functioning (let's set aside the question of what 'a higher level' means, for the moment). What I soon encountered was a mind-boggling array of interventions, theoretical constructs by the dozens, leaving the practitioner bedazzled by the seemingly endless list, and in my case skeptical as to whether anyone really knows what is going on in other people's minds.



To illustrate this dilemma of preferred treatments, I am inserting the following website as a reference, <http://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types>, a site which lists theories alphabetically, naming about 200- which is by no means an exhaustive list. The sad fact is, the more these theories and their respective interventions acquire the mantle of science, being graded by outcome measures through longitudinal studies and such, the more apt therapists are to fall victim to the self-delusion that they are providing a proven remedies, whereas what is being provided, at best, is the therapist's own, authentic self.

It may be argued that the preceding call to authenticity could itself be a theoretical construct. In fact it is, but the theory is grounded in the nature of relationships, in which empathy is the only currency of value. To that end, it is often a hallmark of misapplied theory that the application, be it cognitive, behavioral, or any of the myriad combinations thereof, fails to recognize the individual's healthy resistance to unfavorable life conditions, seeking instead to correct existing responses to adversity, as if they were internal pathologies with no particular connection to the concrete circumstances.

Beginning with Children

An excellent case in point is in the all-to-common clinical response to behavioral and academic problems at school and home. It is assumed from the outset that the child's task is to keep in step with the academic work load, remain relatively still through the school day, only engaging in play when it is sanctioned (as during the growingly rare 'recess'), to produce work in a timely way, regardless of how interesting or relevant the subject matter, and most of all, to be compliant. Deviations from any number of these expectations are often enough to earn a referral to outpatient therapy and a suggestion-sometimes not too subtly put- for psychiatric medication.

Not conversant with the 'theory' that the essence of psychological development is relational, school systems seek to

impose rigid conditions of grades, discipline, and even physical movement upon children, rewarding those who are best able to tolerate this regimen and sanctioning the rest. For therapists to look for pathology in children distracted by boredom, classroom chaos, and chaotic home-lives, there is plenty of fertile ground. Similarly, the dialectic of violence in schools, in which the bullied become bullies and the spillover from brutal households and neighborhoods become identified with 'problem children' provides yet another not-so-happy hunting ground for diagnoses, medications, and treatments.

In the context of this assessment of conditions, what is a sensible orientation for a therapist to take in addressing the emotional needs of these children? (the problems presented by adults in therapy will be addressed more specifically in subsequent writing). The first task to acknowledge what is meant by 'emotional needs'. For humans generally, and perhaps more acutely for children, the need for love (should this be obvious) is primary. To put it provocatively, a social institution in which demonstrable love is the exception rather than the rule is at best a warehousing of human life and at worst its systematic ruin. By 'demonstrable', I mean the ensemble of behaviors that typically show an individual that they are loved and cared for, respected and protected. This is not a touchy-feely prescription; this is just what humans naturally respond to happily in places where they feel welcome. Unfortunately, schools, jobs, and homes are too often not such places.

The job for a therapist then, is first to acknowledge what the conditions are to which the individual is responding, the 'disease', as it were, to which the symptoms are a response. Here it must be noted that almost no school, job, or home is purely toxic, and many are the exceptions, the strengths on which greater well being can be built. The strengths, in the case of children's lives, may include a circle of supportive peers, a particularly attentive and/or interesting teacher, a program either during or after school that enhances and in some cases makes tolerable an otherwise unpleasant experience.

Band-Aids or Real Healing?

It is the therapist's plight to patch up the wounded to send them back out. To what end? To stabilize the client just well enough so that he/she will be able to function within a hostile setting? I, for one, would not like to see my work as consisting in fitting my folks to mental body armor, only for them to become thick-skinned drones. What really counts as change is when a client returns to session with more light in the eyes, visibly more animate, and has stories bearing triumph. Stories of how the same conditions of life presented themselves this next time and this person did something else, something to alter the patterns that had come to be thought of as inevitable, these predicaments that breed the depression of helplessness

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How to Start A Bakery Part 5

By Andrew Gibson

Vendors eye everyone at Farmer's Markets. They ask, themselves, "Will this one be a customer? Will that one?"

Research suggests we wonder if we can trust strangers and, if so, can we respect them as well. Trust comes first. Respect second. These are embodied in "Will this one be a customer? Will that one?"

A similar question is inferred though the intent is the same: Are they like me?. If the answer is "No, they aren't?" we have a problem.

Customers are amorphous. Over time they lump into categories. With repeat visits, they become individuals. Seems harmless enough. But initial generalizations are also called profiling which isn't harmless. It is a culturally loaded term. It can be offensive. Or worse.

Smart retailers acknowledge their profiling and compensate. But not all do in spite of the financial incentive. Those that don't may find themselves on the evening news.

Profiling on the basis of trust and respect is basic. We would still swing from trees if we didn't. We don't have the time or capacity to learn everything about everybody. We must guess. Profiling is economical. It limits the number of us eaten by tigers. Or murdered.

Decent folk say they don't profile. Ridiculous. Everyone does. See if you can spot the profiling in the following:

Foreigners: Foreigners don't buy artisanal bread. They even disdain your sample. Those who just hopped off the boat are the worst. They are unpleasant in their rejection. They arrive at the market with their adult daughters who think a trip to the market is a lovely way to spend an afternoon. Hruumph!

There are two problems: The first: immigrants are used to bread in the old country. Everything here is either too crusty, too soft or too something. Experimenting with new is out of the question.

"What zis?"

"Bread. We have olive, cheese..."

"Not bread. Not in my country. I don't eat such thing!!"

Second: they come from cultures in which the marketplace is thievery. They don't trust you. You want to steal their money. So, when you see them walking towards you, what do you do?

Haul out your anti-immigrant sign, call Donald Trump, and build a fence? Hide in your truck? Man up, offer the sample and brace yourself?

Answer: Man up. Put on a smile. Offer the sample. Once in a blue moon their daughters buy.

Old Ladies: Seniors eat like Chickadees. A 2-lb boule will sustain a senior for months (if they have room in their



freezer which they don't). The freezer is packed with other stuff which was also too large for them. Most seniors are ladies. Most of their men have passed on. It makes consumption of a 2 lb boule even more difficult. These ladies are, also, accompanied by their daughters who urge them to buy.

"Cut it in half" they say. "I'll take half and you keep the rest." Or, "Make bread pudding and invite the neighbors". Or "It freezes beautifully, Mom" (which it does) as if daughter didn't already know the status of Mom's freezer.

If they aren't with their daughters, they stop and chat. Not stop and buy but stop and chat. I have a Santa Claus appearance which invites this sort of thing. I look safe, if not jolly. You get the impression that they haven't outlets for chatting, so you, Santa, are it. This is a problem.

Bona fide customers may also approach your display. You want the sale. Sticking a cork in Grandma while shifting attention to the customer is fraught. A younger seller can do it. I, as a long-of-tooth and unrepentant male, can't. I don't multi-task. I can barely do one thing at a time. I'll mess up the transaction. I forget how to make change. I look like a grade school drop-out. And, the old lady feels rejected. I'm still working on this one.

Children: Children don't buy. But their parents do. My job is to give the little monsters a bit of something sweet. They will, then, trundle off after Mom. she'll be pestered 'til she comes over and buys a treat. It works well enough that I make it a staple. Its wicked, I know but this is commerce so give me a break.. Besides I've made at least two people happy: the kid and me.

Teenagers: Teenagers don't buy. Their parents do. Except their parents are nowhere to be seen. Kids don't want parents seen anywhere. Parents are desperately uncool. If their parents were at the market, the kids wouldn't be. Kids travel in herds grazing (or browsing) aimlessly until something catches their eye that they can, then, get the giggles over. It sure won't be over a loaf of bread.

They'll spot the stuffed focaccias.. Problem is: they don't have eight dollars between them. They don't know that I know. They swoon over the "awesome" and "amazing" Roasted Garlic on Mornay Sauce Focaccia, buzz amongst themselves and depart. They say they'll be back. But, they don't come back. They don't have eight dollars. Rarely when someone says, "I'll be back. Hang on to that one for me."

They don't return. It is a face saving way of leaving the tent. They think if they sound sincere, they will be convincing. Alternatively, they also think if they are loud, and animated, one of us will be fooled; themselves or me. I won't. Maybe they will. There still isn't a sale. I've heard it too many times. But I smile and say, "See ya!"

But every once in a while they return. The power of roasted garlic burrows into the occasional adolescent. More reason to make sure everyone gets a sample.

to be continued in the next issue of Neighbors



Ask "Dr. Mac"

All your Apple Macintosh Mac, iMac and iPhone Questions



iPhone Lock

With security a major concern nowadays, how can you protect your iPhone and other iDevices?

Find My iPhone Activation Lock
Find My iPhone includes a feature called Activation Lock that is designed to prevent anyone else from using your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch if it's ever lost or stolen. Activation Lock is enabled automatically when you turn on Find My iPhone on a device using iOS 7 or later.

With Find My iPhone Activation Lock, your Apple ID and password will be required before anyone can:
Turn off Find My iPhone on your device
Erase your device
Reactivate and use your device
This can help you keep your device secure, even if it's in the wrong hands, and can improve your chances of recovering it. Even if you erase your device remotely, Activation Lock can continue to deter anyone from reactivating your device without your permission. All you need to do is keep Find My iPhone turned on, and remember your Apple ID and password. And now with watchOS 2, you can use Activation Lock to protect your Apple Watch.

Here are answers to frequently asked questions about Find My iPhone Activation Lock on your iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

How does Activation Lock work?

When you enable Find My iPhone on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, your Apple ID is securely stored on Apple's activation servers and linked to your device. From that point on, your password will be required before anyone can turn off Find My iPhone on your device, erase your device, or reactivate and use your device.
Activation Lock is enabled automatically

when you use Find My iPhone on a device using iOS 7 or later. You can set up Find My iPhone from your Apple device. What steps should I take if I misplace my device?

If you ever misplace your device—whether it's just lost or you think it might have been stolen—you should put it into Lost Mode immediately with Find My iPhone.

Lost Mode locks your screen with a six-digit or four-digit passcode and lets you display a custom message with your phone number to help you get it back. You can also remotely erase your device if needed, and your custom message will continue to display even after the device is erased.

While Activation Lock works in the background to make it more difficult for someone to use or sell your missing device, Lost Mode clearly indicates to anyone who finds your device that it still belongs to you and can't be reactivated without your password.

To put a device into Lost Mode, sign in to icloud.com/find from a Mac or PC or use the Find My iPhone iOS app.

You can learn more about what to do if your device is lost or stolen.

Do I need to turn off Find My iPhone before giving away my device?

Yes. Before you give your device to someone else, turn off Find My iPhone to ensure that the other person can activate and use the device normally. The best way to do this is to erase all content and settings from your device before handing it over. This will completely erase your device, turn off Find My iPhone, and remove the device from your

Apple ID account. On your iOS device, go to Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings.

You can learn more about what to do before selling or giving away your device. Do I need to turn off Find My iPhone before having my device serviced?

Yes. If Find My iPhone is on, technicians might not be able to perform service on your device.

What if I forget my Apple ID password?

If you forget your password, you can reset it at your Apple ID account page or you can contact Apple Support and verify your identity.

If you forget your password and can't reset it, you'll lose access to your Apple ID and might be unable to use or reactivate your device. To help prevent this, visit your Apple ID account page periodically to review and update your account information.

What if I purchase a device that is still linked to the previous owner's account?

Contact the previous owner as soon as possible and ask them to erase the device and remove it from their account. Learn how to remove a device from a previous owner's account.

How do I check for Activation Lock before purchasing a used device?

When you buy an iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, or Apple Watch from someone other than Apple or an authorized Apple reseller, it is up to you to ensure that the device is erased and no longer linked to the previous owner's account. You can check the current Activation Lock status of a device when you visit icloud.com/activationlock from any Mac



or PC.

Or you can follow the steps below to make sure that you can use the device you purchase:

Turn the device on and slide to unlock.

If the passcode lock screen or the Home screen appears, the device hasn't been erased. Ask the seller to completely erase the device by going to Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings. Don't take ownership of any used iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch until it's been erased.

Begin the device setup process.

After choosing a language, choosing a country, and connecting to a network, the device will begin activation. If you're asked for the previous owner's Apple ID and password, the device is still linked to their account. Hand the device back to the seller and ask them to enter their password. If the previous owner isn't present, they can remove the device from their account by signing in to icloud.com/find. Don't take ownership of any used iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch until it has been removed from the previous owner's account.

You will know that a device is ready for you to use when you're asked to "Set up your iPhone," "Set up your iPad," or "Set up your iPod" the first time you turn it on.

Does Find My Mac include Activation Lock?

Activation Lock works only with iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch with iOS 7 or later and Apple Watch with watchOS2 or later.

If Your Device is Lost or Stolen

If Find My iPhone is enabled on your missing device

You can use Find My iPhone to find your device and take additional actions that can help you recover it and keep your data safe.

Sign in to icloud.com/find on a Mac or PC, or use the Find My iPhone app on another iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch.

Find your device. Open Find My iPhone, and select a device to view its location on a map. If the device is nearby, you can have it play a sound to help you or someone nearby find it.

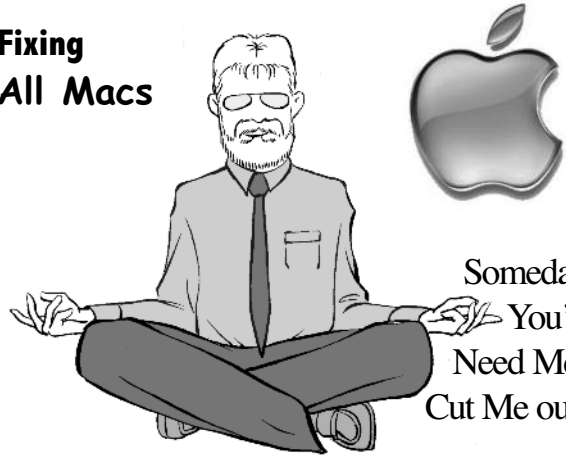
Turn on Lost Mode. Using Lost Mode, you can remotely lock your device with a four-digit passcode, display a custom message with your phone number on your missing device's Lock screen, and keep track of your device's location. If you added credit or debit cards to Apple Pay, the ability to make payments using Apple Pay on the device will be suspended when you put your device in Lost Mode.

Report your lost or stolen device to local law enforcement. Law enforcement might request the serial number of your device. Find your device serial number.

Erase your device. To prevent anyone else from accessing the data on your missing device, you can erase it remotely. When you erase your device, all of your information (including credit or debit cards for Apple Pay) will be deleted from the device, and you won't be able to find it using Find My iPhone. After you erase a device, you can't track it. If you remove the device from your account after you erase it, Activation Lock will be turned off. This allows another person to activate and use your device. online, these actions will take effect.

DR. MAC

Fixing
All Macs



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March 12, Saturday

Kids: The Irish Come to Willimantic, 2:00p.m. Irish Eyes exhibit tout, story, activity and snack for children ages 5-12. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Reservations: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

March 13, Sunday

Community Food: Let's Have Some Wine, 2:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. \$30. Wine and refreshments fundraiser for the Willimantic Lions Club at the Golf Club of Windham, 184 Club Road, North Windham. Info: willimanticlionsclub.org

Community Food: Irish Country Cooking, 3:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. \$50.97. Explore the fine tradition of Irish cookery at 750 on Main, 750 Main Street, Willimantic.

March 14, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults).(See 3/7).

Philosophy: Think-and-Do Philosophy Club: Climate Change/ Logic, Reason, Language, 6:30-9:30p.m. A group of amateur philosophers interested in solving the issues of our time, meeting at Song-A-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878

Film: It Happened Here, 7:00p.m. Free screening of a powerful documentary about student rape and sexual assault on college campuses at Amherst, Vanderbilt and UCONN. Only eastern CT off-campus screening at Storrs Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 46 Spring Hill Road, Mansfield. Info: 860-428-4867.

March 16, Wednesday

Lecture: Malfred A. Fressola presents Intellectual Property, Smartphone Technology & Nokia Tech/patents vs. Apple, 3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Paul E. Johnson Sr. Community Conference Room, J. Eugene Smith Library, ECSU, 83 Windham Street, Willimantic.

Live Music: Artist's Showcase, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. The Silage Brothers, Jarmony, Terry Rand, Just Friends, and Bruce John. \$5 donation for the Covenant Soup Kitchen. Info: 860-429-4220 breadboxfolk.org

March 18, Friday

Clean-Up: Willimantic Trash Mob, 5:00p.m.-5:30p.m. Help tidy up town! Bring gloves and bags to the Whitewater Partnership Bridge Street Property, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-1878 bevishistory@yahoo.com

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. Burton Leavitt Theatre, 779 Main Street, Willimantic. Info & Tickets: 860-423-2245 www.windhamtheatreguild.org

March 19, Saturday

Skill Share: Gardening Workshop, 10:00a.m. - 11:30a.m. Share best practices for Connecticut gardeners. Goodwin

Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

Skill Share: Ukrainian Easter Egg Decorating (Pysanka), 2:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Demonstration by Catherine Squires, sponsored by The Windham Regional Arts Council. Buchanan Center, Mansfield Public Library, 59 Warrenville Road, Mansfield. Info: 860-423-1728 www.windhamrac.org

Skill Share: Willimantic Fibre Club, 2:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. Work on projects and help each other learn. Free! Swift Waters Artisans' Cooperative, 866 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-4143

History: Mike Westerfield talks on the Willimantic Town Farm, 4:00p.m. Donation. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

Community Food: Progressive Dinner, 5:30p.m. Fundraiser for the Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood Association. Move from house to house, enjoying a four course meal. Reservations: WVNA555@gmail.com Info: victorianwillimantic.org

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

March 20, Sunday

Community Food: Annual Freedom Day Lunch, 12:00p.m. - 3:00p.m. \$20.00. Enjoy Hungarian food at the Hungarian Social Club, 314 Ashford Center Road/Rt. 44, Ashford. Info: 860-375-3390

Skill Share: My Roots Are Showing: Collecting and Telling Family Stories, 1:00p.m. \$50 (\$5 for open mic only). Annual family stories workshop for the family history curious and the professional storyteller. 40A Stearns Road, Storrs. Info: 860-690-4292 carolynstearnsstoryteller.com

Music History: Civil War Music, 3:00p.m. \$6. Music Historian Rick Spencer will play and talk about Civil War Music. Sponsored by the Windham Historical Society and funded by the Leo and Rose Pageau Trust. Dugan Hall, 157 Union Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.windhamhistory.org

March 21, Monday

Community Food & Lecture: The Women's Club of Storrs Archeology Talk and Pot Luck Luncheon, 11:30a.m. Connecticut State Archeologist Brian Jones will present on topics in Connecticut Archeology. Buchanan Center, Mansfield Library, Route 89, Mansfield. Info: 860-423-3163.

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults).(See 3/7).

Philosophy: Think-and-Do Philosophy Club: The Origins of War, the Basis for Peace/The Philosophy of Science/ Phenomenology, 6:30-9:30p.m. A group of amateur philosophers interested in solving the issues of our time, meeting at Song-A-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878

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democracy in its most positive aspect.

Gandhi stressed #2 – participation in an ethically oriented democracy through performance of social duties before rights:

“In Swaraj based on ahimsa people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one’s duties. Hence rights of citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State [country, not necessarily government] to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them.

Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to goonda-ism.⁹ But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves.”¹⁰

He saw that individual liberty would need to be tempered with restraint, out of consideration for and allowance of the practice of democracy by all:

“I value individual freedom but you must not forget that a man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the wellbeing of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.”¹¹

Gandhi’s view of democracy or Swaraj was from the angle of the masses: “True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.”¹² “It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.”¹³

He saw democracy as requiring public education:

“Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”¹⁴

Gandhi was against ‘mob’ rule and he saw the danger of this assumption for democracy:

“The rule of the majority has a narrow application,

i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail.¹ But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what the decisions are. Democracy is not a state where people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.¹⁵

Bernie Sanders is not Mahatma Gandhi, but we see him espousing similar principles. Gandhi prepared India painstakingly for participation by the masses in localized democracy; village-level self governance, universal basic education that served India’s unique contexts, a self-reliant medical system based upon Nature Cure, an artisan-based economy which ensured living wages, and equitable urban-rural exchanges. In the end the status quo prevailed, and the institutions Gandhi and his co-workers nurtured with the utmost of care and difficulties for India’s masses, whom Gandhi had awoken to attainable dreams, were sidelined and continue to be so today.

Despite the years of ‘progress’ since Gandhi’s time, Bernie finds himself facing similar issues. Re-focus the people’s attention on government’s rightful duty. Ensure that our taxes are used for the social, economic, and ethical progress of society. Re-educate our nation as to the real reason for even employing democracy as an ideal to guide governance – the advancement of the human being in ethical stature. So the individual, so the society.

- 1 Gandhi, M.K. (1921). *Young India*. February 22. Age 51.
- 2 From an article on a talk Gandhi gave, in the newspaper *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, dated August 2, 1934. Gandhi was then 64 years of age.
- 3 Gandhi, M.K. (1940). *Harijan*. August 25. Age 70.
- 4 Gandhi, M.K. (1931). *Young India*. March 19. Age 61.
- 5 Gandhi, M.K. (1930). *Young India*. January 23. Age 60.
- 6 Charka – hand spinning wheel.
- 7 Prohibition of alcohol sale and use in society.
- 8 Gandhi, M.K. (1940). *Harijan*. May 18.. Age 70.
- 9 Goonda-ism—hooliganism. A goonda is held as a person exhibiting socially disruptive, rude, violent behaviours.
- 10 Gandhi, M.K. (1939). *Harijan*. March 25. Age 69.
- 11 Gandhi, M.K. (1939). *Harijan*. May 27. Age 69.
- 12 Gandhi, M.K. (1948). *Harijan*. January 18. Age 78.
- 13 Gandhi, M.K. (1938). *Harijan*. November 12. Age 68.
- 14 Gandhi, M.K. (1925). *Young India*. January 29. Age 55.
- 15 Gandhi, M.K. (1932). *Young India*. March 2. Age 62.

‘Details of the State’ are things like trusteeship of natural resources for the future public weal; currency, foreign policy, defense, limited taxation to support infrastructure works for the public benefit, etc..

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March 24, Thursday

Poetry: Vivas: A Reading by Martín Espada and Laura Schmidt, 5:00p.m. Curbstone Press writers read from their collections at the UCONN Co-op, 1 Royce Circle, Storrs. Info: 860-486-3537 bookstore.uconn.edu

March 26, Saturday

History: Rockville Mills, 10:00a.m. \$7-10. Meet in front of the Town Hall in the center of town. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

March 28, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults).(See 3/7).

Philosophy: Think-and-Do Philosophy Club: Revolution, Reform, and Apocalypse/Thinking and Doing (Praxis), 6:30-9:30p.m. A group of amateur philosophers interested in solving the issues of our time, meeting at Song-A-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878

March 30, Wednesday

Nature: Vernal Pools, 7:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. Learn about and visit a vernal pool. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Registration: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

March 31, Thursday

Hike: Senior Walk, 12:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. Moderate, casual walks on forest trails. All are welcome. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, 23 Potter Road, Hampton. Info: 860-455-9534 emma.larusso@ct.gov

April 1, Friday

Dancing: Quiet Corner Contra Dance, 7:30p.m. - 11:00p.m. \$5-10. Called dancing by Pal Wilde with music by The Swivets. Wear soft-soled shoes and bring a snack to share. Instructions at 7:30 for beginners; dance begins at 8:00p.m. Patriots Park Lodge, 172 Lake St, Coventry. Info: 484-844-5203 or dcannell@freeshell.org quietcornercontradance.tripod.com

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 2, Saturday

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 3, Sunday

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 1:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 4, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and

adults).(See 3/7).

Philosophy: Think-and-Do Philosophy Club: Evolution and Social Change/The Problem of Beauty, 6:30-9:30p.m. A group of amateur philosophers interested in solving the issues of our time, meeting at Song-A-Day Music Store, 2809 Boston Tpke, Coventry. Info: 860-742-6878

April 7, Thursday

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 8, Friday

Clean-Up: Willimantic Trash Mob, 5:00p.m.-5:30p.m. Help tidy up town! Bring gloves and bags to the Willimantic Cemetery and the VFW. Park at Stop & Shop. Willimantic. Info: 860-423-1878 bevishistory@yahoo.com

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 9, Saturday

History: Hysterical Historicals, 1:00p.m. (See 3/5).

Kids: Famous Authors and Book-making, 2:00p.m. A tour of the museum library, story, activity and snack. For children ages 5-12. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Reservation: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

Community Food: Ham & Bean Dinner, 4:30p.m. - 7:00p.m. \$8-12 dine-in or take-out dinner benefit for the Prudence Crandall Museum at 1 Municipal Drive, Canterbury. Tickets: 860-546-7800 ext. 7 or 860-546-9507. Info: friendsofprudencecrandallmuseum.org

Live Music: Brunilda Myftaraj, 7:00p.m. Free! Albanian-American violin virtuosi Brunilda Myftaraj performs works by Gershwin, Bernstein, Ives, and more at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 60 Church Street, Manchester. Donations accepted. Info: 860-644-1383 www.brunildamyftaraj.wordpress.com

Theatre: Bingo! The Winning Musical, 7:30p.m. \$16-19. (See 3/18).

April 11, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults).(See 3/7).

Film: Dream On, 7:00p.m. Free screening of a film that takes an epic road trip in search of the vanishing American Dream with political comedian John Fuglesang. Storrs Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 46 Spring Hill Road, Mansfield. Info: 860-428-4867.

April 12, Tuesday

Live Music: Quiet Corner Fiddlers, 7:00p.m. - 8:30p.m. Hear the fiddlers play at Midway Restaurant and Pizza, 174 Ashford Center Road, Ashford. Info: qcf.webs.com

Skill Share: Willimantic Fibre Club, 2:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. Work on projects and help each other learn. Free! Swift Waters Artisans' Cooperative, 866 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-4143

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Dennis Pierce continued from page 9

taste.

In a medium bowl toss apples with lemon juice to prevent from browning.

Add the apples, greens, cranberries and half of the walnuts to the bowl.

Add dressing and toss.

Divide the salad among plates and sprinkle with remaining walnuts and top with goat cheese crumbles.

Serve and smile

Someday, as the local movement evolves, I hope to be able to write about our local farmers and say, "Never have so few fed so many for so little." Joining others and moving to buying local is the basis for strengthening our local community. That is what I am talking about, folks: a connection. It really comes down to the choices we make. We can have more to say about what we eat. From the garden, to you to your table. Go on, make a farmer your friend and attend "Know Your Farmer Fair" on Saturday, March 19th at CLiCK. If you have a suggestion or a farm or local grower you would like featured in this column drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com. Peas be with you.

David Corsini continued from page 11

after we boarded, the plane had to be de-iced before takeoff. Because of the delay, we missed our Halifax connection to Logan.

I hurried ahead to talk to an agent about what we should do next. There was already a line of 40 people trying to make arrangements. I went back to find Chuck who was chugging along with his "rollator". Even though it was unfortunate to have missed our connection, we got lucky. An Air Canada agent, who seemed to be wandering the halls, saw Chuck and asked him what the situation was. I arrived and explained. She took our boarding passes and said she would help us. She got us boarding passes for the next morning, and only because Chuck is handicapped, booked us into a hotel along with a \$30.00 meal voucher.

Chuck had checked a bag and I asked if that would be automatically sent to Logan the next morning. The answer was no. Bags cannot be checked sooner than four hours before departure. I had to get the bag. She did not tell me how to do that and I did not think it would be a problem so didn't ask. But it was a problem.

I headed down to the baggage claim area but before going through the final door, I saw a guard and thought I would tell him what I was doing. It was a good thing. He told me I could not go down and come back with the bag. He tried to think through what I could do. After several scrubbed alternatives, he suggested I go down to Gate 18 and go through an unmarked door to go down to baggage claim and then I could probably come back. His problem was solved but mine was not.

I found Gate 18 and saw a door that matched what the guard had described. I left Chuck sitting on his "rollator". I went through the door and there was another guard. I had come through the pilot and crew entrance and there was no way I could get the bag and come back. The guard told me I should take the elevator down a level and find a Canada Air agent to

Neighbors 45
help me. He said to just turn right when I got off the elevator. His problem was solved but not mine.

I got down to the bottom floor and started walking as directed. Nothing was in sight. Then I spotted a man standing at a desk with a sign that said: "May I help?" I explained my problem and this man turned out to be a tenacious helper. He took me to a lost luggage claim area and turned me over to a baggage finder who assured me he would find the bag and bring it to our hotel room.

Meanwhile the gentleman that had begun to help me had managed to find Chuck and bring him down to the level where I was. Our hotel was an easy walk through a tunnel. The baggage finder personally delivered Chuck's bag to our room shortly after we had registered. We made use of the meal voucher, watched a little football and turned in early. Our plane was to leave the next morning at 8:10 am. We went through security and then U.S. Customs very early, had breakfast and boarded our flight on time. I had my vertebrae and it was looking good.

The plane departed on time and it looked like we would get to Logan shortly after 8 am. There had been snow overnight and as we approached Logan Airport, we were put to a holding pattern for 45 minutes. We finally landed and I looked for the shuttle to the Hampton Inn where my car had remained. But I could not find the place where hotel shuttles were picking up passengers and there was no one to ask. With Chuck's lack of mobility and the cold, there was nothing to do except take a taxi and fortunately the taxi stand was close. The taxi supervisor pointed us to a taxi. The taxi driver got out and asked where to. I said, "Hampton Inn". He said with a foreign accent, "which one?" That was not what I wanted to hear. Finally it seemed like he knew where we wanted to go and he began trying to get Chuck's "rollator" into his trunk. There was no way. He finally gave up and just threw the walker to the sidewalk. He was not a pleasant man so I was happy to be rid of him.

Another taxi was summoned and another foreign driver had the same question about the Inn. He finally seemed to understand where we wanted to go. As we took off, he put in an ear plug and commenced speaking Russian. He seemed to be receiving driving directions in Russian. I was sure glad when the Inn appeared.

My car was still there and covered with three inches of light snow that was easy to clear. We easily found the Mass Pike and were home by noon. Chuck had his Dovekie, I could remove the asterisk from the Dovekie I had seen in Rhode Island and I had my seal vertebrae.

For safe keeping I had left Chuck's house keys in my car. We got Chuck's belongings into his condo, I gave him his passport that I had kept track of during the trip and went home where Delia had been waiting for the GPS so she could take off for NY to visit with our granddaughter Eva. Although I was anxious to be back with Delia, I was glad to have the time to get organized and go to bed early. The trip had involved a long period of stress. I know I will not be on a search for the White-tailed Ptarmigan in Colorado or the Tri-colored Blackbird in California. But perhaps there is a Black Rail adventure with Chuck in my future.

Where is God?

By Cathy Cementina

I have a friend whose skepticism about God echoes the age-old conundrum: If God is all good and all powerful, how can He allow suffering to the degree we witness among His creation? Either He is all good, but not all-powerful, or He is all-powerful but somehow not a loving or good God such that tragedy and suffering happen every day on His watch. Of course the traditional response to this conundrum is that God gave human beings free will which, when we exercise it, can result in bad things happening. As the rationale goes, this is the cost for our being free agents. This rationale is not enough to enable my friend to worship a God before whom unspeakable horrors occur.



From a different perspective than my friend's, the impossibility I have with the notion of a spiritual consciousness that we call God springs from reflecting on what we know about the universe – its age, its composition, its evolution through time.

The universe is 13.8 billion years old. That's the first fact that stops me in my tracks relative to being able to "believe." So the universe is nearly 14 billion years old, yet a man living in a desert in Galilee or on a mountaintop in Mecca or on the Sinai Peninsula, appearing relatively late in the universe's evolution, changes everything? Such holy men, as told in the Bible, the Torah, or the Qur'an, emerge on earth at a delayed point in the evolution of this vast universe to bring a transcendent, transforming message to God's people? What does this mean? The universe is nearly 14 billion years old and yet these representatives of God (or, in the case of Jesus, God Himself) come onto the scene late and fundamentally alter existence? In fact, nothing has changed. Some would say things have only gotten worse through time relative to human conduct and, for that matter, the health of the earth. Where is God in all this? Granting the truth of their existence, how did the appearance on earth of the pillars of our monotheistic religions -- Jesus or Muhammad or Moses -- constitute a watershed in the progression of humanity and of the wider cosmos? (And we aren't even addressing the question of why, given that their message was so critical and groundbreaking, did these emissaries of God not speak universally to all of humanity – to people living in what we now call Kenya, or China, or Malaysia, or Fiji, or, for that matter, to natives of the North American continent?) In the face of a universe nearly 14 billion years old and of unknown reach, the impact of these representatives of God is not at all clear to me.

(It is also the case that accounts of people and events told in the holy texts have been repeatedly discredited, not only by science, but by biblical literary criticism. How can I, why would I, engage in a practice based on fiction? By "fiction" I mean: stories that are told by human beings.)

A second thing about the universe that gives me pause relative to believing in a spiritual consciousness --and in particular a spiritual creator -- is the physics of the Big Bang and of the universe's expansion. According to most physicists and observations derived from NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE), the very early universe grew from a tiny region to an exponentially larger region in an extremely short period of time. All that ultimately would comprise the original universe was condensed into a space perhaps 10 to the negative 33 centimeters big. (Or rather, small.) This was our heritage. This was our ultimate homeland. Did a Creator God create this dense pack of radiation and matter? What does that mean? Then, within 10 to the negative 36 seconds from this point, an exponential expansion occurs. The lynchpin of the Big Bang is the universe's expansion, an expansion that initially was so great in such a small period of time that it is referred to as cosmic inflation. Are we then to think that a transcendent or supernatural consciousness somehow orchestrated this explosion of matter and radiation? Is that what we mean when we speak of Creation? And is that what we are giving thanks for when we go to church, temple or mosque and pray, "Thank you, God, for your glorious creation?" What does that mean exactly? Am I to simply posit a loosely-defined spiritual Creator behind (or within) all that is, a spiritual being who -- in an equally imprecise way -- sparked the universe's origin and expansion? Again I have to ask, what does that mean? If I can't know what that means, how can I -- why would I -- worship this "God"? This is not a question of refusing to believe in God; it is a matter of not being able to believe in God because I have no idea what it is that I would be believing in.

And when I think about the universe's composition of enormous amounts of energy, matter, anti-matter, dark matter, dark energy, black holes, stars, planets, quasars, quarks, and so on, I think to myself: Why did a Creator God bother with the whole rest of the universe, given the primacy placed on human beings alone by all theological tenets and in all religious accounts of life found in the theistic holy texts? For heaven's sake, He could have just created our rocky planet of earth and the solar system, a few species including us humans, and carried out His mission. From the perspective of the so-called revealed and holy texts, the greater universe is rendered superfluous.

So I reflect about what we now know concerning the origins of our universe, its composition and its evolution. And we know an enormous amount from the Big Bang background radiation first detected by two Bell Lab scientists while working on a telescope in New Jersey in 1963. (A discovery for which they were awarded the Nobel Prize in 1978.) In all that we know about the nature and development of the universe, I see no place for God. He/She/It would appear to be irrelevant to the process. Another friend tells me God is essentially love, spiritual love. But if so, that love has tragically failed us. We

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April 16, Saturday

Skill Share: Wood Block Print, 2:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Demonstration by Richard Wolf, sponsored by The Windham Regional Arts Council. Buchanan Center, Mansfield Public Library, 59 Warrenville Road, Mansfield. Info: 860-423-1728 www.windhamrac.org

April 17, Sunday

History: Civil War Letters to Windham, 3:00p.m. Donation. A reading from letters in the collection of the Windham Historical Society at the Jillson House Museum, 627 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-1878 www.windhamhistory.org

April 19, Tuesday

Kids: KidVid Premiere Screening, by Bill Dougal, 11:00a.m. \$3. Watch highlights from "Fish Fact Fun, Cowboy Billy's OK Corral, and Fast Draw Fun. Enjoy live songs and drawings, too. 27 Meadow Street, Willimantic. Info: 860456-9041 dougalart.com

April 22, Friday

Clean-Up: Willimantic Trash Mob, 5:00p.m.-5:30p.m. Help tidy up town! Bring gloves and bags to Cardinal Square, near Tony's Pizza, Willimantic. Info: 860-423-1878 bevishistory@yahoo.com

April 23, Saturday

History: Field Trip to the Woonsocket Museum of Work and Culture: The Story of French Canadian Immigration, all day. Car pool and caravan from Willimantic at 9am. Windham Textile & History Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Info: 860-456-2178 www.millmuseum.org

April 25, Monday

Skill Share: Fiddle & Song Sessions, 3:30p.m. - 5:00p.m. (young children) and 5:00p.m. - 9:00p.m. (older youth and adults).(See 3/7).

April 29, Friday

Live Music: The Sticky Greens and Desert Rain, 8:00p.m. \$7. Dead, Bluegrasstafarian Jams and beyond at 25 Meadow Street, Willimantic. Info: blog.vulturetownarts.org

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and the ratcheting fears of what might come next. The fancy word for this phenomenon is 'praxis'.

In reading many case studies of psychologists, I have been struck by how insular the mind is often judged to be, as if its workings produced effects quite independently of the social realities it confronted. Theories of psychosis and personality disorders famously seek causation in genetics, endocrinology, and other physiological process, regarding behavior as something to control but not to inspire. It is not that pre-dispositions to various mental illnesses do not exist; it is that they do not exist in a vacuum. Through the alchemy of understanding, limitations can become strengths. To

authentically believe in a person, to validate the scope of their challenges, and to suggest actions that assert a broader role for consciousness and for choice, is to help unleash energy to help that person feel better as well as loosen the bonds that have held that person in check. Psychotherapy has stressed adaptation; the point, however, is change.

In a recent group session, a client wrote on my dry-erase board, 'On a good day, we are all the same'. Another client added, 'but who has a good day?' It would seem that to know what a good day is would be to know the meaning of a good life, with the idea of happiness being not too distant from either of these notions.

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hear every day of the heartache human beings cause and have caused other human beings (and, often enough, in the "name of God"). Where is God-as-love, God-as-spirit in all of this? He/She/It would appear to be irrelevant. Yet another friend tells me God is the interconnectedness of all that is, the spiritual web that binds all being. Well, Gautama Buddha voiced this same insight into universal interconnectedness with his notion of Dependent Origination in the 5th century B.C. – and he did so without recourse to any transcendent or divine being.

When we lose God – or rather the concept of God – we lose nothing in terms of the joy, creativity and compassion we can forge in our lives. And what we stand to gain is a vision of the universe and our place in it unencumbered by religious constructs.

Cathy lives in Coventry.

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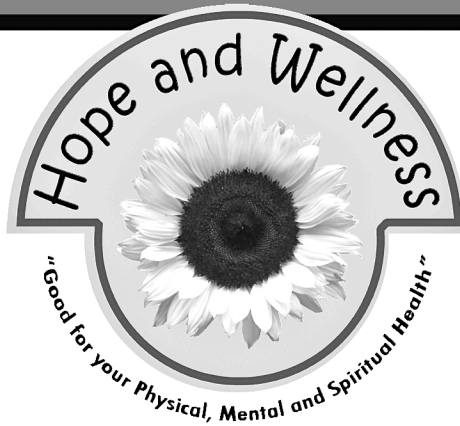
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