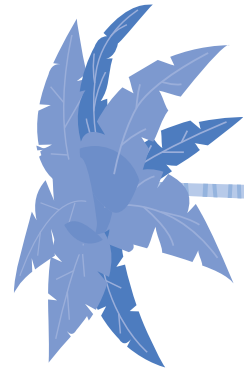


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Looking Up:

# Cleaning the Flue and Holding Hands by the Fire

By Bob Grindle

There is a moment...before the chill of fall sets in, perhaps late August...when the evening spreads its soothing shade of pastels that hover between gray-blue or purple or a watery yellow-orange, the birds are tucking themselves in and chortling whatever says “good-night” in Birdland, and darkening shadows become silhouettes, and, looking up at the moody outline of the house—perhaps punctuated with a lighted window here, a reflected distant sunset over there—the outline of the chimney suddenly reminds you that the flue needs to be cleaned before the fireplace or stove can be started for the coming season.

Standing here by the woodstove right now, warming up after coming in from outside chores, the flue has long ago been cleaned and my mind twizzles with the many unpleasant tasks that set the table for satisfying outcomes. That list might be infinite, limited only by the range of imagination. Adding a log to the fire, its comforting low growl enlivening the warmth with a creature-like presence, my body folds itself down onto the warm tiles of the hearth, rather yoga-like and not at all uncomfortable, and the atmosphere of the room feels almost sentient, inviting and prayer-worthy.

Prayer-worthy—really? Yes, indeed. The random way these moments have of prowling out of the lifescape of a world traveling at an almost indigestible pace makes it urgent to pause long enough to reach out for a sort of spiritual handholding when you feel there’s a connection to be made. What is handholding, after all, if not a virtual affirmation that we are stronger together? Whether communing with a fire by the hearth, or talking to the trees in a glen by the river, yearning for peace on a hillside vista, getting lost in music you love, or consoling a loved one whose pain, or

fear, or regret, or loss needs to feel the touch of someone who cares, each of us has felt the honesty and power of those unmasked moments when our universal connection to all that makes us human slips through our defenses and into our very being...as if something in the world around us is offering to hold our spiritual hand.

I don’t believe in magic, and the gentle, steady purr of a few logs undergoing the chemical reaction we know as fire seems an unlikely place to suddenly feel a connection to the cosmos, but looking up at last night’s Full Wolf Moon, high in a crackling clear and almost tear-freezingly cold sky, I could easily imagine our distant forebears silently invoking the spirits of dancing campfire flames to keep the circling and moonlit silhouettes of howling wolves at bay till dawn. To this day, there is a chilling edge to the story of our species’ journey, but, in a moment of optimistic reverie, I fancy that the outrageous indifference of our Mother Planet’s survival gauntlet will yet find us climbing out of the cauldron, tempered and ready. En garde!

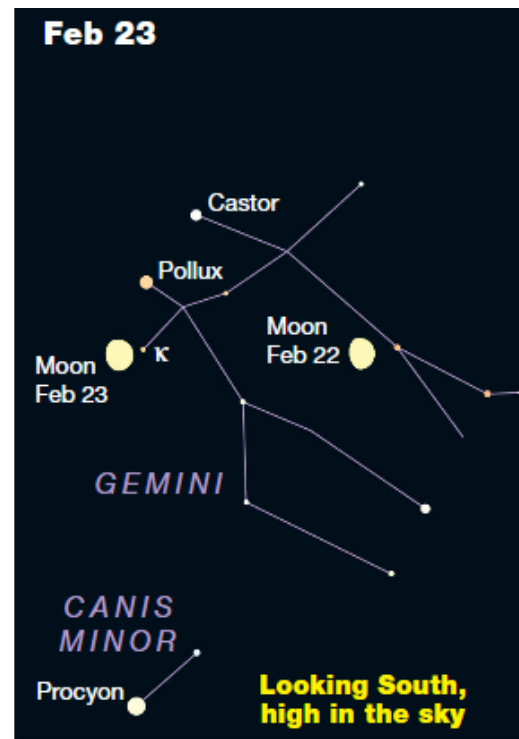
As the Full Wolf Moon of January gradually wanes through the early mornings of February, it will pass through Scorpio and very near Antares, a red supergiant of a star in the last throes of its life—so take a quick glance up toward the southeast if you’re

outside at 6 a.m. on February 6th and you’ll be looking directly at the heart of Scorpio, a red bit of a star just below the waning crescent Moon. Two weeks later, about 6 p.m., a now waxing Moon—as it heads toward its Full Snow Moon version on the 27th—rises through Taurus and near another red star, Aldebaran. This star, the eye of Taurus, is

not as close to the end of its life as Antares (funny how easy it is to fall into cosmic time references, where a few million years is close to the end). But Aldebaran has burned through its supply of hydrogen, and as carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen bubble up from the intense heat of its core they will soon enough be flung explosively into space to provide the building blocks for some other galactic project.

By February 23rd a rapidly waxing gibbous Moon will pass through Gemini, near the mythic twins Pollux and Castor, and third-shifters leaving work and on their way to the car can look almost directly overhead, at a position of 11 o’clock or so, and ponder the curious tale of these identical twin half-brothers. I used to work third shift, and thinking about such bizarre stories was the perfect way

to spend the wee hours of the night before dawn. Anyway, the Moon will line up with Pollux, a bit reddish, and appear a little lower than Castor on the 23rd, and then be the Full Snow Moon four nights later. As the cold settles in over our tiny coastal nook of North America, may your spirits be alert to the surprising and numerous ways our world has of offering its hand in neighborly fellowship.



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

On our cover: Great blue heron at the Eagleville Dam in Mansfield. Photo by Milton Levin of Storrs. Read about Milton and see another photo on page 13.

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

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# Sobering Truth Revealed in *Caste*

By Loretta Wrobel



As I navigate through this new year and digest all the events of January 2021, I am enmeshed with the book, *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontents*, by Isabel Wilkerson. It staggers me. This occurs after hearing/watching the events of January 6<sup>th</sup> where our Capitol was under assault by an angry mob that left me shocked by the horror and fear that the unsettling insurrection called up. My mood shifts while witnessing the inauguration of a new President and the first Woman Vice President. My emotions soar to elation and hope. The mood swings and emotions have been exhausting, and this is only the end of the first month of 2021!

I gather myself, questioning how I can integrate the truth found within this heavily researched book, *Caste*, while my emotions are on a wild roller coaster ride. I readily acknowledge that this is one of the hardest books I have ever read. To be made aware of the complexities and atrocities of racism and its impact on all of us is profound. I have to read the book slowly, as I am so struck by the fierce cruelty that one group of Americans can inflict and continue to inflict on another group of Americans.

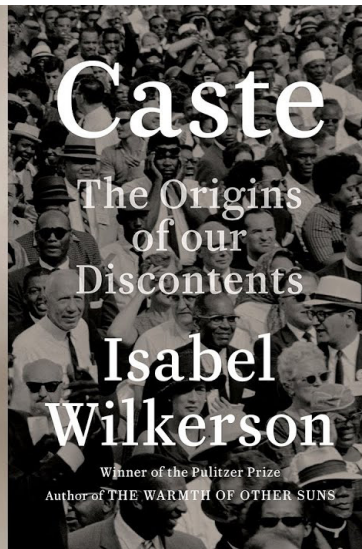
Ms. Wilkerson bases her book on the belief that a caste system is alive and well in our dear country. She compares our history of dealing with racism with the rigid hierarchy in India and the horrors of Nazi Germany. This stark comparison is chilling and a difficult pill to swallow. As she explains her belief, she discusses many documented experiences and encounters between the dominant group (white people) and the subordinate group (black people.)

The dictionary defines caste as a system of dividing society into hereditary classes, mentioning the Hindu class system of India. The concept that in America we operate with a rigid caste system floored me. This book opened my eyes and mind to agonizing truths that I, as a white person growing up in the Northeast and as member of the dominant group, never fully understood. The book has painfully widened my view and made me feel distraught. How did our country establish such a savage system where the brutality and ruthlessness are not always understood by the ignorant white person? This is how racism operates. The dominant segment is unable to totally accept how racism dehumanizes a subordinated group of people, because they do not live and breathe racism every day of their life.

What dawned on me as I read this revealing, raw expose of the dangers and inhumanity of a racist society, is how clueless I have been as a member of the dominant group. I am becoming more cognizant of the multitude of ways I was damaged by being raised in a society that ranked people according to skin color. I am aware that I received explicit lessons regarding race, and am attempting to increase awareness of the implicit lessons. What Wilkerson spells out so vividly in her book are the ongoing struggles that one faces for being an African American in America. She carefully demonstrates the history of being seen as subhuman and subjected to lesser status just because of the skin color. Ironically, we are taught to not judge a book by its cover. This obviously does not apply to Afro-Americans! If you view racism from this perspective, I ask myself, how blind are we as a society that prides itself on being free to rise to your potential? And why has this persisted for centuries?

The author of *Caste* courageously shares personal experiences that make me shudder, and sharply points out the dehumanizing consequences of discrimination. Isabel Wilkerson describes an incident where she was harassed by drug enforcement agents at an airport, when trying to make tight connections to pick up a rental car and reach her destination on time. As a black woman, when she said she was a New York Times reporter, she was not believed by her harassers that she was working and needed to get to her interview. She not only spoke of this humiliating encounter, but mentioned the long-term trauma following such a disempowering event. To be questioned and detained and not believed, while simply trying to do your job, is unconscionable.

The comparison to Nazi Germany initially spun me around. As I read on, I clearly saw her reasons for making this comparison. It is hard to hear and important to examine so that the hidden secrets of our supposedly democratic country are brought to light. If we never address how we really function, how can we begin to make significant changes and stop judging people by the color of their skin?



In this time of intense reevaluating and shifting of who we are as Americans, this book by Wilkerson is a pearl. We need to honestly exam our behavior, patterns, and habits. It is not easy to accept what our ancestors did to African Americans. It is even more essential today that we take responsibility for what we continue to inflict on people of color. What strikes me as more imperative is how to repair the injury and wounding that centuries of mistreating a group of people has caused. I believe the first step is to acknowledge and understand what happened and continues to happen daily.

This is not a task assigned to the targeted group. The dominant group (white people) must take responsibility for ending this unequal and unfair caste system. The abusive history of slavery and continued treatment of people based on skin color is there for all of us to examine. When I consider my biased education that did not spell out the truth about our country, I see how deadly and all-pervasive a caste system can be. Criticizing Nazi Germany is far too easy for us as righteous Americans. We need to go further and cleanse ourselves of our own horrible secrets.

It is a time of high possibility. We have a new administration that includes Kamala Harris, a Woman Vice President who is of black and Asian descent. We experienced an uplifting inauguration that showcased a talented diverse America. We have numerous books like *Caste* to educate and galvanize us. We have groups such as Black Lives Matters and NAACP to guide us to stay on track. We must listen and eradicate this caste system that hurts all of us. How many people have been destroyed by our oppressive racism, and their gifts lost to us? We can and must do better. Are you on board? Are you strong enough to let go of fake superiority?

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# Return of the Banana Republic

By Delia Berlin



The last few years, and in particular the last few months, have been traumatizing for me. They brought back memories of violent times in Argentina, where I grew up. I will always carry with me a touch of PTSD related to those experiences. Lately, and a little too often, I've felt that familiar dread of waiting for the other shoe to drop. I'll explain.

I may be wrong, but I always thought that the phrase "banana republic" originated from the assumption that many countries in banana-growing tropical climates had corrupt and chaotic forms of government. Probably most Americans would throw Argentina into that heap. But from my childhood and youth in Argentina, I know that such an assumption would be wrong.

First, Argentina is not a tropical country. In length from north to south, Argentina is similar to the United States. So, just like the U.S., it includes some tropical areas, but it also extends into cold climate zones. Second, while I was growing up Argentina experienced some incredibly prosperous, organized, and democratic years. Buenos Aires, its capital, was founded long before the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth and is a beautiful, green, and well-designed city. Its subway system in those days would have put most of ours to shame. It was already huge and with multiple connections, but also beautiful. Each station was decorated with majolica murals depicting historical scenes. Escalators and platforms were well-lit and safe. Trains were clean and comfortable.

I don't want to make this story a description of Argentina in my childhood years, but I would like to debunk a few myths with a couple of examples. Education and public health are the perfect areas to focus on. Public education was great and integrated with a comprehensive public health plan. One day during each school year, every class would be taken by bus to a health center, where each child was thoroughly checked and screened for a variety of illnesses, deficiencies, and developmental delays, including vision and hearing. There, we were vaccinated for communicable diseases according to a national schedule. If a new vaccine was developed between our yearly visits, ambulatory clinics would visit schools to update our immunizations. I remember when we all had to line up to take our sugar lumps with the Sabin oral polio vaccine, even after having received the Salk injectable version.

Despite this period of seemingly civilized bliss, Argentina's history is full of ups and downs along the democratic scale. My first memory involves a coup and has been pieced together from visual images stored during a few hours of heightened attention, when I was just 16 months old. Aided by things I've heard over the years, I managed to form and retain this memory that comes from a very tender age. Apparently, I was a very cautious infant who had been cruising for months, and finally walked independently on the day of Peron's first ousting. It wasn't until that fateful day that I let go of furniture and people to get from one place to another.

The year was 1955. I still remember walking alongside the footboard of an uncle's bed as he sat on it, listening to the radio. I have a clear image of the room's layout and furniture, as well as that uncle, smoking and wearing a white tank top. I can describe the footboard: wooden, dark, curved, lacquered. My perspective is from a low point in the room—not surprisingly, since I must have been under three feet tall.

Over time, I've realized that the state of heightened attention that helped me form that clear memory was due to my sensing the tension and fear that my relatives were experiencing. I have a vague recollection of frenzied people coming and going, worried, whispering. I learned much later that at that time my father was due to arrive from work at a nearby train station. Since my family knew that soldiers were recruiting and arming people to fight in defense of Peron as they arrived at the station, they were trying to figure out how to warn him. My father arrived safely and never had to fight, but there must have been several tense hours until that outcome played out. Eventually, Peron was ousted and went into exile in Spain for many years.

Years later, when I was eight or nine, there was another armed confrontation in the city. I don't know any details about that particular incident, except from my limited childhood recollection. This violent dispute involved two military factions that I recall as los rojos (the reds) and los azules (the blues). For some reason, they decided to fight it out on the streets of Buenos Aires, endangering

civilian lives and property. I don't even know who were the good ones and who were the bad ones. What I do know is that we were terrified.

Tanks and heavily armed military personnel lined our street. My father gathered our family in the rearmost room of the house for safety. We all had to stay down on the floor for hours, barricaded behind furniture and mattresses. My sister and I were crying, while our four-year-old brother assured us that nothing bad could happen because our father had a gun. I don't think my father ever had a working gun, but this belief was enough for my brother to feel safe. However, it did nothing for me and my sister, who were old enough to know that a gun was no match for the machine guns and tanks on our street. The noise was deafening.

A few hours after the gunfire started, someone rang our doorbell. It was a group of soldiers, just kids, really, only 18 or 19 years of age, handing out little pieces of paper with their names and phone numbers. They were begging my parents to call theirs, to tell them they were well. A while later, they rang our doorbell again to tell us that there was going to be a brief break in the fighting, in case we wanted to use the chance to go elsewhere.

We had some family a few blocks away. The situation there wasn't any better, but they lived on a second floor, in the rear part of an apartment building. My father thought that it would be a more secure location, so we all ran four city blocks in complete terror to spend the rest of that evening at my aunt's. The conflict ended as suddenly as it had started and, that very night, we were able to return home. The cement walls of our patio have borne the scars of machine-gun fire ever since. Was the conflict consequential? I don't know. It was an opportunity for grown men to play with war weapons while innocent women and children feared for their lives.

Still later, during my late teens, violence returned to Buenos Aires. This time I was a university student and understood a little more about what was at stake. I participated in many peaceful demonstrations. Peaceful from my side, that is, since I never even carried a stick. Only my youth and good fortune helped me run away from danger and dodge bullets, as many of these protests were violently confronted and dispersed. Eventually, things went from bad to worse and the rights to protest and assemble peacefully were suspended, as were many other civil rights. After losing friends and relatives to unchecked violence, and feeling stressed and vulnerable due to constant, unjustified stops and searches, I left Argentina, seeking peace.

I ended up in the U.S. because my parents and siblings were already living here, and I was fortunate to have the resources and support to make a home again. This would take much more than learning a new language and understanding a new culture, but my grandparents had gone through it successfully when they left Spain to go to Argentina, also seeking peace. I had their constitution and their example to help me through.

During our recent national developments, I have reflected upon my family's semi-nomadic lives, unwillingly uprooting themselves for their own self-preservation and well-being, only to have to relive their past within a generation or two. Having been burned before, I've seen bad things coming for a long time. But our national story doesn't have to end in the same way. Our movie is called History and its actors are The People. The next chapter is always being written and, hopefully, the actors can learn from their past.

# The Bus of Life

By Bill Powers

The bus of life has no time schedule and no specific stops. An individual's perception of its ultimate destination is determined by one's philosophy about life and death and theological insight. Still, no one really knows the final destination. When you get on the bus, you don't know exactly where it will take you because it has no specific route; at times, it wanders aimlessly and takes you to some places you really don't want to go. It makes stops along your way, some that you would avoid if you could because they are places shrouded in darkness that can cause pain and trauma. Other times, it takes you to wonderful places bathed in light filled with warmth and happiness. Where it will take you, you never know. For some, the ride is often bumpy and winding; and for others, who are more fortunate, it is much smoother and fairly straight.

After a career in health care as a therapist, administrator, and college teacher, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to teach in public schools. My first public school assignment was working with students in Hartford, where I witnessed not only the poverty and injustices of various sorts faced by my students and their families, but also the incredible caring, talent and dedication of the teachers I worked with.

After teaching in Harford for two years, the Bus of Life brought me to Windham High School, where I had previously completed my student teaching requirements, and I was happy to be rejoining the staff and students again. Before the days of COVID-19, at the end of a busy and sometimes stressful day, I would often stop at the Willimantic Food Co-op on my way home where I enjoyed a freshly brewed cup of coffee and a delicious Oatmeal Walnut Raisin Cookie from Culinary Expressions Catering. The Co-op provided tables and chairs for me to enjoy my treat in relative peace and comfort after picking up some groceries. It provided me time to sit, relax, and briefly reflect on the happenings of my day.

One day, the usual peace and tranquility during my routine came to an abrupt end by a loud discussion among a group of seven who were sitting at two of the tables. One fellow in particular was expressing what he perceived to be the ills of the local education system. What was particularly distressing to me was the amount of misinformation spewing from the mouth of a man who falsely spoke as if he were aware of what was happening in our public schools. It was quite obvious that he wasn't, plain and simple. He exclaimed, "We must defeat the education budget again" because blah, blah, blah as he spewed the venomous mistruths with no accurate foundation. On the same day, I had been working with some of my students on the writing of persuasive essays; and, incidentally, with some other students about the nature of propaganda.

I was seeing first-hand how local propaganda damaged our schools and our children as it was being falsely spread in our community. The speaker was someone who had been a respected journalist and activist. He was someone that I had respected, at one time, for his fearless stance on helping to keep others safe. He didn't know me; and when I calmly spoke out with, "Excuse me I couldn't help overhearing you. I'm afraid you don't have the facts." The man jumped to his feet and ran over to me and literally got in my face and was yelling, screaming, "Who are you to contradict me?" I told him, "I am a teacher at the high school" and he quickly backed away. It seemed as if he was using his status and former credibility as a basis to influence others, while working to hurt the future of children without regard to the actual facts. What A rebel!

On that day the Bus of Life had taken me to one of those truly DARK places by somebody who had very little knowledge of what was happening in education, an individual who attempted to fabricate a reality based on falsehoods while backing away from reasonable discussion.

*Bill Powers is a retired teacher and resides in Windham.*

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# CT Green Energy News

Submitted by Peter Millman

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

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



## A shocker in the plan to finally update residential solar rates: No complaints

**CT Mirror.** "How a homeowner is paid for the power it sends to the grid has been a flashpoint for years. The battle has been between the utilities and just about everyone else...Cited as one of the plan's most creative components is allowing solar purchasers to build systems larger than their current electric needs to accommodate up to two electric vehicle chargers and/or conversion of the home to electric heat. The existing program is supposed to limit system sizes to avoid owners using their solar power to essentially become generators and make money from them."

## Connecticut regulators want to pay utility customers to sync storage with demand

**Energy News Network.** "Connecticut utility regulators are proposing the state's first electric storage program, hoping to get batteries widely deployed to serve both as emergency backup power in ratepayers' homes and virtual power plants that can feed the grid during times of peak demand."

## Food could hold the key to fixing the state's waste disposal problems

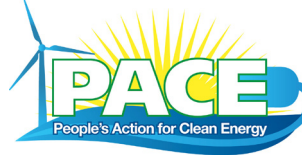
**CT Mirror.** "Getting food waste out of the trash may also provide the key to how Connecticut repairs the dated, expensive, fragmented and environmentally fraught waste systems in the state. But the question is whether it makes more sense to get the food out of the waste stream first or whether other parts of the system get fixed first so the food part follows. It's a chicken-egg problem, and which comes first isn't clear. What is clear, officials say, is that food waste cannot be ignored any longer." Plus: Could 'Pay As You Throw' Be The Future Of Connecticut's Trash? **West**

## Hartford: New solar array on middle school to save taxpayers \$250,000 while cutting carbon output

**Hartford Courant.** "Solar power projects on municipal roofs isn't a new idea, but it's been gaining popularity in Connecticut recently. Darien and New Canaan did those installations on their town halls last year, and communities in California were putting them up more than a decade ago. West Haven recently announced it will add solar panels when reconstructing its high school, with estimated savings of \$1 million over the next 25 years."

## Hartford's Verogy aims to soothe growing friction between solar developers, farmland advocates

**Hartford Business Journal.** "Sheep grazing will occur at its recently approved East Windsor and Bristol solar farms, and potentially at a Southington project it has pending before the Connecticut Siting Council, which has purview over energy generation projects of 2 megawatts or greater. Verogy has also pledged to create native pollinator habitats at those three sites, as well as others, by planting specific seed mixes."



## Plug In Your Electric Vehicle in Downtown Essex

**Patch.** "The brainchild of the Sustainable Essex Committee, the EV charging station project cost \$14,084, half of which was raised by Sustainable Essex who had a goal of raising \$7,042 but ended up raising \$7,717. The additional funds came from Sustainable Connecticut's Community Match Fund program."

## Connecticut plan lays out options for reaching zero-carbon power by 2040

**Energy News Network.** "State energy officials conclude that eliminating emissions in two decades is feasible and affordable, but it will require changes from grid operator ISO New England...The market structure has come under criticism for over-procuring capacity, and effectively barring clean energy investments from the capacity market while favoring fossil-fueled generation."

## We Already Have the Key to a Clean Energy Economy. We're Just Not Using It

**Clean Tech Media.** "However, the real question that regulators should be asking — and are asking in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and elsewhere — is: "How can we get maximum value from smart meters for customers, our economy and clean energy goals?"

# How to Help Americans Facing Hunger

(StatePoint) Millions of people nationwide face hunger. And the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust even more Americans into this vulnerable position.

Before the COVID-19 crisis began, one in nine people, including 10 million children, already lived in a food insecure household. Communities of color are disproportionately affected by both poverty and hunger. For example, one in four Native American and Alaska Natives experience food insecurity. One in five Blacks and one in six Latinos experience food insecurity. As a result of the pandemic, unemployment has soared and the need for food assistance has increased.

More families are accessing food banks than ever before, and many of them for the very first time, which is why it's really important for everyone to come together to help fight hunger," says Casey Marsh, chief development officer for Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

Fortunately, efforts are being made to meet the sharp rise in food insecurity. As part of its "Many Hearts,



One Community." campaign, Wells Fargo fulfilled its commitment to help provide 82 million meals to families in need through the Feeding America network of 200 food banks during the holidays. This was a continuation of a decade-long relationship with the Feeding America network which, since the start of the pandemic, has included efforts such as turning Wells Fargo corporate properties and branch locations into mobile food distribution centers. Additionally, the company made grants over the holiday season to food banks operating in Wells Fargo's

global footprint.

"It was life-changing," says Andrea Thomas, a single mother who received food assistance in Mesa, Ariz. "I didn't have to figure out if I was going to pay for groceries or pay for rent to keep my household afloat."

So how can you get involved? There are 200 Feeding America member food banks across the country, many of which need volunteers to help pack food boxes, distribute food at drive-through pantries and more. Feeding America food banks have adjusted their practices to ensure social distancing to keep everyone safe. Contact

your local food bank to see how you can help families in need. You can also join the fight to end hunger by making a donation. For more information, visit [feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org).

While the issue of hunger is pervasive and persistent, philanthropy, volunteerism and innovative efforts like drive-up food banks can help meet the needs of families across America.

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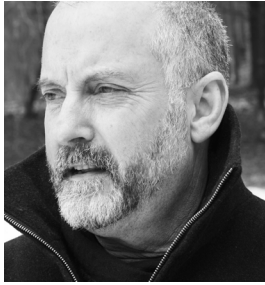
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

# Since 2010, sharing local Connecticut's sustainable agriculture opportunities and recipes highlighting regional offerings

By C. Dennis Pierce



Eight weeks to spring. That's fifty-six days, or one thousand and forty-four hours or eighty thousand, six hundred, and forty minutes! It feels like a long stretch since we are hearing about snow coming in the next few days but for me, I have been encouraged by those who are already scanning the seed options at the local feed store.

It is a time to plan and dream. If you have ever ordered seeds through the mail your address is now embedded into that gardener list somewhere in a shared master database. Yup, the catalogues show up like clockwork each showing off their new offerings. You can call these seed catalogues "dream" books. For the older folks you may see the resemblance to the old Sears and Spiegel catalogues that would arrive before Christmas with pages and pages of amazing toys. Yup, different content but same idea.

So, what are you eyeing this year? The cover of Burpee has a picture of tiered, "Medium Rare", perfectly shaped red tomatoes, a 75-to-80-day beefsteak tomato. Territorial Seed Company boasts a Magnum Bean which is an early maturing, very tender, stringless and sweet bush bean and Johnny's, an employee-owned seed company, shows off a Unagi cucumber, a spineless, straight cuke growing 9 to 11 inches long. Too many choices for one to decide. If you are one that does not belong to those that start your plants from seed you can find an array of plants at the many local greenhouses in the area. In last month's article on Barton's Farm, in Scotland, I forgot to mention that they host a one-day plant sale in the spring. If you are interested, I would go to their web site and sign up for their mailing list, Barton Farms | Hampton CT | Vegetables (bartonfarmsct.com)

This year I have started planning my small garden by sketching out a layout for my plants. I have also found that I had several seed packets that were left over from last season. Every year, at the end of the season I take my seed packets and place them in a large gallon jar. In the bottom of the jar, I place about a cup of white rice to absorb any moisture. If you find yourself with extra seeds store your seeds in tightly sealed glass containers. You can store different kinds of seeds, each in individual paper packets, together in a large container. Keep seeds dry and cool. A temperature between 32° and 41°F is ideal, so your refrigerator can be a good place to store seeds.

If you are wondering if your seeds are still good here is a chart that I found on the internet that may be of some use:

Vegetable seeds average storage life under favorable conditions:

| Plant           | Years  |
|-----------------|--------|
| Beans           | 2 to 4 |
| Beets           | 2 to 5 |
| Broccoli        | 3 to 5 |
| Brussel Sprouts | 3 to 5 |
| Cabbage         | 3 to 5 |
| Carrots         | 3 to 4 |
| Cauliflower     | 4 to 5 |
| Celery          | 3 to 5 |
| Corn            | 1 to 3 |
| Cucumber        | 3 to 6 |
| Eggplant        | 4 to 5 |
| Leeks           | 2 to 3 |
| Lettuce         | 1 to 6 |
| Onions          | 1 to 2 |
| Parsnip         | 1 to 3 |
| Peas            | 2 to 4 |
| Peppers         | 2 to 5 |
| Radish          | 4 to 5 |
| Spinach         | 1 to 5 |
| Squash          | 3 to 6 |
| Tomato          | 3 to 7 |
| Turnip          | 4 to 5 |

No matter what you have planned for your garden how about this year planting a little more if space allows so that you can share your bounty with others. Not only do others appreciate the produce that might appear magically at their doorstep but during this period of uncertainty it brings us all closer together. As you plan your garden as a way to supplement your regular grocery shopping let us not forget an observation from Joel Salatin, "The first supermarket supposedly appeared on the American landscape in 1946. That is not very long ago. Until then, where was all the food? Dear folks, the food was in homes, gardens, local fields, and forests. It was near kitchens, near tables, near bedsides. It was in the pantry, the cellar, the backyard."

In preparation for colder weather, warm soup has your back. This is a wonderful, hearty soup, recommended for cold nights and hungry diners. Serve with crusty bread.

Corn and Cheddar Cheese Chowder  
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

1 large potato, peeled and diced  
2 cups of boiling, salted water  
1 bay leaf  
¼ teaspoon of dried sage  
½ teaspoon of cumin seeds  
3 tablespoons of butter  
1 onion finely chopped  
3 tablespoons of flour  
1 ¼ cups of heavy cream  
2 cups of fresh (if using fresh, partially cook before using) or frozen corn  
2 slices of bacon, diced finely  
Chopped chives and parsley  
¼ teaspoon of nutmeg  
Salt and pepper  
1 ½ cups of sharp cheddar cheese, grated  
5 tablespoons of white wine

Directions:

Peel and dice the potato  
Boil it in the salted water with the bay leaf, sage and cumin seeds until barely tender.  
Melt the butter in a sauce pan and sauté the chopped onions and bacon.  
Add flour lower heat and stir frequently. You want the mixture to turn a turn a light brown and have a nutty flavor when you taste it.  
Take pan off heat and slowly add cream while constantly stirring.  
Add pan back to the heat and you will see the mixture thickening.  
Slowly add the potato water to this mixture as you continue to stir.  
Hold the potatoes back until all of the water is combined with the mixture  
Add potatoes and corn  
Add chopped herbs and seasonings  
Have the soup simmer for about 10 minutes then stir in cheese and add wine  
Once the cheese is melted add salt and pepper to taste.  
Serve in pre-heated bowls

Stay safe and stay warm. If you have a suggestion for a farm or a local grower or even a recipe that would feature a local ingredient, please let me know. I will do my best to share your suggestions in a future column. Drop me a line at Codfish53@Yahoo.com.  
Peas be with you...

## Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

I started writing car care articles to inform vehicle owners of things I see every day. The fast pace of our lives today leaves little time to think of car maintenance or repairs.

The cold weather means you will definitely be using your car's heater. The car manufacturers of today's vehicles have added a cabin air filter to the car's air conditioning and heating system. The idea is to filter out incoming air from the vehicle's cowl. This means leaves, mice, acorns, pine needles, and anything on the outside of your car can be drawn through this filter. Since the start of the COVID-19 state of emergency, and with all of the cleaning protocols that we have put into place, it made sense to us to ask our customers if they would like us to replace the cabin air filter. I never had any idea of what we would encounter. The mold, leaves, mice debris, acorns, and a whole host of other things we've found has been disgusting. Once the old filter is removed, we clean and spray anti-bacterial solution, then we replace the filter. This is a service that should have been done long before the coronavirus, but was rarely done.

The next thing I wanted to mention is lug nuts and wheel locks. If your vehicle has wheel locks make sure you have the tool that removes the locks. We have had customers lose the tool or they have not put the tool back into the vehicle. The manufacturers have made zero tolerances between the wheel and the hub. This has caused lug nuts and wheels to seize to the hub. This last summer we had a vehicle driven in on its wheel. The tires on the vehicle were so dry rotted that lack of maintenance caused the wheel lock to seize on the stud. The owner tried to chisel the lug nut off which only made our repair harder to do. We have started to apply anti-seal to the center hub and studs. We hope this will help alleviate the problem.

The last thing this month is the lack of parts to make vehicle repairs. There are several reasons why this is happening. The holiday season slowed the delivery of parcels and many of our parts come by USPS, FedEx, or UPS. The inventories in many parts warehouses have been depleted. This time of year, many parts manufacturers shut down for inventory. The last cause, of course, is the coronavirus itself which has sidelined many manufacturing and warehouse workers. We appreciate the chance to repair and service your vehicle. Our goal is to repair your vehicle as promptly and efficiently as possible. The bottom line is that we cannot repair your vehicle without parts and we don't get paid until the job is completed. More than anything we appreciate your patience and understanding.

To all, stay safe and be well,  
Rick

*Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.*

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## Unsung Heroes of Soul:

## Jean Wells

By Dean Farrell

As host of "The Soul Express," I play the biggest names in 1960s and '70s-era soul music. I also mix in the many great soul artists who did not make it big but were no less talented. This month's column is about one such act: Jean Wells, who placed five singles on the Billboard Soul chart before returning to her gospel roots in the 1970s.

"Not only did Jean Wells have hits on the R&B charts in the United States in the late '60s, but she acquired a cult following throughout Europe. By popular acclaim, she played the Apollo Theater in Harlem...six times. [She also] appeared on numerous TV shows and was constantly on the go, doing personal appearances. Jean was also a double treat in that she wrote some of her own hits."

So said Clyde Otis, who produced Jean Wells during her late-1960s heyday on Calla Records.

She was born in West Palm Beach, Florida, on August 1, 1942. However, Wells grew up about forty miles west of there in Belle Glade, near Lake Okeechobee. She came from a musical family, singing in church choirs during her childhood and teaching herself the piano. Wells decided early on to take a stab at secular music and formed a vocal group in her teens.

After graduating from high school, she struck out for Philadelphia. Wells cut her first record, "Song of the Bells," for the independent Quaker Town label. It did well enough locally to spawn two further singles, neither of which made any noise. Wells returned to Florida but was back in Philadelphia within a year to work the nightclub scene.

She signed with ABC-Paramount in 1965. Her one single for the company, "Don't Come Running Back to Me," sold poorly, prompting the singer's return to her native Florida. Wells, however, was determined to make it in the music business and had again moved back to Philadelphia by 1966. This time she met Clyde Otis, an A&R (artists and repertoire) man whose client list included Brook Benton, Dinah Washington, Clyde McPhatter, and Sarah Vaughan.

The first two tracks that Otis cut on Wells were the sublimely deep "If You Ever Loved Someone" and the mid-paced "Hello Baby." Released on the small Eastern label, it sold reasonably well but did not make the national charts. During this time, Wells, unable to find what she regarded as suitable material, began to write her own songs. She and two friends created with the uptempo "After Loving You." Recorded in New York City, it became her first release on the Manhattan-based Calla label, reaching #31 on the Billboard Rhythm & Blues chart in the summer of 1967. Wells further composed the follow-up, "I Feel Good," which hit #33 R&B a few months later.



It was her third Calla release that soul-music devotees consider Jean Wells' magnum opus. A pleading ballad with a slow burn, a strong hook and a dramatic climax, "Have a Little Mercy" peaked at #25 R&B in early 1968 and became Wells' biggest hit. That same year saw the release of her one album for Calla, "World, Here Comes Jean Wells."

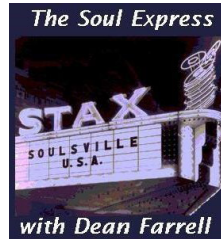
By 1969, she and Calla had gone their separate ways. Her next label, Volare, put out one single on Wells, the self-penned "Keep Your Mouth Shut (And Your Eyes Open)." Over the next decade, Wells had singles out on Canyon, Law-Ton, AVCO Embassy, TEC Records, and Sunshine Recordings. The latter further released Wells' second album, "Number One," in 1981.

Though her whereabouts of the last four decades are unknown, Clyde Otis told an interviewer in 1994 that Jean Wells had returned to gospel music in the '70s (her Sunshine releases notwithstanding).

Charted singles:

- "After Loving You" (1967) R&B #31
- "I Feel Good" (1967) R&B #33
- "Have a Little Mercy" (1967-68) R&B #25
- "Try Me and See" (1968) R&B #45
- "What Have I Got to Lose" (1968) R&B #49

Dean Farrell hosts "The Soul Express" twice on Fridays: on WRTC, 89.3-FM ([www.wrtcfm.com](http://www.wrtcfm.com)) from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. and on WECS, 90.1-FM ([www.wecsfm.com](http://www.wecsfm.com)), from 9:00 p.m. - midnight. He plays vintage soul music of the 1960s and '70s--everything from #1 hits to long-lost obscurities. Dean's e-mail address is [soulexpress@gmail.com](mailto:soulexpress@gmail.com).



## Keep Kids Safe From Medicines This Cold and Flu Season

(StatePoint) During the cold and flu season and amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be more medicines in homes being used to treat all kinds of symptoms. It is important to remember that you can keep curious kids safe by keeping medicine up and away and out of sight and reach.

Approximately 50,000 young children are brought to the emergency room each year because they got into medicines left within reach, according to recent statistics published in the Journal of American Medical Association. This cold and flu season could present some additional hazards.

"Families with their curious children are spending more time at home together to help stop the spread of COVID-19. It's imperative that all medicines are kept up and away and out of sight and reach to avoid accidental ingestion and an unnecessary trip to the emergency room," says Anita Brikman, executive director of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation.

The Up and Away campaign, an initiative of PROTECT, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation,

aims to prevent accidental ingestion of medicine by educating families about how to safely keep medicine out of the sight and reach of young children. They're advising parents and caregivers to follow these tips this cold and flu season and beyond:

-One-half of exposures involve children accessing medications that had previously been removed from original packaging, according to a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics. Whether you're at home or away, keep medicines in child-resistant containers. If you must put medicines in other containers, such as pill organizers, only do so if they're child-resistant.

-Never leave loose pills on the counter or tables and keep medicines in child-resistant containers until right before taking them. To a young child, pills can look like candy, and it's important to keep them out of children's reach and sight.

-Keep young children safe by putting all medicines carried with you, including those in purses, bags, pockets, or pill organizers, out of their sight and reach.

-More than 80% of grandparents say they keep their medication in the same place as usual when their

grandchildren visit their house, and 72% keep them in their purse or bag when they visit their grandchildren, according to a University of Michigan poll. Whether you're a grandparent or another visitor to a home with children, don't be shy about asking for a safe place to put your medicines (including those kept in purses, bags or pockets) that's out of reach and sight of curious young kids.

-Save the Poison Help number: 1-800-222-1222, in your home and cell phones so you're always prepared. Make sure that babysitters, older children and frequent family visitors have the number too in case there's an emergency when they're in charge.

For more medicine safety tips, visit [UpandAway.org](http://UpandAway.org).

This cold and flu season and year-round, keep children safe by always putting medicine out of sight and reach.

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# Apoyo Mutuo, Mutual Aid, Emerges in Hartford

By Steve Thornton

Protests against police brutality still roar across the nation from the front page to cable news. But if we put an ear to the ground, we can also hear the network of activity rising in reaction to systemic racism and violence. It's known as mutual aid, and it has its roots in the earliest history of Connecticut.

"These Americans are peculiar people. If, in a local community, a citizen becomes aware of a human need which is not being met, he thereupon discusses the situation with his neighbors. Suddenly, a committee comes into existence. The committee thereupon begins to operate on behalf of the need and a new community function is established. It is like watching a miracle, because these citizens perform this act without a single reference to any bureaucracy, or any official agency."

Alexis de Touqueville wrote this in 1835 in *Democracy in America*. The nineteenth-century French political observer, despite his antique language, offers a good description of today's youth-led mutual aid networks.

Such projects are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for one another in the face of changing political conditions. They are needed now more than ever, given today's convergence of the pandemic, the faltering economy, and the violence of ICE, prisons, and police.

These groups work in cities and towns across the state. Hartford Mutual Aid/Apoyo Mutuo is a good example. Unlike charity, which is vertical (governed from the top), the group's structure is horizontal (democratic and participatory).

"When we say mutual aid," the group explains, "we mean that every member has the opportunity to give and to take, as needed, no questions asked. This is people helping people. We are action-driven and rooted in the belief that this is the only way we can survive capitalist society."

Hartford Mutual Aid echoes the early forms of support found in our state's history:

-At the start of the twentieth century, the Workmen's Circle (Arbeter Ring) provided medical clinics, old age homes, and burial assistance to the immigrant Jewish community (two cemeteries still exist in Hartford). The Circle linked its services to "deeply-held Jewish values emphasizing community and social justice."

-In the 1930s, Depression-era groups like the Hartford Association of the Unemployed (HAU) organized to demand jobs and income. Its members moved families back into their homes after they were evicted by the authorities. The group scorned the city's efforts to require "conscript" jobs without an actual paycheck. The unemployed went on strike at Brainard airfield for wages, no matter how small. They needed, as one man said, "to have something to show for our work."

-In 1932, Connecticut members of the so-called Bonus Army, veterans of World War I, received donations of gasoline, tires, money, and food from their neighbors to help them reach Washington, D.C. There they joined 45,000 other vets to demand the cash benefit they were promised after the war. Together they established a massive, self-sufficient tent city that allowed them to protest and lobby Congress every day.

-In the 1960s, Hartford community activists organized Root, the first



drug and mental health crisis center for youth based on need, not income. Nearby on Union Place, Wooden Ships built a vibrant arts collective designed to democratize local culture. Shanti Alternative High School, although publicly funded, prioritized student and cooperative learning and governance.

-In 1969 the Black Panthers in Hartford and Willimantic followed the organization's mandate to provide breakfasts to children, years before the public schools did. These efforts were not charity; they were "survival programs" undertaken while the Panthers worked to raise the political consciousness of people of color and the urban poor. Motivated by "freedom to have communities rather than colonies" (as one observer wrote), the Panthers envisioned a new system they described as "communitarian."

-Since the 1980s, a Waterbury community/worker alliance known as the Naugatuck Valley Project has fought economic powerlessness so workers can win democratic control over their lives. The group's list of achievements is documented in Jeremy Brecher's book *Banded Together*. He writes: "The tragedy of defeat by heartless [corporate] forces is universal, but so is the struggle to make a 'better place to live' in the face of those forces."

Today there is a rainbow blend of grassroots groups, like Food Not Bombs in Hartford and Middletown, and the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance. They inspire cooperative action, provide concrete support, and foster reciprocity. They expose the profound failures of the 1 percent's political and corporate profit system, where structural violence—food scarcity, lack of healthcare, and high unemployment—literally kill thousands of people each year in the world's richest country.

Hartford Deportation Defense has learned to "move at the speed of trust," according to organizer Constanza Segovia, who also works with Apoyo Mutuo. The group rejects the paradigm of the "inherent goodness of people who give and the powerlessness of those who receive," she says. "Our community has always survived through cooperation, but we didn't have an organized group that people could join to give or receive support, especially with immigration matters."

Hartford Mutual Aid explains: "Mutual Aid is not a brand. It is a black and indigenous tradition that marginalized communities have been using for centuries. The intention is to decentralize power and put control in the hands of our community. It's not charity. It's solidarity."

Put another way, these activists are building a new world in the shell of the old.

*Steve Thornton is a retired union organizer who writes for the Shoeleather History Project.*

# Boredom— It's Not Just for the Boring

By Bob Lorentson

"A subject for a great poet would be God's boredom after the seventh day of creation." So mused the existentialist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose discursive, tortuous books did their best to give readers a glimpse into that state of being. (And I thought we were doing a rather good job of keeping God amused. Or angry. Anything but bored.) Nietzsche was strongly influenced on the subject by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who, in one of his cheerier moments, wrote, "Life swings like a pendulum between pain and boredom." They say that everybody gets bored, but if you're not too bored to read more about it, stay with me, and steer clear of philosophy. It didn't seem to do poor Schopenhauer much good.

No one is more of a present-day expert on boredom than John Eastwood, director of the Boredom Lab at York University in Toronto. I've heard that this campus is also home to the Apathy Lab, the Inertia Workshop, and the Dullness Center, so a breakthrough is bound to come any day from YU. (YU? Why me?) Dr. Eastwood would be more of an expert if his assistants weren't so prone to staring into space, doodling, and contemplating their navels. (How do you think you would fare if your job was to use statistical methods such as hierarchical linear modeling and structural equation modeling to deepen our understanding of boredom?) Still, he has managed to debunk the popular notion that only boring people get bored, by discovering that other personality types also suffer from boredom. (It should be noted, though, that boring people resent the intrusion of researchers into what had previously been their exclusive domain.) One example is the impulsive person who is always looking for new and exciting experiences, and as a result is chronically understimulated. This type has been known to wear out TV remotes at twice the average rate. Perhaps Dr. Eastwood was onto something when he stated that boredom is a crisis in meaning. (I have no idea what that means, but I did yawn when I read it.)

Some psychologists believe that boredom is a trait, which is what we non-psychologists call a characteristic, or an aspect, or a feature. (Many of us call psychologists by other names as well.) Some people get excited when they learn that psychologists can now measure their boredom. (The people's boredom, not the

psychologists'. Theirs is a given. Imagine if *you* had to listen to people's problems all day long.) The Boredom Proneness Scale measures one's propensity to feel bored by asking a series of twenty-eight questions. I'll bet that all you non-psychologists could think of just one question that would do the trick, but then there's all that grant money to consider. The Multidimensional State Boredom Scale measures one's feelings of boredom in any given situation and in many different dimensions, including the one that psychologists inhabit. More specific boredom scales include the Job Boredom Scale, the Leisure Boredom Scale, and the Spousal Boredom Scale, although no one in their right mind would bring that last one up without having a lawyer on standby.

Philosophers and psychologists agree that boredom is a modern luxury, nonexistent until the late eighteenth century, when the Enlightenment ceded to the Industrial Revolution. Before this, survival took precedence, and staring into space was decidedly not much of a survival skill. It took the TV to change all that. But now that it's here, many experts say that we should embrace boredom as the think tank of the soul, and look at it as a positive force: a call to action, or an opportunity for thought and reflection. Of course, if all you can think about is getting back to the TV, perhaps your first step should be toward Dr. Eastwood's lab, because if your boredom is too luxurious it can lead to despair, especially with what TV has to offer these days.

If you don't believe me, listen to the philosophers. I don't think it's my imagination that picks up despair in their voices. Søren Kierkegaard said, "People settle for a level of despair they can tolerate and call it happiness," and "Boredom is the root of all evil—a fear of oneself." His brother in boredom, Schopenhauer, said, "Boredom is merely the feeling of the emptiness of life." Before you say that those guys should have gotten out more, hear from Susan Ertz, who said, "Millions long for immortality who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon." (I don't think Ms. Ertz was technically a philosopher because that statement is a bit too funny.)

As for me, I prefer to take my guidance from Winnie-the-Pooh, who said, "People say that nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day." I don't know what the philosophers and psychologists would say about that, but I couldn't be bored less.

*Bob Lorentson is a retired environmental scientist and an active daydreamer.*

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# Your Money This Month: A Fitness Test for Your Financial Plans

By Laurence Hale, AAMS, CRPS®  
Principal/Managing Partner,  
Co-Founder, & Chief Investment  
Officer



With New Year resolutions still fresh in our minds, many of us have returned focus to improving and maintaining our physical fitness. But it's also a great time to do the same for your financial fitness. Just as falling out of the habit of regular workouts can wreak havoc on your health, forgetting to periodically review the details of your long-term financial goals and the investments and insurance policies that support your goals can potentially have serious consequences for your future.

To make the most of your money this year, make the time to build or revisit your financial plan and take the steps below. Doing so can provide large and lasting benefits for the financial future of you and your loved ones – no trip to the gym required.

## Financial Goals Anyone?

Resolutions that are followed each new year can convert to great new habits. This is a similar concept to financial life goals. Being sure you and your family have aligned financial life goals- like college funding, retirement income funding, travel plans or hobbies to name a few. Goals are always the place to start in any financial plan and you should revisit them annually to stay on track. Determining and amending your goals can be a fun process and can remove some anxiety once you and family have alignment. Now, as part of your annual fitness test, you have to check to see if your portfolio performance and savings rates are supporting these goals that you set.

## Check your investment portfolio allocations and current holdings.

Even if you have a financial advisor to monitor your investment portfolio and holdings, it's a good idea to remain personally aware of where and how your assets are invested. Know your investment strategy and be sure you have one. Ideally, you should review your investment portfolio on a quarterly basis, but short of that, an annual review is an absolute must. This time of year is a good time, too – chances are you're already looking in on finances as you prepare to file your taxes.

When evaluating your portfolio, first consider whether your goals and desired timeline for meeting those goals has changed. Then, take a look at each of your investments and consider whether each is still on track to help you meet your current goals in the timeline you'd like – keeping in mind that generally speaking, the more time you have to meet your goals, the more risk you can afford to take in your investment choices and vice versa. If it appears that any of your investments are no longer aligned to your goals and timeline, it may be time to speak with your financial advisor about making some changes.

## Review 401(k), IRA, and SEP plans.

Following from the above advice, don't leave your retirement saving on auto-pilot. While your financial

advisor can alert you to recommended changes based on the performance of your retirement accounts, he or she won't necessarily know if your retirement plans have suddenly changed or if you've unexpectedly got some extra income to invest. So, make a habit now of keeping tabs on your balances, ensuring you've made your planned contributions, and evaluating whether you'd like to make additional contributions. If you find your circumstances have changed, you'll be able to be more nimble and proactive in making the necessary changes to your retirement accounts to maximize your savings.

## Review life, home, and auto insurance.

It's easy to let your insurance policies renew from year to year without ever making any updates – but it's not wise. Again here, this time of year – tax time – is a great time to do an annual review of all your insurance policies to ensure the coverage is still appropriate for your circumstances. If there have been any significant changes in your personal life or your home in the last year, adjustments to your policy may be in order. Make them now to avoid being over- or under-insured in the year ahead.

## Revisit beneficiary designations for life insurance and retirement accounts.

While you're evaluating the coverage of your life insurance policies and the investments in your retirement plan, be sure to also review the beneficiaries you've designated for those accounts. If there's been a marriage, divorce, birth or death in the last year, you may wish to update your beneficiaries. Or, you may wish to change the designations for your existing beneficiaries. Take a look through the beneficiaries and designations you've indicated for each of your policies to ensure that your loved ones receive the benefits you intended them to have.

## Fitness Test = Plan Well

Starting the new year off right financially is an essential ingredient to rebuilding or accelerating your life financial goals. Revisiting and establishing a forward looking and achievable financial plan is a basic component to Planning Well. If you need assistance prioritizing your finances to help you work toward your long-term financial life goals visit our website at [www.whzwealth.com](http://www.whzwealth.com) or give our office a call at 860-928-2341. Together, we can leverage our Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well process to help you get to the financial fearlessness you desire.

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# Holly Wanegar Passes Finance Industry Exam

Submitted by Laura Dunn

POMFRET CENTER, CT (February 2020) — Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors looks to add value to the community we serve by empowering them to Live Well. This includes team development and growth to further assist our clients and general community.

To further grow her skillset, Holly Wanegar, Manager, Client Operations & Analytics has successfully passed her Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA®) Series 66 exam. The series 66 is an exam and license that is meant to qualify individuals as investment advisor representatives or securities agents. The Series 66, also known as the Uniform

Combined State Law Examination, covers topics relevant to providing investment advice and effecting securities transactions for clients. This comprehensive exam covers topics such as economic factors, the characteristics of investment vehicles, client/customer investment recommendation strategies, and laws and regulations. Holly's additional skillset will further enable WHZ clients to Plan Well, Invest Well, Live Well™.



Holly Wanegar Cont. photo.

Hale states "Holly has been a key part of our success, and we are thrilled in her new licensing status so she can help provide an exceptional client experience to our clients." Holly joined our team June 2019 and has broadened the scope of the services she offers to our clients, helping them work towards achieving their long-term financial life goals.

If you would like more information on Holly or our company, please visit our website at [www.whzwealth.com](http://www.whzwealth.com).

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# Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy

Greetings everyone, it is great to be back at *Neighbors* after a long break!

I hope this issue finds you well and keeping the faith for better days ahead. I believe they are coming but we all have much to do to get there—in- individually and collectively. Any progress we make will depend on how well we keep 2020 in our rearview mirror and move forward with a common sense of truth and comity.



Local media across the country was seriously compromised during the past year, both from widespread Pandemic impacts but also because of recent historic changes to industry ownership, management and control. I've covered some of these changes in past columns. The past few years have been truly miserable for creators and distributors of local media, and the path forward remains to be defined and secured for media workers and audiences in all channels. And the entire arts community also struggles to survive, adapt, and find sustainability.

This series will continue covering the arts and the surviving locally-based media channels and programs in our region—across all distribution platforms—radio, TV, cable, print and web-based. Relevant and valuable content is still out there looking for audiences of common interest and value. Life always goes on and so do the stories!

This month's highlights include:

- Windham Arts is no longer our state-designated regional arts service organization.
- Engaging the hate in Connecticut through radio dialogues with those at the extremes.

## Windham Arts is No Longer Our Regional Arts Service Organization

From a January 27, 2021 press release:

The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) is pleased to announce that the *Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition* will serve as the Designated Regional Service Organization for towns in Windham and Tolland Counties beginning this month.

COA partners with Designated Regional Service Organizations (DRSO) that serve as local field offices to constituents and citizens. It is well understood that a variety of arts and culture entities working collaboratively across communities can spur a vibrant and robust creative economy. This statewide network of service providers plays a key role that is mutually beneficial to the state's citizens, the creative economy and the regional arts and cultural infrastructure.

Elizabeth Shapiro, Director of Arts, Preservation and Museum for Connecticut Office of the Arts said, "We have watched the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition grow and strengthen under the careful planning and steadfast follow through of its staff and board, and have great faith in their leadership."

The Office of the Arts would like to recognize *Windham Arts* for previously serving in this capacity and for their continued support of arts and culture in the region.

The towns in the Windham and Tolland Counties to now be served by the Cultural Coalition are Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Mansfield, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Stafford, Sterling, Thompson, Union, Willimantic, Willington, Windham and Woodstock.

Wendy Bury, Executive Director of the Cultural Coalition, said "We look forward to expanding our programs and services to the northeast region and working with the creative community to support their needs and goals. The arts and cultural sector has been hard hit by the pandemic, and we will be a resource and advocate during these trying times, for reopening and recovery."

Over the next 12-18 months, as part of a strategic process, the Cultural Coalition will meet with artists, arts and cultural businesses, community organizations, municipal leaders and economic development agencies located in/ or serving the towns in their region. Monthly public round tables will be hosted virtually to gather information, to hear from constituents and to provide information to respond to the needs of Northeastern Connecticut's creative sector.

## Become a Northeast Region Contact

The Cultural Coalition and the Office of the Arts encourages registering as a Northeast Region contact. By doing so, you are providing the Cultural Coalition with basic information to better serve you. The Cultural Coalition will:

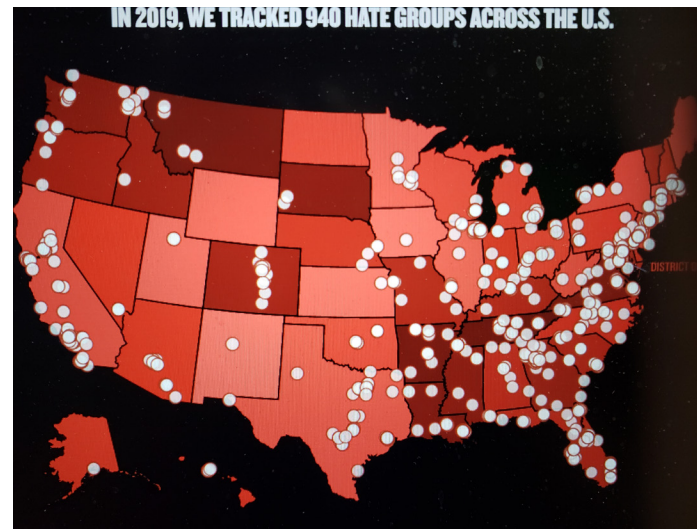
- Invite you to attend its programs, round table/stakeholder conversations, events and other activities.
- Add you to a monthly e-newsletter list and you will receive communications with other relevant information.
- Advocate for the arts, cultural and creative sector in Northeastern Connecticut.

## About the Cultural Coalition

The Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition is a free membership organization that includes a diverse cross section of nonprofit and for-profit individuals, businesses, groups and organizations. It currently serves 500+ registered partners including sole proprietors, artists, historic site operators, museums, galleries, cultural attractions and arts centers.

A registration form specifically for the Northeast Connecticut region is at this link—copy and paste: <https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/eQ78dWlc8g-Zeib50a>

I am very encouraged by these changes and believe this new alignment of arts resources will improve the health and quality of life for our arts community. This column will follow the story in the months ahead and let you know about new opportunities. If you are an artist or arts group, you should register with and join SECT now!



## Engaging the Hate Across the USA CT Radio Dialogues at the Extremes

From Southern Poverty Law Center website = <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

Our media and our democracy are significantly out-of-phase, and our nation's loyal opposition is lost in a sea of anger. The waves of hate are so high! Too much yelling and not enough listening, dang! Too much talk of our neighbors as enemies and not fellow citizens, dang! It is stupid shit, folks, this is what takes nations down.

How do we separate those who employ peace and truth in their politics from those who employ lies and violence? This is a free and open country, right? So how do we deal with bad actors who break the norms we rely on for good faith and bargaining, and who break the balance between system control and autonomy?

And have no illusions, this is a global test as well, with dictatorships in Russia and China and elsewhere in the crosshairs of the rage of people aroused who demand change and justice. This is the underside of the globalization and corruption madness that enabled the worst in human beings to flourish at scales beyond the imaginations of only a few decades ago. Every nation must face its own demons and fears to resolve this challenge for the future because the global media that define us are the rivers where the hate streams too freely.

Since its founding, our republic has always needed the critical element of a loyal (and honest) opposition for its governing system to function in a manner that rewards people for using ballots and not bullets to achieve their goals and objectives. January 6, 2021 is another Day of Infamy for our history books, when we all saw for ourselves just how broken and clogged our political nervous system is. The world saw the USA at its worst!

The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks hate speech across the nation and the groups that create and share it. The graphic (lower left) from their website - <https://www.splcenter.org/> - shows the environment in our nation—the links below will take you to the list for Connecticut. Many groups have active websites you can explore, the content can be eye-opening! Some groups are based in our state and some are chapters of groups in other states.

<https://www.splcenter.org/states/connecticut>

1. ACT for America – 2 chapters  
Anti-Muslim Statewide, Cheshire  
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/act-america>
2. American Identity Movement  
White Nationalist Statewide
3. Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge  
Black Separatist Hartford
4. National Socialist Movement  
Neo-Nazi Statewide  
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/national-socialist-movement>
5. Patriot Front  
White Nationalist Statewide
6. Proud Boys  
General Hate Statewide  
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>
7. The United Nuwaupians Worldwide/All Eyes on Egypt (no typo)  
General Hate Hartford  
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/nuwaubian-nation-moors>

My goal for this project is to do research and outreach to find people in these groups who are open and willing to share non-confrontational and non-hostile conversations to explore their ideas, hopes and goals. If the truth shines more brightly in the darkness, then let's open the mics and see what's really there and what's not.

If anyone reading this is a member of a group or knows one—please reach out to my email (below) to make contact and plan a radio chat. Really, this is a sincere invitation, we need to turn the heat down! Progress will be shared on my weekly program *The Pan American Express*, Tuesdays 12-3 pm on WECS-FM at 90.1 FM and on the web anywhere at [www.wecsfm.org](http://www.wecsfm.org), and in the months ahead.



WECS FM and Internet Studio with live streaming video in spring!

Thanks for reading and for letting others know about the work of this special collective of writers who are dedicated to serving our community. A labor of love that makes every month an adventure in reading!

Keep the faith for a peaceful and healing 2021!

John Murphy  
[john@humanartsmedia.com](mailto:john@humanartsmedia.com)

# Let Capitalism Do Its Work

By Donna Dufresne



On January 6, 2021, we watched democracy teeter precariously on the edge of its own ideals. Misguided by their ignorance of the basic tenets of the Constitution, an angry mob tried to overthrow the very country they claim to love. It was a nail-biter, and we, along with the rest of the world, asked ourselves, "Is the United States of America really this fragile?"

Democracy is a fragile thing, and history is witness to the fact that other democratic nations have been easily toppled by the likes of Donald J. Trump. Germany elected Adolf Hitler through a democratic process. But within a few years, his nationalistic rhetoric, lies, and anti-Semitism had infiltrated and eroded the constitution which had been signed into law by the Social Democratic Party in 1919. Like Trump, he trafficked in fear and lies and peddled scapegoating, a deadly outcome for over six million Jews.

So far, America has withstood the verbal sticks and stones and other projectiles Donald Trump has launched at our government and democracy itself. The justice system thankfully threw out the frivolous lawsuits and accusations of voter fraud for lack of evidence, and in spite of an attempted coup, the legislative body of the government went right back to their jobs, rolled up their sleeves, and did the work of the people.

Meanwhile, half of the people in this country continue to throw fits and tantrums like their leader, and threaten a violent overthrow fueled by lies and driven by white supremacists. You know you're getting old when you start to sound like your father in the 1960s: "Put 'em all in jail and throw away the key!" "Deport 'em!" Or, as I like to say, "Send 'em all to Russia and let Putin teach 'em a lesson about fascist autocracies!"

Unfortunately, the voice of cranky dissent will not be quelled with reason, and the lawlessness of Trump and his followers cannot be tamed by the law. But we do have another weapon in the national arsenal. I'm not usually a fan of unchecked capitalism, but it looks like the calvary has arrived in the form of our free-market economy. A wide range of corporations are finally speaking up and bailing out on Trump and the Republican Party. In recent days, large companies and donors have pulled back their funding. Usually, it's those of us on the liberal side who are calling for boycotts of companies that support Trump, but after the attempted coup, multiple corporations and individuals have condemned the Fuhrer and his sycophants in the Republican Party who were complicit in spreading disinformation and lies about election fraud.

The list is growing. American Express, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Commerce Bank, and Marriott have all pulled funding from the Republican National Committee and the individual Republicans who voted to overturn the

elections. These are not small players in the U.S. economy, but megacompanies with megabucks that have traditionally supported and funded Republican endeavors. But that was back when the Republican Party was a normal, fiscally conservative, and socially flexible party. It's about time business leaders stepped up and put their money where their mouths are to support democracy and snuff out the candle of hate, bigotry, and right-wing extremism that has usurped the Republican Party.

By itself, defunding the Republican Party may be a revolutionary call to reason and responsibility, but these companies have also come down hard with their condemnations. For example: "Airbnb strongly condemns last week's attack on the US Capitol and the efforts to undermine our democratic process. We will continue to uphold our community policies by banning violent hate group members when we learn of such memberships, and the Airbnb PAC will update its framework and withhold support from those who voted against the certification of the presidential election results."

From BP to Dow Chemical, the most surprising addition to the growing list, corporations have repeated that they are "immediately suspending all corporate and employee political action committee contributions to any member of Congress who voted to object to the certification of the presidential election."

Put that in your incendiary pipe and smoke it, Texas senator Ted Cruz, Missouri senator Josh Hawley, Kansas senator Roger Marshall, and Alabama senator Tommy Tuberville. They, along with hundreds of other Congress members, were actively complicit in attempting to overturn the election results and disenfranchise millions of American citizens. Obviously, these traitors do not deserve the honor of serving as legislators. At the very least, they should be censured and jailed as drug felons for drinking and peddling the Trump Kool-Aid. But perhaps it is best to sit back and let capitalism do its work.

Read issues of Neighbors from January 2015 to present in COLOR via a link on our website: [neighborspaper.com](http://neighborspaper.com) You will also find advertising and circulation information.

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"All you need is love." - John Lennon

# A Gilded Valentine

## Can we just embrace Systemic Injustice with Systemic Love?

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

**THE NEAREST TOUR** Taking roadtrips throughout New England, I'm exploring horticultural wonders and oddities near and far.

Quite near last month to the Connecticut College Arboretum in New London. Far north in March to the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden in Booth Bay; the warm coastal gardens resemble Boston with the largest *Rhododendron* 'Purple Gem' I've ever seen! Soon to the Gilded Age estate Naumkeag in Western Massachusetts.

Nearest, however, is this February's wonder and oddity... our hearts. Loving the Land starts there. Passion starts there. Heartlessness, racism also start there. Fine line? Simple yet complex.

Distracted from horticulture, trying to make sense of senseless times as Pandemic and Insurrection threaten, as Earth edges toward a tipping point in climate change.

Thinking of *Naumkeag*, I offer some hearty history and a garden tip with this *Gilded Valentine*:

**SYSTEMIC LOVE?** "Can we all get along?" Rodney King pleaded during the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, after beaten by police. Almost thirty years ago. Can we just embrace systemic injustice – elitism, racism and all the bigotries -- with systemic love? Love for the Land, its plants and wildlife, and our neighbors, is all interconnected, systemic.

Bishop Michael Curry (The Episcopal Church) notes that "Love is unselfish sacrificial living." In essence, others are as important as ourselves... as important as our families. Loving requires a change of heart. Simple yet complex.

Carnations in gun barrels are an iconic image from the rebellious 1960s (as the famous 1967 Bernie Boston photograph, "March on the Pentagon"). Deadly bullets were magically denied by Flower Power. Was humor the magic? Or was it love? I was stationed (USAF) in the UK in 1969, but my partner hitchhiked to Woodstock. We plant flowers along our Chaplin road as a hippy offering, and for the bugs.

"Insects are disappearing at alarming rates... disastrous for the planet," warned National Geographic last May. UCONN Entomologist David Wagner posed the conundrum that is the decline of bugs: Is the cause pesticides, habitat loss or climate change? Danger! Without insects to pollinate, most flowering plants die, and much of our food supply. Love bugs.

**GARDEN TIP** Our Chaplin gardens bloom spring until fall for flowers and pollinators. A season-long meal with all season appeal! Simple yet complex. Love bugs -- except gypsy moth that stripped my non-native Himalayan Birch (*Betula utilis* v. *jacquemontii*). Love whitebarked birch. I treated with a least toxic soil-dwelling bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt); it produces a natural toxin that is fatal to some leaf-eating insects. No conventionally flowering plants were treated. Fewer caterpillars. More Bees.

Treatment wasn't needed with 'Whitespire' (*Betula populifolia*), an apparently resistant native Gray Birch cultivar, Native Serviceberries (*Amelanchier*) were attacked slightly, but not treated because birds eat the berries. Caterpillars were removed by hand; the multi-stem tree is pruned to grow wider and lower as a screen, easier to hand-control the bugs. Love the birds.

Trees can lose leaves and recover, but are weakened, thus successive infestations are killing Oaks (*Quercus*) in our quiet corner of Connecticut.

**SO SOON** Reprinted in last December's *Neighbors*, an interview with warrior Bill McKibben declared his environmental alarm that corporate greed has cost us thirty crucial years to limit climate harm like severe weather, species loss and rising sea levels. We approach a tipping point beyond which change is unstoppable.

ExxonMobil knew the impact of greenhouse warming when super-computers created climatic models in the 1980s. McKibben says the corporate-veiled response was "deceit, denial and disinformation."

The nonsense of climate-deniers invites Dr. Seuss to the conversation (from EC-CHAP in December issue):

"How did it get so late so soon?  
It's night before it's afternoon.  
December is here before its June.  
My goodness how the time has flown.  
How did it get so late so soon?"



Bernie Boston photograph of the October 21st 1967 "March on the Pentagon". Contributed photo.

McKibben became more aware of our world's fragility as he travelled near and far to distressed environments. "I'd been a good suburban American," he admits. "The suburbs are designed to make you unaware where the rivers are, for example, or what happens to them."

Or where from our food and heat? The environmental "disconnect" in densely built metropolitan areas can be a very visceral shift from living in the country. Moving from Minnesota to Boston two decades ago, I reconnected with the Land only after moving to rural Chaplin near the Natchaug River.

Our Chaplin wood stove burns 15 hours a day in winter. Love the fire. The daily routine reignites a spiritual ember kept glowing for a dozen years by Boston's Arnold Arboretum. My small woods sustain me now. Social energies decline, older, softer. A softening of political tone is certainly needed in Congress. Not me.

More women would help. Like Greta Thunberg, teen environmental activist who took a boat, not a plane, from Sweden in 2019 to address the United Nations about the urgent need to reduce carbon-emission damage.

"Unless someone like you  
cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better.  
It's not." - Dr. Suess

I'm researching *Naumkeag*, the Gilded Age garden estate in the Berkshires, a hundred miles away in Stockbridge, Mass. Not too far. But wandering west of the Last Green Valley made me wonder, then ponder some late 19th century history that was really close to home.

**GILDED AGE** The last 30 years of the 1800s were similar to today's cultural clash. After the Civil War -- the last time we were so divided -- America remained polarized. Two national depressions, the Panics of 1873 and 1893, wrought harm. National election turnouts were high. Democrats and Republicans competed closely. Congressional candidates were less than two percentage points apart in 1878, 1880, 1884, 1886 and 1888.

Living on the edge of an era is both exciting and excruciating. As now, there were social extremes: the "gilded" newly elite of the recovery who celebrated success with their elaborate estates -- and a non-gilded era of inequality for millions of poor Europeans who migrated here for a better life, only to find poverty.

The Civil War schism remained. The North profited greatly after War's end in 1865, but the South's economy was disastrously tied to low cotton and tobacco prices. The Civil War was -- and is -- not over for many Southerners. Racism was -- and is -- endemic nationwide. Black lives didn't matter. "In the 1876 election, white Democrats used widespread political violence to prevent Black people from voting" (recent NY Times). Pushing west with "Manifest Destiny", White bigotry victimized Native American Indians.

America continued to harbor racism, but women's suffrage began in 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention, leading to the 19th Amendment in 1919. The popular mood for the women's vote was bolstered by their capable "manning" of wartime industry. As Rosie the Riveter.

**The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today (1873)** by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, mocked an era of social ills masked by thin gold gilding. Hence the 1920-1930s term. Attempted reforms in the 1890s led to the 20th century's Progressive Era. A Tale of Today 2021.

**TODAY** Left-of-Center Democratic and Green Party values are also considered Progressive, also concerned about immigration (and the environment, police reform and all bigotries). Racism surged with Obama's election as first Black president, then was stoked by Trump. *Black Lives Matter* in the Green New Deal, but police kept killing Black people in 2020. Is George Floyd's death in May the tipping point for Black and

Brown voices?

Many believed voting makes no difference, yet the momentous US Senate run-off race in Georgia proves otherwise. Yet racism remains. Female numbers grow in congress -- first VP! -- and the *MeToo* movement continues. President Joe Biden won with 81 million votes.

However, Trump's 74 million voters are profoundly alienated. Many believe the election was stolen. Many are racist. Many distrust elitist coastal cultures, the Media and Washington, DC, and are disinformed by repeated lies. Many resent government intrusion, a pandemic with no vaccination, except civic education. And compassion.

**LOVE** As former Secretary of State, General Colin Powell observes, there is also Love. Democracy depends on loving -- at least respecting -- and welcoming all to the public conversation. Listening.

Many are victims of greedy politicians who promise much, but care little about working people's wages, job security and education. Democracy thrives by teaching integrity and critical thinking.

Sorry for my pomposity -- but are we headed for another Civil War in America ??? Lincoln called the connection between North and South friends and enemies, our "bonds of affection" in 1865. Not the romantic love of Valentine's Day, but a sense of shared civic duty.

Incited by the humiliated president, a violent insurrection of his supporters stormed the Capitol. Five dead. He is disgraced; the angry mob is not excused. I hear gunshots in the Last Green Valley and hope it's simply the local gun culture.

"The times they are a-changing," Bob Dylan sang fifty years ago. Seems like thirty? Seems like now! Change for the public good. Good if Joe Biden and I live another thirty years. Better, that Bill McKibben has another crucial thirty years to fight climate change, and that next-generation Greta Thunberg becomes a global force of nature.

Best that I stick to plants.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Chaplin, Connecticut



## Flying Above Storrs

By Milton Levin

I am the owner of Levin Aerial Works, LLC, a local small business in Storrs, since 2017. My company provides aerial and ground-based photography and videography to help showcase properties and events with unique and awe-inspiring views. In addition to my company, I also serve as an associate research professor in the Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. In that capacity, I conduct field and laboratory-based research to better understand the impact of environmental pollutants on the health of aquatic wildlife, with a focus on marine mammals.

My first exposure to photography came right after high school with a Canon AE-1 Program film camera, a graduation gift from my parents. I was excited to have a new camera but was very prudent in taking pictures due to the cost of buying and developing film; thus, I never truly immersed myself into the hobby. Although my twin brother would graduate college with a BFA in photographic illustration and photojournalism, I went down a different path with a BS degree in marine biology, and rarely used my camera. Over the last several decades, like most people, I have used small point-and-shoot cameras and smartphones to capture moments in my life. My camera was usually set on "auto," and most pictures were never worth printing or sharing.

In 2013, I started to see drones being advertised. I was totally captivated by the idea of having a flying camera. My first thought was

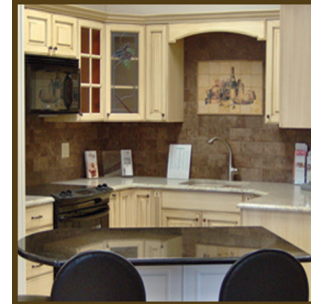
that this would be ideal to help document some of my scientific fieldwork. I imagined flying and capturing epic, award-winning photographs of dolphins and whales in the wild. By the end of 2015, I had purchased my first drone, a DJI Phantom 3 Pro, and taught myself how to fly, using UConn's Horsebarn Hill as my training ground. As I grew more comfortable flying, I worked on improving the quality of the photographs and videos. I consulted my brother about how to get out of "auto" mode and into "manual" mode to really get the most out of the drone camera. With his help and some YouTube tutorials, I learned about the exposure triangle (shutter speed, ISO, and aperture), composition, and photo/video editing. I slowly, but surely, started to see my photography improve, and was more comfortable sharing my images on social media.

The goal of using my drone to fly over and capture aerial views of marine mammals came to an abrupt halt after I found the rules and regulations set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (the agency responsible for regulating drones) to be unsurmountable. However, around the same time, there was a growing market in using drones to capture aerial images of real estate property and construction sites. I thought I could start earning some extra money by taking pictures of houses for sale, but quickly learned I needed to be a certified "FAA Part 107 pilot with a small UAS rating" in order to legally sell and earn money from images captured with a drone. After four months of self-study, I took the FAA exam and

passed the first time. But as a scientist, I knew nothing about how to start and run a small business. Thankfully, I discovered the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, and with their help and advice, I was able to start my new drone business, Levin Aerial Works, LLC.

Although my intent was to focus solely on drone photography and videography, my brother convinced me to expand into traditional ground photography. I have since invested in a Canon full-frame mirrorless camera, with various wide-angle and telephoto lenses. It has been a slippery slope, with more and more accessories arriving each week (tripods, lights, microphones, etc.) to expand my capability and offer more and more services (real estate, construction, town events) to my customers.

Nowadays, you will rarely find me without a camera. You can often see me around Horsebarn Hill taking pictures of Jacobson's Barn, sunrises, moonrises, and sunsets. My other favorite photography locations include Mansfield Hollow State Park and Mystic. Although being an academic scientist is still my primary passion, I have found that photography allows me to have an outlet for being creative and seeing the world through a different field of view.



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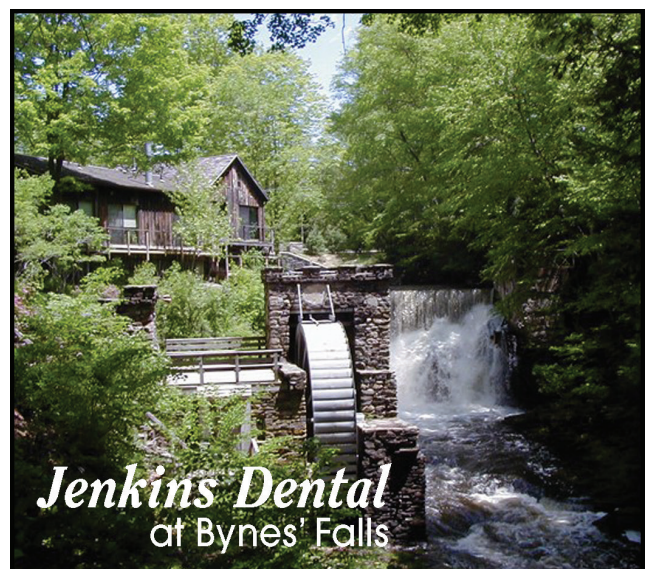
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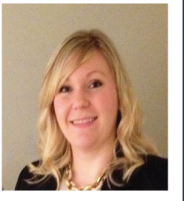
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## Tipping Point

# Bill McKibben On A Planet In Peril-Part Three

*Ed. note: This interview first appeared in the October 2019 issue of the excellent publication, The Sun. This is the third and final installment. Reprinted with permission.*

Interviewed by David Barsamian.

**Barsamian:** Some have suggested that the accumulation of wealth and unchecked growth is in capitalism's DNA. It's incapable of turning this ship around.

**McKibben:** Certainly unregulated capitalism is what has run this ship aground. The good news — and in my business one looks hard for small pieces of good news — is that it's cheaper to take up the task of quickly converting to sun and wind. And as we do that, one of the side benefits is that we will have a chance to rebalance the scales of power and wealth, which have been so unequally distributed.

A fair amount of the imbalance of power and wealth comes from the fact that certain people sit atop deposits of coal, oil, and gas — our greatest economic treasures. The Koch brothers are billionaires not because they have some deep insight into economics but because they're oil and gas barons and have enough money to purchase a political party. We pay fealty to the Saudi royal family not because they have some quality we admire. They beheaded teenagers this week for the crime of asking for democracy. We pay fealty to them because they sit on top of a big oil well. The future will, hopefully, be somewhat less imbalanced in that way, because we'll be producing our energy much closer to home. No one will be writing a check to the Koch brothers every month.

**Barsamian:** Berta Cáceres, an eco-activist who was murdered in Honduras, said, "While we have capitalism, this planet will not be saved."

**McKibben:** If we continue doing what we're doing now, I think that's completely true. This raises the question of how we define capitalism. Bernie Sanders points to Denmark as his ideal. It's capitalist in the sense that there are markets, people exchange money for goods and services, there are corporations, and so on. But it's not capitalism like we're used to, because the government doesn't just hand over control to eight rich people.

The cartoonish levels of inequality we have are almost as unnerving as the absurd levels of environmental disruption. Eight people control more wealth than the poorest 3.5 billion on the planet. The ocean is 30 percent more acidic than it was forty years ago. Those are equally dangerous facts, and they're connected.

**Barsamian:** Let's say I work on an oil rig or in a coal mine, and my livelihood depends on that job. I've got aging parents who are going to need assisted living soon. My kid's college is expensive. I've got a mortgage to pay. How do you win me over?

**McKibben:** This is precisely the conversation that backers of the Green New Deal want to have. In fact, last week a Kentucky congressman challenged Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to come down to his district and talk to some coal miners, and she immediately asked when and where. The guy backed down because he knew that what she had to say would be compelling. She would say the Green New Deal is about a job guarantee and a good wage for anyone who wants to work on this transition to clean energy. It's about a college education for everyone who wants one, just the way that they do in most industrialized countries. It's about government-provided medical care so you don't die of black-lung disease.

These are precisely the things that affect coal miners in Kentucky. It's not like anyone loves the actual act of mining coal. My mother's family is from West Virginia. I know that world a bit. Coal jobs have been the only good jobs down there for a long time. And, remember, every piece of legislation about climate or energy that the Democrats have put forward for decades has included money for retraining and relocating displaced workers. The Republicans have refused to pass any of them.

At this point the coal industry is so fully automated that there aren't many coal miners left anyway. The Washington Post ran a story a while back pointing out that there are now more people who work in Arby's roast-beef-sandwich shops in this country than who mine coal. Spain just essentially did away with its coal industry. It gave many miners early retirement and others job retraining, because that was cheaper than the consequences of keeping the coal mines open. So it's not that we can't do this. The reason we're not doing it is because the people who own coal mines have undue political influence.

**Barsamian:** You've said that indigenous people are often on the "front lines" of environmental destruction. What can we learn from them?

**McKibben:** Indigenous people have been at the

absolute heart of climate organizing. In the nineteenth century Europeans pushed them off their land and onto land that we thought had no value. It turns out now that many of them are living either atop big deposits of coal, gas, and oil or astride the transportation corridors needed to get those fuels to market. So they've been able to play a significant role.

I have helped organize the resistance to the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline, which would carry crude oil from Western Canada to refineries in the U.S. I got involved because a couple of people who became dear friends, Melina Laboucan-Massimo and Clayton Thomas-Müller — indigenous organizers from Alberta — started showing me what was going on up in Canada, where they are extracting oil from tar sands [oil deposits close to the surface, where crude is mixed with sand and clay — Ed.]. There is a scar on the face of the earth there. It couldn't be more horrible. And, of course, the climate consequences are horrible, too. If you were to dig up all the economically viable tar sands in Canada and burn them, it would raise the carbon concentration in the atmosphere from its current 410 parts per million — already too high — to about 540 parts per million.

So the indigenous people started that fight and are still fighting Keystone XL and other projects, as we saw in 2016 and 2017 with the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Everywhere around the world it's the same. Indigenous people are fighting hard to keep Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau from building this ridiculous Trans Mountain Pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia. They're the ones at the forefront of the fight in Queensland, Australia, to stop the Adani corporation from building one of the biggest coal mines in the world. They are the ones in the South Pacific who are rallying public opinion. On and on and on and on.

There's something powerful about the way the oldest wisdom traditions on the planet and the new wisdom traditions of climate science are meshing. The view from the sweat lodge and the view from the satellite are in pretty strong accord. And they're both saying that endless growth isn't possible, isn't smart, isn't good, isn't wise.

Despair is a perfectly legitimate emotion to have. Sometimes I feel it. In my experience, the only way to overcome it is through action. One feels a lot less wretched when one is doing something.

**Barsamian:** What are other wisdom traditions doing about climate change?

**McKibben:** Faith-based environmental organizers from the major world religions have become really important. Not that long ago there was no religious environmental movement, but now there very much is. One of the greatest documents of this millennium is Pope Francis's encyclical on climate change, *Laudato si'*, which calls for an "ecological conversion" among people of faith and offers a remarkable critique of modernity, as radical as anything anyone in this country has written. It's entirely worth one's time to spend a day with it. At 350.org we work constantly with people from every religious tradition who are stepping up. And, boy, are they good organizers.

**Barsamian:** How does one overcome the pervasive sense of despair around climate change?

**McKibben:** Despair is a perfectly legitimate emotion to have. Sometimes I feel it. In my experience, the only way to overcome it is through action. One feels a lot less wretched when one is doing something. We don't know how this story is going to end, but we know it has a chance of ending at least halfway decently if we act now.

We're obviously not going to stop global warming. It is too late for that. But it's not too late to keep it from reaching a 3.5-degree or 4-degree Celsius rise in temperature. That's around 7 degrees Fahrenheit. If that happens, then we cannot have a civilization anything like the one we currently have. But we don't have to go there. If we do everything right, at this point we could hit that 1.5-to-2-degree Celsius target. That will be a difficult world. Climate change is already making life very, very hard for a lot of people, especially the people who did the least to cause it. But if we go much higher than that, then life will go from difficult to impossible.

The youngest members of the climate movement understand this. Look, you and I are going to be dead before the absolute worst of this kicks in. But if you're twelve right now, or fourteen, or eighteen, it's going to happen in the prime of your life, and you're going to have to respond to constant disasters. The youth understand the unfairness of this, and it's good to see them calling older people out on it.

**Barsamian:** John Nichols, the novelist who wrote *The Milagro Beanfield War*, said, "Despair is a despicable and bourgeois affectation; we must not allow it."

**McKibben:** I sometimes despair on days when I think we're just not moving fast enough. But then I think to myself, Even if that's true, at least I can cause some trouble for the oil companies, and that's sometimes reward enough for the day.

**Barsamian:** Another favorite quote of mine is Antonio Gramsci's "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will." You look at the situation objectively and see that it's dire, but you have the optimism to overcome it.

**McKibben:** Climate change tests that optimism, because it's not like other political challenges, where time is on our side, and eventually we're going to win. Martin Luther King Jr. would often say, quoting the Massachusetts abolitionist Theodore Parker, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." That's a comforting thought. The arc of the physical universe, though, appears to be short and bends toward heat. If we don't solve the problem soon, we won't ever solve it. There's not a plan for refreezing the Arctic once it melts. I think it was [socialist Presbyterian minister] Norman Thomas who said, "I am not the champion of lost causes, but the champion of causes not yet won," which is a wonderful and quite American way to think about things. But in the case of climate change, it's not true. That's why, in a rational world, we would be devoting every resource to making a difference in the short amount of time we have left. Past a certain point, we won't be able to.

We're obviously approaching that point. We've raised the temperature of the earth, and that rise in temperature is melting the permafrost up north, which is releasing potent greenhouse gases — methane and nitrogen oxides — into the atmosphere. We can all drive electric cars, put up solar panels, walk where we're going, eat lower on the food chain — all things that we should do — but we have no way of keeping the methane and nitrogen oxide from being released if we keep raising the temperature.

**Barsamian:** It seems to me that change is not going to come from the top. It's going to come from below, from people's movements and blockades and sit-ins and mass demonstrations.

**McKibben:** Absolutely. So here's what people need to be thinking about this year. Leaders of school strikes for climate have said that it's time for adults to back up the students. We need millions of people walking off the job, if only for a day, to make the point that business as usual is not an option. We have to disrupt business as usual, because it's literally what's doing us in. When we get up every day and keep doing more or less the same thing we did the day before, even as this enormous crisis unfolds, that's the problem.

We have to create enough pressure that the economic system begins to respond. It's not going to be easy, and when the system finally does respond, it will do so in the most minimal of ways. Oil companies will propose a modest carbon tax, and they will ask in return to be removed from any liability for what they've done in the past and for an end to regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency. It will be hard not to jump at that deal, because there's never been anything like it offered before. But if we do, we'll take the pressure off, and time will pass without enough progress. It's going to be very difficult. For the moment our job is to keep ratcheting up the pressure.

**Barsamian:** You say you're "less grim" now than you were in your younger days.

**McKibben:** Less grim in certain ways. Truthfully I would not have predicted in 1989 that we would do nothing. I would not have predicted when I was twenty-seven that the fossil-fuel industry would lie to us for thirty years. I was, as it turns out, naive. But I'm more optimistic now that I've watched and helped with the development of movements, and I've come to understand nonviolent movement-building as a kind of technology that, like solar panels, came out of the twentieth century and offers enormous promise in the twenty-first. Gandhi and King and the suffragettes and others figured out a new way of moving the world, a way for the small-but-many to stand up to the mighty-but-few. That's precisely the situation we are in.

**Barsamian:** The big question you pose in the book is: Can we act fast enough?

**McKibben:** I don't know. We're going to find out, and not in a hundred years. We'll know in ten or fifteen years if we acted fast enough. Probably we'll have a good sense even earlier than that. I do know at this point that we're going to put up a fight. Ten years ago I didn't know that. I was worried we would walk off this cliff without even knowing we were doing it, which seemed undignified, at the very least.

I think humans as a species are in the process of finding out whether our big brains are a good adaptation or not. Clearly they can get us in a lot of trouble. Whether they can also get us out of trouble depends on the size of our hearts.

*David Barsamian founded Alternative Radio, a progressive public-affairs program, thirty-three years ago in Boulder, Colorado.*

Solar Today:

# Questions and answers about solar in your neighborhood

By John Boiano



NOTE: *This is a new column that will help inform our community on solar and renewable energy issues locally, statewide, and beyond. Please send your questions to John Boiano at [john@zensolar.net](mailto:john@zensolar.net) or contact him through his website at [john@getinsightsolar.com](http://john@getinsightsolar.com).*

Greetings! Thank you to all the folks who joined us last month on our first community Zoom call. A lot of questions were answered, and two local families joined the solar evolution.

**Join our second community Zoom conversation on Tuesday, February 9, at 7:00 p.m. Topics: going solar; information on the limited time offer from the state of the free Connecticut Home Energy Audit. See below for how to join the call.**

No matter what side of the political spectrum you're on, people across the board agree that helping others and helping communities is the right thing to do. We all do it! We all chip in when we can, and we all like to see others healthy and happy. Solar and renewable energy isn't any different. We've recently seen a lot of large corporations step up in recognizing the financial and global value of harnessing renewable energy.

For instance, General Motors just announced that it plans to eliminate gasoline and diesel light-duty cars and SUVs by 2035. Furthermore, the big U.S. automakers say they will invest heavily in electric vehicles and be carbon neutral by 2040.

## Local and State News

-E. O. Smith High School went live with its solar system at the end of January.

-Ashford School is looking at solar and geothermal energy for this year's renovation project and is open to the idea of replacing its bus fleet with electric school buses. The school buys one bus a year, and, if we can make this happen, the fleet would change over one bus at a time annually. We are in the early stages of drafting a proposal to present for review. The great news is that the school not opposed to listening and learning about it.

-Connecticut is in the early development stage of revising the cap on excess solar production for residential systems. This is *great* news. The main takeaway is that Connecticut is considering supporting solar in a really big way. This would benefit solar and non-solar consumers alike.

So you can see, it's happening right in front of us and all around us. There are *many* great reasons why city planners, businesses large and small, and end user consumers are moving in the direction of solar.

Here are two: It makes a *lot* of financial sense! And it feels great to contribute to helping yourself and the community.

Think about it: would townships and corporations really be investing this much time and money into renewables if it didn't pencil out to have a financially beneficial outcome?

I could go on and on with a flurry of news about how many sweeping changes are happening right now. Every day, something new and exciting is happening to realign

us in the direction of renewable and sustainable energy production, distribution, and consumption.

## Questions from the Community

*You mentioned on Zoom that the utility could refuse me for solar. Please explain again.*

Unfortunately, that is correct! Even though you are motivated to go solar and everything looks great from an engineering, financial, and solar access perspective, you can be denied by the utility because of the load limit on your local transformer.

There have been some local issues with this. I have had two people be denied by Eversource because their local neighborhood transformer is at capacity.

The utility company is working on these issues. They actually do want to contribute to solar growth. Why? Because it's good business. Produce local energy in people's homes and Eversource does not have to buy the energy and redistribute it. Source local, stay local.

It's all a little complicated, but it makes huge financial sense. This is why they will help do their part and eventually make transformer upgrades. The utility company also invests heavily on local solar. Guess who owns a good portion of the solar farms that you see? Yup, our utility company! Why? Because it makes financial sense to procure and maintain local energy sources compared to buying it from three states away or from Canada. Are you seeing a trend here?

*Will solar cost me more or less?*

This is one of the most common questions I get, and the answer is worth repeating: It depends! There are a lot of factors that go into determining if someone is even eligible to go solar. With that said and based on my eight years in the industry and my experience with seeing thousands of solar proposals, if a home is eligible for solar and the numbers make sense, *yes*—solar will cost less than staying with the utility.

Conceptually, paying for solar is simple. You switch from paying the utility company for power to paying a lower guaranteed rate with solar. If it makes sense, people do it; if it doesn't, they don't. It's that simple.

*Will it make sense for me?*

Solar's not for everyone, but it may be a perfect fit for you! The only way to know for sure is to have a no-cost evaluation done by a trusted company.

**Quote from a recent local solar customer:** "It really has me thinking about how I, as an individual, can set up myself, my family, and my community to contribute."

**Join the conversation!** Please reach out with questions for next month's column and be sure to join us for our monthly community conversation on solar.

**Zoom meeting, February 9 at 7:00 p.m.**

Please email or call me to gain access to the meeting link:

John Boiano

(860) 798-5692

Email: [john@zensolar.net](mailto:john@zensolar.net)

Website: [john@getinsightsolar.com](http://john@getinsightsolar.com)

Until next month...ENJOY!

An Update

## Chaplin's 200th Birthday Celebration

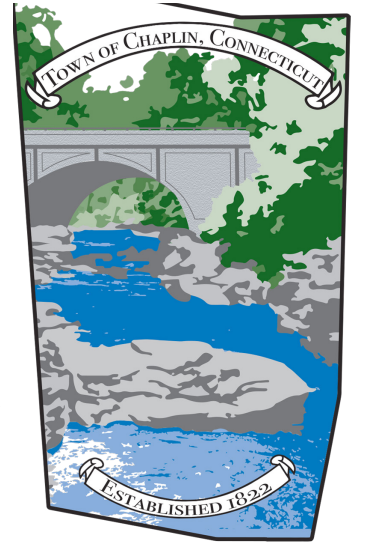
By Bob Grindle

There is a children's book, "The Littlest Grape Stomper," that tells a fanciful story about a small boy with six toes who excels at kickball and stomping grapes. This youngster's exploits are the stuff of a writer's imagination, but one of Chaplin's own, Rena Quintana, told the story, a couple of years ago in the Senior Center's memoir's class of three sisters; Linda, nine; Maria, 8; and Rena, almost 5, who were hoisted up by an uncle and put into an enormous vat—nearly the size of one of today's above ground swimming pools—filled with more than twenty inches of just-picked grapes...The young girls' job? Yes, you guessed it...stomp the grapes into grape juice. That was back in 1926, outside of Verona, Italy. Chaplin was just 104 years old and the United States barely 150.

The town of Chaplin is older now, aren't we all. Rena Quintana is gone, but her story about a five year old girl outside of Verona, Italy who would eventually come to live in America, lives on, and in that way Rena will be with us as long as her stories are re-read and repeated. Stories are like that, there is a sense of immortality to being able to string some words together and recreate a moment...a feeling...a love...a fear...a sense of wonder...perhaps even founding a small Northeastern Connecticut town.

The Chaplin that Ben Chaplin knew and was instrumental in bringing to life back in 1822 has changed, but the church that was at the heart of most New England towns is still here. The Natchaug river, that has helped to drain the marshlands and fertilize floodplains on its way to the coastline hasn't really changed since the last ice age, and certainly would be recognizable to Ben Chaplin as it continues to cut its way across our town from northeast to southwest. Forests have been cleared and regrown, roads have been added and businesses have come and gone. Houses have been built, become homes, grown old; some have stayed and some have been swept away by the curious ravages of 200 years of the passage of time. As we prepare to recognize Chaplin's 200th birthday in September of 2022, think of ways we might catch your interest and things we might do to make it special.

Contact the Chaplin Ad-Hoc Bicentennial Committee at [assistant@chaplinc.org](mailto:assistant@chaplinc.org)



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## Troop 21 Scouts learn how to fix cars

Submitted by John D. Ryan

PUTNAM, CONN. – Scouts BSA Troop 21 in Putnam has started an Automotive Maintenance Merit Badge.

In the coming weeks the Scouts will learn how to change the fluids and oil, change a tire, do minor repairs and take care of motor vehicles in general.

"This is the kind of thing everybody should learn," said Troop 21 Assistant Scoutmaster Christopher

Jodoin. "People who know what to look for when they buy and take care of a car are going to save money and avoid problems. It's great that our boys are learning this."

Troop 21 continues to meet every week, outdoors, in keeping with Coronavirus restrictions, with a full program, including hikes and learning practical and fun skills, like how to maintain a motor vehicle. The troop has been meeting every week since restrictions were first relaxed in early June. Camping trips and other activ-

ities are being planned and will be scheduled when they are permitted.

Assistant Scoutmaster Jodoin, pictured in the photo on the far left under the pickup truck, is showing several Troop 21 Scouts what the truck's undercarriage looks like.

To join Troop 21 or to find out more information, call Scoutmaster John Ryan at (860) 928-7241 and leave a message.



## Reinventing What Matters

By EC-CHAP

### February

*"In February there is everything to hope for  
and nothing to regret."*

-Patience Strong

As your Regional Cultural Center, EC-CHAP must continually ask the question, "what matters to you" – the members of the communities we serve. The EC-CHAP Board of Directors is very interested in hearing from YOU, so that we may better understand what is important, and how we can continue to support your cultural needs during this unique time in which we currently live. Please take a few minutes and let us know your thoughts by emailing us at: [info@ecchap.org](mailto:info@ecchap.org).

Considering the impact of the pandemic, restrictions, and personal apprehension, we have been evaluating our capacity to offer a variety of new high-quality virtual programming. Effectively engaging in this new platform is not a simple matter, and requires new resources, technology, and skills. Julie Engelke, our Volunteer Coordinator is seeking individuals that may possess the interest, passion and video production experience to assist. If you are interested in learning how you may be able to help support this effort, please contact Julie at: [volunteer@ec-chap.org](mailto:volunteer@ec-chap.org).

We have a friend and colleague Greg Abate and his Quartet joining us for a recording session at The Packing House this month; and a film of this concert to stream online March 6th at 2:00pm. Tickets are available at [www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming) (details below).

Since July of last year, EC-CHAP has been offering our monthly Virtual Talent Showcase. We will now be streaming our Virtual Talent Showcase on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm. Please consider participating by sharing your talent, or just join us to see and hear local and regional creatives sharing their talent (details below)!

We look forward to great year ahead, and reinventing what matters to you!

Peace,  
EC-CHAP Board

*"The best and most beautiful things in the world  
cannot be seen or even touched –  
they must be felt with the heart."*

-Helen Keller

### EC-CHAP JAZZ SERIES IS BACK (Virtually)

#### "GREG ABATE QUARTET" - Saturday, March 6th, 2:00pm.

GREG ABATE jazz saxophonist, flutist, composer, and International Jazz/Recording Artist returns to The Packing House for a Virtual Concert!

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 Greg formed his group 'Channel One' which was a favorite in the New England area.



From there Greg had the opportunity to play tenor sax with the revived Artie Shaw Orchestra under leadership of Dick Johnson from 1986 to '87.

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. Until COVID surfaced, he toured the globe with over 225 performances a year.

Greg's newest release Gratitude, with the Tim Ray Trio has received glowing reviews and a lot of international airplay. The project includes eleven originals featuring Greg with members of the Tim Ray Trio - Tim Ray (piano), John Lockwood (bass), and Mark Walker (drums).

The Greg Abate Quartet will be recording a live session at The Packing House on February 27th. This video

will stream live on Saturday, March 6, 2021 at 2:00pm. Greg will be joined by Matt DeChamplain (piano), Lou Bocciarelli (bass), and Ben Bilello (drums). Tickets \$10.00 or Free Will Donation (available on our website).

#### Matt DeChamplain

Matt deChamplain grew up in Wethersfield, Connecticut attending the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts during high school, obtaining his bachelors degree from the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at the Hartt School of Music and graduated magna cum laude with his masters from the University of Toledo in Ohio in 2012.



He has opened for Wynton Marsalis' Quintet, Dave Brubeck and Hank Jones, played with Dave Brubeck, Shawn Monteiro, Nat Reeves, Steve Davis, Greg Abate, Javon Jackson, Jose Feliciano, Paul Keller and Jon Hendricks and has appeared at the JVC Jazz Festival, the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Kennedy Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center and jazz clubs such as the Regatta Bar in Boston, Smalls in New York City and Yoshi's in San Francisco.

#### Ben Bilello

Ben Bilello received his Bachelors Degree in Jazz Studies at the Hartt School of Music, where he studied with Ben Toth, Glen Velez, Michael Carvin, and Tony Leone. Since graduating from Hartt, Ben has performed and recorded with Mulgrew Miller, Eddie Henderson, Branford Marsalis, Curtis Fuller, Javon Jackson, George Cables, Joe Wilder, Anthony Braxton, Charles Flores, Steve Davis, Jimmy Greene, Wayne Escoffery, Dezron Douglas, New Jazz Workshop, and Shelton "Fatman" Laster, among many others.



In addition to performing with noted jazz musicians, Ben has toured with the South American folk groups Viva Quetzal and Markamusic. At this time, Ben can be seen performing with his own trio, Josh Evans and The Connection, bassist Jeff Fuller, and Earl MacDonald's New Directions Ensemble, as well as many others.

#### Lou Bocciarelli

Lou Bocciarelli is a member of the Hartford Jazz Orchestra, Al Copley's Band, Bill's Seafood Jazz All-Stars, Charlie Holland All-Stars, Vince Thompson & TNFT, Johnny and the ECR, Mystic Jazz Ensemble, New London Big Band, can be seen at venues & festivals around the New England area.

Lou has had the good fortune to perform in the Jazz world with many wonderful artists including Phil Woods, Louie Bellson, Joe Morello, Dave Brubeck, Bob Mintzer, Claudio Roditi, Dick Johnson, Tom Kubis, Steve Allen, Donn Trenner, Roger Ingram to name a few. Equally comfortable in the theater, Lou has performed in many pits including performances with the Goodspeed Playhouse in CT, Foxwoods Casino, and the Mohegan Sun Casino.



#### Tickets: \$10.00 or "Free Will Donation".

Tickets available at: [www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming).

For additional information or questions, please call 518-791-9474.

JOIN US FOR EC-CHAP's Virtual Talent Showcase:  
STEAMING FEBRUARY 10TH, 7:00PM

### EC-CHAP Virtual Talent Showcase



#### Live Stream

**7:00pm - February 10th**

Submit your videos by February 3rd (15-Minute Max)

CALL 518.791.9474 FOR UPLOAD INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

Our Talent Showcase is designed as a platform for local and regional performers to share their talent in front of a live audience. Until we are able to return to live performances in The Packing House, we are offering a Virtual Talent Showcase which will be prerecorded and streamed live each month. We have been asked to reschedule our monthly offering. As a result, beginning this month we will be **Streaming our monthly Virtual Talent Showcase on the 2nd WEDNESDAY of the month at 7:00pm.**

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

We will compile your videos and present the February Virtual Talent Showcase as a LIVE Stream on **Wednesday, February 10th at 7:00pm. (Please call 518.791.9474 for information and be placed on the schedule. The deadline to submit your video is February 3rd.** Join us for an evening of "talent sharing talent"! Virtual Access at: [www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming](http://www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming) the day of the show.

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

#### Welcome EC-CHAP Intern - Ryan Elgin!

Please join us in welcoming Ryan Elgin, a new intern with EC-CHAP. Ryan is a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University, pursuing a second degree in business with a concentration in marketing after recently completing my Bachelor of Psychology. Outside of school, Ryan's interests include skiing and traveling; and in his free time he enjoys studying history, watching movies, and visiting the many breweries throughout New England.

Ryan will be working with EC-CHAP over the Spring 2021 semester. He will be conducting research projects associated with market demographics; funding; collaborations with other nonprofit partners; and assisting with the development of new programming models.

We leave you with the following:

*"Our greatest glory is not in never falling,  
but in rising every time we fall."*

-Confucius





# Lifted Branches

By Judy Davis

When we embrace heritage, we celebrate time – and when we embrace time, we build tribes.

And when we all dance, nations are created.

Heritage is where completion meets our horizons – culling from a story here, or a song there.

It is always good for our souls to hear the drum, and dance memory.

At times, our history has been quieted, but our voices remained loud.

We dance in the same direction, and our feet are thunder. Our joy is lightening.

We rise, and rise, and rise yet again.

We are the river, and its banks; the sunshine, and the shadows; the darkening sky, and the stars.

We are always at our beginning, as time flows by, I have become a celebration of my ancestors.

I promise to keep songs alive.

Nothing will stand in my way.

As I walk through the woods,

If any rock is in my path,

I will go around it, and

dance my way to sunlight.

# The Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery Presents “Live To Tell: An Exhibition of the Human Spirit”

By Tyana Lopez

This February, please join us at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery in welcoming our newest show titled “Live To Tell: an Exhibition of the Human Spirit”. This show features three incredible local artists: Lexi Palmberg, Josie Redding, and Randy McMahon. All of their work comes together to showcase both Humanity and Humility, through the lens of their respective mediums.



lens of a Fuji and output of a printer. Randy documents the life he is living, capturing the spirit of those around him, the places he visits, and beauty and architecture of New England.

These three artists come together in “Live To Tell: an Exhibition of the Human Spirit”, combining their individual talents for the very first time. As their art co-exists, it illustrates a spectrum of human emotion and experience that is sure to wow any viewer, and our gallery is very honored to have them. Come see this show live and in person to experience the full spectrum of emotion as intended by the artists. Our gallery is spacious, and we welcome all to be immersed. You may even get a chance to speak with the artists themselves about their work!



Lexi Palmberg (artwork above) is a conceptual artist from Stafford, CT. Lexi works in a range of mediums confronting identity and communication to ultimately explore new forms of collage and assemblage. She is influenced by how we are continuously shaped by our own understanding and awareness of our environment through philosophical, spiritual, and scientific lenses. The work approaches simplicity in shape, form, and color, under the belief that art is another form of communication in which we are able to examine and relate to. Lexi enjoys finding ways to experiment and deviate from the “regular” or “usual” mundane patterns.



Josie Redding (artwork above right) is a 19 year old college student studying art at UCONN. She takes influence from the human form. Her use of color in her paintings creates a fantastic juxtaposition between humanity and inhumanity. Her portraits depict people experiencing strong feelings and emotions, from agony to joy. She uses expression to exaggerate the human form, twisting it into something new we may recognize within ourselves.

If you would like to visit the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery, we are open under CDC Guidelines on Saturdays from 10 AM until 2 PM, and we are closed between exhibitions. We are located at 156 River Road in Willington, CT. Please check out our website or social media for announcements and information regarding reopening and schedules [WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG](http://WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG).

We are always on the lookout for new local and regional artists in the new england area to show at the Dye and Bleach House Community Gallery. Whether you are a professional or a beginner to the arts, we want to share your work! Please email us at [CommunityGallery@ec-chap.org](mailto:CommunityGallery@ec-chap.org) to discuss opportunities to show your work in the Community Gallery. We can't wait to have you!

Tyana Lopez is the EC-CHAP Artist-In-Residence, and Director, Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery. You may contact Tyana at: [communitygallery@ec-chap.org](mailto:communitygallery@ec-chap.org).



Randy McMahon is a Willimantic native and Photographer. His photographs capture the majesty of everyday life, and occasionally not so everyday subjects. Featured in his work are both people and puppets! Showcasing the beauty in New England, Randy's photographs are both nostalgic and striking. From his first developed photograph at the age of 14, he was hooked! Now his magic is developed through the

Read issues of Neighbors from January 2015 to present in COLOR on our website: [neighborspaper.com](http://neighborspaper.com) You will also find advertising and circulation information.

Peter Polomski  
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# What Happens in Vegas

By Dan McGinley



This is not a story about Las Vegas, but a reference to that popular line, “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” We all have our Vegas, falling short of what we preach or display and carrying many secrets.

Unless you’re like Mister Rogers or Tom Hanks. Those two are kind of angelic...though Satan was still an angel at one time, so only time will tell.

This all relates to the sudden and unpredictable death of two co-workers, and how most people show just the tip of a very dynamic iceberg, floating and melting and gathering more ice and changing all the time, because people are never static. People never stay exactly the same until they reach old age, when you can set a clock to when they eat, sleep, or visit the toilet to create a popular emoji.

(And seriously, why is that poop emoji even a thing?)

If you are old and no longer in good health, Death is a guest you set the table for, because you know he’s coming. Or she. Or they. Can’t really see anything under that hood, so gender-neutral pronouns are appropriate.

Where was I? The death of co-workers and how people are like icebergs.

A former manager of mine died suddenly right in front of my close friend and co-worker in the winter of 2016, and it was quite a shock to our local community. Another co-worker who I spent a lot of time with was brutally murdered by her fiancé during this past New Year’s weekend. That was so tragic and unpredictable that I find it hard to approach without some kind of measured look at this human condition, which is often just insane, because icebergs can collide and even sink ships.

If you worked for him, my late manager was not an easy person to know, for very understandable reasons. He oversaw eleven custodians and an assistant who were not exactly a cohesive team, running the gamut from butt-kissing back-stabbers to bullshitters, a dignified veteran, a pervert, and my own personal favorite: raging alcoholics.

In short, a workplace.

He was very much like Danny DeVito’s character Louie De Palma in the hit show *Taxi*, belting out orders and calling bullshit whenever he saw it. If a group of workers were standing around talking, he would say, “You’re not gonna solve the world’s problems, so get back to work!” or something similar, moving on quickly before there was time to react.

He and I only clashed once, but it ended in a mutual understanding that I wasn’t going to be wrongfully accused of something, and he wasn’t going to care if I was.

I never saw him step out of his role, but he couldn’t hide a smirk or chuckle when I called him Louie De Palma, and considering the crew we had, I understood there was a method to his madness.

He was managing people who were taking advantage of the job, and this reflected directly upon him, the Manager of Facilities. He had to answer to the Board of Education, and if one of his crew was leaving work early every night (which happened), and got caught, he would be called to the carpet. In the end, he could never truly be your friend, and never really trust you, so it was a very hard role to play.

When we had a major blizzard that blocked my driveway with a huge, downed

birch tree, his assistant manager was furious with me for not making it in, and the manager felt that he had to back his guy up, even though it was wrong.

It turned out that the school grounds (20 miles away) only got a few inches of snow that day, and the other guy on call handled it easily alone, yet I was scolded.

“What if he dropped dead of a heart attack clearing that snow?” the manager asked me. “Nobody would be here to help!”

Ironically, he himself dropped dead of a heart attack while shoveling snow with that very same person, and it really turned my head around.

His tragic death was exactly the scene he had feared for someone else, having to shovel because of my absence. It was as if some guardian angel got seriously tweaked over his trying to guilt-trip me, said, “Really? Hold my beer,” and took things way too far.

The thing is, he never had to pull an act with me or play Louie De Palma, and that’s what hurt the most. This wasn’t Fort Benning and he wasn’t wearing any stripes, though even a couple of those guys in the army opened up to me during basic training, pulling off the mask they always had to wear.

It was only after he had passed away that I started to see under the frosty exposed tip, when he was celebrated as a beloved golf coach and family man.

If only I had seen that side of him before his very sad demise.

The other person was another hard worker and loving parent, always trying to learn more about the job and trying to give a young co-worker of ours motherly advice.

She was strong and fearless and often wore her heart on her sleeve; she was shot to death by her fiancé during a heated argument in Massachusetts, before he turned the gun on himself.

We had worked side by side and laughed and told stories and got to know each other, but we did not really know each other at all, because look what happened, and look what lies beneath.

“You never know about people,” my friend said. “You never know what takes place around their kitchen table at night.”

And so we move along in these isolated times, sometimes intimate with people and more often not, sometimes civil and sometimes riotous, holding secrets or bursting open in plain sight, like when I pressed my head against the window of a jetliner while flying to my father’s funeral, crying silently into the glass.

A light touch on my shoulder from an elderly woman in the seat behind snapped me back to the present.

“I’m very sorry for your pain,” she said. “I’ve been there so many times myself.”

With just a few quick words of comfort and empathy, I came to know that stranger on a plane more than I ever knew so many others from my past—more than the beloved family man who felt obliged to yell and pose at work, and even more than my hard-working co-worker who would say “I love you” on her cell phone to her murderous fiancé.

Paul McCartney sings, “Somebody’s knocking at the door, somebody’s ringing the bell. Do me a favor, open the door and let ‘em in.”

We should never be afraid to open that door, and let people in.

# The God of Evolution

By John Coffey

One of the great debates in the church (especially conservative leaning churches) is whether or not we can believe in evolution. Many Christians actually spend immense amounts of time and energy to prove that evolution does not account for our existence and that God indeed created the world in the span of 7 days some 6000 or so years ago.

The argument begins with the Bible and shores it up with science, which I don’t really want to talk about, because I’m not actually well versed in the evidence for or against. I can talk about what the Bible says all day, but I find discussions of the geological record or fossil evidences to be indecipherable and, well, uninteresting. Besides, I’m on much safer ground assessing the logic behind the debate in the first place. I suspect conservative Christians are less concerned about Scripture and science than they are general theology—what their beliefs say about God.

To say that God couldn’t have created the universe in 7 days (6 days of work, one of rest) due to fossil evidence, is to say that there is something God can’t do. We can’t say that! Therefore, let us doubt science, not the power of God. Saying that God created the universe by speaking, is saying our God is powerful. Saying that God created the universe, is saying our existence is the result of intentionality, and therefore we have purpose. Saying that God created, is saying there is something above and beyond our present existence, and therefore we can have hope.

In a convoluted way, this logic pays homage to what I think is the original intent of the creation narratives in the Bible (Genesis 1-2). Comparing them to other ancient accounts of creation (Enuma Elish, the Baal epic) is enlightening. There are a lot of similarities—a god creates order out of chaos, wind is involved, the creation of the heavens is important, and at a later point humans are created. These ancient accounts are myths, stories told to convey some perceived truth about the divine realm and its relation to earth and humanity. What is the role of humanity? The myth tells us.

The Bible takes these myths and twists them. In the myths, the main god has to fight other gods. They are threatening the earth with chaos, so the main god steps in and brings order by slaying the chaos. In Genesis, there is no battle, no fighting. Just talking. “God says,” and it becomes so. No armies, no threats, no danger. Just God speaking, because God is so powerful that nothing else can compete. The Bible works, not because it is unique, but because it begs to be compared to the myths and seen as superior. Who wants a god who can be challenged by chaos, when you can have a God who destroys chaos with a word?

The role of humanity is also interesting. In the myths, the creation of humans is so the gods can rest. Initially the top gods are resting while the lower gods work, but then the lower gods get fussy, so they ask the top gods to create humans to do the work. The top gods oblige to keep the peace, and humans get their beginning as measly slaves of the gods.

In Genesis, humanity isn’t an afterthought. Their creation is the point at which God says, “this is very good.” Creation isn’t complete without them. And their role isn’t to be slaves to God, their role is to steward and care for creation, to help it flourish. Our role isn’t to provide God with what he needs; our role is to help creation flourish so we can flourish along with it, so that God might be glorified. Interestingly enough, technically this is God’s job. God is responsible for the preservation and sustaining of creation. To the extent

that is also our job, then, it is a partnership between us and God, God entrusting us with what he wants done. What an honor!

Like I said, the conservative Christian insistence on the historical veracity of Genesis 1-2 is a way of communicating truths about God’s power, intent, and transcendence, which gives humans purpose and hope. But I think it’s a mistake, an unforced error. Evolution can be mythologized just as effectively as a strict, young-earth creationist account. Perhaps even more so.

Evolution, and pardon the gross oversimplification here, is the idea that life, in all its complexity, began with the basic elements combining to form one thing which led to another and another and another, increasing in complexity, adapting to new environments, interacting with other things that traveled down a different evolutionary branch, all over the course of billions of years. Now then, imagine if at the very beginning God started this whole process, setting things in motion, pushing a molecule here to join with a molecule there, always tinkering, sometimes letting things take their natural course, other times stepping in more actively, always working towards a set goal, but not specifying the route to get there.

If God exists, and the universe is as old as scientists say (13.8 billion years), God has been around a very, very long time (2,300,000 times longer than what’s recorded in the Bible). Does that not speak to God’s transcendence? And if he has been orchestrating the entire evolutionary process, yet humans are such a small part of that work, does that not speak to God’s care for all of creation? But the fact that we are such a small part of creation, yet the son of God came in the form of a human, does that not speak to the honored place humanity has in the scope of creation?

I believe God created all that is. I believe Genesis 1-2 is true, in that it tells us true things about God, the universe, humanity, and life. But I also believe what scientists have found about the history of the universe, and I think God reveals true things about himself in that as well. Evolution, no less than Genesis 1-2, teaches us about the transcendence, power, and intentionality of God, if we will but listen.

*John Coffey is a minister at the Storrs Road Church of Christ in Mansfield Center.*

Support our local farmers.

Shop at the Willimantic Food Co-op, Bob’s IGA and other local markets.

Look for locally sourced produce when you dine.

Frequent our farmers markets. There are some winter markets in our area.

To find a farmers market close to you visit the CT Department of Agriculture website for a link to markets.

# News from UConn's Benton Museum

Submitted by Maripaz Shaw, Marketing Volunteer - The Benton

## Benton: Activism in Art – A New Exhibition

### Käthe Kollwitz: Activism in Art

Exhibition runs from: February 3, 2021 to April 10, 2021 Admission is free. Donations are appreciated.

This exhibition draws on the Benton's collection of more than 100 prints and drawings by German

artist Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) to explore the relationship between her art and activism. Kollwitz is known for her humanitarianism, determination to communicate to a wide audience, and commitment to socialist ideals, though she never joined a political party. She was also a gifted printmaker who used her art to give voice to the common person, the suffering, and the poor.

The current exhibition *The Human Epoch: Living in the Anthropocene* continues through March 10.

Benton Museum hours are Wednesday-Friday 10-4 and Saturdays 1-4. Please go to <https://benton.uconn.edu/> for what to expect when visiting and COVID guidelines.



Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), *Die Witwe I [The Widow I]*, from *Krieg [War]* (1922-23). Woodcut.

### Benton: Virtual Walk-Through: Käthe Kollwitz: Activism Through Art

Friday, February 5, 2021, 5:30pm – 6:30pm

Käthe Kollwitz is known for her humanitarianism, determination to communicate to a wide audience, and commitment to socialist ideals, though she never joined a political party. She was also a gifted printmaker who used her art to give voice to the common person, the suffering, and the poor. Join exhibition curator Amanda Douberley for an exploration of Kollwitz's art and activism.

Register: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1CB0f-D9UTW6ZLIV0L7Gbsw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1CB0f-D9UTW6ZLIV0L7Gbsw)

### Benton Museum Challenge

Thursday, January 28, 2021 and repeats daily until Wednesday February 3, 2021, 12:00am – 11:59pm. All Day. From anywhere.....

Recreate a work of art from the Benton's collection. Inspired by the Getty Museum Challenge, we invite you to turn yourself, your family, and your pets into a masterpiece.

Feel free to browse the museum's illustrated database for inspiration, or use the suggestions below.

Send your pics to [benton@uconn.edu](mailto:benton@uconn.edu) or post them to social media no later than Wednesday, February 3 using the hashtag #BentonMuseumChallenge. You will be entered into a drawing to win a UConn Cafes gift card OR a Benton Museum t-shirt.

Details: <https://benton.uconn.edu/benton-museum-challenge/>

### Benton: Critical Looking - A Gallery Dialogue

Friday, January 29, 2021

12:15am – 12:45am

Tap your powers of observation and investigate a single work of art through close looking and discussion with Amanda Douberley, Assistant Curator/ Academic Liaison. Through mid-March, we are featuring works of art in the exhibition, *The Human Epoch: Living in the Anthropocene*. This week's subject is "Silueta Works in Mexico" (1977) by Ana Mendieta. [Image credit: Ana Mendieta (1948-1985), *Silueta Works in Mexico* (1977), Color photograph, WBMA, Deaccession Art Purchase Fund.]

Offered via Zoom Meetings – registration is required and space is limited.

Registration Link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsd-GorTIqEtUXVieD8YUUtmoVwOv4ZIU1>

Your registration will be approved if space is available. You will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting or put on a wait list.



Ron Kleemann (1937-2014), *Gas Line*, from the portfolio *CITY-SCAPES*, 1979. Screenprint.

Have you ever thought about living in a piece of history?



Please allow us to introduce you to the Boarding House Apartments, newly offered August 2020. On November 30, 2017, this property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of an Historic District designation in South Willington, CT. Purchased by the current owner in 2014, each 3-Bedroom / 2-Bath unit has been completely and meticulously renovated from the ground up to preserve its original character - while upgraded appropriately to meet current standards, including top quality amenities and technology infrastructure. All New: Insulation and Windows | Electrical, Cable, and Ethernet | Plumbing, Fixtures, and Hot Water System | HVAC Equipment | Kitchen & Bath | Period Doors and Trim | and more.

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## The Elements of Writing

## Prose &amp; Dialogue

By Felix F. Giordano

This month we will cover Prose & Dialogue which are not only parts of the elements of writing but they are the mechanism by which stories are told. Prose and dialogue appear in both fiction and nonfiction. In this submission, I refer to prose and dialogue as parts of a novel but it is also relevant in short stories, memoirs, and nonfiction books.

Prose can be defined by most resources as referring to any written work that follows a basic grammatical structure. It differs from works of poetry, which follow a metrical structure involving lines and stanzas. In its basic form, we were introduced to prose at a very early age in school. We were taught to use words and phrases and integrate them into sentences and paragraphs. This structure became the fundamental way in which we communicate with other human beings in casual conversation, our professional lives, and even with our own pets (and sometimes they understand what we're saying).

In literature, prose is simply taking our learned communication skills (words, sentences, paragraphs, and the resulting grammatical structure) and using them in such a manner that they advance a story. Prose is a description of language that follows the natural patterns found in everyday speech. If we can write as close to the way we speak, our writing, whether it be a short story, a memoir, a novel, or simply a newspaper editorial, or an artistic review, will ring true with the reader.

Prose that tantalizes the reader with what will happen next is much more effective than prose that has little to do with the story and more to do with impressing the reader with the author's extensive vocabulary. Most of us have been in conversation with others when the other person goes off on a tangent and we are either yelling inside our brains (or sometimes out loud) to "get to the point". That can happen in a story when we include information that has no bearing on the plot, setting the scene, or character development.

Take for instance the famous crime author, Elmore Leonard, "The Dickens of Detroit". He had such a way with words that when reading one of his novels it made you feel as if you were an observer right in the scene with the characters. Here is a link to an article about Elmore Leonard and his writing style:

<https://writingcooperative.com/write-it-like-elmore-leonard-ditch-formal-language-82e642c1c692>

And here are Elmore Leonard's 10 Rules of Writing:

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/08/21/elmore-leonard-10-rules-of-writing/>

Elmore Leonard is considered a great writer because he didn't use eloquent words, expressive sentences, or enlightening paragraphs. Instead he used an economy of words such that through his writing he appears to be having a conversation with the reader. Elmore Leonard provided us with a roadmap of the most effective way to write. His one rule that sums up his *Ten Rules of Writing* is, "If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it." One could then sum up his concept of how to write by saying don't write the way we were taught to write but instead write how we

speak.

Use prose to provide an introduction to the time, location, setting, situations, characters, beliefs, politics, etc. Prose can also describe the background of the story, the location, or the characters and how they got to be where they are as the story unfolds. Prose enables the writer to deliver enough detail so that the reader will become engaged in the story. Prose also can define for the reader the single greatest driving force in the story which is the conflict or conflicts. Use prose to build upon the story.

Here is the beginning of a chapter in my upcoming book, *Miracle of the Talking Stick*:

*Hardin was a typical Montana town, a jumping-off place along I-90. Gas stations, a truck stop, pickup trucks, one-floor single-family homes, mobile homes, a few bars with slot machines, liquor stores within close proximity of the Crow Reservation, the occasional Bureau of Indian Affairs patrol car, and dust everywhere kicked up by the springtime winds off the high plains.*

This one paragraph of prose tells us quite a bit about Hardin Montana. It has no flowery words yet describes a place that is desolate, could have a transient flow of people, a place where vices coexist with a hardscrabble life, and the law as a counterbalance.

Dialogue is a subset of prose. It is conversation between two or more characters or sometimes just one character, if they are speaking to themselves. Prose shouldn't drive the story. Dialogue among characters is what drives the story.

Our brains formulate ideas and visual descriptions through the dialogue and behavior of our characters. We sense their moods and sometimes even their physical attributes by the way they speak and interact with others and the environment around them.

Here's another passage from my upcoming novel. This one is an example of dialogue that reveals the personality and physical appearance of Lucy Brown, owner and part-time waitress in Lucy's Luncheonette. Alma Rose is Sheriff Buchanan's daughter.

*Lucy took Alma Rose's hand and pulled her up out of her chair. She then grabbed Alma Rose and gave her a bear-hug. Then she pulled away, held Alma Rose's shoulders at arms-length and said, "I'm awfully pleased to meet you. Any kin of Jim and Kate is like kin to me."*

*Alma Rose said, "I heard a lot about you too. My father told me that you're an Olympic weightlifter and was a Taylor Police Chief."*

*Lucy laughed, "Don't believe everything your father tells you but...yeah, that stuff's true. I also used to be a bouncer in my prime up in the Yaak but that's neither here nor there. Now I'm fifty-four years old and tired as all freakin' hell." When laughter erupted from customers at a few tables, Lucy said, "Hey you good for nothin' rowdies, tone it down, we got decent customers over here." She stared at Alma Rose. "What'll have sweetheart?"*

This dialogue excerpt tells us a lot about Lucy Brown. Because she's an Olympic weightlifter we have no

doubt that she is strong and has a muscular frame. Because she was a police chief we know that she can be an authority figure and probably commands respect from those who know her. Her time as a bouncer in the Yaak, which is a wild and remote location in northwestern Montana, lets us know that she can take care of herself and others have depended upon her for protection. Finally we know that she's a hard worker to the point of exhaustion but her snappy retort shows us that she takes no grief from others. Yet she has a soft heart for Alma Rose, the sheriff's daughter, when she refers to Alma Rose as sweetheart.

Dialogue can also teach a lesson and reveal the virtues of a character. In another chapter Alma Rose pipes in when her stepmother and aunt have a conversation about a serial killer:

*Becca pursed her lips and then said. "But how many people had to die? Does he think he is God?"*

*Alma Rose piped in, "Sometimes we act like we are God, sometimes we cry for God, and sometimes we curse God. The fact is that God is in all of us and God is all around us. We just have to open our eyes and look."*

Dialogue can even help describe the scene. Here's a third example from my upcoming novel where a young man had a car accident and hit an elk:

*Jim struck a serious tone. "That elk was where it was supposed to be. You see son, I see this every June. That was an old cow scouting a summer trail for a herd of cows, calves, and yearling bulls. Once she knew the trail wasn't flooded or that predators weren't lurking, she would have gone back for the others and led them up into the hills. They winter in the lowlands and summer up in the mountains. She was only looking out for her own kind." Jim sensed that he temporarily disarmed the boy about the elk, so he then asked, "What do you suggest we do about all this?"*

In summation, use prose to give depth to your story. Let it describe the setting and location and reveal to the reader your characters' strengths and weaknesses, what they may be up against, and what may possibly occur later in the novel. Use dialogue to help describe the characters' physical attributes, their mood, their relationships with each other, and any other pertinent issues or events.

We defined "Prose & Dialogue" as part of The Elements of Writing, and I hope I've piqued your interest in writing. Storytelling is inherent in us all. It is who we are as social human beings and we all have stories to tell.

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Next Month's Topic: Setting



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# Messy Misleading Functioning Labels

By Michelle M. Baughman



Autism is a spectrum condition, which means that each individual with this condition varies from another, and any given individual can have strengths or challenges in varying degrees. But the important thing to not lose sight of is the fact that each and every individual on the autism spectrum needs and deserves supports, regardless of how they compare to their peers.

A common erroneous assumption is that a person who appears to be functioning well doesn't need or deserve any support because they seem to be managing "just fine." A person like this used to be referred to as having "high-functioning autism." But autistic advocates prefer the more accurately descriptive term "low support needs" because the words "high-functioning" are so misleading. How well an autistic individual functions can fluctuate based upon the level of stress or cognitive demands they are under, whether they are getting enough sleep or proper nutrition, and even if they are feeling poorly due to cold, flu, or any other illness.

An individual who experiences more challenges with daily living skills ought to be referred to as having "high support needs" as opposed to being referred to as "low-functioning" because not only are the words "low-functioning" derogatory and insulting, but they are also very misleading. Most unenlightened neurotypicals (non-autistic people) assume that the ability to talk is the determining factor, as though the ability to speak is some measure of intelligence. But this is simply not so. There are many highly intelligent, very talented and accomplished autistic authors who have written several books (that have been infinitely helpful to promoting autistic advocacy) who happen to rely on assistive augmented communication devices in order to talk. AAC, or assistive augmented communication is a device like what Stephen Hawking used. As one autistic self-advocate Laura Tisoncik so aptly put it, "The difference between high-functioning and low-functioning is that high-functioning means your deficits are ignored, and low-functioning means that your assets are ignored." It is time we retire these unhelpful terms and focus on supporting each individual according to their specific needs.

What neurotypicals observing an autistic person mean by the words "high-functioning autism" is that they are not inconvenienced by the autistic person's behavior. They assume that if this autistic person is not causing any problems for them, then the autistic person is coping just fine. However, the person may, in fact, not be coping well at all: Often when autistic individuals are over stressed by a situation or circumstances they will go mute and their nervous system shuts down (goes into a dorsal vagal state). To the outside observer, this may appear that the person is unperturbed, calm, or even indifferent. Outside observers will then conclude that if the autistic person had an objection to what was going on then they would surely voice it, (because, after all, that is what a neurotypical person would do), so they take the lack of objection as compliance.

Imagine not being able to express yourself to be

able to say "No! Please stop," or "You are hurting me," or "You are violating my rights/physical/psychological boundaries." Now imagine what you would be feeling if your perpetrator persisted, despite you not wanting them to? You would feel helpless to stop the abuse and your anxiety would increase, rendering you even more shut down and mute. Then you would feel angry with yourself for not speaking up for yourself to put a stop to the abuse. You would feel overwhelmed with humiliation and self-blame for not having done right by yourself. Such feelings make a person vulnerable to suicide. The suicide rates among autistics is three to six times higher (it varies by gender) than that in the general population. This statistic affirms that things are not "just fine."

Now imagine you are an older autistic adult who has experienced a lifetime of similar situations where you failed to advocate for your best interests, safety or well-being because your neurology predisposes you to this self-defeating vulnerability. Many autistic adults are traumatized by such experiences, so that when a new one happens, no matter how innocuous it may appear to outside observers, they are flooded with intrusive memories and the accompanying visceral feelings of all the other times they have been similarly violated in their lives. Older autistic adults are particularly susceptible to this because they have lived through the periods in our history when humiliating corporal punishment was accepted common parenting and educational practice. Back then, no one understood anything about autism, so it was assumed that the individual was willfully misbehaving, and the solution was to beat them into submission. Or to humiliate them with a barrage of diminishing verbal abuse about their short-comings. (For example, being derided by a teacher in front of the whole class). Experts are now saying that verbal/emotional abuse is far more damaging to the psyche than physical abuse. Gas-lighting is one such form of this kind of verbal/emotional/psychological abuse that many older autistic adults have been subjected to throughout their childhoods because they were told that they had "asked for it" or that "it is for their own good" when they received corporal punishment.

When a person is raised in an environment where it seems that everyone is allowed to violate your personal and psychological boundaries and inflict physical and emotional pain on you, it is very difficult to even realize that you have the right to advocate for yourself when you are being mistreated. This is true for all trauma survivors, not just autistic ones, and it is why they are the favorite targets of bullies...because they have been conditioned to accept abuse and not stick up for themselves or to seek help. The book "But You Said?!" A Story Of Confusion Caused By Growing Up As An Undiagnosed Autistic Person by Emma Wishart does an excellent job of illuminating all the various forms of abuse autistic individuals receive, the confusion this causes, and the resultant cost this imposes upon one's mental and financial well-being.

Autistic trauma survivors have an additional level of vulnerability when they are being mistreated or threatened with danger because they may also experience alexithymia or depersonalization, which to an unenlightened outside observer makes them appear unaffected by the situation. Because non-autistic and non-traumatized individuals would respond with some kind of emotional

reaction to an upsetting situation they automatically assume that a lack of such reaction means that the person is unaffected. But this is a dangerous and erroneous assumption: Alexithymia, the inability to understand or process one's feelings in "real time," means that the person is not able to show the expected emotional reaction. This explains the delayed emotional response or delayed grieving that teachers and parents observe when they are perplexed by how their autistic child/student seemed to not even notice the death of a beloved grandparent or pet, but then months later some seemingly innocuous reminder sends the child into waves of grief and despair. Depersonalization is the nervous system's natural response to overwhelming threat of danger by creating a mental barrier between you and the danger. Almost half of adults in the US will have at least one depersonalization episode in their lifetimes. However autistic and traumatized people experience it more frequently. A person experiencing depersonalization may not be able to mobilize in order to get themselves out of danger, much like a deer in headlights. So instead of running away from a potential mugging their feet remain frozen in place and they are at the mercy of their attacker.

Recently, I experienced a situation where a younger autistic individual who was challenged in emotional regulation was allowed to rage in frustration for 45 minutes at another older autistic individual who appeared to have lower support needs. The neurotypical staff assumed that the older person was unaffected by this verbal abuse (and the accompanying lack of intervention from the management staff) because the older person did not show any outward signs of distress in real time. However, this situation caused her a great deal of distress in the following week, re-triggering a lifetime of intrusive traumatic memories of abuse and neglect. Any program that provides services and activities for autistic people ought to have a staff member who understands about the unique vulnerabilities and support needs of all autistic individuals, and they ought to be able to fairly and justly balance meeting the needs of all individuals, regardless of high or low support needs. Ideally, this staff person should be autistic. The Autistic Self-Advocacy Network's motto "nothing about us without us" is erudite advice because the ones who know best how to meet the needs of autistic individuals are the autistic individuals themselves.

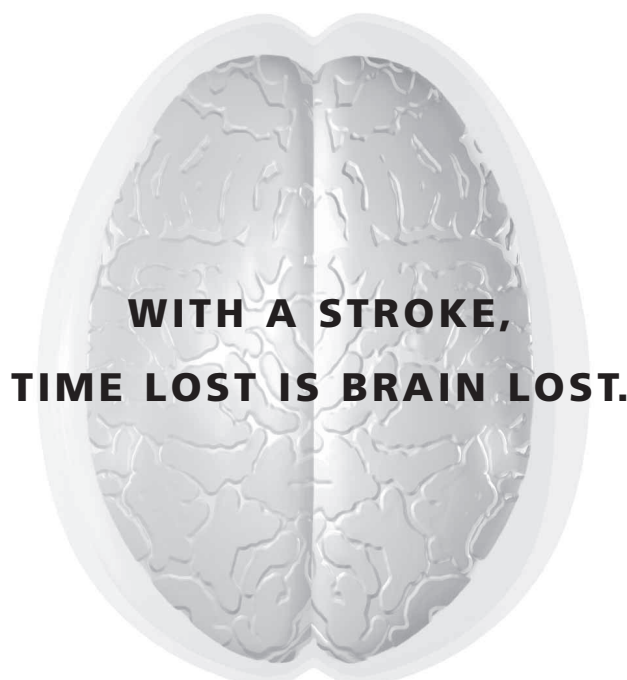
*Michelle M. Baughman is a late-in-life diagnosed adult on the autism spectrum, an educator, a parent of a twice-exceptional child, and a trauma-informed AANE Certified AsperCoach who provides intensive, highly individualized coaching to individuals with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and related conditions. Michelle ascribes to the Neurodiversity paradigm and writes to help debunk the general misconceptions surrounding this condition to help autistics live their best lives and to change the negative cultural narrative about autism.*

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T. King, Publisher



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## Finding Lost Village

## Harvesting the Understory

By Donna Dufresne



The research for my book, *A Good Piece of Land: A Thousand Acre Journey Through Time*, has led me to explore neighborhoods beyond Lost Village. Although not everyone may see the connections, I know that the roots of trees can be laced together for miles beneath the forest floor. Many plants from ginger to ferns spread through rhizomes, and mushrooms (the fruiting bodies of fungi) have a secret life of tiny, interconnected webs spread throughout the ecosystem of the understory. Therefore, while investigating the understory of history, one is bound to encounter tentacles reaching out to unexpected places beyond the neighborhood.

My investigation into Obadiah and Darius Higginbotham led me to explore the area around the old Abington train station along the Airline Trail. I was searching for the site of the Old Pomfret fulling mill, which was destroyed by both the railroad and the expansion of Route 44. The Higginbothams listed themselves as mechanics or millwrights and worked on the flume and waterwheel for Nathaniel Ayer's fulling mill. Ayer arrived in Pomfret in 1789 with his brother-in-law, Samuel Hartshorn, to set up a clothier business. They came from Franklin, where they operated a similar business. They bought 10 acres of land from Jonathan Ruggles which appear to be just about where the old Abington station was later erected by the railroad. The parcel began on the east side of the brook near the bridge (Route 44) and bordered the highway and Capt. William Osgood's land. The deed allowed for building a dam and drawing water from the pond to power the fulling mill. I'm pretty sure the mill pond is the present-day beaver pond along the Airline Trail where the old Abington grain store and train station once stood.

My curiosity about Nathaniel Ayer began with the fulling mill and its business transactions with the Higginbothams of Lost Village. Besides working on the flume and waterwheel, Darius Higginbotham continued to do repairs after his father died in 1803. His mother, Dorcas, spun tow yarn and wove tow cloth (rough linen) for Ayer, who also operated a store that provided various textiles and food items including Captain Osgood's cider from his mill. But Ayer's land transactions continued after the initial 10-acre lot. After his first wife, Edney, died in 1801, Ayer married Joanna Sharpe and began to acquire land through the Sharpe family bordering the Ingalls and Clapp properties. These land transactions appear to migrate south from Route 44 to the Jericho section.

My expeditions have revolved around developing a sense of place, first exploring the Old King's Highway (Old Abington Road) and other colonial roads from Lost Village to Abington, to get a sense of how Darius and Dorcas may have traveled back and forth to the fulling mill. Later, I began to explore the King's Highway in Abington to get a sense of what travel may have been like before the railroad, and how Nathaniel Ayer would have moved toward the Jericho section. Joanna Sharpe Ayer and her brothers inherited John Sharpe Jr.'s land in Jericho. When she died, her three sons, Morris, Nelson, and John, inherited the land, which bordered the land earlier acquired by Nathaniel.

During one of my expeditions, I discovered an old cellar hole on the east side of the Airline Trail in Jericho, along Blackwell Brook. According to the 1856 census map, a J. S. Ayer lived in that spot. I finally connected the dots to see that J. S. was Nathaniel Ayer's son John, who lived there until 1892. The land bounded the William Osgood and Ransom Kingsbury properties, which is where the cellar hole exists.

Another rhizome in the Lost Village understory led me to investigate Johnathan Randall, Esq.'s enslaved Africans, who are supposedly buried in the Randall/Higginbotham Cemetery with fieldstone markers. One of my aims is to identify their names, birth dates, and death dates so that we can investigate placing tombstones on their graves. Identifying enslaved Africans is a deeper understory and more difficult to research. I did, however, trace the ancestors and descendants of Mary Webster, who was said to be a descendant of the "Randall slaves" in Susan Griggs's book. Mary, along with her sister, Lucretia, were Lamberts, and the Lamberts can trace their lineage back to the enslaved Randalls through Reuben Randall. I started with Mary and linked her to the Webster family of East-

ford. Mary married Edgar Webster, the younger brother of Charles Webster, whose Civil War grave marker is in the Lambert Cemetery in the middle of the Natchaug State Forest. The tentacles of this story have proffered rich fruit in the understory which have led me to more expeditions and explorations.

The Lambert property is about a mile north of Cat's Den Quarry on the Fayette Wright Road in the Natchaug forest. It's possible that the Lamberts, who were part Nipmuc through the Brooks family of Ashford, were stonemasons and worked as laborers in the quarry. The first enslaved labor in northeast Connecticut were the Nipmuc Indians, who built many of the stone walls that interlace the landscape. Charles Webster and his brother, Daniel, both enlisted in the 29<sup>th</sup> Colored Regiment in the Civil War and died during the war. But before the war, on the 1860 census, the two young men in their early twenties were working on farms in Pomfret and Eastford within a three-mile radius of the Lambert property. This makes me believe that the Websters may have lived near the Lamberts or on the same property. The land has been referred to as a "settlement" of Nipmuc Indians and descendants of African slaves. Both families have African and Nipmuc heritage.

Daniel Webster was working for the Sherman farm on the Pomfret/Eastford border along Fire Tower Road. That land would have bounded Seth Sumner's property, including Lyon Brook across from Paine Road, where he operated a sawmill. Charles Webster was working on the Sumner farm and may have worked in the sawmill in the winter months while doing farm labor in the summer. Jim Platt currently owns much of the Sumner land including the remains of the mill, bounding the state forest, 4-H property, and the Nature Conservancy (the old Dennis farm). I've been searching for information about the mill remains on Lyon Brook for years, and only recently had the pleasure of joining the adventurous 92-year-old Jim Platt on an expedition to the mill site and the site of the former Seth Sumner tavern and farm, which is now beneath Route



44 in Abington.

While intrigued by the thought of Charles Webster working at the sawmill, Jim and I began to wonder if he may have been working as a collier, burning charcoal as well. There are remains of charcoal hearths throughout the former Sumner property including the state forest, 4-H camp, and Nature Conservancy. Years ago, I was told that charcoal burning was a niche filled by local Nipmuc Indians, but I haven't found any data to support that yet. In the meantime, I've been trying to identify charcoal hearth remains in the area, bushwhacking and hiking across Allen Hill, which provides an excellent distraction from Covid-19.

Once I identified the connection between Mary Lambert Webster and Charles Webster, I dove into genealogy research, the fine-webbed tendrils edging their way into the twentieth century. Mary had three sons, Irving, Charles, and William. In the 1920 census, they were living on Andrew Sharpe's farm (Mashamoquet farm?) and working

in Sharpe's lumber camp as laborers and teamsters. Mary and her daughter-in-law, Rebecca Taylor Webster, worked as housekeepers for a local family. I suspect they worked on the Goodrich estate. William remained in Pomfret along with his mother, while Irving and Charles migrated to Colchester. He worked in Frank Paine's sawmill in 1928, and later rented the "Easter Hill" house, on an abandoned railroad bed, from Eliza Kimball's parents in the 1960s.

My research into the Webster/Lambert families led me to a Nipmuc woman from Charlton, Massachusetts, who is also a descendant. She has done extensive research on her line through Elmer Webster and Hattie Lambert, and we have had some wonderful conversations. As I dove deeper, I discovered that Charles Lord Webster (Mary's son), had a daughter, Gladys, in Colchester. It turns out that the property where Charles Webster's gravestone sits in the Natchaug State Forest is still owned by the descendants of the Webster/Lambert family through Charles Lord Webster of Colchester. Gladys married George Peay in 1954 and their son, James, is the current property owner. In her obituary from 2018, the family noted that Gladys instilled

in her children the pride of their Native American heritage. When I finally located the graves of Mary Webster, her sister, Lucretia Taylor, and her children, Irving and William, I cried because I felt like I knew these people through all the trials and tribulations of American history. They have a family plot in the New Abington Cemetery. Irving's wife, Rebecca, is buried there along with their son, Henry, who never married and who fought in World War II. I know a lot about this family from the early 1800s to the twenty-first century. I am a voyeur, a peeping Tomasina, stealing a view through the windows of census and military records and the trace elements of genealogy. Like many Native and African American families, they struggled through systemic racism and oppression, survived, and remained intact. They fought in American wars from the Revolution to the Korean War. Yet the names of their ancestors who were enslaved remain lost.

Those lost names, going back to Jonathan Randall, Esq.'s enslaved Africans, are what beckon me to follow the rhizome tendrils far beyond the Randall/Higginbotham Cemetery. It's like pulling up Virginia creeper in a blueberry patch; the vines seem to travel a great distance once you begin tugging them to the surface. Recently, I began following a tendril that led me to the Yale-Myers Forest in Westford and an interesting quarry. Following a hunch based on census data, I wondered if Reuben Randall lived in the Westford section of Ashford, where there were iron and lead mines and potential work for black laborers who were newly manumitted. I am still waiting to hear from the town hall regarding Ashford Woods and land records for Reuben Randall. Getting antsy for physical evidence, I decided to follow my gut and go out on another expedition.

I visited the Yale-Myers Forest twice. The first trip was a recognition of the Westford Village Cemetery and the area around Boston Hollow Road and Eastford Road. The Eastford/Westford Road is a serpentine cut between Eastford and Westford through an expanse of wilderness (at least as defined in Connecticut). I stopped along a wood's road near Boston Hollow Road that looks like it had once been quarried. There were lead (graphite) and iron mines in the area, but I don't know the time period. It is rough and scraggly land with a zigzag of stonewalls, evidence of quarries, cellar holes, and rough outlines for small dwellings, sheds, or barns. It's not the kind of land you would buy if you were a well-to-do or middling farmer. Wet, boggy, rocky, and obscured by immovable ledges, it would barely provide enough space for a milk cow, a couple of hogs, and a small subsistence garden. But if you had the skillset to work with rocks, it might provide a living. The land is littered with large slabs of rock which appear to have iron in them. Even the smallest rocks are very heavy for their size. There is also an odd circular archaeological feature on the land, dug into the hillside (photos above). It is mounded and has a stone roof covered with soil. The in-

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side is perfectly circular, about 6 to 7 feet in diameter and 3 to 4 feet high. It could have been used for food storage, and the cellar holes would have provided root storage. Another mystery.

I have hypothesized that the Randall slaves were stoneworkers and may have done much of the stonework at Lost Village. Therefore, it didn't surprise me that their descendants lived a mile from a quarry in the Natchaug State Forest. So, when I ventured along the Westford/Eastford border, I was looking for evidence of quarries and the kind of unwanted scrubland where Native and African Americans may have settled. While waiting for primary source data, I'm trying to imagine where Reuben Randall Jr. and his wife, Waity Brooks, might have lived. On a second trip to the Yale-Myers Forest, my intrepid friend, Donna Drasch, and I took the road up over Turkey Hill, where there was more evidence of quarrying and cellar holes. We then dropped down to Boston Hollow Road, which made a round trip of about four miles.

Reuben Randall was born in 1777 in Pomfret, most likely on the Jonathan Randall estate. Jonathan Randall had bought the land in 1776, and, according to the 1790 census, owned several enslaved Africans. Reuben Randall is Mary Lambert Webster's ancestral tie to the Randall slaves. It's his parents or grandparents whom I think may be buried in the Randall/Higginbotham Cemetery. Reuben may have ended up living in Westford with his son, who was also named Reuben. Reuben Jr. was married to Waity Brooks by the Rev. Luke Wood in the Westford Church in 1827, so they must have been living in that section of town. In the 1850 census, Reuben and Waity were living in Ashford. They are the ancestors linked to the Lambert family. Waity was part Nipmuc. Reuben was 55 years old, which would mean he was born in 1795, about the right age to be the son of Reuben Sr. It's possible that Reuben Jr. was manumitted by age 21, but his parents may have remained enslaved on paper. In the 1820 census report, they were living in Ashford: "Household includes 1 free colored male age 14-25 [Reuben Jr. would have been 25]; 1 male slave age 26-44 [Reuben Sr. would have been 43]; 1 female slave age 14-25, possibly a sister."

I imagine Reuben Jr. living in the wilds of the Yale-Myers Forest from the early 1800s to the middle of the century. Waity died in 1854 in Ashford, and Reuben Sr. died in 1865 in Eastford. Reuben Jr. died in 1870 in Woodstock. Life couldn't have been easy for them, and their lives appear to have been tied to other manumitted slaves, free blacks, and Nipmuc Indians in the area including the Lamberts, Douglasses, and Websters. I've unearthed some fascinating stories, but it's not my laundry to hang at this time. For now, I'm inching ever closer to the names of those enslaved Africans buried in the Randall/Higginbotham Cemetery.

## Craft Therapy Healing the Nation's Veterans

StatePoint) Therapeutic and rehabilitation benefits of crafting are well-known to those who've experienced them firsthand, but advocates want more people to understand what a powerful healing tool it can be, particularly for the nation's veterans during this time of increased isolation and anxiety.

To raise awareness of the healing and unifying power of crafting, the non-profit Help Heal Veterans recently hosted a nationwide online art contest honoring Veterans Day called "Craft & Salute." Open to all, veterans, crafters and families submitted art pieces depicting what military service or patriotism means to them. Submissions included mixed media, digital art, sculpture, blacksmithing, woodwork, performance art and body and face paint.

The prize winners were:

**First Place:** Maria-Eliza Cabarrus, an Army Veteran from Maywood, Ill. who created a sculpture entitled, "But on the Inside." Cabarrus turned to art as a way of healing from an injury sustained in the Army. Her piece depicts the injury, which ultimately catapulted her to her true calling—making art that inspires others.

**Second Place:** Sherman Watkins, a U.S. Air Force Veteran from Hampton, Va. who submitted two paintings he called, "Black History V-I-P," and "The Quilt". Taking two years to complete, they illustrate the accomplishments of Black Americans.

**Third Place:** Ting Du, a Navy Veteran from San Diego, who submitted two wood sculptures she called "Sail Boat of Hope" and "Beacon of Light." They symbolize the days and nights she spent at sea and the hardships she navigated. "Even during the darkest nights with the most difficult conditions in the ocean, as long as we can see the beacon of light within our own hearts, we will be able to find our own path back home," says Du.

Winning entries will be displayed at military hospitals and VA facilities throughout the U.S., and the three top winners will be awarded a Southwest Airlines gift card for \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 respectively.

"Through Craft & Salute, we wanted to share and elevate the healing power of crafting," says Joe McClain, retired Navy captain and Help Heal Veterans CEO.

For almost 50 years, Help Heal Veterans has supplied free arts-and-crafts kits to veterans and active duty military recovering from wounds, injuries and long-term psychological effects of warfare. These kits can provide many therapeutic benefits, including an improvement in fine motor skills, cognitive functioning, memory, anger management and dexterity. They also help address symptoms from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. In a recent survey, 94 percent of respondents said the kits helped them have a more positive outlook on life, and 89 percent said the kits helped relieve their pain.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for effective coping strategies has only grown, according to McClain, with millions of veterans on lockdown and experiencing increased isolation, boredom and anxiety. Not surprisingly, Heal Vets has seen a huge increase in demand, shipping nearly 290,000 craft kits to

veterans since the beginning of the pandemic, including deliveries to over 90 VA medical centers, a large number of domestic and overseas military bases, state veteran homes and other locations where the need is great.

To view the winning pieces and learn more about the Craft & Salute competition, visit [bit.ly/CraftAndSalute](http://bit.ly/CraftAndSalute). For more information about craft therapy and the work of Help Heal Vets, visit [healvets.org](http://healvets.org).

"In today's unprecedented environment, we hope to inspire others to bring about positive change by managing stress in creative ways," says McClain.



The winning entry, "But on the Inside," by Army Veteran Maria-Eliza Cabarrus.

## Where to find the Neighbors paper

### Ashford

Terry's Transmissions  
Ashford Spirit Shoppe  
Wooden Spoon Restaurant  
Ashford Post Office  
Babcock Library

### Brooklyn

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

### Bolton

Bolton Post Office  
Subway-Bolton Notch

### Chaplin

Chaplin Post Office  
Pine Acres Restaurant

### Columbia

Saxon Library  
Columbia Post Office

### Coventry

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

### Eastford

Eastford Post Office

### Hampton

Hampton Post Office  
Hampton Library

### Lebanon

Lebanon Post Office  
Green Store

### Mansfield/Storrs

D & D Auto Repair  
Holiday Spirits  
All Subway shops  
Bagel Zone  
Storrs Post Office  
Mansfield Senior Center  
Starbucks  
Storrs Comm. Laundry  
UConn Bookstore-Storrs Ctr.  
Chang's Garden Rest.  
Liberty Bank  
Spring Hill Cafe  
Nature's Health Store  
Mansfield Supply

### Mansfield Center

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

### Mansfield Depot

Thompson's Store  
Tri-County Greenhouse

### North Windham

Bagel One  
Subway  
No. Windham Post Office

### Pomfret

Weiss, Hale & Zahansky  
Vanilla Bean Restaurant  
Pomfret Post Office  
Baker's Dozen Coffee Shop

### Putnam

Antiques Marketplace  
Putnam Library  
Subway  
Putnam Post Office

### Scotland

Scotland Library  
Scotland Post Office

### South Windham

Bob's Windham IGA  
Landon Tire  
So. Windham Post Office

### Stafford

Stafford Coffee Company  
Stafford Library  
Subway  
Artisans at Middle River  
Stafford Post Office  
Stafford Cidery  
Hangs Asian Bistro

### Tolland

Birch Mountain Pottery  
Subway  
Tolland Library  
Tolland Post Office

### Willington

The Packing House  
Franc Motors  
Willington Pizza I & II  
Willington Post Office  
Willington Library

### Windham/Willimantic

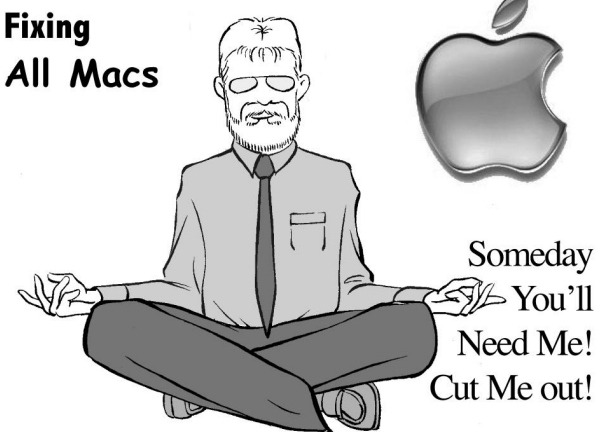
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Design Center East  
Schiller's  
Windham Eye Group  
CAD Marshall Framing  
Clothespin Laundromat  
Main Street Cafe  
That Breakfast Place  
All Subways  
Super Washing Well  
Willimantic Public Library  
Windham Senior Center  
Elm Package Store  
Not Only Juice  
Willimantic Records

### Windham Center

Windham Post Office

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# Our Neighbor's Photography



Jacobson Barn on UConn's Horsebarn Hill.

Photo by Christine Acebo



## Flakes

Snow..you have found me waiting for you and wondering about how you will feel on my breath. I close my eyes for just a few moments , and you cover the brown with a crisp coating of unblemished fineness. The tall ash and pine that peek into my window, welcome you with opened arms hour after silent hour. You dance slowly on the rhythm of the wind and will rest quietly after your long journey from the heavens, on monuments of your own creation. You.. in the midst of long winter's night ,brings a warmth to my being beyond just illusion and calls for me to honor your presence.

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.

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