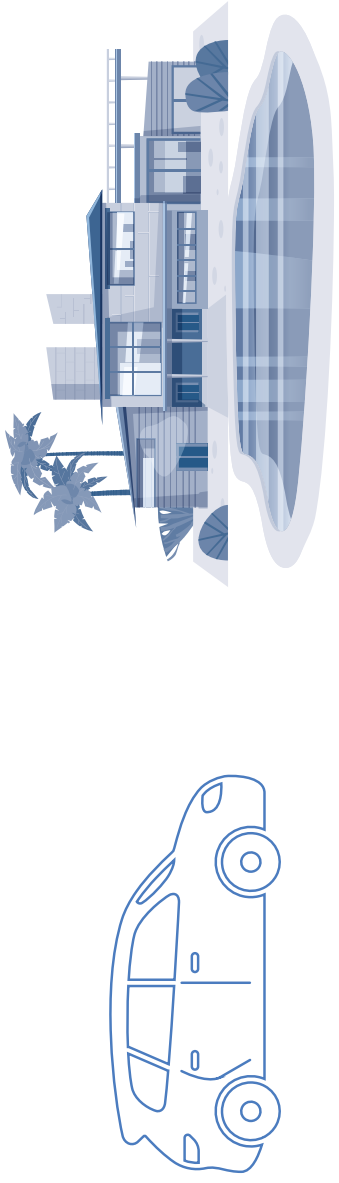


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Looking Up:

The Rabbit-holes of Summer

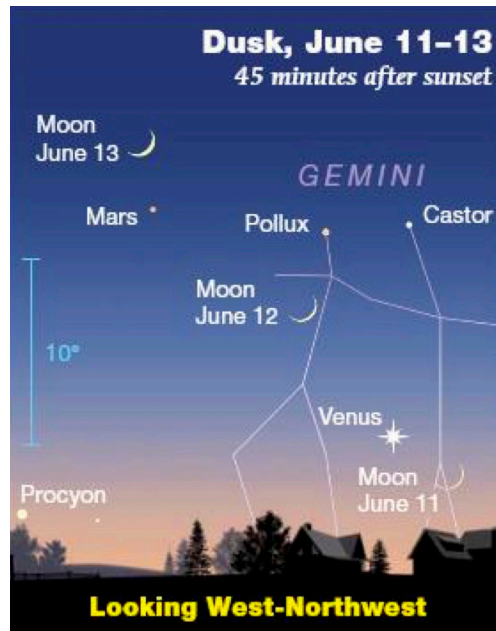
By Bob Grindle

A small group of hardy Connecticut neighbors—men and women, not all locals—showed up this morning to go on a site walk...pretty uninspiring stuff, right? There was official business at hand, but the chill, wet, gray and blustery weather on this late May walk in the New England woods was indifferent to our human agenda and a colorful assortment of jackets, slickers, hoodies, hats, gloves, boots and walking sticks, plus several maps and at least one plastic covered notebook with waterproof pages, accompanied our group of eighteen. As we set off my slightly rusty memory recalled the chaotically colorful movie *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. Here, though, there were no umbrellas, and certainly nobody was singing, but with a flower-child era patched-jeans kind of colorful rag-tag-ness and an underlying cheerfulness of purpose, getting wet in this particular way was not all that unpleasant. It certainly wasn't the cool, gray drizzle of a dreary, if just a bit romantic, May day on the streets of Paris. Here, towering oaks and hickories, ailing ash and knarled maples combined with the less noteworthy birch and hornbeam and poplar trees to form a rather porous canopy that provided what can only be described as a walk-in-the-woods rainfall experience. Despite the serious reason for this rainy day walk I couldn't help but hear Norah Jones bluesy *Come Away with Me* drifting up from one of the many rabbit holes that have showed up over the years in the 100 billion or so brain cells in my head. I smiled. As hard as many people try to fill-in or ignore or divert attention from these rabbit holes, I must admit to enjoying them, perhaps actually cultivating them, even when they waste a bit of time.

I have written before of the amazing opportunity it seems simply being alive gives each of us to sort of

mud-wrestle our imaginations and, in the knocking about, to discover old lapses in our thoughts and opinions, perhaps weaknesses that hadn't surfaced or even strengths that haven't been tested, and in such testing we can develop a sturdiness of character that holds up well when we are challenged...mentally, physically and maybe even spiritually. Having coffee with a friend recently, they told me they had stopped using social media and I thought: how odd, this very conversation is a form of social media, but the various modern and high-tech platforms that get all the attention seem to have pushed aside the old standards of face to face interaction and in the name of a more democratic opportunity we can simply all stay in our "rabbit holes" so-to-speak and have a go at expressing ourselves. No unpleasant comments or stares; no poorly ventilated rooms or uncomfortable chairs; no exposure to infectious germs or ideas...herd immunity through isolation from the herd.

As the site walk finished and our host thanked us all for the 90 or so minutes of our time as well as our interest in the matter, I thought it worth remembering that despite the fact that we were all pretty much cold and wet by now...some of us were even hungry, having waited until after the walk to grab breakfast...everyone had handled this opportunity to get back on the beaten track with considerable grace. As members of the same species, we need



to communicate and problem-solve in an in-person, give and take format, and this felt good.

Despite the lack of clear, view-friendly skies over the past few weeks, the theater of the night sky has been busy. Venus returned into view a couple of months ago and by now dominates the early evening skies, but by the second week of the month Mars and the thin crescent Moon join Venus for some truly ahhh-h inspiring shows. Looking west, after sunset between the 11th and 13th or 14th of the month, Venus, Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini, the Moon and Mars perform an aerial sleight-of-hand that's worth the time to pause and look because they'll be there most of the month and by the 24th and 25th of June the twins and Venus will form a straight line across the west-northwest horizon.

June, though, is not just about the magic of the night. There is the wonder and mystery and promise and even a sort of crackling energy in the air of the suddenly and now lushly warmer mornings. Whether taking a pre-dawn break at work; stepping outside to test the world before leaving for work; feeding livestock; watching or listening to the morning news; drinking a first coffee—or perhaps a smoothie—on the front step or deck or porch or even down by the river if you are camping out; going for an early morning jog or any of the many ways our days begin; those first minutes before sunrise are just as wondrous as if we were still eight years old and every morning was a surprise package. As the full Strawberry Moon wanes into the morning's advancing light of the last week of the month keep a look out for Saturn and Jupiter in the southern sky and try not to get lost down too many rabbit holes as summer spreads its delightful sounds and aromas and tastes and opportunities across the landscape of our recently reclaimed lives.



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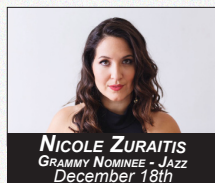
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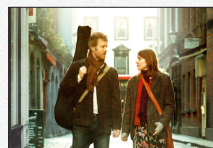
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On our cover: 5.29.21 Customer Sarah Keleher (left) and Market Master Jenna Aldrich on a cold, rainy, Saturday morning at the Willimantic Farmers Market. Read Dennis Pierce's article and see another of his photos on page 6.

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

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The Purpose of Neighbors:

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

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

Neighborspaper LLC is a member of the Ashford Business Association.

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

Living with Hidden Stereotypes

By Loretta Wrobel



While browsing through the *Optimist Daily* my eye caught on an article about the Oregon Trail. I didn't realize that it was a computer game created in 1971. Players assumed the role of leader of the wagon train and were responsible for guiding their group through the struggles, as the white settlers made their journey across America in 1848. Naturally, this game follows the perspective of the white culture and totally diminishes the rich culture of Indigenous peoples.

Now an updated version of this game has been created that apologizes for the failure of the old game to depict the Native Americans with honor and respect for their culture, presence and perspective. The United States Government's vision of western expansion to the Pacific Ocean by the settlers was to Native American tribes an encroachment and impingement on their lands.

The new model of the Oregon Trail employed Native American historians to represent an accurate picture of Indigenous people and to seek out stereotypical portrayals. For example, picturing all Native Americans with braids and using bows and arrows was not historically correct. For the time period represented, guns would have been more appropriate and not every Indigenous person wore braids.

Reading through this account, it suddenly dawned on me that the history lessons I so methodically ingested as a small, gullible child, were totally inaccurate and based on the assumed superiority of the white European culture.

The discounting and annihilation of a huge population of Indigenous tribes was viewed as a success. As a child I was taught that those people were our enemies and were savages. I recall that I imagined all the tribal peoples were killed.

As I reexamine my early education, I focus on ferreting out the stereotypes that I took on without questioning as I was schooled in the understanding that European America was always right. Such phrases as "Indian giver" were common place. Television and movies portrayed Native Americans as primitive, uncivilized, cruel and limited. I remember Tonto as the companion of the Lone Ranger. He spoke haltingly and used strange words like "Ke mo sah bee." Looking back with the truth that Indigenous peoples lived on this continent for ages before the white race descended upon their sacred lands, I see the tragedy of discrimination and white supremacy. My educational training was malicious and destructive. It taught me to judge and separate people based on race, background and skin color.

What is the real deal about the Oregon Trail? The settlers stole about 2.8 million acres from the Indigenous

Americans over a period of five years. They also killed hundreds of Native American residents of these lands in the process of opening up the west and making America safe again! The United States Government offered parcels of 320 acres to the settlers by passing the Oregon Land Donation Act. Our Government never asked permission to seize these lands from the over sixty tribes that were residing on these lands. The people who were caring for the land, respecting it and living in harmony, were not viewed as civilized peoples who were entitled to the same rights that all Americans deserve. You can bet that I never learned that in my classes growing up in Manchester, Connecticut! Lest I forget, the mascot of Manchester High that I attended in the late 1950's was, you guessed it, the "Indians." I will add that the name was changed to Red Hawks in 2019.

Happily, I am glad I am around in 2021 so I can witness the dismantling of our derogatory stereotypes and disregard for cultures different from the dominant model. I am heartened to see apologies to peoples that our society has harmed and attempted to destroy and humiliate. We have a long way to go as we preach freedom and equality, and we often forget our founding principles.

I was jarred by reading this article about how a game developed in 1971 could be so filled with ignorance. I tried to imagine myself as a Native American encountering this game. I shudder to see how blind we can be by the filters our culture throws at us. It is difficult to be discerning when you are young and vulnerable. To unhitch those early learned beliefs takes a lifetime of working on how you act, react, and the resulting feelings.

I am grateful to the power and resiliency of all the Indigenous peoples who keep trying to educate us as to how destructive we are to our earth, our people and ourselves. The wisdom of our tribal nations is finally being shared and heard by many people who grew up believing in the myth of white superiority. Now our work is set out for us. By reexamining our beliefs and early education, what do we really think and feel about our country and its behavior in the past, present, and future?

Now we are opening up our State, as the number of vaccinated Connecticut residents is rising and the number of COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths from the virus continues to move downward. It is a perfect time to make a pledge to ourself to ditch our inner negative prejudices, while we cast aside our masks that we have faithfully donned since March 2020. We will be better and wiser for focusing on this self-correction. We obviously feel unburdened and lighter without those masks that hide our smiles and hinder our connections. Our stereotypes do the same, hinder us. Join me in moving toward healthier thinking, breaking through those false beliefs and behaviors that damage others and limit us.

Make Music Day

Submitted by Ruth O'Neil

The Song-a-Day Music Center in Coventry joins the international Make Music Day Celebration taking place on Monday, June 21, 2021. Make Music Day is a one-day event where free, live musical performances, opportunities to make music, and other musical events take place around the world on the longest day of the year. Musical offerings in Coventry and throughout Connecticut are part of a global celebration of music making in over 800 cities inspired by France's Fête de la Musique.

The Song-a-Day Music Center invites community members to visit on Monday between the hours of 4 and 7 P.M. to observe lessons, which weather permitting, will take place outside. Lessons to be observed include piano, drums, violin and guitar. Visitors are also welcome to view the music center and become familiar with its offerings. The event is free and open to the public. In case of rain, lessons will take place inside the music center. Space may be limited in keeping with current state requirements regarding capacity limits. Visitors are asked to practice social distancing and wear a mask when distancing outside

is not possible. Masks are required when inside the music center. Hand sanitizing stations will be in place for use by all.

"To create, to make music is inside each one of us. We all should have the chance to express that creative part of ourselves whenever possible," says Ruth O'Neil, owner and director of the Song-a-Day Music Center. "We are proud and excited to be part of Make Music Day and are trying to offering something special not only for the community but our students as well during this time when public performances have been so limited. This day is a true gift to communities everywhere." Music has been shown to strengthen social connectivity, reduce stress, lower blood pressure, stimulate memory, and is integral to a well-rounded, enjoyable life. Now participating in Make Music Day for its fourth year, the Song-a-Day Music Center encourages every form of music making.

National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) members and partners from coast to coast, including the Song-a-Day Music Center, will open their doors, joining in their communities' celebrations of Make Music

Day. June 21 is the perfect day to stop in to a local music store for some gear or to go out and play – whether it's for the first time or the thousandth.

For more information on the day contact the Song-a-Day Music Center at 860-742-6878, inquiries@songadaymusic.com or the Song-a-Day Music Facebook Page. The Song-a-Day Music center has been in operation for 19 years offering musical instructions, sales, rentals and repairs.

About Make Music Day:

Held annually on June 21, Make Music Day is part of the international Fête de la Musique, taking place in 800 cities across 120 countries. The daylong, musical free-for-all celebrates music in all its forms, encouraging people to band together and play in free public concerts. This year, more than 65 U.S. cities are organizing Make Music Day celebrations, encompassing thousands of concerts nationwide. Make Music Day is presented by The NAMM Foundation, and coordinated by the Make Music Alliance. For more information, please visit makemusicday.org.

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Willimantic, Now and Then:

The Soundtrack for Community

By Mark Svetz

Did I mentioned that I got a wind-up radio from my friend Carol? Well, I did, and it has reacquainted me with my local radio station, and its morning host, Wayne Norman. Now, as I sit in my mother's rocker, warming my bones in the morning sun, Wayne brings my community into my kitchen. All in twenty-minute segments, after which I wind for a couple minutes and go again.

Some mornings, I give it a crank before the news, and that's it. Occasionally, I might wind that little radio three or four times, even more. I'll let you tot up the numbers, but at 15 or 20 minutes for each crank, well, you can see I sit for quite a while some mornings. The sun is warm and my mother's rocker is comfortable. When I dawdle, I enjoy listening to Wayne and his guests. I have been a guest on his show over the years and I appreciate what a skilled interviewer Wayne is. It's fun to listen to him in action.

I particularly like his conversations with Newsman John Tuite. They have been colleagues for a long time, and it shows in their easy give and take. He and Wayne have a regular morning conversation after the 9:00 news. Recently, when they got to the subject of John's morning music show, the Vinyl Frontier, I learned it was Pete Seeger's birthday and International Peace Day. When John said that would be the musical theme for the show, I imagined some great music and decided to tune in at 11 o'clock.

What I found when I tuned in was exactly what Wayne Norman promises in one of his promo ads: "The soundtrack of my life." I started listening at about 11:15 just as the Buffalo Springfield song, "For What It's Worth" was beginning. "There's battle lines being drawn. Nobody's right if everybody's wrong." The words were so familiar to me, as was the alienation and fear I felt when I sang along in 1967. And then I thought about what's happenin' here and now, and I found myself too choked up with emotion to sing along. I recalled the opening lines of that song. "Somethin's happenin' here," indeed.

"When human respect is disintegratin' / this whole crazy world is just too frustratin' ... Ah, ya don't believe we're on the eve of destruction." The next song up cleared my emotional pipes and I was belting out the lyrics to Barry McGuire's *Eve of Destruction*. The anger I felt then about the Vietnam War, poverty, police brutality, racial oppression, poll taxes and literacy tests keeping people from voting, was palpable even more than 50 years later. It was all there in the lyrics of those songs. Just as it is in the news broadcasts today.

I have heard historians and journalists talk about the impact of television bringing world events into our



living rooms for the first time during the 50s and 60s. That may be true, but for me it was the music that made it all real. John Tuite's line-up that morning did it again, right there in my kitchen, thanks to Carol's wind-up radio. Barry McGuire was followed by a version of Bob Dylan's "Masters of War." I thought I was listening to Joan Baez, but now I think it might have been Judy Collins. Sorry, John. I missed the credit. I do recall how the terrible truth of this song changed the way I saw the world in 1965. It still does.

The Temptations came on next, and I was, like Nero, dancing to the details of the disintegration of our world, or so I thought in those far-gone days. As I was to find out, there would be a lot more "demonstration, integration, determination, aggravation, humiliation" to come, and still the world is a "Ball of Confusion." By the time the 70s arrived with this song, I was painfully aware of the state of the world, and I guess I thought dancing wasn't such a bad idea.

The last song I heard that morning was a great ending. I was still moving to the Temptations and getting ready to get to work when I heard Country Joe and the Fish: "Well. Come on all of you big strong men/ Uncle Sam needs your help again/ He's got himself in a terrible jam/ Way down yonder in Vietnam." I guess it was a sign of just how withdrawn I felt, that the sarcasm of this song appealed to me as much as the anger of the others. It still brought tears to my eyes the other day when I shouted: "There's plenty good money to be made/By supplying the Army with the tools of its trade!"

There is one song I didn't hear that morning on the Vinyl Frontier. The songs I listened to reminded me of a world – both local and global – that outraged me in those days. The song I wish I had heard was Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's "Teach Your Chil-

dren." I took them seriously when they told me: "You, who are on the road/Must have a code/ That you can live by." I think this song spoke to me of the Golden Rule my mother had taught me. "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." On the road and off, that has been my code.

And the living embodiment of that code is my community. That's what I'm really talking about. When Carol gave me that wind-up radio, she had no idea it would reacquaint me with Wayne Norman after years without a radio. Or that Wayne and John Tuite would entice me to listen to five songs that would take me on a journey through some of the most dramatic years of me life. That is the magic of community. Thank you Carol, Wayne and John.

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



Carol's wind-up radio brings community to my kitchen. Mark Svetz photo.

Don't Fall for That

By Delia Berlin



At my first annual physical exam on Medicare, I was asked if I had fallen during the past year. I had not. I had to resist the urge to answer "I can't remember" because the joke could have been taken seriously, unleashing further screening protocols that I did not wish to see unfold. But the question, a new one in my experience, made me curious. Can such a question have any practical value? And what would have happened if the answer had been "yes"?

I easily remember the last time I fell, eleven years ago. Fortunately, no serious injuries occurred, but what was unusual enough to seal it in my memory is that I fell three times on the same day. I'll expand.

I am certain about the timing of these falls because my daughter was pregnant at the time and my granddaughter is now over ten years of age. It was a fall weekend (no pun intended), and my daughter and son-in-law were coming to visit us for Saturday lunch. That morning, I decided to take a quick trip to Logee's, a wonderful old greenhouse in Danielson that I visit when I'm hungry for greenery. That was the setting of Fall Number One.

Logee's greenhouses are sprawling and crowded. That day, in the fern house, someone had left a hose unrolled across a narrow path between tables, and I didn't see it below the hanging foliage. One of my feet caught against it and stopped dead in its tracks, while my other foot just kept going. Unable to adjust my stride fast enough, I stumbled forward and fell on my hands and knees, getting a couple of scrapes. I cleaned up as well as I could before heading back home.

Our family arrived as planned, we had lunch, and then decided to go to Pigeon Swamp, a local nature preserve, to walk a few trails. That was the scene of Fall Number Two, which was eerily similar to Fall Number One. In this case, a branch was lying across the trail, buried under a pile of leaves. One of my feet landed on one end of the branch, lifting the opposite end just enough to catch my other leg going forward. I stumbled but recovered my balance before hitting the ground.

The third fall was less memorable and I can't recall the details, other than my daughter yelling, "Mom! What's going on? Is this a neurological thing?" She was a surgical resident at the time. Fortunately, her bedside manner developed considerably over the next decade.

I don't want to tempt the devil by saying this, but after those three falls on the same day, I haven't fallen again in eleven years. This casts considerable skepticism on the practical value of the question "Have you fallen during the past year?" I am just thankful that I wasn't asked that eleven years ago, since I may still be undergoing tests to rule out strange maladies.

Another thing I've noticed since I went on Medicare is that some medical office personnel started addressing me as "hon" during phone interactions. I find this habit condescending, unprofessional, and annoying, but I haven't had the heart to complain about it, because I know it's done with good (if misguided) intentions. I'm thinking about how to offer constructive criticism without hurting anyone's feelings. These office staffers need to internalize that the only prevention for getting old is dying young. Perhaps the next time I'm called "hon," I should just say: "Sweetie pie, I know you mean well, but please address me by my name."

Mutual Aid for Eastern CT - Updates

By Len Krimerman with Elena Stone

1. We are still eager to learn about Mutual Aid enterprises that might be planning to emerge, or ones that have already taken root in eastern Connecticut. If you're interested, we can assist you in connecting to other mutual aid groups in the CT Mutual Aid collaborative.

You can reach Len at 860-918-8709 or lenisageo@gmail.com; he can put you in contact with Jamarr Farmer, the Program Coordinator of CT Mutual Aid. Jamarr is an activist and musician; he organizes around LGBTQ, black liberation, and anti-imperialist movements. He's very easy to talk with, and full of righteous wisdom

and energy. Back in February, he zoomed with a UCONN graduate course on philosophy of education, and substantially clarified the benefits of mutual aid for all of us; and he's planning to join the same student group face-to-face this summer.

2. This past week Len talked with Jeff Beadle, a close and long-time friend, and founder of WRCC, a long lasting and respected non-profit serving Willimantic and Windham. Jeff suggested a few individuals and groups in those towns who might want to consider developing mutual aid enterprises.

3. At the end of our first *Neighbors* article (May, 2012) we asked: Why has mu-

tual aid recently become so amazingly alive in so many different places? The answer might seem that it's a case of crisis – or multiple crises – giving rise to opportunity.

But why would so many folks be drawn so readily and so diversely to MUTUAL AID? Why have they chosen to rely on mutual aid enterprises in coping with these crises?

Perhaps (more and more?) people are firmly convinced that two-party politics and politicians should not be trusted, as they in general benefit only distant, dominating, and divisive "representatives" who do little beyond supporting their own parties, leaving the rest of us without power or voice.

Consider:

"The people of England deceive themselves when they fancy they are free; they are so, in fact, only during the elections of Members of Parliament: for, as soon as a new one is elected, they are again in chains, and are nothing." (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 1762)

Maybe mutual aid endeavors can help displace or minimize two-party politics, enabling grassroots folks and communities to abandon their chains and forge their own paths, much like alternative educators can enable students to design their own curricula.

4. More to come, down the mutual aid road.

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.



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).

Leaked docs: Gas industry secretly fights electrification
E&E News. "In public, Eversource Energy likes to tout its carbon neutrality goals and its investments in offshore wind. But officials from New England's largest utility struck a different tone during an industry presentation in mid-March. Instead of advocating for lower emissions, company officials outlined a defensive strategy for preserving the use of natural gas for years to come."

The Transportation & Climate Initiative is worth it
CT Mirror. "Connecticut needs TCI now to reduce the deadly pollution. Exhaust from diesel and gasoline-powered cars and trucks contains toxic chemicals, like carbon monoxide and arsenic, and has been linked to asthma, heart and lung conditions and cancer...TCI will help address these problems by putting a price on vehicle pollution in the Northeast, including in Connecticut, by raising revenue for investments in electric vehicle charging stations, public transit, and safer streets for pedestrians and bicyclists." Plus: Is it a plan to fight climate change, or a gas tax? The TCI is facing fierce pushback

Connecticut considers stretch code that lets cities push builders on efficiency

Energy News Network. "Enacting a stretch energy code would put Connecticut in line with Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont, all of which give municipalities the option of going beyond the state building code in the area of efficiency...The cheapest way of reducing future building emissions is to build them efficiently at the start...Kops said she believes some builders are resisting the idea because 'they are worried about the learning curve involved in doing anything new.'

Connecticut looks to join seven other US states in setting energy storage target

Energy Storage News. "Importantly, programmes need to meet a number of metrics which include proving the positive net present value of deployments to all electric ratepayers, providing multiple benefits to the electric grid including ancillary services, resilience and peak demand reduction, fostering the development of an electric energy storage industry in the state and maximising the value of participation in capacity markets for storage systems."

Reducing — not expanding — natural gas use is essential for climate and public health

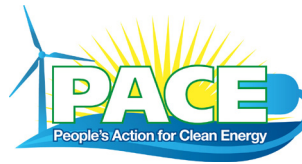
CT Mirror. "...building more fracked gas (so-called natural gas, which is nearly 100 percent methane) infrastructure is not a bridge to the future, it's a bridge to disaster. Counter to the evidence that methane gas use needs to decline rapidly, our state continues to approve new gas power plants, compressor stations, and pipelines. Here's looking at you, Gov. Ned Lamont.

Some worry wind and solar will gobble up forests and farms

CT Mirror. "Local advocates and state leaders are hoping to see more solar development on rooftops, parking lots and landfills, which they contend also will benefit local solar installers instead of large corporations. But some in the solar industry say the state's approach is misguided, and its efforts to protect forests could hinder its renewable energy ambitions."

Commentary: Solar canopies need to be a part of Connecticut's energy plan

Energy News Network. "Rhode Island and Massachusetts have already incorporated solar canopies into their energy policy platforms. These states provide incentives to owners of solar canopies by supplementing the baseline credits provided for any form of solar. Importantly, this helps encourage the adoption of solar canopies by offsetting installation costs and saving consumers money over time."



Strong bipartisan support for electric vehicles

CT Mirror. "Connecticut isn't flying blind here; we have the collective experience of states that have allowed EV makers to sell directly to consumers to inform us. According to annual reports published by the National Automobile Dealers Association in 2012 and 2019, 17 of the top 20 states for overall franchised dealer growth were states that allowed direct sales by electric car manufacturers."

Connecticut's C-PACE Program Surpasses \$200 Million in Clean Energy Investment for Commercial & Nonprofit Properties

Environmental Leader. "This \$200 million supported nearly 340 closed projects, which will provide an estimated lifetime energy cost savings of \$300 million, and reducing energy usage by over 5 million MMBTUs through efficiency upgrades and renewables, which resulted in over 42 megawatts of installed solar PV capacity. The implementation of these projects also created more than 2,000 direct and indirect job years. The lifetime energy savings of these projects is equal to the home energy use of 88,000 homes, or the avoidance of the use of 86 million gallons of gasoline for automobiles." Plus Premium Promotional Product Provider Goes Solar

June Events at the Mill Museum

Submitted by Bev York

June 5. The Lorax Family event. Bev York from the Mill Museum will read the Lorax by Dr. Seuss at Julia de Burgos Poetry Park at 10 a.m. The park is located at the corner of Jackson Street and Curbstone Way. Children are invited to bring a poem to share. Sponsored by the Mill Museum. Masks required. Millmuseum.org themillmuseum@gmail.com

June 12. Saturday Stroll Walking Tour of Willimantic Bridges 10 a.m. \$10 cash Meet at the Mill Museum 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Approximately 90 minutes. Millmuseum.org 860-456-2178

June 13. Adopt a Sewing Machine Project Kicks off on National Sewing Machine Day For a \$25 donation to the Mill Museum an individual can receive a matted photo of

a vintage toy machine and a pamphlet sharing the story of the machine and a lace sewing machine ornament. To adopt a machine visit the website at millmuseum.org.

June 16. Wednesday Evening Walk 6 p.m. Tour of the Thread Mill Property \$10 cash. Meet at the Mill Museum, 411 Main Street, Willimantic. Approximately 90 minutes. Millmuseum.org themillmuseum@gmail.com

June 19. Painting in the Park for teens and adults. The Mill Museum sponsors a painting party in Heritage State Park across from the Museum. 411 Main Street, Willimantic. 3 p.m. Limited Spaces available. \$20 per person, bring chair and easel or small table. preregister at millmuseum.org themillmuseum@gmail.com

June 26. Spinning Bee 10 to 1 Dugan Hall at the Mill Museum Drop by. Bring your wheels. Masks and vaccinations required.

June 26. Where They Stood: The Race Revolution: History 101 Third of three programs teaching American History through visiting local 19th century sites. A slow-paced driving and out-of-doors walking tour around Norwich lasts approximately 3 hours. 10:00 a.m. Fee. Drive, caravan or carpool on your own. Bring masks, water and snack. Itineraries will be emailed to people who preregister at themillmuseum@gmail.com

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The Neighbors paper
Locally Written
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From the Ground Up - Buying Local in Connecticut

The Best Laid Plants (and Plans)

By C. Dennis Pierce

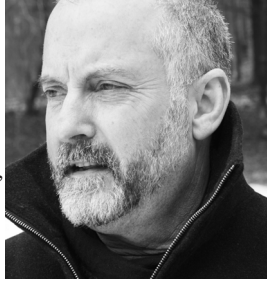
When you carefully plan for your garden or some new plantings for your yard for your spring project and some fail, all is not lost, though much is a ruin, many still remain. I am an expert at this. Most of the time it is my own fault. Either chose the wrong plants for the conditions, not getting the plants in the ground fast enough, providing sufficient water or just plants failing through the transition stage. Of course, this year I have biting off more than I can chew. After thirty-four years with the University of Connecticut I have retired.

Retired - A word that I disdain. I am not fond of the term "retirement".

The Cambridge Dictionary defines retirement as "the act of leaving your job and stopping work, usually because you are old." I would prefer to adopt the philosophy of those that live in Spain. The Spanish word for "retiree" or "retired" is a lot more fun than the words we use in English. The word that is used for those that retire is "jubilado" it is based on the word "jubilee" and it is the term commonly used by Spanish retirees. Jubilee connotes a

season or occasion of joyful celebration. I am sad that I am leaving my position at UConn but I am celebrating what other options lay ahead of me through community service, supporting Connecticut Grown agriculture and continuing to write my *Neighbor's* column.

In my last column I listed the opening of local, summer, Farmer's Markets. I was remiss in not mentioning the Willimantic Farmers Market. Not sure why, perhaps a lapse of memory with everything else going on. It is strange too because I frequently attend the Wili market in season for local produce. As most farmers markets, the Willimantic Farmer's market has evolved over the years. Some markets relocate, change market masters, vendors come and go but, in the end, it usually results in a better market for all. According to the Willimantic Farmers Market's website, theirs is the oldest in the state of Connecticut. It officially opened in 1976 on a budget of \$1,500 in a pop-up tent on a town-owned parcel of land under the auspices of a community non-profit agency, the Windham Regional Community Council, with co-sponsorship of the Town of Windham and the Windham Chamber of Commerce. Staffing consisted of a dedicated Food and Nutrition Coordinator and a team of VISTA Volunteers afforded to the Project by the University of Connecticut's Agricultural Department. The Market opened with some fifteen vendors selling produce, baked goods and craft items. All vendors were vetted by farm and site visits to certify that all items sold were originally produced by the respective vendors, that their farm or place of business was local, and that they were in compliance with all applicable regulations of the State and local Department of Public Health, the State's Department of Agriculture, and other regulatory bodies. More recently the market resided on Jillson Square and then jumped inside the enclosure that now features the recently completed Shaboo stage. With an array of events that are planned and the current construction of the new Senior Center the market's location is no longer a viable entity so it was inevitable that a move was in order. Their new location at the Willimantic White Water Park at 28 Bridge Street (just down from the intersection of Main and Bridge Street) provides more space to grow and expand. The market's opening day was this past Saturday, May 29th. The featured vendors included Russo Roots, Cambera Farm, Kindred Crossings, Blue Hill Too, Swampy Acres, Madman Micros, The Bread Lady, Rural Heritage Arts, Elainthesun, Bloom Bake Shop, Everyday Harvest, Pflzgraf Farm, and Dragons Blood Elixir. The Willimantic Farmers' Market Accepts: WIC/SENIOR FMNP Checks,



SNAP Benefits/EBT and offers SNAP Double Dollars. The market is open from 8:00am until noon every Saturday until October. The market has a very informative website at <http://www.willimanticfarmersmarket.org/> and a Facebook site at www.facebook.com/WillimanticFarmersMarket/

Greens are one of the first items to debut at the farmer's markets. For years kale was not a supporting actor in the cast of produce but recently it has taken center stage. Kale contains fiber, antioxidants, calcium, vitamins C and K, iron, and a wide range of other nutrients that can help prevent various health problems. Antioxidants help the body remove unwanted toxins that result from natural processes and environmental pressures. These toxins, known as free radicals, are unstable molecules. If too many build up in the body, they can lead to cell damage. This may result in health problems such as inflammation and diseases. Experts believe that free radicals may play a role in the

development of cancer, for example. Not that I am on a kale kick but what I liked about the follow recipe is that it makes for a savory breakfast pastry rather than a sugary alternative.

Kale & Goat Cheese Muffins
Makes 12 Muffins

Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Butter a 12-cup muffin tin or line with liners.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons of butter plus extra to grease the

muffin tin
2 cups of whole milk
8 oz. of kale, roughly chopped
2 eggs
2 teaspoons of baking soda
2 teaspoons of baking powder
1 teaspoon of salt
1 pinch of cayenne
2 cups of flour
¼ cup of softened goat cheese
¼ cup of grated parmesan cheese

Directions:

Place 2 tablespoons of butter in a medium pot add milk and place over medium heat.

When mixture barely comes up to a boil add chopped kale and turn the heat down to a simmer.

Cook kale until softened, about five minutes.

Place mixture into a food processor and puree slightly leaving the kale somewhat intact. You don't want to puree it into a liquid green mixture.

Let mixture cool then add it to a large mixing bowl and add eggs, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cayenne.

Stir in the flour.

Fill the muffin cups halfway with muffin mixture.

Divide goat cheese among each muffin and place cheese on top, in the center, of the half-filled muffin.

Place the remainder of the batter on top of each muffin covering the goat cheese.

Top each muffin with the Parmesan cheese.

Place pan in oven until muffins have risen, browned and firm to the touch, about 25 minutes. Let muffins cool before serving.

So, now for me, every day is a Saturday. On the bright side it provides me more time to explore the locally grown community, having the opportunity to try out new ingredients and work on new recipes. As always thanks for reading my column. After many years I still enjoy finding out new items to write about, interesting farmers and the stories they have to tell and just encouraging residents of the Quiet Corner to purchase local Connecticut Grown. 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...



5.29.21 Libby Tarleton (at right) from Russo Roots Farm in Canterbury and a customer at the Willimantic Farmers Market.

Dennis Pierce photo.

Opinion

By Susan Eastwood

June brings warm weather and renewed outdoor activities. It also begins the nesting season for several species of bats, four of whom are state-listed as (i.e., threatened, endangered or special concern) in an equally threatened forest outside Killingly in Eastern Connecticut. This is the proposed site of NTE's Killingly Energy Center, a controversial fracked gas plant that is not needed for Connecticut's projected electrical supply. June 1 marks the beginning of a 2-month time period that protects the bats while nesting and rearing their young. When and if the plant is built, the construction will permanently destroy that nesting area.

The gas plant must be fed, and that will require a 2.8 mile pipeline branching from an existing pipeline running through Pomfret. This branch has not yet been approved by DEEP but, if built, it would run through fourteen wetland areas, as well as the Pomfret Audubon Center and the Wyndham Land Trust. These lands are fragile, and, in fact, DEEP has been working to restore the Wyndham Marsh, work likely to be undone forever if this proposal is approved. This gas pipeline expansion would destroy habitat for several state-listed endangered and special concern species including the American bittern, Northern long-eared bat, Eastern box turtle and wood turtle. It would also endanger the Northern long-eared owl, which has been sighted and photographed on the pipeline path itself, and is known to nest in the area.

People who live in the rural towns of Eastern Connecticut love our forests and wildlife. We stop to help the turtles cross the road and even nail up handmade road signs to mark turtle crossings. We do not want to lose the very reason we choose to live here.

Further, this gas plant will endanger more than our land and animals, it will impact the health of our residents! There are four schools, a day care and a senior residential facility within a mile of the proposed site. Emissions from the dirty fracked gas plant and methane leaks from the pipeline will contribute to poor air quality, making it difficult for Connecticut to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions as required by law. These pollutants are linked to many chronic diseases, including asthma and other respiratory illnesses, heart disease and cancers. Asthma rates in Connecticut are already high and Killingly has one of the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations and emergency room visits per 10,000 population. A second dirty gas plant will only increase the air pollution, and our children are likely to be the ones to suffer most from exposure over years.

Now, there may be economic benefits to Killingly from allowing a second gas plant to be built on the shores of Lake Alexander, but there are costly disadvantages as well. Those costs cannot be calculated as easily as taxes, but they add up quickly and last for decades. These are the cost of our children's health, our clean air and water, and our wildlife. Is this a fair exchange? A recent Harvard report and RMI state by state breakdown shows that air pollution from burning fossil fuels in Connecticut buildings led to an estimated 318 early deaths and \$3.567 billion in health impact costs in just one year, 2017. When you think about the cumulative impacts it is staggering.

To allow this project to go forward is to invite environmental destruction and a public health threat that will last for decades. The energy produced will not be used in Connecticut, we already export 30 percent of the energy produced here to other states. We pay for these plants in our high electric bills, and with our health. Connecticut's air quality is one of the worst in the country.

I urge the people of Eastern Connecticut to speak up. Tell Governor Lamont that we need to put our children's health above fossil fuel expansion that goes against his own goals for our climate. Tell DEEP to stand up for what they say they believe in, because we do not want the future that further gas build out will bring. Tell Town officials, in Killingly and beyond, to consider the true costs of fossil fuels in their decision-making, for the good of us all.

To all our contributors-
Thank You!

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

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Laura Lee

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 necessarily become household names but were no less talented. This month's column is about Laura Lee, whose attitude-laden recordings for Chess and Hot Wax made her soul music's first unabashed feminist.

She was born Laura Lee Newton in Chicago on March 9, 1945, but grew up in Detroit with her mother, Ernestine Rundless, who led a gospel group called the Meditation Singers. Its line-up included Della Reese, who Laura replaced in 1956 when Reese pursued a career in pop singing. Nine years later, as Laura Lee, she launched her own career in secular music, performing in clubs around Detroit. In 1966, she made her first solo recording, "To Win Your Heart," for the Ric Tic label.

By 1967, Lee was on the Chess Records out of Chicago. It was decided that she would record at the FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where the label had had great success with Etta James. Lee's debut for Chess, "Dirty Man," was about a woman whose man had treated her so badly, she was now "tired of you and your woman and your dog, too!" It got to #13 on the Billboard Rhythm & Blues chart. Lee stayed with Chess until 1969, when she moved to Cotillion, a subsidiary of Atlantic. After two unsuccessful singles for the label, Lee signed with the Detroit-based Hot Wax Records, run by the former Motown production team of Eddie and Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier. Hot Wax and its Invictus subsidiary were riding high with recent successes by Freda Payne, the Flaming Ember, and the Honey Cone. They also put Laura Lee back on the charts with feminist anthems like "Wedlock is a Padlock" and "Women's Love Rights." The latter became her sole top forty pop single.

Lee's biggest R&B hit, "Rip Off," came in 1972. It continued her pattern of taking no crap from men as she emphatically proclaimed, "This fool is in for the shock of his life, I'm tired of being neglected / I'm gonna slap him in the face with the unexpected!"

By 1975, Lee was on Ariola Records, but her time with the label was short-lived; Lee became seriously ill and left the music business for several years. In 1983, she recorded a gospel album, "Jesus is the Light of My Life."



It was produced by Al Green, with whom Lee had been romantically involved a decade prior. By 1990, she had recovered her health and became an ordained minister in Detroit.

In 2016, Lee filed a defamation suit against Mildred Gaddis, a Detroit radio talk-show host. Gaddis had claimed on-air that Lee threw hot grits on Al Green in 1974, putting him in the hospital with second-degree burns. While the incident did occur, Green's attacker was his then-girlfriend, Mary Woodson, who, after the assault, committed suicide with the singer's gun. Laura Lee had nothing to do with it.

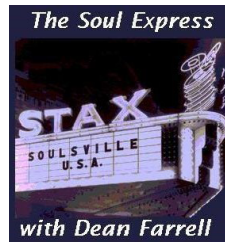
Charted singles:

- "Dirty Man" (1967) R&B #13, Pop #68
- "Wanted: Lover, No Experience Necessary" (1967) Pop #84
- "Uptight, Good Man" (1967) R&B #16, Pop #93
- "As Long As I Got You" (1968) R&B

- #31, Pop #123
- "Need to Belong" (1968) R&B #44
- "Hang It Up" (1969) R&B #48
- "Wedlock Is a Padlock" (1971) R&B #37
- "Women's Love Rights" (1971) R&B #11, Pop #36
- "Love and Liberty" (1971) R&B #23, Pop #94
- "Since I Fell For You" (1972) R&B #24, Pop #76
- "Rip Off" (1972) R&B #3, Pop #68
- "If You Beat Me Rockin' (You Can Have My Chair)" (1972) R&B #31, Pop #65
- "Crumbs Off the Table" (1972) R&B #40
- "I'll Catch You When You Fall" (1973) R&B #49
- "I Need It Just As Bad As You" (1974) R&B #55
- "Love's Got Me Tired (But I Ain't Tired of Love)" (1976) R&B #61

Please check out the Unsung Heroes of Soul blog at <https://60459fe07898a.site123.me/>

Dean Farrell hosts "The Soul Express" twice on Fridays: on WRTC, 89.3-FM (www.wrtcfm.com) from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. and on WECS, 90.1-FM (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.




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Immigrant Eyes:

Photographs by Joe Standart

June 2 - October 16, 2021

News from UConn's Benton Museum

The Museum Opens June 2nd For The Summer!

Submitted by Maripaz Shaw

Enjoy a walk to the Museum. The Immigrant Eyes exhibition is indoors AND outdoors!

This exhibition consists of a gallery installation in the Benton Museum featuring large scale photographs of eyes (previously exhibited in store fronts in downtown New London

in 2016) as well as this outdoor exhibition of large-scale portraits of recent refugees and immigrants (these works were exhibited in 2018 on the New Haven Green). Both projects are part of Joe Standart's Portrait of America series that aims to "stimulate awareness, overcome indifference, and encourage people to build a respectful multicultural society".

Joe Standart (b.1950) is a Connecticut-based photographer who works on public art and community

engagement initiatives.

Museum Hours: Wednesday to Friday: 10:00am - 4:00pm Saturdays: 1:00pm - 4:00pm

THE WILLIAM BENTON MUSEUM OF ART University of Connecticut School of Fine Arts 245 Glenbrook Road Storrs, CT Like us at: www.facebook.com/benton.museum

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Knock, Knock



Sign on Back Road in Windham at the entrance to Beaver Brook State Park.



Sign at the junction of Route 14 and Back Road in Windham. Bill Powers photos.

By Bill Powers

Knock-Knock - Who's there? - Canoe - Canoe Who? Canoe tell me where the boat launch is?

That is how this story began and, unfortunately, I have to say, seems like it will never end. It continues not from the lack of trying to end it – but it just goes on and on with a life of its own.

My wife and I have two indoor cats, and they are wonderful. In some ways they run the house. If their feeding schedule is even slightly modified in the early morning; they let me know, leaving my wife totally out of the equation. They have trained us well and make sure that I get up early by their cries, head butts, kisses, and hugs for their food.

One of the things about being a high school teacher is that the school day began EARLY! If you taught four or five different subjects, as I did, you needed to get to school each day much earlier than the start of school. In my case, while teaching: American history; geography; civics; modern social problems; and psychology, I preferred to arrive very early in order to organize the day and to meet requirements for the day's instructional objectives for each class written on the white boards. As a result, our cats were fed and loved early each school day by me before heading off to school. Don't think for one minute that they easily adjusted to being fed on a different schedule on days when there was no school.

So, at dawn 10 years ago on a Saturday morning in June, I fed my wonderful cats and returned to bed but left the kitchen lights on. Just as I dozed off, I awakened by all kinds of meows and someone knocking at our door. We were living on the shore of a body of water named Beaver Brook Pond on Route 14 in Windham. When I answered the door, a man said: "We saw your lights on; can you tell us where to park for the boat launch?" I told him, "There is no boat launch." He showed me a printout from a fisherman's website; and, sure enough,

it contained the directions and a map that brought him to my house and not *Beaver Brook State Park* a few miles away on Back Road in the same town. A father and son were out to catch some fish from their canoe.

At the state park there is a pond with a parking area and boat launch, but the correct name of that pond is "Bibbins Pond." Over the years, after attempts to correct the confusion that has caused inconvenience and public safety concerns, there has been some progress but some confusion still remains. For example, on the internet find: "Fishing Northeast: Home of the Northeast Fishing Community." There you will find good information about the pond at the Beaver Brook State Park, including photos; but also, unfortunately, the site also erroneously includes a Google map that displays where I live at the Route 14 location. I have included photos of two state road signs that help to promote the confusion. One sign is located at Route 14 (Scotland Road) and Back Road in Windham that includes the boat launch symbol and is inscribed "Beaver Brook Pond." The second sign appears at the entrance to the boat launch on Back Road.

Since that first dawn knock-knock at my place, the number of visitors who were sent to the wrong location has decreased; but, yes, they still continue. I was inspired to write this story just two weeks ago when a couple who were seeking the park had been misdirected by the internet. There has been progress; the town's website eliminated a link containing a map with the incorrect information and several other websites, after being contacted, now display the correct information, but not all.

Beaver Brook State Park is a wonderful place to visit, and I'm told a great place to go fishing at BIBBINS POND! It also has easily assessable parking and a boat launch.

Bill Powers lives in Windham and is a retired teacher.



Cat Research for Dummies

By Bob Lorentson

The hardest working animal researchers in the business have to be the cat researchers. If you don't believe me, try getting a grant to study cats. The grant people will gladly give you all you need to study the mating behavior of the semi-palmated sandpiper, or the social life of coral gobies, but give them a whiff of a study you're proposing to find out whether humans domesticated cats or cats domesticated humans, and they'll stare at you like you've got cat scratch fever. Such proposals are destined to end up in the litter box more often than a cat with parasites.

One of the earliest attempts to find out what, if anything, is in a cat's head didn't occur until 2005, when a naïve cognitive researcher conducted the pointing test on cats. This test, for those who might need it pointed out to them, was conceived to determine if a cat could understand where a person is pointing. The first sign the researcher was naïve was when he called it the pointing test, instead of something like the Directional Focus and Awareness Assessment as any seasoned researcher would have done.

The second sign occurred when most cats promptly walked away from the test, thereby pointing more than anything to the need for more testing of cat researchers. It was ten years before anyone sufficiently clueless was found to try again. Cats, in the meantime, continued their research on humans. No grants were needed, as there was no shortage of eager participants willing to work for an occasional purr.

It's no secret that cat researchers have always been envious of dog researchers, mainly because dogs evolved from a social and cooperative animal, the gray wolf. After 30,000 years of habitation with humans, and 9,000 years of selective breeding, dogs have learned to recognize emotion in humans, understand some human speech, and perform socially complex tasks.

By contrast, cats evolved from the Near Eastern wildcat, an antisocial loner who needs 19 square miles of territory for itself or it starts to feel like the world's becoming too crowded. Still, after only 10,000 years of living with humans and 1,000 years of selective breeding, cats have learned how to get humans to feed them, clean their litter box, pet them at times of their choosing, and, if 19 square miles aren't available, to otherwise leave them

the hell alone. They likely look at dogs as needy, bootlicking fools, and are quite prepared to wait 20,000 years if necessary before evolving any further.

In later cognitive testing attempts, cats scratched, bit, hid under furniture, leapt out of mazes, and if the researchers weren't already up them, climbed trees. "If you want results on one cat," said one frustrated researcher, "you have to test three." I suspect any cooperative cats were summarily shunned by the others, and stripped of their cat independence rights.

Instead of waiting for University researchers to make any headway on cat cognition, there are simple tests you can try with your own cat at home. All you need is patience, tranquilizers, and a pillow to scream into, as cats are sensitive to loud noises. The first test explores whether or not your cat actually likes you, by placing treats and toys near to where you are sitting to see where your cat lingers. If the cat chooses you, it likely means that you didn't follow directions and gave the tranquilizer to the cat instead of yourself.

To test whether your cat is tuned to your emotions, sit near a frightening new object and talk calmly to it. If your cat remains agitated, it likely means that you have no influence over your cat. Now there's a stretch. If your cat calms down, it likely means that your cat is in fact influenced by your emotions. To punish you for conducting this cruel experiment however, it will then test YOUR emotions by clawing the leather couch, peeing on the new rug, or ignoring you for the rest of the day.

To test whether your cat knows its name, say several random words of similar lengths and accents, pausing between each. Then say your cat's name. If your cat reacts in the slightest to any of the words, you could be on your way to a new career as a cat researcher.

Some final notes: The results of these tests can actually mean anything you want them to mean, as your cat is liable to change its responses the next time you try to understand it. And if you still don't think that cats are smart and manipulate us, then why is the internet awash in cat videos? As smart and social as dogs are, they haven't begun to figure out the value of social media.

Bob Lorentson is a retired environmental scientist and active daydreamer.

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Mortgage Interest Rates Are Plunging – Should You Refinance?

By James Zahansky, AWMA®
Principal/Managing Partner
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With mortgage rates dropping in recent weeks, you may be wondering if the time is right to refinance. There are a number of reasons for refinancing. Perhaps you want to lower your monthly payment or shorten the length of your loan, potentially saving money on interest over time. Or perhaps you'd like to cash out on the equity in your home in order to finance home improvements, pay for a child's college education, or pay off debt.

Whether your goal is to better your long-term financial health or to pay for important shorter-term goals, it's important to understand all the costs and benefits before you move ahead with refinancing.

When should you refinance?

It used to be said that you shouldn't refinance unless interest rates were at least 2 percent lower than the interest rate on your current mortgage. However, even a 1 to 1.5 percent differential may be worthwhile to some homeowners.

In addition to interest rates, you should also consider the length of time you plan to stay in your current home, the costs associated with getting a new loan, and the amount of equity you have in your home.

Ultimately, it may make sense to refinance if you're certain that you'll be able to recoup the cost of refinancing during the time you own the home. So, it's important to do the math ahead of time and calculate your break-even point (the point at which you'll begin to save money after paying fees for closing costs). Ideally you should be able to recover your refinancing costs within one year or less.

No cash-out versus cash-out refinancing

No cash-out refinancing occurs when the amount of your new loan doesn't exceed your current mortgage debt (plus points and closing costs). With this type of refinancing, you may be able to borrow up to 95 percent of your home's appraised value, depending on the type of loan requested and other factors.

A cash-out refinancing occurs when you borrow more than you owe on your existing mortgage. In this case, you are often limited to borrowing no more than 75 to 80 percent of the appraised value of your property. Any excess proceeds remaining after you've paid off an existing mortgage can be used in any way you see fit.

Cash-out refinancing has certain advantages. The interest rate that you'll pay on the mortgage proceeds will usually be less than the interest rate on the other debts (e.g., car loans, personal loans, credit cards, and even some student loans). Moreover, the interest paid on your refinanced mortgage is generally tax deductible, whereas the interest on consumer debt is not.

There are also disadvantages to cash-out refinancing. With a cash-out refinancing your refinanced mortgage is secured by a lien on your home. As a result, if you can't make the mortgage payments, the lender can foreclose on your home and sell it to pay the mortgage.

The costs associated with refinancing

While refinancing can often save you money over the life of your mortgage loan, this savings can come at a price. Typically, you'll need to pay an assortment of up-front fees, including points and closing costs. However, some lenders offer "no points, no closing costs" refinancing, which roll the costs into your overall loan balance or charge a higher interest rate. Typical closing costs include the following: application fee; appraisal fee; credit report fee; attorney/legal fees; loan origination fee; survey costs; taxes; title search; and title insurance.

Are there any tax advantages with refinancing?

If you pay points when you refinance your mortgage, you may be able to deduct them. In order for points

to be deductible, they must have been charged by your lender as up-front interest in return for a lower interest rate on your loan. If the points were charged for services provided by the lender in preparing or processing the loan, then the points are not deductible.

When deducting points, keep in mind that unlike points paid on a loan used to purchase a home, points paid on a refinanced loan usually cannot be deducted in the year that you paid them. Instead, the points may need to be amortized over the life of the loan. For example, assume that you refinanced to a \$300,000/30-year mortgage loan and paid \$6,000 in points. You would be able to deduct 1/30 of those points each year over the 30-year loan period, or \$200 per year.

The one exception to the amortization rule is if part of your refinanced loan is used to make improvements to your primary residence. In that case, you may be able to deduct the portion of the points that is allocable to the home improvements in the year that the points are paid. In addition, if you choose to refinance again or sell your home in the future, you can generally claim the entire unamortized deduction that remains.

For more information on the deductibility of points, you can refer to IRS Publication 936. As for other costs you may have incurred from refinancing, such as recording, title search, appraisal, and attorney's fees, they are not deductible. Furthermore, unlike costs associated with a home purchase, costs associated with a refinance cannot be added into the cost basis (value) of your home for income tax purposes.

A word on refinancing and the Making Home Affordable Program

The Making Home Affordable Program (MHA) was created by the Obama administration in an effort to stabilize the U.S. housing market. The MHA offers a number of programs that are designed to meet the various needs of homeowners, including a program that enables homeowners to refinance their mortgages to a lower rate even if their home has decreased in value. For more information on the MHA, visit www.makinghomeaffordable.gov.

Weigh the benefits and costs carefully – including how refinancing will affect your current financial health and long-term goals.

Refinancing can be a smart move if the end result helps you to achieve your financial and life goals. But there's a lot to consider beyond the interest rate. For example, cashing out on your home's equity now may mean you won't have it as an asset to lean on when you retire. So be sure to consider your total financial picture and your long-term goals when deciding whether or not to refinance.

Take advantage of the mortgage calculators and other tools and resources on our website at whzwealth.com/resources, and contact us at (860) 928-2341 or info@whzwealth.com to see how we can help you to build a strategic financial plan that will help you to Plan Well, Invest Well and Live Well, now and in the years ahead.

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

CLiCK's Latinx Mural: "Painting" a Sense and Story of Community

By Phoebe C. Godfrey

There are two distinct languages. There is the verbal, which separates people...and there is the visual that is understood by everybody.

—Yaacov Agam



I could not agree more with the astute observation by Yaacov Agam, an Israeli sculptor and experimental artist best known for his contributions to optical and kinetic art, that the visual language of art is understood by everyone. This does not mean that everyone takes away the same meaning, but rather that no matter what the art piece, the viewer, regardless of who they are or how they engage with the outside world, can create *some* meaning. Furthermore, when it comes to public art, according to muralist Grace McCammond, "Murals build a sense of community," not only in their value as art, but also in the collective act of creating them. Those of us who live in Willimantic are lucky to have a number of excellent murals in town (some done by MBK Murals, which has dissolved as a team, although one member continues to do them; see <https://www.benkellerart.com/>).

Another result of having public art in the form of murals, as the writer and social activist Arlene Goldbard recognizes, is that "The experience of art moves us from the everyday into the realm of possibility" (Parolek 2014), a realm that is essential in social justice work, as the future we seek to create must be felt to be *possible* despite an oppositional and unjust reality. Hence, art is a place where those who dare to dream of more beautiful ways of living and being have the chance to manifest their "magic."

This theme of magic is one that is currently unfolding at CLiCK, the nonprofit, shared-use kitchen my wife and I co-founded, which is now in its sixth year of operating in the former Knights of Columbus building at 41 Club Road in Windham. CLiCK is excited to announce our second mural project with Nicaraguan artist Alejandro De La Guerra (<https://alejandrodela Guerra.com/>), who over the past year was a visiting fellow at UConn's School of Fine Arts with the support of the Artist Protection Fund and other groups (<https://elin.uconn.edu/2020/02/24/multi-media-artist-alejandro-de-la-guerra-year-long-residence-at-uconn/>). De La Guerra's mural, which is slowly emerging on the front of the CLiCK building, speaks to CLiCK's mission of "Grow, Cook, Share" in that each part of his design represents one of these activities, while celebrating the "mystery and magic of Latinx foods" and the diverse Latinx cultures in both our community and the world. For a full analysis of the design, let me quote from artist himself:

This mural, 'The Mystery and Magic of Latinx Foods', is a final part of the Art exhibition The Future is Latinx that was curated by Yulia Tikhonova at ECSU, Fall 2020 (<https://www.easternct.edu/art-gallery/past-exhibitions/the-future-is-latinx.html>).

The mural design is a tribute within another tribute: on the one hand, it is a tribute to UCONN's puppetry program which is a very important part of Connecticut's art community. For that reason, the principal 'actors' of the mural are hands (which also links with CLiCK's other mural on Native American food practices) and puppets that are on a stage to "tell us a story" about Latin American food.

It is a playful design made for the community by the community, with the aesthetic of Pop Art and primitivism, where from right to left you can see two hands holding a knife and a fork playing with a puppet marionette, which represents the creativity of the kitchen. However, this first scene also represents cutting off/ending farm exploitation, that includes ending the racism towards Latino immigrant farmworkers.

In this imaginary garden, we can also appreciate some corn plants and a pumpkin flower, which represents some of the fundamental foods of Latin American ancestors, as well as that their food has transcended borders, while also linking with the indigenous foods of North American as in maize.



The mural 'in progress.'

Contributed photo.

In the next scene, we can see a hand that manipulates a hand puppet - it is a frog chef that symbolizes Willimantic and the story of the frogs, as well as the cooks at CLiCK. This frog has just cut an ear of corn and is taking it to the kitchen table to prepare it.

In the next scene, we can see a "table" - that is the roof of the main entrance of the building of CLiCK - through which the design of the mural integrates the elements of the architecture of the building in a creative way. On the table, we can see such elements as a hand mill - an ancestor instrument utilized in the modern kitchen. We can also see an avocado and two hands with a knife cutting a corn cob just brought from the garden by the frog chef.

In the last part of the mural, we can see some elements cut by the hands on the table falling on a pre-Hispanic pot that was used by the Mayans for their food and culinary rituals. We can appreciate another detail in this scene: that is a piece of popcorn that jumps from the fire of the pot. This symbolizes the evolution and the mixture of cultures, as it is the case of corn being transformed into popcorn by the North American culture. It also symbolizes the process of cooking and creating new elements with traditional foods. The smoke, which contains carbon, comes out of the pot and becomes the sky so it can go back to the farm and feed the plants, in a cyclical manner.

As Agam observes, when we write about art we "separate," but when we create it together and enjoy it together, like ingredients in a recipe, we "paint a sense and story of community." Therefore, we invite you, our neighbors, to help support this mural project in a number of ways. The first would be to sign up to help (email me at phoebe.c.godfrey@gmail.com), and the second would be to support our fundraiser to help cover the various expenses. Some funds have already been generously given by UConn and ECSU, and so now we are looking to you, the community, to help continue to make this mural "for the community by the community"! And better yet, if you are willing to help support the project financially, you get to "own" a piece of this playful mural in the form of limited edition, 100% cotton T-shirts based on the three main designs from De La Guerra's "Pop-Art and Primitivist" mural (see details on the [GoFundMe page https://gofund.me/755973b3](https://gofund.me/755973b3)). Finally, there will be a ribbon cutting in mid-June, so that would be another way to come see the mural, help support the project, and even meet the artist.

I hope to see you up on the scaffolding, or listed on our GoFundMe site, or at the ribbon cutting, or at all three, because after this challenging—and for many, devastating—past year, what we all need now is to be moved from our "everydays" into the realm of new collective and positive possibilities.

Reference:

Parolek, D. (2014). "The Power of Public Art: How Murals Beautify Cities and Build Communities." <https://opticosdesign.com/blog/the-power-of-public-art-murals/>

Old Mohill Town

By Judy Davis

Assemble the Dancers;
The fiddler comes around.
It's time for
the ceili,
from Leitrim on down.
From
all fields and farms,
and where the Shannon
River flows,
Seanachies
come together,
to share
the stories of long ago.
Come,
and heed the pipers;
clap,
and stomp your feet.
Celebrate
Old Eire,
where
songs and history meet.
Honor
the shamrock
and keep the music
deep inside.
May Ireland sing forever,
let
my family's banner fly.
From
one end of Leitrim
to the other,
there are
good times to be found.
But,
nothing like the hooleys
in
old Mohill town!

Landscaping the Soul

Plant the spaces between animal and machine,
patterns of movement,
and your views,
some to screen.
Find a balance
between ever-evergreen
and winter's quiet dormancy.

Plant desires, dreams and nurture them
between structures and boundaries which
define us by our values,
align us with our neighbors,
and confine us within ourselves.

Some will grow.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes

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Solar Today: Questions and answers about solar in our community and beyond

By John Boiano



Greetings-

Thanks to all who joined our Zoom call and Facebook live event last month! We will resume the monthly zoom meetings in the fall. Please reach out to me directly if I can help answer your questions about solar or if you're interested in speaking with me about solar for your home. I would love to help you transition to a lower cost fixed rate than what the utility offers.

Solar Today reader Greg asked: "What does a home evaluation process look like?"

I will give an over view of the process and I will leave out a bit of the particulars due to every home has its own offering for solar access and every homeowner has their own wants, needs and personal life circumstances which all play into finding out if solar makes sense or not.

I start the discovery process with an initial look from a due south satellite and possibly a google maps street view. Then I have a discussion with the homeowner to see if what I've discovered is actually true. Sometimes I see trees in a satellite view that are no longer there and sometimes there have been additions added to the home, etc.

The following "usually" pursued in the order listed below. With that stated, it is a dynamic conversation that consists of information and back and forth questions and answers from both sides. I believe that the more informed a homeowner is, the more confident they are in their decision to install solar.

Discovery with a homeowner will cover many items including:

- How long have you been in the home
- How long do you plan on being in the home
- Future upgrades, electric car, kids, mini splits, a/c units, hot tub
- Future changes – kids moving, getting rid of hot tub etc
- Last time roof was replaced
- Other concerns

Then we cover the current electric usage by going over the electric bill.

Are you a frugal, moderate or heavy consumer?

Discuss the current rate you're paying

Annual historic usage (If a new homeowner, we cover what the home has to offer and what type of user you are, such as mentioned above)

Annual utility rate increases

All of this plays into weighing the numbers to see if solar will make sense.

Next step, if everything pans out, my engineer does an initial discovery of solar access using a sophisticated software program that calculates 365 of solar access taking into consideration:

- Azimuth (gutter line to due south)
- Roof pitch angle
- Shade from trees, dormers, chimneys, other structures, and much more.

The program also takes 30 years' worth of historic weather data into the calculation. How many average snow, cloudy, rainy days a year. Also if tree shade is a consideration, how much dappled light will the panels receive with dappled light through the bare trees during the late fall to early spring. It's a very reliable program.

Then we tie it all together and do the numbers. Does solar make sense financially?

What I know from helping hundreds of families decide if solar is a good option is that "if" solar works for the property and if the numbers make sense, the least expensive option is usually to choose solar over staying with utility provided power.

Costs vary due to many factors such as size of system, financing options or if you choose a simple company financed PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) where you simply pay a lower rate for electricity from solar on your roof or if you choose an owner financed or low interest option provided by a finance partner that specializes in tying in federal credits to a low interest rate for a solar loan. All of this is discussed in great detail with a homeowner.

Moving forward:

A Site Survey is performed by a trained technician to look at a home's structure including rafters, shingles, electrical system. Tree heights and obstructions are also noted at this time to make sure our initial shade reading is accurate.

Then we move to final engineering and final design approval by the homeowner.

Town permitting and Utility approval is next.

WHAT could go wrong here?

Final approvals are granted by the Utility Company, after we get their thumbs up, then we have a full green light to install solar. Yes, they have the last say!

Once approved, we schedule an install date, final town inspections and the utility company changes your meter to a net meter to track solar production credits.

Then we are given a green light from the utility for Permission To Operate the solar system!

Although this may seem like a large process, for the homeowner it is a small time commitment for switching to solar. We do most of the work.

Questions from the community:

Q: Is a battery worth it?

A: Yes and no! It all depends on how motivated you are and what your particular energy usage is. The pro's and con's need to be weighed out individually just like solar. The new Demand Response program is a great step in encouraging homeowners to add a battery to a solar home.

Q: What about those solar tiles?

A: The solar tiles play out well in a very small set of circumstances. They work much better in states like Arizona and Southern California. Per square foot, the panels produce much less energy than a traditional solar panel, they also cost about 3 x's as much per watt. A full re-roof also needs to be done with special attachments etc..

Q: How much does it cost?

A: The short answer is that "if" solar makes sense for your home, it costs less than staying with utility provided power. Costs vary due to many factors such as size of system, financing options or if you chose a simple company financed Power Purchase Option where you simply pay a lower rate for electricity from solar on your roof.

Quote from a recent local solar customer:

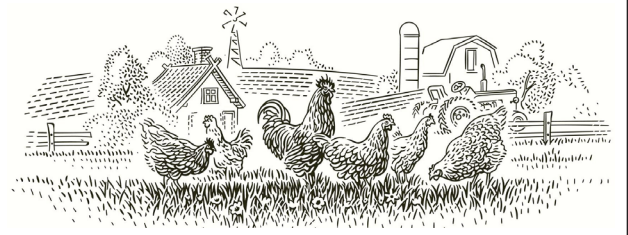
"Wow, that was easier than I thought. More people should be doing this!"

Until next month... ENJOY!

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The Last Green Valley

By Brian Karlsson-Barnes

“The Last Stretch of Dark Night Sky in the Northeast’s Coastal Sprawl” (per map by The Last Green Valley, Inc.). Flying from D.C. to Boston, it’s the dark corner of northeastern Connecticut before the lights of Massachusetts. Only 90 minutes from Boston driving in the fast lane.

“An unexpectedly ancient and authentic region” with three dozen towns, and three-quarters farmland and forest in the eastern edge of Connecticut that is called the “Last Green Valley” (LGV), a National Heritage Corridor for nearly thirty years.

And here we are in spring 2021, when nature is at its craziest, Spring !!! Trillions of romantic cicadas are about to emerge after the usual 17 years! (They’ve been in America for millions of years.)

This pocket of paradise, traditional New England farms and woods, is less-developed -- less spoiled -- than Massachusetts and western Connecticut.

Paradise that I had never heard of until seeking someplace to live and plant ninety miles from Boston. Returning from the midwest to the east coast in 2004, I first thirsted for the ocean, and a decade later decided I was Good in the Woods. Lucky to find a farmhouse in Chaplin in the middle of the Last Green Valley.

TLGV is actually many small river and brook valleys in a wide watershed from Coventry to Killingly, from Quabog, Mass., to Mohegan Sun, before broadening into New London’s Thames River, technically not in the valley, where trains could load from the deep water port.

Railways followed grades along rivers, and rails may be gone, but remaining railbeds are great walking and bicycling.

Most intriguing is the Air Line State Park Trail. The rails are long gone, but the rail bed once offered fashionable rapid transit from New York to New Haven, then Boston. East to west diagonally

GHOST TRAIN The Last Green Valley was picturesque and large enough to diagonally cut an hour off the six-hour train ride that followed the coast from New York to Boston. Good enough to warrant a special Pullman train, white and gold, as it sped across central Connecticut to this “quiet corner”. Luminescent at twilight.

The *New England Limited* offered new Pullman luxury cars in 1891, white in color with gold trim -- the legendary *Ghost Train* -- which had shortened the run by 1885, cutting across Middletown to East Hampton and Colchester, through Hebron, Columbia and Lebanon to Windham. The eastern leg to Chaplin, Hampton, Pomfret, Putnam, and finally Thompson. Long before the Super Speedway, the nation’s first asphalt racetrack followed cleanup from the 1938 hurricane on Thompson farmland. “Indianapolis of the East”.

The trail is named for an imaginary line through the air from New York to Boston, the shortest possible route between the two cities. But a completely new rail line proved economically unfeasible, so the “Air Line” used existing rails from New York to New Haven and began its journey to Boston from there.

On its way to Boston, the Air Line overcame tremendous obstacles in eastern Connecticut’s ridges and valleys, and politics.

Construction began in the late 1860s and the first milestone, track from New Haven to Middletown, was celebrated by 1870. This was challenging because the landscape needed a winding rail bed. Limited by technology, big cuts through the hillsides were achieved with massive “fills” in the valleys to keep the rail bed at grade.

This was most apparent at the bridge viaducts in East Hampton over Flat Brook, and in Colchester over Dickenson Creek. Only 1.2 miles from each other, these stream valleys were first crossed by long bridges. Rapallo viaduct needed 800 feet of length to cross Flat Brook, and the Lyman Viaduct, to the east over Dickenson Creek, needed 1,000 feet. Three years later, in 1873, the line was completed to Windham.

Another entity laid rails east of Windham to the



Connecticut border. Politics. Crossing the Quinebaug River in Putnam was a major obstacle. Intermittent passenger traffic built up until the first dedicated passenger run in 1876.

Approaching a new century, technology improved, railroad engines became faster, cars became longer, and everything was heavier. The quaintness of the Air Line’s winding grades, and the weight restrictions of the spindly trestle bridges built for an earlier era, were limited and traffic tapered. Though local runs and intermittent passenger trains continued to run along the line, Ghost Train passenger service concluded on May 17, 1902.

Once the faster passenger trains moved back to the shore, service defaulted to the coast. Slower freight trains and local passenger traffic kept the rail line alive for many years. With growing weight requirements in 1912, the two viaducts were strengthened by dumping sand for 20 months, covered with cinders to stabilize its surface. The massive appearance is still evident.

Disastrous flooding in August 1955 washed out a Putnam bridge, and route cancellations and section closures crippled the line from ever regaining its status. The construction of interstate highway I-395 throughout the 1960s sealed the fate of any future rail traffic.

Air Line Trail Those who travel the corridor today see the same sweeping panoramas and solitude that greeted early travelers. Air Line Trail State Park may be the best greenway in Connecticut.

Stretching diagonally across eastern Connecticut from New Haven to Thompson, this linear trail dates from the 1870s, and today draws many from across the state.

Highlighted by two tremendous viaducts, the Air Line passes favorite local locations along the trail as it passes over streams, through state forests, past town parks and wildlife areas. From the footbridges, trail users still enjoy the views throughout the year.

The Air Line Trail State Park is one of the best greenways in all of Connecticut. “Limited” parking is available where the trail crosses local roads.

TALE OF TWO TRAILS Long before the trains, native Indian trails followed north-south post-glacial paths along rivers, across valleys, notably the Native American Nipmuck and Natchaug Trails in the LGV.

Natchaug is actually a Nipmuck word for “land between the rivers”, the name of a topographical place common throughout northeastern Connecticut. Not the name of a Native American tribe, Natchaug is a recurring landform in the LGV.

Connecticut’s 850-mile blue-blazed trail system includes the Natchaug Trail in eastern Connecticut with the adjacent Nipmuck Trail. A 2 to 4-day hike suits all grades of backpackers. Camping permits may be obtained for up to five locations.

The Natchaug Trail wanders the James L. Goodwin and Natchaug State Forests, but not all who wander are lost as Tolkien noted. With the Nipmuck State Forest, Yale

Forest and several large private tracts, it forms “one of the largest areas of contiguous forest in southern New England supporting a large variety of wildlife.” - Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Natchaug State Forest in Eastford has horse trails, good fishing and picnicking along the Natchaug River flowing to the notorious Diana’s Pool in Chaplin, under scenic route 198 and into Mansfield Hollow. A few miles east, the Natchaug Trail around Pine Acres Lake in Hampton is a wild-flowered 5.5 mile loop trail. Dogs okay on leash.

The Nipmuck Trail is a Blue-Blazed trail system maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. It meanders through 35 miles of forest.

The Nipmuck Trail runs 41.5 miles from Mansfield to the Massachusetts border following peaceful rivers, overlooks and small waterfalls. The southern sections are dominated by water features and are popular with easy to moderate difficulty.

There are two southern trail heads in Mansfield. The southwestern terminus is at a road shoulder parking place on Puddin Lane, and the southeastern terminus is a DEEP parking lot on North Windham Road at the southeast corner of Mansfield Hollow Park.

The northern section is more rugged in remote forest with much more elevation change, more challenging.

The Nipmuck Trail travels 9 miles through Yale University forest. Also 3.5 miles of the University of Connecticut’s East Campus (the protected Moss tract through Fenton Forest). The northern terminus is along the Massachusetts border at the north end of Breakneck Pond in Nipmuck State Forest.

NATIVE PEOPLE The Nipmuc or Nipmuck people are descendants of indigenous Algonquin peoples of Nippenet, ‘the freshwater pond place’, which corresponds to central Mass. and adjacent portions of Connecticut and Rhode Island.

The Nipmuc tribe first encountered the English in 1630, when it took maize to sell to starving Boston colonists and their endemic pathogens (as small pox). Native Americans had no immunity and many died. The English also introduced them to alcohol, assailed their culture and religion, and took their land. Many Nipmuc joined Metacombet’s rebellion, and were defeated by the English in 1675.

The Nipmuc continued to survive, and the tribe gained Massachusetts recognition in 1979. Federal recognition has suffered largely because lands were lost long ago and the tribe has had difficulty proving political and social continuity.

But in 2021, White America is learning that Black and Brown Lives Matter.

Brian Karlsson-Barnes, Chaplin

Photo was contributed.



Some of the staff from Windham Public Schools and their children who hosted this year's 'Take Time to Play.' Nusie Halpine photo.

Catina Caban-Owen, A Voice for Kids

By Bill Powers

When I think of social worker Catina Caban-Owen I picture a 5-foot-tall bundle of energy. She is a genuine powerhouse of leadership, compassion, purpose, and strength, all the elements for the well-being of our children. Her energy is limitless, when it comes to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. She was a spark plug eight years ago that inspired me and a diverse group of caring individuals who shared Catina Caban-Owen's energy on protecting children.

The murder of two little girls spurred her commitment for community action. Ever since then, Catina has been the catalyst to unite people to promote and organize numerous programs and events to remind us all that "IN WINDHAM THEY ARE ALL OUR CHILDREN." For eight years now, as a volunteer, her skills have managed to involve numerous others with *The Windham Task Force To Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect*. She moves the goodwill of hundreds of others to offer their various strengths for the cause of stepping forward to protect our children. Her compassion, commitment and love for children is obvious and contagious in leading as she leads by example. She always gives the credit of her efforts to others because that's the kind of loving person she is.

I asked another school social worker from Windham Public Schools, Nusie Halpine, who also serves on the Task Force, why she does so. She works at the school program that Athena attended, one of the two precious little girls who were murdered in Willimantic. Athena's death was an important event in bringing about the formation of *The Windham Task Force To Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect*.

Nusie Halpine told me: "We still have pictures of Athena here at the Windham Early Childhood Center.

Many of us remember her. It's good to know there is a positive legacy after such a horrific death. I am part of the task force because I feel it is an important group. Today I heard one of the PSA's on WILI, and the information was on being patient and listening to your children. When I hear that I feel pride in the work we are doing and very hopeful that our messages would help parents cope. How wonderful that our radio station helps us that way. The task Force is a community effort. We hope that our work is preventing child abuse. I think it is because we raise awareness of the problem and spread information to the community on helping children."

Catina, is now recently retired after working for many years as a school social worker with Windham Public Schools. She also taught college students about social work both in the classroom and as interns gaining practical experience. Now she teaches at UConn and Eastern Connecticut State University. Perhaps you have heard Catina or others in public service announcements on WILI radio, one of the ongoing activities educating the public about protecting children. Other activities include: projects involving high school students who create programs about child abuse programs for fellow students; talks about lead poisoning; providing educational programs for parents about trauma at schools, churches, and civic organizations; and, sponsoring a family fun day each spring called "Take Time To Play." This past year Task Force funds were used to donate car seats to parents who could not afford them. This used to be done by other agencies but COVID-19 shut that down.

We are fortunate to have Catina as a strong voice for kids and as a result many other voices have joined her in this important mission for the wellbeing of our children.

Bill Powers is a resident of Windham and a retired teacher.

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Systemic Racism: What is It?

By Cathy Cementina



The notion of systemic racism is a hotly contested topic among Americans today. I do think it would be helpful if we had an understanding of what that term means.

The term institutional or systemic racism refers not first of all to personal prejudices held by individuals, but to policies, laws, ordinances, business practices, and other quite legal institutions that have served to suppress the ability of black people to accumulate wealth. Wealth, not income, is what allows you to buy a decent home with a down payment, to have a rainy day fund to fall back on when family emergencies or job losses occur, to contribute to your children's college costs. Wealth is security. It is the building up of wealth that has been denied black Americans in this country through institutions and practices that have been put in place largely by white men of property. This is what is meant by the term, "institutional" racism.

With the demise of Jim Crow laws, white Americans created so-called race-neutral means of securing and maintaining political and economic power. These quite legally sanctioned practices effectively put black Americans in a position where the goal of accumulated wealth remained out of reach. Policies involving money can be every bit as effective in marginalizing blacks and maintaining the color line as legal segregation. How so?

Perhaps the most critical factor in building wealth is to own property. Right after the Civil War, there was an attempt to award land to newly freed slaves to develop their own self-sufficient farms (the 40 acres and a mule policy of General Sherman). With the advent of the Southerner Andrew Johnson as President following Lincoln's assassination, the federal government reneged on that agreement. Many white Americans agreed with him, believing that winning freedom was payment enough for former black slaves.

Now you may say, well, that was long ago, enough time has passed for blacks to "catch up." In fact not. Just after the federal government decided that black people were undeserving of restitution, it began bestowing millions of acres in the West to white Americans under the Homestead Act. From 1868 to 1934, the federal government gave away 246 million acres in 160-acre tracts, nearly 10 percent of all the land in the nation, to more than 1.5 million white families. Very few of those land grants were awarded to black families, and when they were, it was often swamp land or otherwise un-farmable tracts. Some 46 million American adults today, nearly 20 percent of all American adults, descend from those white homesteaders. If that many white Americans can trace their legacy of wealth and property ownership to a single entitlement program, then the perpetuation of black poverty must also be linked to national policy.

And speeding up to the 20th century, black families have been effectively and quite legally locked out of decent neighborhoods by the simple denial of mortgages. 98% of the loans the Federal Housing Authority insured from 1935 to 1962 went to white Americans. We all have heard of Levittown on Long Island. Perhaps the most famous example of a post-World War II planned suburban development, Levittown is an example of how racist policies

were perpetuated. The developer of the town, Levitt & Sons, was able to build thanks to loans from the Federal Housing Administration—on the condition that leases barred those who were 'not members of the Caucasian race.'

How can one build wealth when one can't even access decent, stable housing from which to commute to a sustainable job and begin the project of constructing financial security?

As with the institutional disparity in property, so goes education. While there is no guarantee that quality education will translate into wealth, there is no denying that it increases the probability of being vocationally successful and thereby securing financial means. We know that to a large degree, local property taxes are the primary means of funding K-12 education throughout the country, and they often determine the quality of local public schools. Black people being forced (through quite legal mortgage practices, for example) into substandard neighborhoods will inevitably mean that they end up sending their kids to substandard local schools. From the earliest age, then, black children are to a large degree at a disadvantage in the game of wealth accumulation.

And turning to higher education, consider the uneven way in which the GI Bill was accessed between white and black veterans, setting a whole generation of black soldiers behind in the quest for decent jobs requiring higher education degrees. When President Franklin Roosevelt signed the GI Bill into law on June 22, 1944, it laid the foundation for benefits that would help generations of veterans achieve social mobility. More than 2 million veterans flocked to college campuses throughout the country. But even as former service members entered college, not all of them accessed the bill's benefits in the same way. That's because white southern politicians designed the distribution of benefits under the GI Bill to uphold their segregationist beliefs. So, while white veterans got into college with relative ease, black service members faced limited options and outright denial in their pursuit for educational advancement. This resulted in uneven outcomes of the GI Bill's impact. (MilitaryTimes documents the details; see below)

There is so much more history here to share. And it won't work to say, but that is long gone and we have fair practices now. Because even if that were true, the historic shunting of opportunities for black Americans effectively has given white Americans a huge economic head start that blacks can only with Herculean effort catch up with. It has been said that the difference between the lived experience of black Americans and white Americans when it comes to wealth can be described as nothing other than a chasm. We have to get away from taking it as personal insult when we hear the claim of systemic racism, and start seeing this nation's history with clear eyes. I appreciate historian Heather Cox Richardson's words: "America was born in idealism and the profound principle that all human beings had a right to self-determination. It grew up, though, in an environment that limited that right to white men of property."

Sources: Military Times, Nov 9, 2019; How the South Won the Civil War, Heather Cox Richardson; What is Owed, Nikole Hannah-Jones

The Problem with Poland Spring

By Calen Nakash

Poland Spring bottled water is more than just a recognizable brand to customers in Connecticut and throughout the Northeast. Its website boasts a clean, green template with pictures of nature that create an energy-conscious, aesthetically cozy vibe, and the site appears to tell consumers everything they need to know—aside from the important fact that the brand was established by Nestlé. The Frequently Asked Questions page, only reachable by scrolling down to the bottom of the main page, hints at this with the question "If Poland Spring® is 100 percent natural spring water, why are you involved in a lawsuit?" Nestlé, aside from being one of the most hated companies in the world due to its use of child labor and its belief that water is not a human right, is ethically difficult to support due to its "likely use of tax avoidance strategies, animal testing, animal rights abuses, a poor approach to climate change and more," according to ethicalconsumer.org. And Nestlé's products are so numerous that consumers need a chart to keep track of them all (readily available online)—because they carry no tagline that reads, "Proudly owned by Nestlé."

All bottled water companies take their water from somewhere, but Nestlé has a bad habit of draining rivers and lakes dry. Residents of the Grand River indigenous reserve in Ontario suddenly found themselves with a water shortage after Nestlé extracted millions of liters daily from Six Nations treaty land. The *Guardian* reported on one family that had no water at all and lived without a toilet or baths, giving one of the children a rash that refused to go away. Even ignoring these ethical problems, bottled-water sources run out, and the plundered areas are always left worse off. Nestlé received a cease-and-desist letter from officials in California over its continued draining of the drought-hit state, but the unfortunate reality is that Nestlé can afford to pay any fines without affecting its bottom line. There is very little that can stop a corporation that has so much money.

Nestlé is no stranger to ethically questionable practices. In the 1970s, the company pushed its infant formula to mothers in impoverished countries who mixed it with polluted water, resulting in many infant deaths. Even if Nestlé had provided better sterilization instructions, and even if it had made those instructions available in languages the population could read, its advertising claimed that the formula was just as good as breast milk, which was plainly false.

According to an article titled "Why Nestlé Is One of the Most Hated Companies in the World" (zmescience.com), the company "drains the aquifers it controls, without any regards to sustainable usage or environmental concerns." A 2017

investigation showed that Nestlé is taking far more water than its share, and California's cease-and-desist order states that the company does not have the rights to the water it is taking. More recently, Reddit has reported that Nestlé's "floating supermarket," sent into the heart of the Amazon, is causing obesity in children as young as seven.

It's always difficult for consumers to make ethically based decisions, especially when it takes a laundry list of products to avoid in order to refrain from supporting just one company. Purina, for instance, does not advertise its parent company, so many pet owners in Connecticut are likely supporting Nestlé whether they realize it or not.

"Several towns in Maine have objected to the business practices of Poland Spring and its parent company Nestlé," according to Wikipedia. Nestlé says that Poland Spring gets its water directly from eight springs in Maine, but Vox reported in 2019 that the company was facing a lawsuit that accused it of selling "ordinary groundwater." The suit states, "There is no photographic proof that even one such spring—much less eight—exists on or near Defendant's sites in Maine." The lawsuit stated that not one drop of its water came from "genuine, legal, natural springs," and that Nestlé was defrauding its customers.

Nestlé recently completed a \$4.3 billion sale of its water bottle brands to One Rock Capital Partners private equity firms, including Poland Spring. However, environmental groups actually protested the decision, Bangor Daily News reported. Co-founder Nickie Sekera of *Community Water Justice* in Maine voiced concerns that while Nestlé was at least a *bit* receptive to negative press, they did not believe a private equity firm would respond the same way. Sekera added that by doing this the company would relieve itself of the accountability it promised, handing the torch to someone else and making the residents of Maine "a resource colony for Wall Street."

It may be easy to grab a bottled water on the way to work. But in the long run, it's important to note the issues that crop up with convenience and the reality we will all live in if our local water is drained. To save on money and reduce disposable waste, consider purchasing jugs to fill at a location you trust for home if you aren't a fan of tap water, or buy a water filter. For on the go, reusable water bottles with time lines exist that dictate how much you should be drinking at each time of day. It is an unfortunate reality that holding companies responsible for doing harm often comes down to consumers being smart with their wallets, but bottled water is thankfully not yet a necessary purchase. It would be a grim reality having the Earth's usable water located on supermarket shelves, so why not start sustainable practices now?

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Big River, Big Dreams: The Pomfret Power Company

By Donna Dufresne

If you paddle north on the Quinebaug River from Route 101 in Pomfret toward Putnam, you will notice a massive stone structure just before the river gets too shallow to paddle. It's a remarkable edifice which has perplexed me for years with its imaginary turbines spinning rumors of old cotton mills and hydroelectric dreams. Aerial photographs from 1934 show a massive ditch or mill race from Durkee Brook up to the abandoned structure, which seems to be an incomplete wall. I'm not the only one who has been intrigued by this mystery. Dick Symonds, an expert in mill site evaluations, was also impressed by the evidence seen on maps and aerial photographs. A handful of amateur history detectives from Pomfret Historical Society have also been abuzz trying to solve this history mystery.

According to George Jackson, this was the site of an abandoned hydroelectric dam started by a group of investors from Boston in the 1920s. The edifice we see north of Durkee Brook was the abutment for the dam, which was to span the river from Pomfret to Killingly. They got started in the 1920s but when the Depression hit, the investors bailed, and it was never completed.

I did some research and found some newspaper clippings and court documents online as well as some genealogy. I discovered that the Pomfret Power Company was formerly known as the Cochrane Power Company and changed its name around 1920. J. Eugene Cochrane, of Dedham and Boston, was the primary investor. It turns out that he and his father owned the Danielson Cotton Mills!

Eugene's father, John Cochrane, emigrated from Scotland in 1843. In the 1880 census he was living in Lowell with his wife, Pauline, daughter, Kate, and son, J. Eugene (age 16). He lists his occupation as calico printer and manufacturer. It's not clear if he was a worker in one of the mills or perhaps an owner or superintendent. At any rate, by 1901 he and his son, J. Eugene, managed to buy all the stock of the Danielson Cotton Mills and become president and treasurer, respectively. A disgruntled superintendent of the mills sued them for the money he had spent on supplies and other business to keep the mill running during the transaction. It appears that he viewed the transaction as a takeover since the Cochranes absorbed all his stock. He "ran the mill as if it were his own" and clearly didn't want to give up power. The lawsuit, *Taylor v. Danielson Mills*, lists John Cochrane, president; Pauline Cochrane, shareholder; and J. Eugene Cochrane, treasurer, as defendants.

By 1909 the Danielson Mills were thriving, and several newspaper articles were devoted to a large addition and revamping of air circulation, heating, and machinery. Eugene planned to build a large hydroelectric dam above Cotton Bridge which would provide electricity for the mills. It seems he expressed some impatience with reluctant landowners who wouldn't sell their flowage rights.

The newspaper articles read more like press releases celebrating the productivity of the mill and the workers. The Cochranes provided a lot of jobs, including all the support industries for the mill. The articles described the newly constructed row houses for the workers.

In 1918 there was another article describing the proposed hydroelectric dam. This time Cochrane suggested that he had support from the government (state? federal?) to buy up the flowage rights along the river from Putnam down to Danielson. The dam project was finally moving forward.

This was the era of Thomas Edison and the numerous power companies that sprang up like bittersweet in his East Coast grid. About forty years earlier, in 1879, Edison had been employed by the Willimantic Linen Company to install electric lights in Mill #2, making it the first electrified mill in the country. Hydroelectric power was the next best thing. It would mean the mills could run around the clock with safer, brighter lighting than gas lamps. Where there was water, there was the potential for electric power, which rang in the twentieth century.



We can assume that it took decades from the idea to build a dam to produce electricity for the Danielson Cotton Mills to the actual beginning of construction. The legalities of buying the flowage rights must have been wrapped up in a lot of red tape. Finally, the day came to begin construction. And then the Great Depression ground everything to a halt. I wonder if there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony when they finally broke ground. I wonder if one of the cranky Yankee farmers who owned river frontage fired up a lawsuit. Regardless of the previous hurdles that Eugene Cochrane overcame, the Depression was too great a wall to scale. Like many industrialists and investors, he went under and had to give up on his dream.



The unfinished Pomfret Power Company hydroelectric plant (1920) on the Quinebaug River in Pomfret. It was going to supply power for the Danielson Cotton Mills but may have been interrupted by the Great Depression. Photo by Donna Drasch.

The Pomfret Power Company is a great study in industrialization and the dawning of eminent domain as railroad and power companies gobbled up private property in the name of progress. Although textile history is easily romanticized from our twenty-first century perspective, we can see how industrialization eroded communities, abused

the environment, and mistreated workers as greed ushered in the twentieth century. The mill owners were proud of the progress they had made and the thousands of jobs they created, and they expected free range to do as they pleased, regulations be damned. By the early 1900s, the Quinebaug was choked with bleach, dye, and other toxic chemicals that the large cotton mills were pouring into the water. The population growth in mill villages meant more sewage would find its way into a conduit which could no longer dilute the pollution. By the 1870s, the paternalistic benevolence of the employers who provided their jobs was lost on workers who were paid so poorly they had to employ the whole family, including children, in the mills in order to make a living wage, which barely paid the rent to the company store.

Still, it's exciting to see that one abandoned project long ago forgotten can teach us so much about American ingenuity, engineering, and the power structures we struggle with to this day. I can't help but think that Mark Zuckerberg might be feeling the same kind of annoyance toward regulatory procedures that J. Eugene Cochrane felt when he wasn't able to absorb the flowage rights and acreage to support his project. In those days of untethered greed, industrialists looked to the government to support them in the name of "progress." Today we look to the government to protect the people and the environment for the greater good. Perhaps the Wild West of unfettered social media needs some reining in for the greater good of democracy while we continue to sort out our First Amendment freedoms in the context of capitalism. But rest

assured, there will always be a new boom on the horizon, a new industry spawning growth, prosperity, and its own set of problems. Let's hope that the next best thing is a little kinder, a little greener, and leaves a smaller footprint on the earth.

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LIVE Performance at TPH Fall 2021!

By EC-CHAP

June

*"I realized
June had never been
just a month
music...
never just a tremble
on my lips
warmth was never
merely a blanket."*

- Sanober Khan

We are planning for the GRAND REOPENING of The Packing House September 2021. As long as vaccinations continue to progress favorably, and critical health metrics continue to decline, we will be prepared.

As indicated last month, we will be highlighting different artists and films each month in the coming issues of the *Neighbors* paper leading up to our Fall Reopening. This month we will highlight the artists and film screening scheduled for the month of October. These include LA based singer-songwriter and keyboardist Bob Malone, Spiritual Medium Maura Geist, the Greg Abate Quartet, and AJ Jansen "Outlaw Woman of Country Show". Our film screening planned for October is "Begin Again".

EC-CHAP is seeking applicants for our Artist-In-Residence (AIR) Program. Currently, the Artist Residency is for a term of one (1) year, with possible renewal. Program details and application is available at: <https://www.ec-chap.org/artist-in-residence>.

The Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery and the Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum will be closed during the month of June. Please join us for the Opening of a 10-week exhibit, *The Mill Works Artist Community*, 4:00pm, Saturday, July 17th.

If your EC-CHAP membership has expired, or if you are interested in becoming a new member, please visit: <https://www.ec-chap.org/membership-information> or give a call (518-791-9474).

EC-CHAP is looking for volunteers! Julie Engelke, our Volunteer Coordinator is seeking individuals that may possess video production and social media experience; as well as those that would just like to lend a helping hand. If you are interested in learning how you may be able to help support this effort, please contact Julie at: volunteer@ec-chap.org.

We will continue to stream our Virtual Talent Showcase on the **2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm** through September. We plan to resume our **LIVE monthly Talent Showcase on Wednesday, October 13th!** Please consider participating by sharing your talent, or just join us to see and hear local and regional creatives sharing their talent (see details below). Our next Virtual Talent Showcase is scheduled to stream at **7:00pm, Wednesday, June 9th** (all files must be received by Wednesday, June 2nd).

We leave you with the following:

*"When you have a dream,
you've got to grab it and never let go."*

- Carol Burnett

Peace.
EC-CHAP Board

OCTOBER 2021 HIGHLIGHTS AT THE PACKING HOUSE

An Evening with Singer/Songwriter & Keyboardist Bob Malone" (Rock/R&B). Saturday, October 2nd, 7:30pm.

BOB MALONE has toured the world as a solo artist for over two decades and has played keyboards with rock legend John Fogerty since 2011. Classically trained, with a degree in jazz and a lifetime playing rock & roll clubs, theatres, and arenas, Bob's sound is a one-of-a-kind hybrid of rock, blues, and New Orleans R&B, delivered

with high-energy piano virtuosity and a voice all his own.

Born and raised in New Jersey, he has lived in New York City, New Orleans and Boston, and is currently based in Los Angeles. As a solo artist, Bob plays around 100 shows a year in the US, UK, Europe and Australia - including sets at Glastonbury Music Festival (UK), Colne Blues Festival (UK), Long Beach Bayou Fest (US), Falcon Ridge Folk Fest (US), Blue Mountains Music Fest (AU), and Narooma Blues Fest (AU). He has been featured twice at WWOZ Piano Night in New Orleans, and has opened for Boz Scaggs, Subdudes, The Neville Brothers, Rev. Al Green, BoDeans, Dr. John, Marcia Ball and many others.

As a member of John Fogerty's band, he has played with Bruce Springsteen, Bob Seger, Jackson Browne, Jimmy Buffett, and Alan Toussaint; playing the New Orleans JazzFest, Radio City Music Hall, The Hollywood Bowl and is featured on the 2019 concert album/DVD "50 Year Trip: Live at Red Rocks."

Bob's 2016 Mojo DeLuxe album went to #1 on the IBBA UK radio chart and was one of the top 100 most played CDs on the Roots Music Report radio charts. His latest album, Good people, will be out in May 2021 and singles from it are already being played on WFUV NYC, KCSN L.A., and SiriusXM The Loft. Bob's music is heard regularly on Dr. Phil, and The Rachel Ray Show, NCSI New Orleans, Entertainment Tonight and he has appeared on The Late Show With David Letterman and The View with John Fogerty.

Kurzweil Music Systems chose Bob to make the demo videos for their new Forte digital piano, and he is endorsed by QSC Audio, Hammond Organ and Fishman Acoustic Transducers. (Bob Malone)

He's been a session player for Ringo Starr and Avril Lavigne, and his recording of "You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch" was the theme in the 2018 Illumination/ Universal movie trailers for The Grinch.

Tickets: \$25.00 online / \$30.00 at the door.

"An Evening with Spiritual Medium Maura Geist". Friday, October 8th, 7:30pm.

The evening will begin with a discussion lead by Maura. She will discuss when and how this unique ability began, what a Medium is and her understanding of the Afterlife. She will also give an overview of how a reading is done, methods used in the process and what she will need from the audience. Maura will then make connections for the audience members and bring loving and healing messages from loved ones that have crossed over.

Based on experience and general audience attendance, approximately ten readings are typically able to be completed during an evening session. There will be a brief intermission ending with a Q & A.

A complimentary copy of Maura's new book, "God, the Soul and the Afterlife Through the Eyes of a Medium" will be available at the door for the first ten (10) attendees. Life is a beautiful thing, it is our journey of learning, but it is even more interesting through the Eyes of a Medium. This is my journey and all the things I have learned about God, our Souls, and the Afterlife. - Maura Geist

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

"Greg Abate Quartet" (Bee-Bop). Saturday, October 9th, 7:30pm.

GREG ABATE jazz saxophonist, flutist, composer continues as an International Jazz/Recording Artist with 225 days a year touring the globe.

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 and from there 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.

Greg recorded his first CD Live At Birdland NYC in 1991 on the Candid Jazz Label with the trio of James Williams, Rufus Reid and Kenny Washington. To this date Greg has recorded over 17 other recordings as leader.

Greg is currently a Whaling City Sound recording artist. His newest album, Magic Dance is planned for release April 2021.

Greg is also an adjunct professor of Jazz Studies at Rhode Island College and is also a very active jazz clinician with co. sponsorship from the Conn-Selmer Instrument Co., conducting workshops and master classes through the U.S and abroad. Greg was inducted into the RI Music Hall of Fame in 2016.

Greg will be joined at The Packing House for this recording by Matt deChamplain on piano, Lou Bocciarelli on bass, and Ben Bilello on drums.

Tickets: \$25.00 online / \$30.00 at the door.

"AJ Jansen featuring The Outlaw Women of Country Music Show" (Country). Saturday, October 23rd, 7:30pm.

AJ JANSEN has a long history and love of music. Music and performance are a core part of who Jansen is, and she loves sharing her passion with others. She's been performing since age 6 and writing songs since age 10, surrounded by music from a 1st generation Polish family who encouraged her to pursue her artistic dreams.

She grew up listening to various instruments played in the home like trumpet and harmonica and lots of singing, there was never dull moment. From Rock, Pop even Polka music. But it was the sounds of Country and Folk music on Sunday mornings that grew in her soul.

Jansen first hit Nashville stages in 2006 after winning the Connecticut Country Music Association's "Female Vocalist of the Year" award. Since then, she's performed at countless venues - from New York's The Bitter End, to Nashville's iconic Tootsies, to headlining Hartford's Infinity Music Hall and Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut- traveling back and forth between Connecticut and Tennessee. Along the way, she's had the opportunity to open for artists like Phil Vassar, James Montgomery and James Otto.

Outlaw Women of Country is the Brain-child of AJ Jansen Singer and Songwriter in her own right. Growing up listening to just some of these amazing Female Artists sparked an idea that would create a show that journeys through the Songs by Kitty Wells to Shania Twain and more.

AJ wanted to pay tribute to the Artists and songs she would study, listen to and learn from as she became an Artist herself. The artists for the musical revue were carefully selected and put together in order of decades that follow the evolution of Country Music. Often times the audience will say after a show "Wow I haven't heard that song in a long time" and that's what this show is all about bringing back songs and Female Artists that bring along memories we cherish and new ones that are created. It's a listening, toe tapping good time.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

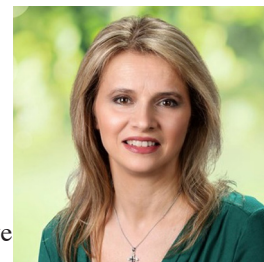
Film Screening

"Begin Again" (R). 2013. Friday, October 21st, 7:00pm

"Begin Again" was written and directed by John Carney, starring Keira Knightley, Mark Ruffalo, and Adam Levine.

"The film portrays "a chance encounter between a down-and-out music-business executive and a young singer-songwriter, new to Manhattan, turns into a promising collaboration between the two talents." -IMDb

"Gretta (Keira Knightley) and her songwriting partner/lover



Dave (Adam Levine) head for New York when he lands a record deal with a major label. However, Gretta is suddenly left on her own when Dave gives in to the temptations that come with his newfound success. Things take a turn for the better for her when Dan (Mark Ruffalo), a disgraced record executive, discovers Gretta performing in a club. A mutually life-changing bond forms between the pair as they work together on Gretta's first album." - Rotten Tomatoes 83% Tomatometer

"Ruffalo and Knightley perform subtle magic. On a bench, ear buds in and lost in the music, they forge an intimacy you can't pin down." - Peter Travers, Rolling Stone, JUNE 26, 2014 | 3/4

"Absolutely LOVED this film, especially Mark Ruffalo's joyful portrayal of a down-on-his-luck kinda guy (a truly pleasant oxymoron)!" Susan Wloszczyna, RogerEbert.com, June 27, 2014

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

Doors 6:30pm / Show 7:00pm. Soft drinks and snacks available. We are pleased to offer our exclusive "BYOB&F" model - Bring Your Own Beverage & Food (Wine & Beer Only - I.D. Required).

For information, please call: 518-791-9474

EC-CHAP ACOUSTIC ARTIST SERIES

"Twice Around" with Curtis Brand (Folk/Indie). Saturday, September 18th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.



"Ramblin' Dan Stevens" (Blues). Saturday, September 25th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

"Eric Sommer" (Blues/Americana). Saturday, November 20th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

"Tracy Walton" (Folk/Indie). Saturday, December 4th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.



Ramblin' Dan Stevens, Eric Sommer and Tracy Walton (l-r)

EC-CHAP JAZZ SERIES

"Luke Hendon" (Gypsy Jazz). Saturday, November 6th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$20.00 online / \$25.00 at the door.

"An Intimate Evening with Grammy Nominee Nicole Zuraitis (A Holiday Theme). Saturday, December 18th, 7:30pm.

Tickets: \$25.00 online / \$30.00 at the door.



Luke Hendon (left) and Nicole Zuraitis

EC-CHAP VIRTUAL TALENT SHOWCASE

EC-CHAP has been offering our LIVE Talent Showcase since 2016. Our Talent Showcase is designed as a platform for local and regional artists to share their talent in front of a live audience. As always, acoustic musicians, film makers, poets, comedians, jugglers, puppeteers, and creative artists of all ages are invited to perform at The Packing House. Visit www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming for general details.

Since the arrival of COVID-19, EC-CHAP has been offering monthly online programming beginning in April 2020, and launched our Virtual Talent Showcase beginning July 2020.

We are 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.

If you would like to participate in our Virtual Talent Showcase, please give us a call for instructions to upload your videos. Each participant may submit multiple files up to a cumulative maximum run time of 15-minutes. All video files should be submitted in Landscape mode (Horizontal format), and .mp4 file format. Video files will need to be received one week prior to streaming, or by the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Our next Virtual Talent Showcase is scheduled to stream at 7:00pm, Wednesday, June 9th (all files must be received by Wednesday, June 2nd). Visit www.thepackinghouse.us/upcoming for general details.



EC-CHAP FILM SERIES

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

"Once" (R). 2007. Friday, November 18th, 7:00pm



"It's A Wonderful Life" (PG). 1946. Friday, December 16th, 7:00pm



Tickets, Reservations, CANCEL-LATIONS, and Contact

Tickets for all shows and program registrations for the Fall are available for purchase online at www.thepackinghouse.us/

upcoming; or may be purchased at the door the day of the event. Unless otherwise specified, doors open 30-minutes prior to show time.

Unless specified otherwise, all performances will feature EC-CHAP's Exclusive Bring Your Own Beverage & Food "BYOB&F"™ model - wine & beer ONLY (Not applicable to Meetings, School Programs, and First Sunday events). Snacks and soft drinks will also be available. You can also bring your paid ticket to Willington Pizza House (or WP Too) for eat-in or take-out the night of the show and receive 15% off your meal purchase.

If you're feeling sassy, SPECIFICALLY ask for "The Packing House" pizza! You won't go wrong. Visit www.thepackinghouse.us for the secret recipe.

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

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

Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This month I'd like to talk about two things, estimates and safe driving courses. Estimates are something that has become problematic lately because most of the calls we get are looking for an estimate over the phone. Safe driving courses are something older drivers may want to consider for two reasons. They usually offer a discount on your policy and they really help to review the rules of the road.

The word estimate is something that I hate. The phone calls for an estimate on a repair usually comes from a person who is not a regular customer. This means we have no history or information on their vehicle. At this point the best information you can give a repair facility is your vehicle's VIN number. The VIN, for the most part can give us enough information to help us give you a closer estimate of the repair you are asking about. There are some repairs, however, where the vehicle needs to be checked visually before an estimate is given. I remember a brake repair estimate given that covered hoses, calipers, rotors, and pads replacement. This was an over the phone estimate and the vehicle was not inspected. The person made a comment on our website later about how they had the brake repair done for \$400.00 less than what we gave them over the phone and how we were going to take advantage of them. This is one reason I stopped giving an estimate without checking the vehicle first. We receive some phone calls for an estimate on repairs and if the truth was known the customer's vehicle was already being repaired some where else. Remember some repair facilities low ball repair estimates. Estimates are not a contract so you could get a phone call with a higher repair cost as your vehicle is being repaired.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was a safe driving course. My wife greeted me the other day when I came home from work with a conversation she had with our insurance company. They said that we could get a discount on our insurance if we took a safe driving course online. She said that AARP offered a 4-hour safe driving course online. Well, 4 hours in front of a computer is just not me, but after having done it, I'm glad I took the course. The information was not only informative, but it was also interesting. I did not know that left hand turns resulted in more fender benders and fatalities than anything else. The position of your seat, seat belt, and head rest should be adjusted to fit you properly. This should allow you to touch the gas and brake pedal using your full foot. The air bag in your steering wheel pad should be at least 10 inches from you when you are driving so it doesn't hurt you if deployed in a crash. Vehicle maintenance, state laws, different sign configurations, and pavement markings are just a few of the things that were covered in the course. So, if you are looking to save money just like the auto insurance commercial on TV with the singing hood ornament, it is worth the time and effort to review driving safety and rules of the road with a safe driving course. Until next month...

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.



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Don't Let Stigma Stop You From Doing Right By Your Kids

By Michelle M. Baughman



Parenting decisions should not be influenced by stigma. Often I meet parents who suspect that their bright, precocious, child is on the autism spectrum, or they suspect their child may have ADHD, Sensory Processing Disorder, mild dyslexia, or some other neurodivergence...but they decide not to have their child diagnosed because they do not want to "label" their child. This fear of a "label" is actually fear of the stigma that ignorant people attach to "labels." It is essentially prioritizing what other ill-informed people think over doing right by your child. Which, when you really think about it, is a ridiculous thing for a parent to do! Especially since a good parent's ultimate responsibility is to put the needs of their child above their own. So failing to get your child the help they need in order to have a successful life outcome just because you want to avoid feeling momentarily uncomfortable if and when someone makes an ignorant comment is neglectful parenting.

An official diagnosis is important for children who are educated in the public school system because it opens the door to academic supports and accommodations. (Public schools are not compelled by law to make any educational accommodations for a student who does not have an official diagnosis). But even more importantly, it opens the door to understanding and acceptance: Instead of teachers, coaches, scout leaders, and other adults in your child's life being frustrated with your bright but "lazy," "disorganized/irresponsible," "selfish/thoughtless," or "flaky/day dreaming" child who "isn't living up to his/her potential," an official diagnosis gives a new framework through which to view your child: These harmful character assignments are suddenly seen as challenges with executive functioning skills that are the result of a developmental delay. It is not something the child chose, nor is their struggle to meet expectations willful. (Indeed, all children want to please the adults in their lives and earn their esteem. No child willfully elects to be held in low regard by the adults in his or her life. As Dr. Ned Hallowell says, "If they can do better, they do do better").

Character assignments are foisted upon a child when the adults who are frustrated with the child's lack of meeting expectations view the child as choosing to willfully flaunt their expectations. Unfortunately, this is the default assumption when no other explanation (such as a diagnosis) is offered. And it's really a shame, because this causes damaged self-esteem and a lifetime of self-loathing and co-dependency for the child. Especially when the child is doing the best they are capable of, and yet they are constantly accused of not giving their best effort because they failed to measure up to expectations as well as their peers. This phenomenon of having one's reality denied and then having an alternate, distorted explanation of reality imposed upon one is a form of psychological abuse called gaslighting. Gaslighting is very damaging and insidious because it covertly sows seeds of doubt in oneself, making the person question their own perceptions, intentions, and judgements. It creates cognitive dissonance, rendering the person dependent upon others for emotional support, thus destroying any chance of achieving autonomy. (When you consider that the desired outcome of child rearing is to create an autonomous adult, it is easy to see how very damaging it can be to let a neurodivergent child remain undiagnosed)!

This criticism from teachers, parents, scout leaders, coaches, etc. that results in gaslighting a child happens when they observe a bright, seemingly capable child's performance and draw the following conclusions:

"He rushes through his work, making careless mistakes."
"She is always day-dreaming and not paying attention in class."

"He is not paying attention to details and he doesn't bother to read the instructions."

"She doesn't make an effort to get along with her peers/siblings"

"He refuses to stay seated during seat work."

"She is too sensitive, bursting into tears at the slightest things."

"He doesn't remember to raise his hand and he blurts out answers and interrupts others."

"She is always complaining and finding fault with others."

"He doesn't think before he acts/doesn't consider the consequences of his actions."

"She is impatient and pushy."

"He never finishes his work."

"She procrastinates/has trouble getting started on her work."

"He or she is forgetful, always losing things and not turning in assignments."

All of these are different ways of the outside observer saying that the child is not trying hard enough" or "not giving their best effort," but they also describe challenges with executive functions. Executive functions are neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation that allow a person to manage oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. They are involved in how the prefrontal cortex of the brain plans, prioritizes, organizes, makes decisions, manages time, inhibits impulsivity, manages transitions, sustains concentration, focus, and attention, initiates and follows through on a task, and allows one to be self-aware and to regulate one's emotions. A person's working memory (the ability to temporarily maintain and manipulate the information involved in a complex task) is also an executive function.

So when a teacher accuses a student of making "careless mistakes" she may actually be observing a deficit in the executive function (EF) of working memory. When a teacher accuses a student of daydreaming she may actually be observing a deficit in the EF of sustaining concentration, attention, and focus. Daydreaming could also indicate an EF challenge with emotional regulation, because when a child is overwhelmed they may retreat to a rich inner world of their imagination where they can take refuge from whatever it is that is going on around them that they are not feeling equipped to deal with. In the cause of undiagnosed autistic girls, this could indicate sensory overwhelm from the environment such as noise, smells, fluorescent lighting, physical proximity/crowded spaces, visual clutter of the classroom, etc. Other examples from the bulleted list above that could indicate an EF challenge with emotional regulation include "not getting along with others," "always complaining and finding fault with others," and "too sensitive, bursting into tears at the slightest things." (I find it ironic that adults will actually use the word "sensitive" in their criticism, when that word is actually hitting the nail on the head in terms of what is actually going on, yet they completely miss it!) "Not paying attention to details and seeming to not read the instructions" can indicate EF challenges with inhibition/impulsivity as well as working memory. (The student may have read the instructions, but poor working memory might cause him or her to forget what the instructions said while performing other mental processes involved in the task). Other examples from the bulleted list above that could indicate EF challenges with impulsivity include "not being able to remain seated during seat work" "interrupting others and blurting out answers without raising one's hand," being "impatient and pushy," as well as "not thinking before he acting/not considering the consequences one's actions." (Again, this last one the quintessential description of impulsivity, and yet teachers completely miss this most obvious indication of EF challenges)! Also obvious, "never finishes work" and "procrastinates/has trouble getting started on work" indicate challenges with the EFs of initiating and following through on tasks.

Being criticized for not trying hard enough when one is doing their best kills motivation. Perhaps this affords some insight into why kids drop out of school? Hearing a steady stream of criticisms about oneself is not good for one's mental well-being. According to researcher Jenara Nerenberg, neurodivergent students hear about twenty times more negative criticisms per day than their neurotypical peers. The INSAR Policy brief 2021, stated that the suicide rate of autistic individuals is seven times higher than the general population, and for autistic women, it is thirteen times higher. As Jenara Nerenberg wrote, "It's no wonder that we [undiagnosed neurodivergent individuals] walk around with unnecessary amounts of shame, guilt, depression, and anxiety. Our reality has not been validated."

It is important to remember that a diagnosis is not an excuse. It is information. It explains why the student is struggling to meet expectations, but it does not make the student exempt from meeting those expectations. A good analogy to help children understand this concept is that their diagnosis is like a detour sign: If the route you were intending to travel is not passable because it is under construction, there will be detour signs directing you to an alternate route to your destination. This alternate route may not be as fast or as direct, and it may take more effort because you might have to travel a longer distance, but it will still get you to your intended destination. It may seem unfair because other classmates may have been able to take the shorter, quicker, more direct route, but in the end, you will all get to the same destination point, and that really is

all that matters. (Without the diagnosis, the student might not reach the destination, just as a re-routed traveler without benefit of detour signs telling them where to go might end up lost and not make it to their desired destination). The information from the assessments in the diagnosis, like the detour signs, guides one, letting you know what you need to do to reach your goal.

Another common conflation that parents will cite for not getting their child a proper diagnosis is that they think that a diagnosis will cause the child to stop trying or cause them to believe that they are incapable because the diagnosis means that they are "stupid." This can happen when people attach a "meaning" (stigma) to a diagnosis, and the child internalizes this meaning (internalized stigma). Stigma is a function of ignorance. (Ignorance is the lack of knowledge, learning, information, etc.), and the best way to combat it is by becoming informed. The children who do not internalize stigma are the ones whose parents are proactive about learning about the child's diagnosis, teaching the child about their diagnosis and how to advocate effectively for themselves, and who model positive attitudes towards the diagnosis.

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.

She may be contacted via email: LifeCoach.PELC@gmail.com, cell phone: (860) 207-4263, or her online presence: <http://linkedin.com/in/michelle-m-baughman-28b5a92b> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1015628291826263/> <https://www.alignable.com/storrs-mansfield-ct/personal-evolution-life-coaching-2>

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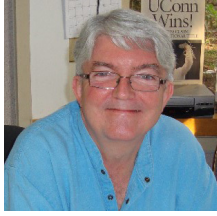
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Community Media and Regional Arts

By John Murphy

We made it through our Covid-19 madness, and it is great to see so many arts organizations planning their recovery and restoration. Good greetings and good grief, we are somehow making it through this COVID-19 crisis, and sometimes despite ourselves! So glad spring has sprung, and warm weather arrives...just in time.



This month's column features local media and arts news and updates about projects underway:

1. Expanded arts radio coverage for entire eastern Connecticut region—WILI and WECS
2. New radio series with Connecticut writers continues in June—July
3. Connecticut Arts Alliance—statewide arts coverage for recovery and restoration
4. Update Report: Mansfield Agricultural Development Project on Browns Road with Agbotics
5. Make Music Day 2021—Summer Solstice Celebration on June 21

Expanded arts radio coverage for entire eastern Connecticut region—WILI and WECS

I am pleased to share good news that I am resuming the weekly radio series about the arts in our region at WILI AM/FM! Eastern Connecticut Arts Review airs every Wednesday from 5:30—6:00 pm, following another arts-related program, Connecticut East...This Week, which airs at 5:05 after the news. Together, the two shows give WILI a solid hour for the arts every Wednesday!



When I produced the WILI arts program several years ago it was wonderful to meet and share the studio with so many artists and organizations across the region. I missed all of you and I sensed a genuine and growing spirit of community and development before the Pandemic changed our reality in so many ways.

Now that the worst is behind us (I hope!) this series will focus on how people and groups made it through the storm and how everyone is planning for recovery and restoration. Current events, arts-related news, and information about resources, training and opportunities will be featured. And please consider joining me back in the studio when the timing is best for your efforts—everyone at the studio, including me, is fully vaccinated and we have a clean and safe space for radio to shine a light on all the good news to come.

Our first batch of programs featured guests from across our region:

Bruce John & Therese Jenkins—Bread Box Folk Series to Benefit Covenant Soup Kitchen
 Jim Rivers—Town of Windham Town Manager/
 Downtown Development and the Arts
 Matt Fox—Make Music Alliance/Statewide Summer Solstice Music Celebration
 Deb Mathieson—Cultural Coalition Serving Southeastern & Northeastern Connecticut
 Cathy Shires—Windham Regional Arts Council
 Brian Cohen—Positive Expression and 2021 Connecticut Arts Hero!
 Richard Wright—Coventry Art Guild

Programs are broadcast live and video recorded. Interviews will be posted on my website and YouTube channel for on-demand access anytime to maximize exposure and outreach for all guests: www.humanartsmedia.com Reach out via email at john@humanartsmedia.com to schedule a conversation and we can make the most of our summer together. Send flyers and notices to keep me current with news to share.

Radio series with Connecticut writers continues—musics, methods, manifestations Connecticut Arts Alliance Radio Series—Post-Pandemic Arts Restoration and Recovery

This new radio series with Connecticut writers continues after a successful launch last month. It was great to share time and conversation with people dedicated to the power and craft of words in many forms and contexts.

Thanks again to poet, teacher, and editor John Stanizzi for helping me connect to this wonderful community! We include writers of all styles and levels of experience. The focus is on the art of creating meaning and sharing emotion through the blank page or with sound.



Interviews and readings are featured during *The Pan American Express*, Tuesdays from 12-4 pm on ECSU Radio WECS at 90.1 FM and www.wecsfm.com. The June—July schedule will include:

Dianne Bilyak
 Ed Ahern
 Barbara Fulton Jennes
 Laurel Peterson
 Jon Anderson
 Pegi Deitz Shea

The schedule is still being confirmed as this issue goes to press—it will be posted along with the interviews at www.humanartsmedia.com and on my YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_JZT9nwKpWuofM-dyzPrUig/featured. Please subscribe for these conversations and many other features—enjoy!



The *Connecticut Arts Alliance* is a statewide non-profit organization that works to build political, financial, and grassroots support to ensure that arts are a vital part of life for everyone in Connecticut. CAA engages artists of all kinds, arts leaders, and members of the community with regular advocacy updates and signature programs like Create the Vote and Arts Day at the Capitol. More information at www.ctartsalliance.org.

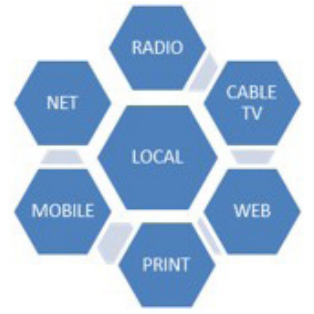
I am proud to serve as a (volunteer) board member of the Connecticut Arts Alliance. I connected my media coverage of the arts in all forms with the people and organizational members of CAA to co-create a new radio series about the arts across our state. The link below will take you to the archive of broadcasts and webcasts from *The Pan American Express*, Tuesdays from 12-4 pm on WECS 90.1 FM and www.wecsfm.com. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5AN89RCIR-7cUsQp54HCzzy37eaGU_dk Recent interviews:

Jackie Lightfield from Norwalk 2.0 discussed the function and power of creative placemaking as a catalyst for building community and revitalizing downtowns—using economic development and data to bring art and artists to public places, sparking ideas about how to make the city better, and creating fun! **Norwalk 2.0** engages residents, businesses, and community organizations to work together and create an authentic, creative, economically diverse, and sustainable future. We also discussed the current working conditions for gig workers, free-lance and Indy artists and how they can plan for the post-Covid new normal. More information and an inventory of projects with history is at www.norwalk2.org.

Shanley Rowe from ASAP! reported that their theme for 2021-2022 is “Community” and they are looking at that term through the lens of the plurality of communities we all belong to. If we feel isolated in one community, there are still others that embrace us! So often we do not realize the many roles we play and our responsibility to each community in making the world a better place. How do the communities we affiliate with reflect the diversity within themselves? How do communities collaborate? How do communities damage and/or uplift others? **ASAP!** is also an educational organization that engages classrooms, teachers, and curriculum in subjects like social studies, science, and English. More information at www.asapct.org

Chris Hisey from the Greater Connecticut Youth Orchestra shared his journey and experiences in music from being a youth member of the orchestra in the 1980s to his current service as Music Director. The orchestra has been providing music education and performance opportunities to young musicians since 1961. This developmentally progressive music program offers ensembles the opportunity to play at the highest level both individually and collectively. Members are selected by competitive audition and come from over 30 communities in Connecticut. GCTYO strives for diversity and inclusivity in a social

environment that is both fun and musically challenging, providing all types of symphonic literature to enrich their musical education. More information about their community and event schedules available at www.gctyo.org.



I created a new section within my YouTube channel, dedicated to CAA, so all interviews can be shared widely as a common resource and to maximize exposure and outreach for guests. More information at my regional media hub, www.humanartsmedia.com.

Update: Mansfield Agricultural Development Project on Browns Road with Agbotic Inc.



An application is active and pending in Mansfield for the construction of a new agricultural business at 438 Browns Road by *Agbotic Inc.*, a company based in Sackets Harbor in upstate New York. A smart farm was proposed that would include six greenhouses, a wash-and-pack building with a small office and two restrooms. Local journalism coverage of this issue is limited and contributes to a significant gap in public understanding.

I share this story in *Neighbors* to reach a larger audience because every town and city is struggling with how to grow budgets and not sell out the values and qualities that make local everyday life precious and unique. Watch what happens in Mansfield for a peek into the future of how local government balances citizen needs and interests with the needs and interest of private developers of all kinds.

I recently broadcast interviews with Mansfield resident Toivo Kask and Mayor Antonia Moran about the project and I appreciated their willingness to share history, perspective, and context for placing the project specifics in a larger frame of how towns plan and manage the process for growing local economies and preserve quality of life. I am actively seeking other interviews with folks who want to share, with as many different viewpoints as I can find. A conscious and engaged and active local citizenry that attends meetings (that can be dry and wonky, yes), and follows websites and speaks their truth at hearings is, for me, more important than just money in creating a success that goes beyond the short term goals and quarterly reports, to our long term quality of life.

A second public hearing is planned for **6:30 pm on June 7, 2021** at the Inland Wetlands Agency/Planning Zoning Commission Meeting. The Town Hall recently re-opened (great news!) but check the website to confirm if the meeting will be in-person or virtual. The meeting will be live-streamed and recorded for those who cannot attend. I will record and broadcast the public comment section of the meeting, as I did for the first round of comments on May 3.

My understanding is that this will be the final opportunity for information sharing and comments from the public. As expected, there has been some local heat developing from those already opposed and those caught by surprise, and those in support. Locals are still learning about this development effort and want more information while the legal process is still underway.

I have two more interviews planned for my WECS program *The Pan American Express* on Tuesday June 1:

Local resident Scott E. Rhoades at 1:00 PM will share his concerns as a neighbor to the project.

Agbotic Inc Project Manager John Prete at 3:15 PM will provide an overview of the whole project in the context of the growth of smart farming technology across the country, and address some of the questions that were raised at the May 3 hearing. John is filing new documents with the town that will provide additional details and interested people should look for copies on the website before the June 7 hearing.

All radio interviews and all public comments will be available at www.humanartsmedia.com

continued on next page

1. Agbotic Inc. application documents, agendas, announcements, including videos of meetings with project presentations: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/2123/Proposed-Projects>

February 18, 2021 Economic Development Commission Meeting

March 17, 2021 Conservation Commission Meeting (Joint Meeting with Agriculture and Parks and Natural Resources Committees)

2. Additional project documents and reports: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/620> <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/1519/Planning-and-Zoning-Commission>

Make Music Day 2021—Summer Solstice Celebration on June 21

Make Music Day is modeled after a Parisian tradition (Fête de la Musique) that began in 1982 as a tribute to the Summer Solstice. More specifically, each June 21st Paris is filled with musicians of all kinds performing on sidewalks, lawns, balconies, in parks, etc. for anyone to enjoy at no cost. In 2007, Fête de la Musique crossed the Atlantic with the debut of Make Music New York. Ever since, more than 1000 cities around the world have been starting their own Make Music days.



Make Music Southeastern and Northeastern CT features musicians of all abilities and music from any genre. Everyone is invited to participate virtually and for live performances (in accordance with state and local guidelines), in this international day of music by performing, providing an outdoor space, appreciating, or volunteering. All are welcome to participate- no experience necessary! Join a diverse community of musicians and help fill every town and city in Southeastern CT with music.

To get involved there is more information at www.culturesect.org and www.makemusicday.org. I will also be providing updates on my WILI and WECS radio programs.

So that is it for now as we move closer to the new normal. My best to you for a healthy, happy, and peaceful summer 2021. And I look forward to seeing many of you at the Shaboo 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Shaboo Stage on August 28!!! It is music history for Willi at its best—be there and feel the spirits fly on the green... blessings and congrats to David and Bruce and the Shaboo Family of Friends!

As always, thanks for reading, for listening and for keeping the faith during these hard times.

John Murphy
john@humanartsmedia.com

Mole Love

Though the mole's eyes are tiny and weak
His sharp ears hear the littlest squeak
Could that be how fate hooks him up with his mate
To his little wife gentle and meek?

Do their tunnels by fate or chance meet
As they're searching for earthworms to eat
Do they promise to love below or above
Tender vows of love do they repeat?

Do they break through the ground in the spring
Just to hear as the peeper frogs sing
Under the moon they're enthralled by the tune
Their little hearts soar on the wing

They feel more than see the vast night
With the moon hurling down rays of light
The soft air is clearing their ultra-fine hearing
There's a symphony playing tonight

The moles' little joy so complete
The dark danger they're daring to cheat
The fierce owl is near but they're feeling no fear
So enthralled by the siren song sweet.

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham

Poetry at Roseland Park

Submitted by Karen Warinsky

Four free poetry readings will be held this summer at Roseland Park, 205 Roseland Park Road in Woodstock, CT, in the beautiful outdoor amphitheater. This series will be held from 2-4 p.m. on the following Sundays: June 6, July 25, August 15 and Sept. 26. These readings are for people ages 14 and up. Wine will be served. Folding chairs or camp chairs are recommended for a more comfortable time. Besides featured readers there will be an open mic segment at each event as time allows.

This is the second year for these events and the series was expanded due to its great popularity. Covid guidelines will be met.

Some of the summer's featured poets will include National Beat Poet Laureate for 2020, Paul Richmond; Candace Curran, twice named as Western Massachusetts Poets' Seat Laureate; finalist in the Montreal International Poetry Contest and Woodstock resident Karen Warinsky; New Jersey author and founder of the non-profit collaborative, ARTS By The People, Paul Rabinowitz; T'Challa Williams, co-founder of Hartford's L.I. T., which presents monthly literary events for youth; Pomfret author and organizer of the Quiet Corner's branch of the Connecticut Poetry Society, Christine Kalafus; UCONN Assistant professor and author Brian Sneed; authors Robert Eugene Perry, Dina Stander, Gerald Yelle, David Wyman, author and Professor Emerita, UMass, Amherst Janine Roberts, and Heidelberg University student Jayce Porter.

This event is being sponsored in part by Sharpe Hill Winery, Linemaster Switch Corporation, Brunarhans, Inc., CR Premier Properties, St. Onge & Brouillard law firm, Weiss, Hale and Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors, the Woodstock Airport, Ashford's Xtra Mart, Bank Hometown, Charter Oak Credit Union and The Rusty Relic.

This series is being organized by Mrs. Warinsky and she can be reached at karen.warinsky@gmail.com.

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

Dear Reader-

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

T. King, Publisher

EC-CHAP
Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance, Inc.

Seeking Applicants for Artist-In-Residence

The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) is seeking visual artists interested in an Artist Residency located in Willington, CT. The term of the residency is one (1) year, with possible renewal.

Please visit www.ec-chap.org/artist-in-residence to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by calling: 518.791.9474.

WWW.EC-CHAP.ORG
156 River Road, Suite 2106A, Willington, CT 06279 | 518.791.9474 | info@ec-chap.org

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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Commentary

Black, Blue, and Bruised: A Nation Scarred by a Dangerous Man

By Donna Dufresne

Some Americans may think that we dodged a bullet literally and figuratively when Donald Trump lost the 2020 election. But now is not the time for complacency or crawling back under the covers. Like a predatory criminal, he is lurking in the corners of the American psyche, continuing his role as the Divider in Chief. Remnants of his rending of democratic values and the erosion of the Constitution can be seen in misguided chatter on local community Facebook pages. The recent arrest of a high school student who posted racist comments about a fellow student has tickled the outrage of those who continue the racist narrative of Donald Trump, who found the Constitution inconvenient unless it benefited him personally.

Ironically, there has been a sudden flutter of interest in the First Amendment when it comes to protecting racist behavior, bigotry, and hate speech. This phenomenon is akin to the flurry of Second Amendment rights rhetoric and the spike in gun sales every time some crazy white dude commits a mass shooting. As Governor Gavin Newsom of California recently said, “What the hell is wrong in America?”

What is wrong with us, indeed. Our fragile democracy took a beating during the Trump administration and our Constitution remains bruised and battered by the continued attacks by those who drank the Trump Kool-Aid. It appears they care little for the Constitution except when it can be used as a convenient weapon to protect the white supremacist narrative.

One must wonder, where were these constitutional converts when Colin Kaepernick and other NFL players exercised *their* First Amendment rights to kneel for justice? Where was their outrage when Trump threatened to turn military troops on peaceful Black Lives Matter protesters? Where were they when Trump systematically chipped away at our free press by manipulating truth with “alternative facts” and spreading the Big Lie, one of many attempts to replace the press with state propaganda? Where was their so-called religious sensibility when he threatened to close down mosques and torture and deport Muslims even if they were born citizens? And yes, where were they when Trump threatened to overturn the 14th Amendment, which protects the rights and citizenship of African Americans, Native Americans, and naturalized citizens of the United States? Clearly not on the side of justice for all.

Our entitlement is our undoing. We tend to take our rights of citizenship, the freedom of speech, religion, and a free press, for granted. Few are aware that we teetered close to the edge of losing it all, as exemplified during the 2015 campaign when Trump vowed to overturn the 14th Amendment. This is the amendment that in 1868 finally promised equality for African Americans, putting to rest the argument that Blacks were not citizens and therefore did not have constitutional rights. How is it possible that a man who knows nothing about the Constitution or American history, and who has obvious fascist, racist, and autocratic leanings—the antithesis of the ideals of a democratic republic—could weasel his way to the presidency? Did no one notice his fingers crossed behind his back when he took the oath of office to protect and uphold the Constitution? Of course, his main focus in the 14th Amendment was its clause about citizenship. He was aiming at illegal immigrants and their children who were born in the United States. Still, the audacity of trying to overturn one of the most important constitutional amendments through an act of Congress or executive order was in itself an act of treason. Not his first, and certainly not his last.

If not for the 14th Amendment we would not have overturned segregation or Jim Crow terrorism in the South. It gave the federal government the power to step in when individual states infringed upon the rights of citizens. Section 3 of the amendment focuses on rebellion, prohibiting anyone from being elected or appointed to a state or federal office after engaging in rebellion or treason. No wonder Trump hated one of the most sacred amendments in the Constitution!

Without the 14th amendment, our First Amendment rights would be rendered impotent. Before the Civil War and the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, the federal government had little power to intercede with state laws on behalf of citizens. The Constitution had not yet been fully tested in federal courts, and citizenship was yet to be defined. As early as 1836 Southern states reacted to the overwhelming number of petitions from white aboli-

tionists in the North with a gag rule making it illegal to even mention anti-slavery in Congress. Later, Southern states passed anti-sedition acts making it illegal to hold anti-slavery meetings or even possess anti-slavery propaganda. Clearly, the First Amendment rights of abolitionists (even white males who enjoyed full citizenship) to petition the government were being infringed upon. Yet they could not bring their case to the federal courts. Anti-federalists ruled the day, and states rights prevailed. Reuben Crandall—brother of Prudence Crandall, who ran the first school for Black girls in the U.S., as I recently wrote about in these pages—was arrested and tried for seditious libel for having used the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* to wrap his belongings in when he moved from Connecticut to Washington, D.C. First Amendment rights were not used in his defense.

The impotence of the federal government to protect First Amendment rights before the adoption of the 14th Amendment was played out in countless court cases from Prudence Crandall to Dred Scott. Anti-slavery activists used the Constitution and First Amendment rights to argue for the freedom of enslaved Africans and the right of free Blacks to an equal education and the rights afforded to other American citizens. In the Dred Scott case, the ruling judge, Roger Taney, the fifth Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was part of the Southern slaveholding aristocracy. His final opinion stated that all people of African descent, free or enslaved, were not United States

citizens and therefore had no right to sue in federal court. He went on to say that the Fifth Amendment protected slave-owners’ rights because enslaved workers were their legal property. If Donald Trump and his white supremacist tribe had succeeded in overturning the 14th Amendment, it would have been the final unraveling of democracy.

And yet we remain confused. While the converts of convenience duke out the meaning of free speech on social media and in the fascist court of Fox “news,” we forget that our constitutional rights do not protect us when we break the law. We are supposedly a nation of laws (depending on the color of one’s skin). Even though the Declaration of Independence (which inspired the writers of the Constitution), emphasized the inalienable right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” it is still against the law to steal and murder. And it is against the law to yell “Fire!” in a movie theater. Yet the fire that burns in the belly of the uber right has been stoked by the illusion that our constitutional freedoms protect us from the law itself. First Amendment rights such as freedom of speech have become the refuge of extreme conservatives igniting the National Rifle Association and white supremacist groups to commandeer social media. And because we Americans hold sacred our First Amendment rights such as freedom of speech, we have tolerated a culture of hate for too long. Liberals, moderates, and the media have remained silent while the maniac who once occupied the White House is holed up in his dark corner yelling “Fire!”



>> How a silver lining forms

>> It starts at sea.
 >> Tropical waters heat up.
 >> Warm air soars skyward.
 >> Cold air rushes to the void.
 >> Cold air warms up.
 >> Cycle repeats.
 >> Faster and faster—a 50,000 foot engine of air.
 >> At seventy four miles per hour it earns a name.
 >> Harvey, Irma, Katrina.
 >> Then landfall.
 >> Roads rendered useless.
 >> Buildings destroyed.
 >> Families stranded.
 >> But for a brief moment,
 >> A silver lining appears.
 >> People see neighbors instead of strangers.
 >> And labels that divide are forgotten.

>> But when rains ease,
 >> when clouds part,
 >> silver linings need not fade.

>> Let’s embrace our shared humanity.
 >> Let’s connect with one another.
 >> Let’s find our love for each other.
 >> Every single day.

>> Come together at lovehasnolabels.com



Art and Garden Tour of Northeastern CT - The Gardens

Submitted by Suzy Staubach

Saturday and Sunday, June 12 & 13, 10 am to 5 pm

This free self-guided tour features 11 artists' gardens displaying the works of 17 area artists. Enjoy paintings, sculpture, ceramics, woodwork, photography and other works of art in gardens in Ashford, Coventry, Mansfield and Willington. The gardens, which vary in style, include a handmade greenhouse, a hydroponic greenhouse, ponds and pools, a stone arch, paths, terraces and an abundance of flowers, shrubs, vegetables, trees and herbs. Art work will be available for purchase. All current Covid-19 protocols will be followed, including masks.

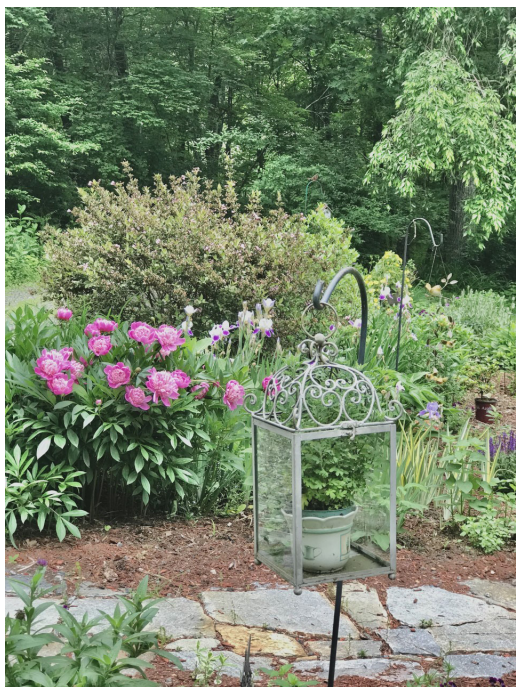
For more information and a map, please visit our website: ArtGardenCT.com

Ashford
Willow Tree Pottery, 24 Bebbington Road
Set in an old hayfield, this is a blowy cottage garden, casual in a country setting. It invites you to wander and stroll. There are arbors, informal hedges, flowers, and the sound of birds.
Artists: Host - Suzy Staubach, Guest artists - Barbara Katz, Gretchen Geromin, Lauren Merlo.

Windowhaven Studio, 179 Varga Road
These lush perennial gardens are designed as a place of refuge and inspiration. There are places to sit, observe and enjoy. Stone walks, a whimsical garden lantern and other accents bring joy.
Artist: Host- Debra Gag

Coventry
Barbara Timberman Watercolor Paintings, 1194 Main St.
A charming handmade greenhouse is at the heart of this abundant hillside cottage garden packed with flowers, herbs and vegetables. There are paths, a garden gate, stone terrace, and loads of charm.
Artists: Host - Barbara Timberman, Guest- Richard White

Storrs/Mansfield
Fenton River Studio, 287 Gurleyville Road
This enchanting and magical garden features a colorful riot of blossoms, cast cement leaves, sculptures, fairy houses, a Koi pond, and columns reminiscent of the classical era.
Artist: Host - Shauna Shane



Flying Dragon Farm, 533 Chaffeeville Road
The summer gardens are filled with the greens and reds of kale and tomatoes and bold, clown colored zinnias. Gold fish bask in the aquaponics greenhouse.

Artist: Host Mary Noonan
Khuyay Farm, 441 Warrenville Road (Route 89)
Alpaca graze in the fenced pasture. Chickens greet visitors. A bright cutting garden supplies the roadside flower stand in mid-summer.
Artists: Host - Janet Dauphin, Guest - Nora Charters

Kim Bova Photography, 587 Wormwood Hill Road
This is a naturalized landscape with herbs, vegetables, flowering shrubs, raspberries and a pretty dining terrace. It nurtures people and butterflies.
Artist: Host Kim Bova

Scott Rhoades Studio, 422 Browns Road
A show stopping garden artfully combining plants and structure. Paths, fences, a pool, and terrace grace these picture-perfect grounds. And there's a must-see stone arch!
Artist: Host Scott Rhoades

Willington
Holes In the Woods Studio, 17 Lustig Road
In the tradition of the landscape gardens of the eighteenth century without the formality, this garden offers a woodland walk with ferns, moss, loads of mountain laurel and a half acre pond.
Artist: Host - John Starinovich

NC Bunnell Studio, 12 Red Oak Hill Road
The garden is filled with hostas, hardy geraniums, rhododendrons, grasses, daylilies and other perennials and shrubs. There's a fish pond, a meditation walk, and a gently arched bridge.
Artist: Host - Nancy Bunnell, Guest - Aline Hoffman

TBG at Dragonfly Studio, 34 Old Farms Road
A small and charming garden of roses, annuals and perennials enclosing two sides of the studio. It is overlooked by an impressive eight-foot dragonfly sculpture!
Artist - Host, Marylin Makuch

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
Saxton 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 Cider
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
Willimantic Food Co-op
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

Windham Center
Windham Post Office

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Seeking New Board Members
The Eastern Connecticut Center for History, Art, and Performance (EC-CHAP) is a 501.c.3 nonprofit cultural organization serving Eastern Connecticut and beyond.
EC-CHAP is positioning its Board of Directors to ensure we have the capacity to oversee a **major facility project**, and respond to a **changing environment**. We embrace diversity, and invite individuals with a broad range of creative and analytical skills to apply.
Please visit www.ec-chap.org/board2020 to learn more and to apply online. Questions may be addressed by email to: info@ec-chap.org; or by calling: 518.791.9474.
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Note: Some locations may be closed due to pandemic.

Melodies Ring

Dandelions dancing through summertimes song,
 she gathers not only the flowers.
 The music plays in warm soothing yellows,
 her dreams allowed with each petal picked .
 Sunlight finds her soft silent shadows,
 alone she becomes one with the greens.
 Will she find what she seeks in days new meadows,
 her fingers stained from the melodies ring.



Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.

Hampton Green Energy Summer Movies

Submitted by Kate Donnelly

The Hampton Green Energy Committee is showing two outdoor films this summer related to sustainability and climate change on Thursday, June 24 and Thursday, July 29. Both films showings begin at 7 pm. They are free and will be shown outdoors at the Town Hall pavilion, 164 Main Street, Hampton. Bring a lawn chair and popcorn will be provided.

On June 24, the award-winning film "The Biggest Little Farm" will be shown. The Biggest Little Farm chronicles the eight-year quest of John and Molly Chester as they trade city living for 200 acres of barren farmland and a dream to harvest in harmony with nature. Through dogged perseverance and embracing the opportunity provided by nature's conflicts, the Chester's unlock and uncover a biodiverse design for living that exists far beyond their farm, its seasons, and our wildest imagination. THE BIGGEST LIT-

TLE FARM provides us all a vital blueprint for better living and a healthier planet.

On July 29, the film will be "2040." Award-winning director Damon Gameau embarks on a journey to explore what the future would look like by the year

2040 if we simply embraced the best solutions already available to us to improve our planet and shifted them into the mainstream. Structured as a visual letter to his 4-year-old daughter, Damon blends traditional documentary footage with dramatized sequences and high-end visual effects to create a vision board for his daughter and our planet.

"2040" points a practical, achievable path toward solu-

tions, but its most important contribution is a sense that change is possible. Gameau says that he wants "to create a vision of a different future" with "an exercise in fact-based dreaming." This film does not scold us; it is hopeful.

For more information: contact Kate at 860 604-4846.



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