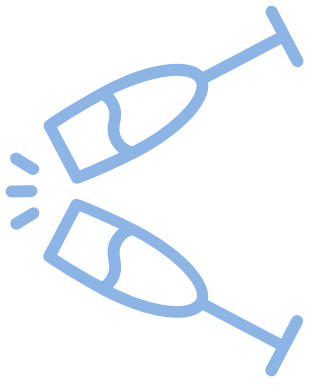
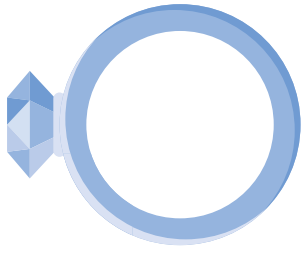


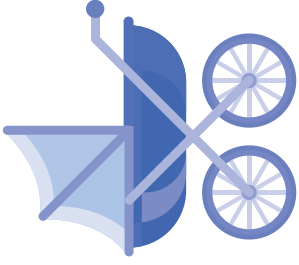
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Looking Up:

So Much to Do... Yet Finding Time for the Night!

By Bob Grindle

The clam shack and bar on the beach was a bit of a ramshackle affair, a restaurant that under today's building codes and health department standards simply wouldn't exist. When questioned about how it had come to be, the locals would shake their heads; perhaps, like the character Topsy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it had simply popped into existence. No one seemed to know otherwise. The Windward, however, as the tin-roofed, driftwood-sided, and accurately named—since it was relentlessly wind-battered—restaurant was known, was an extremely popular around-the-clock eatery north of Newport, Oregon, that appealed to the endless crowds of young surfers and other travelers up and down the West Coast in the late '60s. The menu was eclectic on a scale that defies description. The owner, an Indonesian woman of considerable size, appetite for life, and personality, had a passion for cooking like few people I have ever met and could turn anything edible into something worth standing in line for. It was my good fortune to work there for nearly a year. The days were long and the hours grueling: cooking, bartending, waiting tables, cleaning up after the long evening rush and before the after-hours latecomers. You did whatever needed to be done...because even then, help was hard to find, and turnover meant a never-ending procession of new faces and training to be done.

At the end of my shift, the pace having slowed, sitting outside and watching Leo and Gemini and perhaps Cancer and maybe even an interesting phase of the Moon setting into the post-midnight pitch blackness of the Pacific, a kind of Zen(ness) would settle over my mind. Like chasing lightning bugs across the lawns of childhood, the slowly drifting eternity of the cosmic patterned sky can

soften the jagged edges of the chaos that humans have managed to orchestrate into nearly every note, bar, and stanza of the music of life. And now, all these many years since those days in a coastal Oregon restaurant and my brief encounter with an epicurean force of nature—we called the owner Nora; I think her name was Noorali—I can still find myself slipping into a somewhat Zen state when pausing in the middle of life's busy boulevard and looking up. Watching Leo and Gemini and perhaps Cancer still, and certainly those eternally interesting phases of the Moon, no longer setting but now rising from the pre-midnight darkness of the Atlantic by our nearly coastal patch of northeast Connecticut, it is easy to get lost in the simple act of breathing in and breathing out and looking up into the bottomlessness of the universe over our heads, less to smooth out the rough edges of the moment than to simply enjoy the hammock-like support our serious brain provides for our playful mind.

The skies of August will provide lots of playful moments for serious brains and after-hours minds right from the start of the month. On Monday, August 2, the crescent Moon passes between Taurus and Orion in the southwest sky and will be prettiest about 5 a.m. It continues on through Gemini as it wanes before disappearing by the 8th. Throughout the month, the evening skies will be a story of Venus and Mars and Jupiter and Saturn playing tag with the many phases of the Moon, and, by frequently looking up, any viewer will be treated to the very best that the August skies have to offer.

Of course, no story of August nights would be complete without a visit from the Perseids. This almost legendary meteor shower is without a doubt the star of shooting stars. Although a few meteors from this shower



will be visible throughout the month, the real showstopper is the peak performance on the evening of August 11–12. Find a spot with good night sky viewing, lay out a blanket or bring along a chair that leans back as far as possible, and get comfortable, because this year's viewing should be some of the best in recent years. Meteor showers are never a sure thing and even 60 to 80 meteors per hour leaves chunks of time with nothing happening, so bring along some friends or family and perhaps something to sip or snack on and maybe even some music. Lay back as far as you can to see as much sky as possible and be patient, as this could take a while...peak should be about 2 a.m.

While the constellation Perseus, the radiant reason the Perseids are so named, is in the northeast corner of the night sky, you'll likely see meteors from all over the sky. The Moon will have set already and Venus and Mars will be low in the west, and this will be a great time to enjoy the sounds of the night and talk about all the important things that get swamped by the background garble that seems to rise out of nowhere to inundate our lives.

The full Sturgeon Moon of August arrives on the 20th of the month and is flanked by Jupiter and Saturn. Look up, enjoy the show of August's night skies, and if you find yourself relaxing and zoning out, perhaps you'll feel a bit closer to the cosmic neighborhood.

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

8.1.2021 Kayakers and paddle boarders on Hall's Pond in Eastford. Tom King photo.

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

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

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

Neighborspaper LLC is a member of the Ashford Business Association.

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



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October 9th

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October 23rd



LUKE HENDON
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November 6th



ERIC SOMMER
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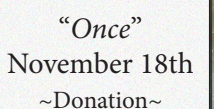
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Climate Change Book: Brutal Truths but Shockingly Hopeful

By Loretta Wrobel



When I first heard of *All We Can Save*, I thought it was just another climate scary book which would leave me feeling depressed, overwhelmed, and frozen with great grief. How wrong I was with this call. This book, edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine Wilkinson, felt like finding a diamond in the trash, or when least expecting it, finding the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow you didn't know existed.

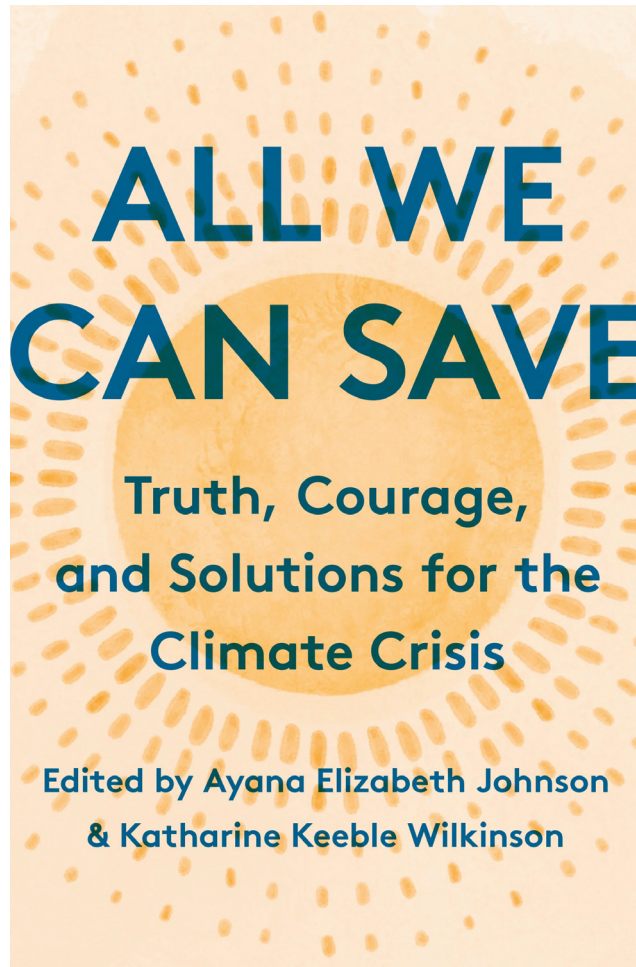
All We Can Save is a book of essays and poetry by various women authors, who are filled with passion and drive and want to share their insights, truths, and projects with the world. It is not an easy book to read, as the devastating truth of the horrors of climate change is a bitter reminder of how precarious life is in 2021 on our fragile sphere.

I began reading this book while I was sick with Lyme Disease (unaware at the time that a small tick had zapped my energy) and was having issues with my knee. Even though at the time I had diminished energy, the book stirred me with astounding information about climate change, new discoveries, and a wealth of groups organizing to combat the effects of our changing climate. At the same time that I was digesting this book, the wildfires were gobbling up our forests in the West. The daily excessive rains submerged our fields and overflowed the banks of streams and waterways. The delta variant upped the number of cases, sent the metrics upward, and increased hospitalizations. Things were not looking too positive for me, northeastern Connecticut, or our special planet.

The writers all had stories to tell that inspired me to consider what I could do to join the movement to reverse the trend of harming and trashing our planet. I read of Soul Fire Farm in New York. This Afro-Indigenous community farm is dedicated to uprooting racism, providing healthy food, and empowering people to take control over the food system. Because of the history of slavery, Black people have been reluctant to take up farming. The mission of Soul Fire Farm is to encourage and teach Black people to return to the land to farm as free people who are taking back their basic human right to nourishing food. Many minority people are unable to access food that sustains them, due to lack of availability, or the funds needed to purchase fresh, organically grown healthy food. The farm is bringing folks from urban areas to experience the joy of planting and growing your own food. Another positive is being part of a community that supports independence and educates about sustainability.

Leah Penniman, a Black Kreyol farmer, author, and food justice activist, is the founder of Soul Fire Farm. She maintains that Black people have an ancestral connection to the land and by reconnecting to this 'black gold' they empower themselves and can heal the soil. Penniman talks of the work of George Washington Carver, who was a pioneer in regenerative farming and who encouraged farmers to use cover crops, mulching, and crop diversification to replenish the depleted soil. Soul Fire Farm trains aspiring Black and Brown farmers to use regenerative farming methods to restore the soil and put carbon back into the soil. Frighteningly, worldwide we lose about 25 million acres of cropland yearly due to soil erosion. By adapting sustainable practices, we reduce emissions, capture excess carbon from the air and trap it in the soil, and secure our food supply. By changing from unsustainable agricultural practices (intense tillage) to Indigenous systems such as silvopasture and regenerative agriculture, the robust soil helps to reduce carbon in our atmosphere. We become partners in healing the planet, giving us healthy food that is more sustainable, and returning to a sacred partnership with the soil.

This is just one story in over fifty encouraging tales, from women who are using their skills, expertise and fervor to create a myriad of solutions to the flood of issues confronting our world today in 2021. The essayists speak boldly and honestly about what is happening in our world and how they are working to explore ways to combat the effects of climate change, pollution, injustice, inequality, and loss of diversity in all the species living on earth.



Green Wave is a nonprofit that trains ocean farmers and supports them in learning regenerative farming to take advantage of the space in our oceans that can be used for growing food. The advantage of ocean farming is that, in addition to providing food, it purifies and cleans up toxicity in our waters. Emily Stengel is the cofounder of Green Wave, and writes of becoming intoxicated with the ease and magic of using our oceans to provide food without producing pollution. Farming our oceans can provide inexpensive ways for novice farmers to get started. Scaffolding can be erected to create a rectangular underwater garden. Anchors on opposite edges are connected by horizontal ropes that float beneath the surface. Kelp and other seaweeds can grow vertically downward, next to scallops in nets and mussels in mesh socks. Oysters can sit below in cages on the seafloor, and clams are buried in the muddy bottom. No fertilizers, no pesticides, and no fresh water are required. Added bonus: seaweed captures carbon, oysters filter water removing nitrogen, and underwater scaffolding is cheap and relatively easy to build. Seaweed can also be used for fertilizer, animal feed, and food for human consumption. A win-win for all.

Farming regenerative species in less than 5 percent of United States waters could create more than 50 million jobs, absorb 10 million tons of nitrogen and 135 million tons of carbon per year, according to a report from the World Bank! All of this without fresh water or chemicals. Plus, all of this farming could produce protein equal to three trillion cheeseburgers! Does that arouse your curiosity and open your eyeballs just a bit? I was charged up to imagine all of us using our ingenious minds to envision so much more.

I have only shared a tiny piece of all the inspiring tales described in this uplifting book. An architect, Amanda Sturgeon, details her work designing buildings that connect people and nature. 'Biophilic Design' is a strategy to reestablish the connection of people to their environment. I learned that an hour in nature improves our memory and attention by 20 percent! By bringing more of nature into our buildings, we reduce our reliance on energy, use local materials, lessen the impact on our environment, and keep us sharper and more alert.

My wish is for you to be encouraged to use your cleverness to add your unique perspective to improving our relationship with the earth. May you be stimulated to dance with nature. Be thrilled to know there are vibrant women and men who are using their expertise to offer solutions, and craft community groups dedicated to improving and saving our planet. May knowing you are not alone, as thousands of other conscious folks are together with you, give you much courage and optimism, and allow you to dream large.

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Suggestions for Jeff Bezos

By Delia Berlin



What would you do if you had many times more money than you could possibly ever spend? It pains me to see that some people come up so short in imagination that their best idea for putting a dent in their treasure chest involves shooting themselves into space in a rocket for a few minutes of awe. The cost of this type of game is enormous, not just in money but in non-renewable resources and environmental damage. But apparently, they think they are worth it. I have tried to think about yet more ridiculous ideas, but I have failed. Some came close, but upon closer examination, they seem to have at least some redeeming value. I'll share a couple of examples, of varying degrees of complexity and impact.

A seemingly simple but daunting problem that needs all the resources we can muster, if it's ever going to be properly fixed, is the perpetually clogged shower drain. No amount of drain snakes, enzymes, harsh chemicals, or expensive expert plumbers resolves this problem for the long term. High on the list of obstacles is the proverbial hairball, resistant to almost all physical or chemical treatments. Given enough financial incentive, someone out there must be able to reengineer this ubiquitous portal to sewers in a better way. Everyone needs a shower, and (almost) everyone has hair. The problem is inescapable and the solution elusive, but surely nothing that big money couldn't buy. Mr. Bezos, what do you think? Granted, not too much glamour, but lots of practical value.

Another idea pops in my head almost every time I drive to New York City. My daughter and her family live in an area of Manhattan that is not easily accessible, except by car. Because of that, I drive there, via the Merritt Parkway. When I leave home in Willimantic, the GPS estimates a driving time of 2 hours and 20 minutes to my destination. Yet it usually takes me more than three hours (and sometimes much longer!) to get there. Why? The reason may surprise you.

Connecticut is among the states with the most congested highways in the USA. The Merritt Parkway, with just two

heavily used lanes, exemplifies this congestion. To make matters worse, I frequently find that for part of the way to the city, one of these lanes is closed due to mowing, causing great delays. Even during serious heatwaves, mowing the median or the side of the parkway goes on. This risks the health and lives of DOT workers, as well as the safety and well-being of commuters. It doesn't need to be this way, and a sizable investment could resolve this problem. There is a solution that would bring us into the twenty-first century before it ends.

What I envision is a large fleet of unmanned mowers. These machines would look like a gigantic cross between a drone and a vacuum robot and could be operated safely and remotely by skilled DOT workers from the comfort of cool command centers. The mowers would go straight to the overgrown areas that need mowing, without necessitating five or six DOT trucks with flashing lights reading "LANE CLOSED AHEAD," and allowing traffic to flow unencumbered. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Mr. Bezos, please consider this. The future is now.

Joking aside, when the novelty of rocket travel wears out, I hold limited hope that at least some of these billionaires may look for more altruistic and rewarding new ideas. But what constitutes a reward is always in the eye of the beholder, and I can't place myself in their shoes. I imagine that public admiration and fame may be desirable to them. If so, there are plenty of serious problems that could be tackled for that purpose.

One of these projects, obviously, would be increasing the reliability of our power grid. Already outdated, decrepit, ugly, pinned-around-the-edges, and vulnerable to hacking, our electrical infrastructure is at a breaking point. The stresses of climate change, including extreme weather and more frequent prolonged periods of severe heat or cold, will cause dramatic system failures that unavoidably will lead to mass casualties. Burying our cables, increasing generation from renewable sources of energy, and building more resilient microgrids with increased redundancy would save lives and elicit the gratitude of many. Mr. Bezos, please keep this article handy when the next urge for splurging hits you. I sincerely hope that "We, the People" beat you to it but, as of now, I'm not so sure.

What Voting for Public Education Reflects

By Bill Powers

In some towns, the chances the education budget will fail in a referendum are greater than its passing. Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be or not to be, that is the question", is about living and dying, success or failure, positivity or negativity. The budget, recommended each year by the Board of Education to meet our children's educational needs, will live or die as determined by the number of votes cast for and against. I believe that an appropriate education can be an important equalizer for students faced by barriers not of their own making, such as: low income; special needs; not speaking English; and racism. A good education will allow them to have a better life including better opportunities for employment, earnings and health.

As a teacher in my town, I witnessed first-hand the harmful cumulative effects caused by a succession of horrific cuts to the education budget over a period of several years. The effects included the loss of essential support staff positions, the need to negatively compromise instructional programs, the failure to acquire and replace necessary equipment, the inability to meet the needs for Individualized Educational Programs for special education students and lack of appropriate instruction for English language learners.

In order to help bring an end to the horrific downward spiraling funding impacting our children's educational aspirations, groups of concerned parents and other community members resolved to unite to take action to protect our children's educational growth. With the notion in mind that parents want their children to receive a good public school education and are willing to cast votes to that end, it seems reasonable to me that reminding them just prior to voting would be very positive, a very productive thing to do. My plan is that beginning a week before the referendum and the day of the referendum, to hold a sign reminding parents to vote as they dropped off and picked up their children at school. This activity is just a small piece of inspiration added to other actions of many other advocates to enlighten all our citizens of the importance of voting and education.

As it turned out, Windham Center School and North Windham School are relatively close to one another and have different opening and closing times. This allowed me to visit each school both in the mornings and afternoons to interact with voters.

As a courtesy, I contacted administrators at both schools to let them know when and why I would be in their area. One administrator had two concerns. 1) I might be violating rules of the State of Connecticut's "Prohibition on Expenditure of Public Funds Relating to Referenda." 2) Did I first need permission from the Board of Education to be on school grounds?

The answer to the first concern came quickly from an attorney with the State Elections Enforcement Commission in Harford. I explained that I simply had two signs, one that read, "PLEASE VOTE TUESDAY" and the other with the words "PLEASE VOTE TODAY." No, I would not be in violation of any of the 13 rules relating to referenda. In closing, the attorney, trying to be helpful, said: "Bill, just

remember, when you go to the school with a sign that reads 'PLEASE VOTE TODAY' someone else can also show up with a sign that reads 'PLEASE DON'T VOTE TODAY'. I thanked him for the advice. Of course, since my objective was to remind voters that it was the day of the referendum and someone else who proposed the opposite view would help to achieve the same purpose. To Vote or Not To Vote was Not at All the Question.

The answer to the second concern did not come as quickly as I had hoped.

When I contacted the board of education, I was referred to the town because the school

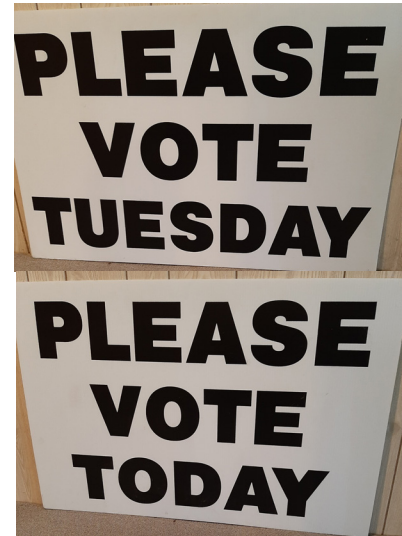
was on town property. The town administrator with whom I spoke told me: "There is a town ordinance that prohibits you from being on school property, and I wouldn't want you to get arrested for trespassing." Visions of the First Amendment immediately sprang into my mind. How could this be? Simply reminding folks to vote is prohibited because I'm on town property? That evening I read through the town's ordinances and was

unable to find any such ordinance. This threw a monkey wrench into my plans to visit the schools the very next day with my sign. It meant standing outside the schools on the side of busy routes 14 and 102. I needed to do that for five days, mornings and afternoons. Believe me when I tell you that it was much more than a memorable experience, it was a veritable nightmare. Any traffic engineer who believes a posted 40 mph speed limit in a school zone is appropriate on a busy two lane state highway has got to be delusional.

When I got back to the town administrator to request the exact reference for the ordinance, because I was not able to locate it, I was told that I would be advised of it. After another week and still not being given the reference, I contacted the Town Manager who told me the matter had been referred to the town's attorney since they were unable to locate the ordinance and I would be notified of the result. Since the education budget did not pass, I still had plenty of time to prepare for another whack at holding my signs for the next referendum after the budget was cut again. I was hoping that I would not have to place my life at risk again by standing at the sides of two busy state highways asking folks to remember to vote for their children's future. Fortunately, after a few more weeks, the town manager informed me of the town attorney's determination that there was nothing preventing me from visiting the schools on school property for the purpose I intended.

During the next round of reminding parents of the upcoming budget vote and for most other future referenda, I was happily joined by Adele Swart, a capable and energetic volunteer, whose grandson attended Windham Center School. And her sign was in Spanish! Gracias Adele. Buen trabajo. We were getting thumbs up from many of the parents on all sides indicating what they wanted for their children.

All I could think of was Horace Mann's statement: "Education then, beyond all other devices, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of social machinery." There is no doubt that voting for education certainly does reflect the pulse of who we are and what we could become.



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CT Green Energy News

Submitted by Peter Millman

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



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).

CT to convert more buses to electric; unveils new incentives for electric car purchases

Hartford Business Journal. "Waterbury's bus station would be the first in the state capable of running a 100% electric battery-powered bus transit system..." This project is the first of its kind in Connecticut to prepare an entire transit and paratransit depot fully for electrification, and a major step forward in our push to become the first state with a fully electric bus transit fleet. " Plus: State Expands Electric Vehicle Rebates

Hamden, Connecticut, Plans Microgrids to Help Meet Energy Goals

Microgrid Knowledge. "A microgrid in Hamden, a town of about 62,000, could include the town's schools, ice rink, the shopping centers, restaurants, gas stations, banks, emergency care facilities, the town center, a library and the town hall as well as the fire and police headquarters, according to the plan. A microgrid could enable "near total renewable energy" by integrating battery storage and smart controls, according to the plan. It could allow key services to continue running when the wider grid is down, lower energy costs and provide demand response to ISO New England, which runs the wholesale power market in six northeast states."

Nation's 1st "Net Zero" Hotel Takes Form

New Haven Advocate. "The building is an example of a global shift to all-electric living — a goal advocated locally by the environmental group New Haven Climate Movement. The group has been pushing for the city to shift to electric vehicles, to convert all city-owned buildings to electric heating and cooling, and to urge developers to turn their backs on fossil fuels, and is applauding an electrification resolution recently passed by the Board of Alders. "This project is a great example of what an electric future could look like...It's really looking to reduce air pollution and other types of climate damage, and produce a much healthier future for New Haven and the world."

Driving Electric Is Now a Moral, Fiscal and Climate Imperative

EV Club of CT. "We're in a climate crisis and each of us should be taking action, regardless of state and federal policy. Driving electric has become a no brainer now that new models are out with longer-range batteries in styles and sizes that fit varying consumer needs...While an electric vehicle can be more expensive to acquire, the cost of owning one is significantly less than an internal combustion engine (ICE) car according to Consumer Reports. Not

only is it less expensive to power a vehicle on electricity, but EVs also need much less maintenance. The bottom line is that it's half as expensive to drive an electric than an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle because of the fuel and maintenance savings." Plus: The age of the electric vehicle is upon us

Essex Meadows Activates Solar Arrays

Zip 06. "A bustling retirement community in Essex has powered up its latest sustainable initiative, more than 1,000 new solar panels in three different locations on its property..." The residents are supportive of anything that is environmentally friendly including the solar and it also has an economic benefit too, which, of course, is helpful to them in managing costs..."

PURA greenlights vehicle charging incentives

Hartford Business Journal. "It could soon be cheaper for Connecticut property owners to invest in electric vehicle chargers, thanks to a new program that could dole out hundreds of millions of dollars in incentives over the next nine years. The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) on Wednesday approved a plan that directs Eversource and United Illuminating to pay homeowners, employers and apartment building owners incentives for electric vehicle supply equipment and fast-charger installations, and to cover a portion of electrical make-ready costs." For more details, see PURA's EV Charging Program Summary.

Other Voices: New prevailing wage legislation a win for solar industry workers

Hartford Business Journal. "New Jersey, which has required prevailing wage on solar development projects 1 megawatt and larger since 2013, is one of the best case studies we have for this type of policy's success. Because labor is a relatively small portion of the total cost of utility-scale solar projects, New Jersey's has successfully protected workers' wages with no evidence of significant costs to developers or ratepayers. Now, New Jersey ranks seventh nationally for installed solar capacity. For comparison, Connecticut ranks 21st."



Emerging wind energy industry offers CT manufacturers new potential customer base

Hartford Business Journal. "Experts say Connecticut manufacturers, many of which have backgrounds in serving the aerospace and medical device sectors, are well positioned to enter the wind energy supply chain at a time when that industry is poised for significant growth...Turbine maintenance is another space where Cooper sees opportunity for local manufacturers. Once turbines are built, local companies will likely have to maintain them, and manufacturers that make and service things like jet engine turbines could naturally pivot to do some of this work."

Connecticut and Rhode Island governors sign laws boosting bioheat use

Biodiesel Digest. "In Connecticut and Rhode Island, governors from both states signed graduated approaches to tackling carbon emissions into law this week through mandates requiring increased use of biomass-based heating oil, also known as Bioheat fuel, over the next decade. Connecticut: Signed into law on July 12 by Governor Ned Lamont, the mandate requires B5 by 2022, B10 by 2025, B15 by 2030, B20 by 2034 and B50 by 2035."

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Where Would We Be Without Market Masters?

By C. Dennis Pierce

As I get older, I measure summer days by the height of the corn stalks on Mansfield City Road. They are to me, Mother Nature's measuring stick and with the recent rain the corn's growth has increased significantly. Watching them grow to towering heights from the once tilled field let's me know that summer's end is quickly approaching. How do you slow it down? Impossible. Yesterday, while driving through Coventry I saw a half dozen geese picking through a newly cut field of hay. Without thinking I rolled down the window and yelled, "Go back, your too early!"

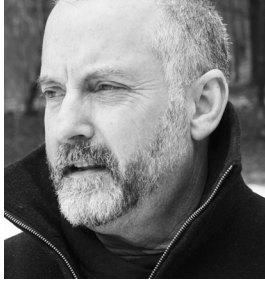
I often encourage all to shop locally in my column to obtain produce while it is in-season. As you probably aware there are several Farmer's Markets in our area. Many years ago, there just a few, the Willimantic market, which was started in 1976, which is the longest, continuously running Farmer's Market in Connecticut, and the Storrs market which was in the parking lot behind Saint Mark's church in Storrs. The Storrs's market was created by a gentleman by the name of Bill Hopkins who worked for the Connecticut's Department of Agriculture. During the Storrs' market's hay day there were approximately thirty vendors who would set up every Saturday afternoon. Today, roughly every town has their own market with a variety of offerings.

Some might say that markets have popped up like mushrooms after a few days of rain. What most market goers do not know is hosting a market is not just setting up once a week in a central location. Markets are typically organized by an individual called a Market Master who has a very arduous and time-consuming job with little rewards. To provide an insight into what the Market Master's responsibilities are I gleaned some details from several of the markets that are local and throughout the state. First of all, the Market Masters primary objectives are to support the vendors while ensuring compliance with the market's rules; to promote locally produced foods and products and to encourage both vendor and customer participation. This position is typically a year-round position since some markets run through the winter and if they do not there is still some pre-season and post-season tasks that need to be accomplished. While this may sound very doable there are many specific responsibilities such as maintaining the logistics and compliance requirements for the market. These might include operating the market to ensure all federal, state and local rules are followed, conduct farm visits, recruit and select vendors, maintain records to include vendor fees, crop plans, proof of insurance and any required licensing. The Market Master must schedule events and entertainment, publicize and promote the market via websites, Facebook, Twitter and newsletters, press releases and other appropriate communication channels. The market master must be a good communicator. They need to respond to customer and vendor inquiries and complaints. The weekly market day responsibilities would include creating a venue that is safe and welcoming to the vendors and customers, acting as the administrator of the market, exercising general supervision and keeping the market running smoothly and effectively... rain or shine. Needless to say, all who hold this position should be nominated for sainthood since they do not receive the recognition they deserve.

I reached out to several Market Masters from the general area with the following questions and here is what I found:

With the restrictions of COVID-19 being partially lifted by the State and the CDC how are you communicating to your customers that your market(s) are safe to return to?

The Willimantic Farmer's Market was able to keep the market open in a traditional sense (re: not mandating preorders or drive-through) throughout the entire season last year and they had very high attendance compared to previous seasons — Jenna, Willimantic's Farmer's Market, Market Master, observed by the level of participation that the market was viewed as a safe, outdoor place to access fresh, local food. This has been carried over seamlessly to this season as well. As in all markets that responded, Market Masters continue to follow the health guidelines of our local health district as well as the CDC.



CJ Pogmore, from Bluebird Hill Farm in Lebanon, CT, selling first corn of the season at a recent Willimantic Farmers Market. Dennis Pierce photo.

What strategies are you using to increase participation at your market?

Willimantic's Farmers Market went through a transition that some would say is not an easy task to do. This year their market had to change to a new location so they communicated the change by a month of radio advertising in addition to Facebook ads to ensure that old and new customers would be able to transition to the new location. They also issue a weekly newsletter that is emailed to their subscribers and is posted on social media as well. In addition they have been spearheading an effort via Instagram which highlights the market and their vendors every week. The general efforts from other area markets were to provide educational opportunities, increase a social media presence and establish themselves firmer in the community.

Where do you see Farmer's Markets going in the next few years? What changes have you been entertaining?

The general response I received from all Market Masters was the hope that residents of the Quiet Corner will look at the global food system a little differently due to climate change, the pandemic, increase cost of food / availability of food and the general hope was that more people will start to see the value in supporting local farmers and their local farmer's market.

So now you have a better understanding of how a market operates. Next time you are visiting one of the local markets seek out the Market Master and thank them for their efforts. Without them the local markets would not exist.

During summer it is hard to run out of things to put blueberries into. The flavor of thyme goes well with the sweet, in season, freshly picked blueberries.

If you find that after visiting one of the local "pick your own", locations and you need prepare the blueberries for storing place them on a cookie tray and put them in the freezer uncovered. When hardened, toss them into a freezer bag, date and seal.

Blueberry-Thyme Muffins
24 muffins
Pre heat oven to 400 degrees
Pre-grease / oil, baking tins

Ingredients:
2 ½ cups of all-purpose flour
1 ¼ cups of sugar
2 teaspoons of salt
1 tablespoon of baking powder
3 tablespoons of unsalted butter
4 eggs (would be nice if they were local)
1 ½ cups of milk
1 tablespoon of vanilla
1 teaspoon of finely chopped fresh thyme
2 cups of whole blueberries

Directions:

Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
Melt the butter. Let cool a little bit.
Mix the butter and eggs in a bowl.
Add butter and egg mixture to the dry ingredients
Add the milk and vanilla
Mix in thyme and gently fold in blueberries
Scoop the batter into the muffin tins, about ¾'s full
Bake when temperature of oven reaches 400 degrees. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the middle
Baking time is about 20 to 25 minutes
Let cool before taking out of pan



A recent Willimantic Farmers Market entertainment featuring Jay Daly on acoustic guitar. Dennis Pierce photo.

Another column comes to an end. Recently I have received several emails suggesting that I take several of the recipes that have appeared in this column over the last five plus years and author a cook book. Who knows, with time on my hands, that may be a great winter project. Speaking about books I would highly recommend, *We Are What We Eat, A Slow Food Manifesto*, by Alice Waters. Alice is the owner of Chez Panisse, a restaurant in Berkley, California. I had the opportunity to meet Alice at Yale many years ago. She is truly a remarkable person and is very passionate about locally grown. As always, thanks for reading my column. 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...

Unsung Heroes of Soul:

Ann Peebles

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 column is about Ann Peebles, who sold many records to the soul audience but never really crossed over to the pop market.

The seventh of eleven children, she was born April 27, 1947, in Kinloch, Missouri. Beginning in childhood, she sang in the choir of her father's church and with her family's gospel group, the Peebles Choir. They regularly served as a warm-up act for gospel stars like Mahalia Jackson and the Soul Stirrers (featuring Sam Cooke). Peebles also listened to secular music by the likes of Muddy Waters, Mary Wells, and Aretha Franklin.

She performed in St. Louis clubs and, in the middle 1960s, joined a revue led by bandleader Oliver Sain. While visiting Memphis in 1968, Peebles played a gig with trumpeter Gene "Bowlegs" Miller. He introduced her to producer Willie Mitchell, who signed Peebles to the Hi label. Mitchell would produce all of Peebles' Hi releases, which also featured the Memphis Horns and the Hi Rhythm Section.

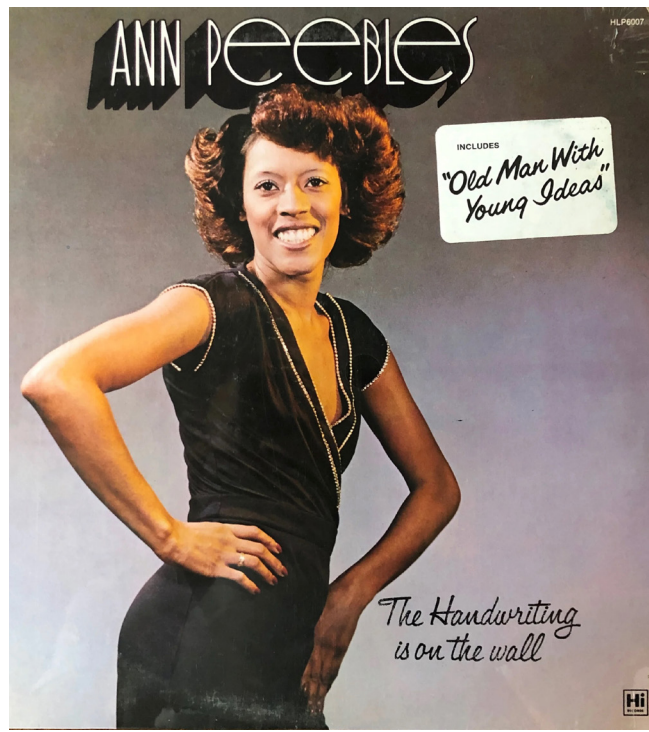
Her 1969 debut single, the molasses-like ballad "Walk Away," made the Billboard Rhythm & Blues chart, as did her next release, "Give Me Some Credit." This prompted Hi to issue an album on her, "This Is Ann Peebles." In 1970, she remade "Part Time Love," a seven-year-old blues hit by Little Johnny Taylor. It became her first top ten R&B single.

Peebles continued to sell to the R&B/soul market, but never really broke through to the pop audience. Her biggest hit on the Billboard Hot 100, "I Can't Stand the Rain," reached a modest #38 in December 1973. Peebles co-wrote the song with her husband Don Bryant and radio D.J. Bernie Miller.

Hi Records closed its doors in 1979, at which point Ann Peebles took a break from the music business to focus on her family. Ten years later, she reunited with Willie Mitchell, who produced her 1989 album, "Call Me," on Mitchell's Waylo label. That same year, rock critic Dave Marsh included both "I Can't Stand the Rain" and "Part Time Love" in his book, "The Heart of Rock and Soul: The 1001 Greatest Singles Ever Made."

In the '90s, Peebles came out with albums on Bullseye Blues, a Rounder subsidiary. She appeared in the 2002 soul-music documentary film, "Only the Strong Survive." In 2006, Peebles re-recorded some of her songs acoustically for the album "Brand New Classics." She also joined Cyndi Lauper on "Rollin' and Tumblin'," from Lauper's "Memphis Blues" album.

After having a stroke in 2012, Peebles stopped performing. In 2014, she was inducted into the Memphis Music Hall of Fame.



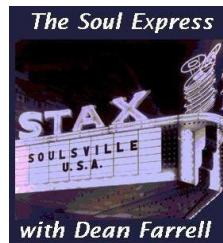
Ann Peebles has been sampled by such hip-hop acts as Missy Elliott, RZA, and the Wu-Tang Clan.

Charted singles:

- "Walk Away" (1969) R&B #22
- "Give Me Some Credit" (1969) R&B #45
- "Part Time Love" (1970) R&B #7, Pop #45
- "I Pity the Fool" (1971) R&B #18, Pop #85
- "Slipped Tripped, Fell In Love" (1971) R&B #42, Pop #42
- "Breaking Up Somebody's Home" (1972) R&B #13, Pop #101
- "Somebody's On Your Case" (1972) R&B #32, Pop #117
- "I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down" (1973) R&B #31, Pop #111
- "I Can't Stand the Rain" (1973) R&B #6, Pop #38
- "(You Keep Me) Hangin' On" (1974) R&B #37, Pop #102
- "Do I Need You" (1974) R&B #57
- "Beware" (1975) R&B #69
- "Come to Mama" (1975) R&B #62
- "Dr. Love Power" (1976) R&B #57
- "Fill This World With Love" (1976) R&B #96
- "If This Is Heaven" (1977) R&B #64
- "Old Man With Young Ideas" (1978) R&B #54
- "I Didn't Take Your Man (1978) R&B #55
- "If You Got the Time (I've Got the Love)" (1979) R&B #95

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.



August Events at the Mill Museum

Submitted by Bev York

Mill Museum hours in August. Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Adults \$10. Seniors and Students \$7. The exhibition: "Unlacing the Corset, Unleashing the Vote," features women's lives and fashions through the past century since women got the vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment. This summer Children, age 18 and under, and one Adult may have free admission to the museum until September 5 because the Mill Museum is participating in the state's Connecticut Summer at the Museum - a new state program created in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that allows Connecticut children to receive free admission at more than 90 museums across Connecticut during the 2021 summer months. 860-456-2178 themillmuseum@gmail.com

Aug. 10 is National Shapewear Day! The Mill Museum's Curator, Chelsey Knyff, will give a Zoom presentation on shapewear, "Unlacing the Past: Corset History and Basic Construction," at 7 p.m. See

how the corset developed and changed from the 17th to the early 20th century: \$15 per screen. Register and pay at millmuseum.org

Aug 25 Brattle Bookshop Presentation and Rare Book Evaluation. Kenneth Gloss, Proprietor of Brattle Book Shop, will speak about books and give informal appraisals. His talk will kick off a three-day used book sale fund raiser Aug. 27 to 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Mill Museum. Mr. Gloss will speak on rare and collectable books. Brattle Book Shop is one of America's Oldest and Largest Book Shops and is located in Downtown Boston, MA. The program will be 6:30 to 8:30 and is \$15.00 per person and includes one book appraisal and following the program, visitors will have an early bird entrance to the Crazy Quilt Book Sale. The program will be held on the second floor of the Main Museum building and entrance is on Union Street. The Mill Museum is at 411 Main Street, Willimantic. 860-456-2178 themillmuseum@gmail.com

Aug. 27, 28, 29 Crazy Quilt BookSale of gently used books donat-

ed from the community. Sale runs Fri. Sat. Sun. from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and is a fund raiser for the Museum. Admission is free. Donations appreciated. The sale will be held in Dugan Hall, The Mill Museum is located at 411 Main Street. Entrance to the sale is on Union Street side of the building.

Sat. Aug. 28 Drop-in Spinning Bee, with Peggy Church. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on the Museum's 2nd Floor, 411 Main St., Willimantic. Stop by and bring your wheel. Vaccinations required. All skill levels and visitors are welcome. Free admission.

Sept. 6 Labor Day Strike: The Newsboy Strike of 1899 Join the Mill Museum on Labor Day, Monday, September 6, at 5:00 p.m. for a strike reenactment of the New York City newsboy strike to experience first-hand why we celebrate Labor Day. Participants are invited to bring strike signs and dress like a newsboy, a newspaper magnate, a reporter, a police officer or crowd. (optional) This is a free event but donations to support the museum are appreciated.

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Regional Partners Launch Pollinator Pathway

Neighbors plan initiatives to restore native habitats

Submitted by Margaret Chatey

Resident volunteers of three towns collaborated this spring to educate fellow citizens and develop projects to establish a regional network of land that will become part of the National Pollinator Pathway (<https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/>).

The mission of the Pollinator Pathway initiative is to establish “pollinator-friendly habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects and wildlife along a series of continuous corridors.” These types of collective actions are important because “pollinators are responsible for 1 out of 3 bites of food we take each day, and yet pollinators are at critical point in their own survival. Many reasons contribute to their recent decline. We know for certain, however, that more nectar and pollen sources provided by more flowering plants and trees will help improve their health and numbers. Increasing the number of pollinator-friendly gardens and landscapes will help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators across the country.” (National Pollinator Garden Network). Furthermore, entomologist and University of Delaware professor, Doug Tallamy, writes, “Chances are, you have never thought of your garden - - indeed, of all of the space on your property - - as a wildlife preserve that represents the last opportunity we have for sustaining plants and animals that were once common throughout the U.S. But that is exactly the role that built landscapes are now playing and will play even more in the near future.”

Prior to March 2021, local efforts had occurred independently in each municipality. For example, members of the Garden Club of Windham established pollinator gardens along the East Coast Greenway and added pollinating plants to existing gardens, Windham and Mansfield passed Pollinator Resolutions, and Chaplin planned a Bicentennial Arboretum with native trees.

“By collaborating among our three communities, we believe we can make a bigger impact through our efforts,” says Jean de Smet, member of Windham Garden Club, Wildlife subcommittee. “Since we are contiguous, our pathways can truly connect to support wildlife and beneficial insects.”

The regional partnership has coordinated a wide range of community education projects, engaging youth in schools and scout troops, college students, and adults.

In Mansfield, for example, educators featured a multifaceted pollinator project at Mansfield Middle School by a fifth-grade team where students have been learning about taking care of wild spaces in their community through an Outside Learning Project. In the town’s newsletter the students’ project was described “to research and install a Pollinator Garden, reestablish a Shade Garden, and design and construct trellis to support native honeysuckle plants. Additionally, donated sunflower seeds were planted and germinated in the school’s greenhouse and planted around the school. Our young environmentalists have also taken on independent side projects such as building birdhouses and creating an informational slideshow on pollinators. Mansfield Middle School students care about the natural world, and it shows!” At the high school level, members of the E.O. Smith Leo Club attended monthly regional collaboration meetings and volunteered with the Garden Club of Windham along the East Coast Greenway to clear invasive plants and mark plantings with educational signage to identify which species feed on which plants.

Members of Mansfield Girl Scout Troops (60050/60043) learned to identify native spring flowers and invasive species such as garlic mustard (*Allaria petiolata*), and scouts collected and disposed of garlic mustard plants from a trail in the Eagleville Preserve. Cleared for The Eagleville Mill in early 1800’s, a Mansfield Parks & Recreation brochure describes the preserve as “heavily infested with non-native invasive species.” Scouts also planted zinnias and sunflowers, to provide sources of pollen for beneficial insects in their home gardens. In the wider community, seeds and pollinator brochures were also distributed to Oak Grove Montessori School, the Mansfield Library for seed sharing, and the Senior Center Garden.

“Inspiring our young citizens to protect pollinators and cultivate wild spaces magnifies our efforts across miles and years. Sparking interest among the next generation



In photos above and below Mansfield Middle School students work on the Pollinator Pathway project.

Contributed photos.

to respect their natural world is important to the local and national initiative,” says Susannah Everett, Vice Chair, Mansfield Board of Education.

Education related to the Pollinator Pathway has also occurred at the college level. Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) has participated in the tri-town discussions on increasing pollinator habitat. Eastern’s Green Campus Committee and interested faculty have been exploring measures to increase pollinator habitat and conservation on campus in alignment with Eastern’s Climate Action Plan. Eastern students and sports teams volunteered with the Windham Garden Club projects by the hundreds this Spring to dig holes, plant trees and seedlings, and cut back invasives. They worked many weekends on the new garden on High Street and on the East Coast Greenway. Students also participated in “One Tree Planted” at the Willimantic Whitewater Park planting 15 trees and shrubs. Future actions include creating more awareness about pollinators among faculty, staff, and students, exploring initiatives to streamline Eastern’s pollinator efforts, with faculty and students planning to identify native plants on campus in the fall semester.

Adults interested in supporting the pollinator resolution learned how to “Improve Your Gardens with Pollinators,” in a virtual Mansfield Community Center class taught by Raluca Mocanu, owner of Shundahai Farm, Mansfield. In Windham, the public learned about pollinator pathways at the annual VeggieStock, where plants and seeds were given away for free. In Windham, more than 100 households and businesses have qualified as wildlife habitat through the National Wildlife Federation. For a description of the Willimantic Certification, search for Connecticut, at <https://www.nwf.org/CommunityWildlifeHabitat/Home/All-Communities>.

“We encourage all of our residents to learn more about how to create green spaces and why pollinators are so critical to our food production,” says Virginia Walton, Mansfield Recycling Coordinator and staff member of the Mansfield Sustainability Committee. “We invite resident participation in the tri-town regional pollinator pathway by contacting me at 860-429-3333 or send an email to waltonvd@mansfieldct.org.”

The Tri-Town Collaboration will be setting up webpages on Pollinator-Pathways.org website to list our towns and our accomplishments. There will be an area for the public to list their pollinator gardens, also, to create a corridor throughout Eastern CT. This regional collaboration for launching the local portion of The Pollinator Pathway has been made possible by volunteers from the following organizations:

Chaplin Community and Economic Development Commission
Garden Club of Windham
Institute for Sustainable Energy, ECSU
Joshua Trust
Mansfield Agriculture Committee
Mansfield Sustainability Committee
Mansfield Parks and Natural Resources Committee
Mansfield Conservation Commission
Mansfield Public Schools
EO Smith Leo Club
Girl Scout Troops 60050 / 60043, Mansfield



Common Sense Car Care

By Rick Ostien

This month’s topic is about tires and wheels. The summer temperatures will raise the air pressure in your tires. I have found that a lot of people do not know what the manufacturer’s specification is for correct tire pressure in the vehicle they own. This can be found on the inside of your driver’s door when it is open. Your vehicle will handle better and you will also notice an increase in fuel mileage with the correct tire pressure. The tire pressure imprinted on the sidewall of the tire is the maximum rating only. This is not the suggested tire pressure for the vehicle. The rubber a tire is made of will crack and fatigue over time. Overinflating will cause premature wear and could lead to a possible blow out. These two things are why you should inspect your tires. This will help keep you aware of their condition and most importantly keep you safe on the road.

Tire sizes and construction vary on today’s vehicles. A low-profile tire does not have the flexibility that a taller sidewall has. We have found more bent wheels on these lower profile tires. I have always said that every action has an equal and often opposite reaction. In this case low-profile tires for their better handling have caused wheel problems.

The aftermarket wheel or used wheel should always be checked for run out plus how much weight it will take to balance it before mounting it. We have found aftermarket wheels from some manufacturers to be of poor quality. The quality issue is not just about alloy wheels, but steel wheels as well. Beware of companies that offer mounting and balancing when you purchase wheels and tires. As always, do your homework when buying online. Tires do lose their balance over time. The rule of thumb to rotate and rebalance every 10,000 to 15,000 miles is a great rule to live by.

We have also found lug nuts seizing on to the wheels over long periods of time. I’ll give you an example: We had a person snap the head of a locking lug nut off on his vehicle. The reason for trying to change the tire was that the tire was so dry rotted it blew out. He was informed of the cost which is usually about 45 minutes of labor. The vehicle was driven in on the wheel. The condition of all the wheels and tires were quite poor. The wheel to be repaired looked like a hammer and chisel had played some part in an attempt to repair the damaged lug nut. We repaired the broken lug nut and mounted the spare tire. This was billed at 45 minutes of labor. We also loosened the other 3 locking nuts at no charge. I’ll back up a few lines when I said being aware of the condition of your tires was a safety issue. The inside of this vehicle had children’s toys and clothes in it. The owner was upset at the price and that we loosened the other 3 locking nuts without his permission. He later posted a picture of his wheel and lug nut. He stated that we had damaged his locking lug nut and wheel, over charged him, and performed services not authorized. He felt it should have been a 10-minute repair. The thing that bothered me was at the end of the post was a statement that this is what he gets for going to a local garage. The only truth to his post is that this is exactly what a local garage does. We stick to our price, do a little extra, and just plain care about what we do.

Until next month...

Rick Ostien is the owner of Franc Motors in Willington.



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How SECURE and SECURE 2.0 Could Affect Inheritance

By James Zahansky, AWMA®
Principal/Managing Partner
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In 2020 the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act changed some key rules regarding distributions for those who inherit funds from an individual retirement account (IRA). Now the Securing a Strong Retirement Act, often referred to as SECURE 2.0, is widely expected to be passed in the coming months. If passed, SECURE 2.0 could bring additional changes to consider for both those who want to leave retirement assets to loved ones and those who have recently inherited them or stand to inherit them in the future.

Here's what to know in order to plan well for how to best put those funds to work for you and your heirs, and how to avoid unnecessary tax consequences if you've inherited retirement funds this year.

The SECURE Act significantly shortened the required minimum distribution (RMD) period for non-spouse heirs, leading to a potential large tax liability.

For retirement assets inherited before 2020, a non-spouse beneficiary had to begin required minimum distributions (RMDs), or payouts from the account, within a certain time frame after inheriting it. However, annual distributions could be calculated based on the beneficiary's life expectancy. This ability to stretch taxable distributions over a lifetime helped reduce the beneficiary's annual tax burden and allowed large IRAs to continue benefiting from potential tax-deferred growth.¹

But beginning in January 2020, the SECURE Act now requires most non-spouse beneficiaries to liquidate inherited accounts within 10 years of the owner's death. The only exception to this rule is for those who qualify as "eligible designated beneficiaries" – a spouse, a minor child of the account owner while they are still a minor, beneficiaries who are not more than 10 years younger than the account owner, and disabled or chronically ill individuals.

If you've inherited a high-value IRA but do not qualify as an eligible designated beneficiary, it's important to understand how this shorter 10-year distribution period could result in unanticipated and potentially large tax bills. There are no RMDs during the 10-year period, so beneficiaries can take distributions in any amount and any time frame they choose, provided the assets are completely exhausted at the end of the period. Any funds not liquidated by the 10-year deadline would be subject to a 50% penalty tax.

The beneficiary of a traditional IRA might want to spread the distributions equally over the 10 years in order to manage the annual tax liability. By contrast, the beneficiary of a Roth IRA — which generally provides tax-free distributions — might want to leave the account intact for up to 10 years, allowing it to potentially benefit from tax-free growth for as long as possible.

Spousal beneficiaries can roll over the IRA assets to their own IRAs – and if SECURE 2.0 passes, they could potentially wait longer before having to take RMDs.

Spousal beneficiaries can roll over inherited IRA assets to their own IRAs, or elect to treat a deceased account owner's IRA as their own (presuming the spouse is the sole beneficiary and the IRA trustee allows it). By becoming the account owner, the surviving spouse can make additional contributions, name new beneficiaries, and wait until age 72 to start taking RMDs.²

If SECURE 2.0 passes, the age at which RMDs are required will rise to 73 starting on January 1, 2022, then to 74 on January 1, 2029, and finally to 75 on January 1, 2032. In addition, the penalty for failing to take the RMD would be cut in half, to 25% rather than the current 50% penalty tax – and if the missed RMD is corrected quickly, the penalty could even be reduced to 10%. (It's important to note that a surviving spouse who becomes the account owner of a Roth IRA is not required to take distributions at all.)

Beneficiaries can choose to disclaim an inherited retirement account.

This may be appropriate if the initial beneficiary does not need the funds and/or want the tax liability. In this case, the assets may pass to a contingent beneficiary who

has greater financial need or may be in a lower tax bracket. A qualified disclaimer statement must be completed within nine months of the date of death.

The SECURE Act may render "pass-through" trusts null and void.

Prior to 2020, individuals with high-value IRAs often used conduit — or "pass-through" — trusts to manage the distribution of inherited IRA assets. The trusts helped protect the assets from creditors and helped ensure that beneficiaries didn't spend down their inheritances too quickly. However, conduit trusts are now subject to the same 10-year liquidation requirements, which may render null and void some of the original reasons the trusts were established.

There are things you can do to plan well in light of the SECURE Act rules and potential additional SECURE 2.0 changes.

Retirement account owners should review their beneficiary designations with their financial or tax professional and consider how the existing SECURE Act rules and potential SECURE 2.0 rules may affect inheritances and taxes. Any strategies that include trusts as beneficiaries should be considered especially carefully. Other strategies that account owners may want to consider include converting traditional IRAs to Roths; bringing life insurance, charitable remainder trusts, or accumulation trusts into the mix; and planning for qualified charitable distributions.³

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- 1 For account owners who died before January 1, 2020, the old rules apply to the initial beneficiary only. Under these rules, a beneficiary also generally had the option to take distributions sooner than required.
- 2 For an account owner born prior to July 1, 1949, RMDs would start at age 70½.
- 3 Other trusts are generally subject to RMDs based on the owner's life expectancy if the owner had reached the required beginning date; if the owner died before the required beginning date, the account must be emptied by the end of the fifth year after the owner's death. There are costs and ongoing expenses associated with the creation and maintenance of trusts.

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Part Two:

Walking the Original Water Line through Beacon Hill to West & North Ends

By Brian Karlsson Barnes

THE OWL TOUR walks the *Original Water Line* of Boston that was Shawmut Peninsula in 1630. This self-guided tour follows existing streets (more or less) to explore both downtown delights and Boston's bold land "reclamation."

Part One (July) noted Boston Common on Shawmut's west shore and the land-making that allowed the Public Garden, Newbury Street shopping and Back Bay elegance.

Part Two walks from Boston Common through toney Beacon Hill around the northern edge of the peninsula past Government Center and the Green Dragon Tavern to the dining destination that is the North End. Good to have a highlighted map, compass and comfortable shoes. Or just Uber to the restaurant?

And as all good things come in threes, **Part Three** will be the remarkable Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway and Chinatown.

1 BOSTON NECK Ocean water surrounded Shawmut Peninsula and its narrow causeway known as "Boston Neck" in the 1600s, now **Washington Street**. Some considered the whole peninsula Boston Neck. The eastern edge of the roadway represents the OWL of Boston Harbor.

East of the Neck was ocean, and **Washington Street to Kneeland Street** approximates the shoreline; the peninsula widened along the next road to the east/right side, **Beach Street**. The nearest Orange Line "T" station is "Tufts / South Cove" -- the cove where Shawmut narrowed to a neck. *Of course!* A beach in South Cove. A boat landing in 1630, but no water now and no swimming in 2021.

South Station was underwater in 1630, but "Cut & Fill" land-making levelled the land for rails. America's first subway train dates to 1897; the historic headhouse replaced several terminals in 1899. Now a good place to get off the "T" and walk the Original Water Line.

Walking West of the Neck was Charles River salt marsh. Walking to Boston Common, Shawmut's western shore in 1630, follow **Stuart Street**. It approximates the widening western side of Shawmut Peninsula from **Washington Street to Charles Street**, now the edge of the Common. Other side of the park and **Beacon Street**, the OWL ran north near the **Spruce Street Gate**, elaborate entry to the Beacon Hill neighborhood.

2 BEACON HILL The Original Water Line edged five acres known as Blackstone's Point where first European resident William Blaxton built a cottage in 1625, five years after Plymouth Colony was founded. Sold to Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. Too crowded already?

In 1800, still "rough, rocky and overgrown, the Hill was the last sizeable piece of land for homes on Boston Neck" (per Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill). Now many expensive tiny houses with little green space on narrow cobbled streets. Charming sanctuaries hidden from view in small brick courtyards, 20 by 30 feet. A planted tree needs a rootball less than 30 inches to fit the small gates, but good to start small on demanding sites, adapts better.

Walking North of **Beacon Street**, the OWL rounded the peninsula. Cross **Beacon Street** and enter Beacon Hill on **Spruce Street** through its elaborate gate. Cars Do Not Enter, but walkers can. Walk west/left on **Chestnut Street to West Cedar Street** (or the nearby **Lane**, narrowest of Beacon Hill streets, not wide enough for some cars). Walk north/right on the shifted waterline, a block east of **Charles Street**.

SIDE WALK? East/right on **Mt. Vernon Street** to stately Louisburg Square. Former Secretary of State John Kerry lived here. Return on **Pinckney Street**.

Walk north again on **West Cedar to Phillips Street**, then east/right and north again on **Garden Street** that becomes **Blossom Street** on the other side of **Cambridge Street**.

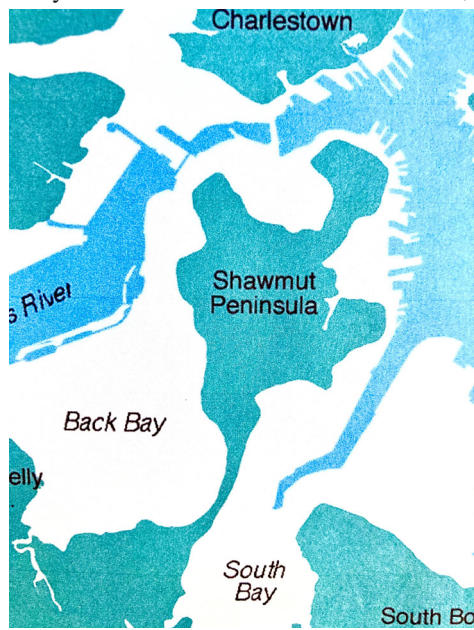
3 THE WEST END A vibrant pedestrian neighborhood was on the other side of **Cambridge Street** in the northwest corner of Boston. Not very walkable now. The Old West End was a close community of narrow crowded streets, bulldozed in 1960 for Charles River Park. Urban renewal sacrificed 300 years of human history for antiseptic high-rise apartments. More hidden gardens. Attractive plantings were noted in the Boston Globe a quarter-century ago: "Charles River Park at 35" wrote Robert Campbell (May 1995): "Well-kept beds, shrubs and trees are blooming everywhere. They're blooming, all right, but they're not blooming for you."

The OWL was near **Blossom Street** curving around Massachusetts General Hospital. Many big buildings, the hospital, multi-unit residences and Boston Garden, the old name for the Celtics' home court, not really a garden.

See zoomy Zakim Bridge and the Museum of Science atop the Charles River Dam separating freshwater from saltwater. But you can't see the water line.

Walking Neighborhood streets are gone and unless you want to venture along the raceway that is Storrow Drive, best walking is along **Blossom Street**. Turn right along **William Cardinal O'Connell Way**, walk south on **Staniford Street** and back to **Cambridge Street** to City Hall.

BOSTON CITY HALL is architecturally "Brutalist" and horticulturally brutal. An uninviting hardscape, the barren brick plaza could use groves of trees offering shade, flower and fall color. Walk north from the other side of City Hall on **Hanover Street** and look for the bar in the triangle with **Union and Marshall Streets**.



Narrow lane on Beacon Hill.

Contributed photo.

partly-elevated, partly-tunneled, often congested expressway called the "Distressway" and the "Other Green Monster" with girders the same color as left field Fenway Park. Since 2003, Interstate-93 zooms in the "Big Dig" O'Neill Tunnel below a series of urban parks with gardens, water features, public art and food vendors. (We'll be back in Part 3.)

4 THE NORTH END "*The Island of North Boston*" was the smaller peninsula at the end of Shawmut in 1630 and a busy waterfront by 1750. First Europeans to settle were Irish escaping the 1845-52 Potato Famine; next came European Jews, then Italians (still 40% of citizens) with fruits and vegetables, wines, cheeses and olive oil.

Tragically, Boston also had molasses. A green plaque on **Commercial Street** notes the Boston Molasses Flood of 1919 that killed 21 people. A three-story wave of hot, sticky molasses, 160 feet wide moving 35 miles per hour, scoured the waterfront for nearly a mile after a massive 50-foot, 2-million gallon tank burst. The North End was as densely populated as Calcutta, mostly Italian. Some still smell sweet pastry and remember on hot summer days.

Walking Hanover Street is Boston's 'North-east Passage' to fine Italian food. Smell the ocean air, wafting garlic and Parmesan cheese. Wander quiet side streets. Roam the halls of North End dining. Many fine Italian restaurants. **Hanover Street** is busiest: pasta, pizza and seafood, pastry and gelato. Some restaurants suggest reservations, some are cash only. My first foray was on a Catholic feast day, magical. Sampling:

Daily Catch, 323 **Hanover Street**, not Italian but a seafood legend.

La Summa, 30 **Fleet Street** between **Moon Street** and **Garden Court** with homemade pasta in small family restaurant on quiet side street near the birthplace of JFK's mother, Rose.

Trattoria Di Monica, 67 **Prince Street** with windows open to street, delicious food aromas inviting in summer, common in North End.



Green Dragon Tavern near Boston City Hall.

Contributed photo.

GREEN DRAGON TAVERN First city hall? A favorite haunt of Paul Revere and his Lodge of Masons and Tea Party heroes, it is rumored. British plans may have been overheard here, starting the famous ride of 1775. The Tavern was on the OWL at the edge of a mill pond on a 1630 map that notes it operated 1680-1828 on **Union Street** about 200 feet north of **Hanover Street**. The tavern now serves at 11 **Marshall Street** south of **Hanover**, and claims to have been established in 1654. Ponder with a pint.

(The mill pond was filled with rubble from Beacon Hill when lowered 110 feet. Cut & Fill. Granite steps to the once-highest John Hancock house were moved to the Pinebank Estate overlooking Jamaica Pond in the Emerald Necklace. The estate is gone, but the steps still lead down to the water.)

Hanover Street was a narrow spine like Boston Neck, linking the waterfront to Beacon Hill, now blocked by City Hall / Plaza at the western end. Walking northeast from City Hall on Hanover Street is a dramatic change from the 1950s, connecting downtown to the waterfront again. Cross the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway that replaced Boston's notorious former Central Artery -- the



North End Trattoria.

Brian Karlsson Barnes photo.

PART THREE Returning to the *Original Water Line*, we'll cross the Greenway through North End Park. Walk toward the brutal bulk of City Hall. Trace the convoluted OWL past historic Faneuil Hall to Fort Point's cannons (now gone); the OWL is complex in downtown Boston. Easier to trace are the many unhidden public gardens on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway. Chinatown is yet another dining destination.

Brian Karlsson Barnes, Master gardener / designer and wanderer, Chaplin

Arts Exhibition in Ashford

Submitted by Kathryn Eidson

The Ashford Arts Council is holding an exhibition, open to the public, starting at 6:00 pm on September 22, 2021 at the Pompey Hollow Senior Center and Park. The focus of the exhibition is to present the works of a variety of artists followed by a discussion of opportunities in that given art area.

Music - Vinnie LaMonica
The Babcock Cornet Band will perform at the Gazebo at Pompey Hollow Senior Center Park starting at 6:00pm. The band is led by Vinnie LaMonica, a bassoonist, conductor, and educator. He currently teaches at The Hartt School and in his Quiet Corner Music Studio in Ashford. He provides lessons on all wind and brass instruments.

Starting at approximately 6:45, we will move to the Senior Center for the following artists to present their work and discuss opportunities in their field.

2D Art - Debra Gag
Debra Gag is a landscape oil painter working in Windowhaven Studio. Her art works are featured in the Art and Garden tour, Artist's Open Studio and in various shows and galleries. Debra has been commissioned by several arts organizations to run critiques, do painting demonstrations, and jury art show.

Poetry – Tony Patichio and Marian Vitali
Ashford's Poet Laureate, Tony Patichio, and Marian Vitali, a poet in AAC's Font 'n Pen will share some of their work. Tony will be leading a series of workshops on Saturdays, October 9, 16, and 23 from 10:00 am-12:00 pm focusing on close reading and writing of poetry. Contact Tony directly at ajpati@yahoo.com to

These presentations will be followed by a short session, open to the public, for suggestions of other exhibitions and workshops.



Pomfret fence and field photograph by Christine Acebo.



'Little Moo' painting by Debra Gag.

enroll.
Encaustic - Linda Rogers
Linda is an encaustic artist who loves color and painting with fire. Her work involves painting with a medium made with refined beeswax and damar resin that is fused with butane and propane torches. She will show and

talk about her work.
Photography – Christine Acebo
Christine is an award-winning photographer with photographs displayed in a variety of venues. She will show some of her work and discuss opportunities for artist's exhibitions.

Love and Peace – Where Are You?

I was in high school during the 1960's – during the love and peace movement that arose in tumultuous times. Anger, hate, and division are so prevalent today, I find myself asking, "Love and peace, where are you?"

I have political views opposite of many of the writers in this paper. That should be OK – this is the United States of America, founded on freedom of belief and freedom of speech. However, I've angrily and rudely expressed my opinions to our government representatives that hold a different view point from me and that is not OK. The key words here are angrily and rudely. How can love and peace prevail with such a manner? It's good to let our representatives know how we feel since they represent us, but it's the way we say it, not what we say.

One of my best friends and I almost ended our friendship over different political beliefs. We chose the

friendship. There are lots of other topics for us to talk about and if politics does come up, we agree to disagree politely and with respect for one another.

Love and peace go together. Jesus taught us love. "A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." *John 13:34*. If we love one another, we will feel peace and spread peace through love.

The world is changed one person at a time - I'll start with myself. I look forward to others joining me in this mission as we work individually and as a nation to change for the better. May love and peace win!

Anne McAwley-LeDuc
Lebanon, CT

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Apathy by Design

By Calen Nakash

Any of us who have a little “save the world” in us probably feel immensely powerless watching the news, with special interest groups and corporations thriving, and billionaires lining their pockets during a global pandemic that has killed hundreds of thousands. Every day, the news paints a bleaker and bleaker picture as the oceans catch fire, billions of animals fry under a global heat dome, and the elite buy up homes in an attempt to lock in rent for themselves, jacking up an already absurd cost of living. Financial analysts advise that rent should account for no more than 30% of one’s income, but a minimum wage job does not currently make rent affordable *in any state*. People have been fighting for a minimum wage of \$15.00 an hour for so long that that number is no longer enough. If wages had risen with inflation, we would be looking at \$25 to \$27 an hour. Instead, a billionaire who forces his workers to pee in bottles instead of taking bathroom breaks rides a phallic-shaped rocket to space as the Earth burns beneath his feet, and even those with good jobs struggle to pay back student loans, shackles they’ve taken on by trying to better themselves.

In desperate times, talk of overthrowing or replacing the system gains traction. It can be easily argued that big changes are necessary, what with income inequality, climate change, and a media that pits us against each other, instilling fear and paranoia with every click to the point that stories abound of family members lost to superstition and anger, dying off from a preventable disease because of a chorus of “what-ifs” that poisons their mind. We see “acceptable” forms of protest against a pipeline that poisons the Earth met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and years in prison, while an attempted coup results in one of the perpetrators serving only eight months.

The difference in the severity of these responses is made clear by taking into account the supposed crimes. The biggest polluters knew about climate change for decades, and an Exxon lobbyist was caught on tape bragging about undermining Biden’s efforts to combat climate change. The largest polluters of the Earth have power behind them, and stepping in front of that power puts you in much larger crosshairs than interrupting a national election.

The way forward is not immediately apparent, but there is a path. When working within the system fails, change must happen outside of it. The FBI once called Martin Luther King, Jr., “dangerous to the nation” when it came to national security. King went through all venues to march for peace, and when he was repeatedly denied, he marched anyway. At the time, his speeches were seen as seditious by the American public, and he himself said that the biggest obstacle was the white man who agrees with what you’re doing, but not the way you go about it. That is still seen today, as the message of any protest that inconveniences onlookers becomes delegitimized. “Acceptable” forms of protest these days are shrinking to the point of nonexistence, and working within the system to fight back only succeeds when the system does not control the work. It is time to try something new.

We become apathetic when the venues of “acceptable” resistance do not work. We expect someone else to be the change we want to see, but the reality of what it will take is much different.

An ethics and morality teacher at UConn went over the great figures of history in a class I took. He spoke about Martin Luther King and Gandhi, and told us that in each instance, someone wanted them dead because of what they said. In times of strife, they stepped forward and went above and beyond what was considered “acceptable” at the

time. “The problem with all of you,” the professor continued, “is you’re not worth killing.” It was harsh, to be sure, but it resonated with me.

There are levels of extremity, of course, and varying levels of effectiveness. Protests only work if, once the protesters go home, change has happened. If protests alone made history, it wouldn’t be nearly as bloody. At the moment, those fighting are trying to reform an existing system. By voting in new public officials who will potentially serve the public better, we *could* get to \$15 an hour, and we *could* eliminate student loans, or go after people who dodge taxes. All of that goes out the door after voting season is over and we can only ask nicely for our needs to be met. The more likely scenario is what happened after Trump’s election, with the White House press secretary literally hiding in bushes, waiting for reporters to pass. We are told that our vote is our power, but even that has been stripped away with gerrymandering (look up Texas’s 2nd congressional district). Voting is still important, and voting for grassroots candidates you trust in numbers too big to gerrymander will be vital moving forward. But that is only one step.

Because corporations are now legally people and can lobby to do whatever they want, gaining the power required to make things better needs to start from grassroots movements, with people working together in local communities. Unlike in the past, however, these grassroots movements conduct their business on public forums, which makes them much easier to shut down or sabotage if they challenge the status quo. Most events are hosted online, to gain traction. If we look at the struggle between the 99% and the ruling class as a game of cards, the 99% are forced to play with their cards face up. Every event is monitored, every smartphone tracks an individual’s location, and every terms of service contract is written to be as confusing as possible. If the great wars of history had been fought in a world with Facebook, there would have been no surprise attacks.

During a Trump military parade, I saw one group of counter-protestors ask the venue for permission to fly an anti-Trump balloon. They were allowed, as long as it was far out of the way and not within view of the then-president. That is the risk one takes when it comes to working within the system. We should be aiming to be the next King in our own passions.

Convenience is a killer, and if a group is to remain undetected, its members must downgrade to handheld phones, purchase VPN subscriptions (virtual private networks hide your location as well as your browsing history), and grow by word of mouth alone. Those who want to be a part of history must risk their safety by standing in front of special interest groups and putting themselves in the crosshairs. To plant trees that our grandsons and granddaughters will see, to repair the Amazon rainforest, which now emits more carbon than it absorbs due to human interference, pockets of resistance need to sprout up now. The way things are going, we are on track for societal collapse, according to a 1972 report. A bright future would see corrupt individuals overrun and defending themselves against impassioned groups across the country. We are apathetic by design, and that can change.

Living on a burning Earth has radicalized even the kindest and gentlest individuals, and there will no doubt be a breaking point. Begin now to build something in your local community, so a solid structure will exist beneath the rubble. Contact me at calenakash.com with your ideas, and I will incorporate them into future writings. By combatting misinformation and finding mutual interests, we can rise against a system that works to maintain the status quo.

Strike Re-enactment in Willimantic

Submitted by Bev York

The Windham Mill Museum will host the annual Labor Day Strike Re-enactment on Monday, September 6 at 5:00 p.m. This year’s strike will be the 1899 Newsboy strike in New York City. The public is invited to learn the story and participate in the strike.

In the late 19th century newspapers and word-of-mouth were the main forms of communication. Subscribers had the morning news delivered to their home or office, but the afternoon news was sold through newsboys hawking the papers on the street for a penny. One hot summer

in July 1899, thousands of newsboys, orphans and immigrants went on strike against the New York Journal and the New York World. The newsboy’s strike was a U.S. youth-led campaign to force change in the way that Joseph Pulitzer (The New York World) and William Randolph Hearst (The New York Journal) newspapers compensated their child labor force of newspaper hawkers. Newsies in Brooklyn and Manhattan quickly followed suit, and suddenly boys across New York were refusing to sell newspapers and assaulting those who did. The strike lasted about two weeks until the price of papers was reduced to their original price.

This strike reenactment is an outdoor event and held rain or shine. The public is invited to participate in the strike reenactment. Come dressed as 1890s newsboy, newspaper magnate, reporter, police officer or crowd (optional.) Bring picket signs! After your picnic, bring the family and learn about why we celebrate Labor Day.

The event will last about an hour and is free but donations to support educational programs at the Mill Museum are greatly appreciated. The Museum is located at 411 Main Street in Willimantic. For more information millmuseum.org, themillmuseum@gmail.com or 860-456-2178.

A Thousand Names

By Judy Davis

I am on the road of stars, flying clear and sweet in my soul. I travel on the river of goodness, to my village of standing tall.

It is a path of quiet, and of jubilation. I have been on it since the day I was born. I will be on it, forever and a day. It is both near and far away. There is the cool shade of the willow, as well as every ray of hot sun. It is my alpha, and my omega – my newborn heart, and my radical transformation.

I walk past sagebrush, and cool waters. I wade in the dark, and in the cavern’s watery light. I have become the reservation’s land.

I walk with those who came before, and get ready to welcome spirits who have yet to arrive. Children follow me, as I race with the energy my ancestors send me. I honor all of my lovely travels, and teach the children the history of my tribe.

I am the bow, and the flash of the arrow. In the still pond with the lily pads, I glimpse the moon of myself, and my reflections reach to the sky.

The longhouse shelters me - my strength is forged in its fire. The wilderness of me is untamed, and always will be.

I am the colors of the rainbow, and the solidness of every stone.

I am of thousands of names, etched on walls of caves. All joy is mine to embrace. I am all I need.

Ancestors of Podunk Nation, on this day, welcome this woman warrior home!

Ken Goss to speak at Mill Museum

Submitted by Bev York

If you love books, don’t miss this program on August 25th at the Windham Mill Museum! Ken Gloss is the current proprietor of The Brattle Book Shop which has been in the hands of the Gloss Family since 1949. Over the years, Ken and his father, George, built this shop into one of America’s largest antiquarian book shops in the country.

Housed in a three-story building in the heart of Downtown Boston, The Brattle Book Shop carries an impressive stock of over 250,000 books, maps, prints, postcards and ephemeral items in all subjects. In addition to its general used and out-of-print stock, The Brattle Book Shop also maintains an inventory of first editions, collectibles and fine leather bindings in its rare book room.

Ken Gloss appraises books and libraries for Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, Northeastern, the FBI and others. He lectures on the antiquarian book field, books and their values. He also has written many articles on appraising books, book collecting and selling. Ken will talk on the topic of old and rare books.

The program will be 6:30 to 8:30 and is \$15.00 per person and includes one informal book appraisal and following the program, visitors will have an early bird entrance to the Crazy Quilt Book Sale. The book sale runs Aug 27 to 29 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The program will be held on the second floor of the Main Museum building and entrance is on Union Street. The Mill Museum is at 411 Main Street, Willimantic. 860-456-2178 themillmuseum@gmail.com

Please thank and patronize our advertisers for making the Neighbors paper possible. Thank you. T. King, Publisher

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

Honor Earth Day
everyday with solar!

Greetings,

We will resume the monthly community zoom meetings in the fall. Please reach out to me directly, I would love to help you gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of solar.



I invite you to join a peaceful revolution while simply changing where and how you buy your electricity.

As I mentioned last month, my wife, daughter and I went solar before the early adopter stage. We may be the anomaly, but we were willing to spend more for solar than to continue to buy our energy from Eversource; our local energy company. At that time, solar ended up costing us less than if we didn't go solar. And today, we spend WAY less for our solar energy than what Eversource charges.

It's all in the math!

If solar cost more than the utility, why are so many people installing solar on their homes?

When we went solar, Eversource was .115 cents per KWH delivered rate (supply + delivery). We locked in a solar rate at .09 cents/KWH. Today Eversource delivered rate averages .255/KWH. Guess how much I pay for my energy today... yup, .09/KWH delivered from my roof!

Here's how the simple math plays out:

My home uses what most average homes use for electricity, about 9500 KWH/year.
 $9500 \times .255 = \$2,422.50/\text{yr}$ and averages \$202.00/month
 $9500 \times .09 = \$855.00/\text{yr}$ and my monthly solar payment is \$71/month
 $\$2,422.50 \text{ minus } \$855.00 = \$1,567.50$
This year alone, we saved \$1,567.50 all because we said yes to solar.

Solar or Utility?

"If" your home is eligible for solar, meaning:
 If you get enough sun
 If the utility allows the install
 If your structure passes engineering

For me, and for many others, staying with the utility company almost always pencils out to be the most expensive option.

With today's progressive solar finance options and PPA (Power Purchase Agreements), there's no reason not to look into solar as a money savings option for you and your family. Most every option to finance solar offers zero up front cost and you only start to pay when the solar system is installed.

The concept for switching dollars to solar is quite simple:

You literally take the exact same money that you already have allocated for electricity and you simply switch it solar... and it costs less!

Let's face it, if solar didn't do what a "professional solar consultant" says it will do, with savings or solar production guarantees, there would be an uproar of complaints all over social-media sites like Yelp, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.. Yes, some folks don't have the best experience, but overall, folks are really happy with solar.

Notice above that I mentioned, "professional solar consultant" and not, Facebook and YouTube click bait ads! As warned in previous articles, there is a LOT of false and misleading information about solar. Make sure you work with someone that you trust and that they have proven tenure in the industry. You should easily be able to verify their industry experience.

When less is better than more!

If Eversource called you today and said we have a couple of plans for you to choose from:

Plan A - "You can stay on your current rate plan that you did not sign an agreement with us for, where we will continually increase your rates year after year as we have done so since the beginning of selling electricity to you".

Plan B - "You can buy your energy at a reduced rate, there's no up-front costs, it never goes up and after 20 years, you get free electricity for the next 15 to 20 years. However, there's a catch! - you have to stay locked into the lower rate agreement for 20 years and if you ever sell your home, the lower priced agreement will transfer to the new home owner."

What program would you choose, **Plan A** or **Plan B**?

Solar is the equivalent to **Plan B**!

It either pencils out or it doesn't.

It's worth repeating: When solar works for a home, staying with the utility company almost always pencils out to be the most expensive option. It's very simple math and the numbers are in plain sight.

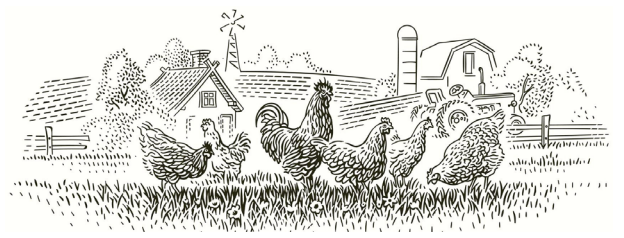
A few benefits of solar:

- Instant savings
- A great return on an investment if you purchase the equipment
- Show you care and compassion for our Earth from your rooftop
- Create a legacy for future generations

Until next month... ENJOY the Summer
John Boiano

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families who switched to solar!**

Zen Solar

Local Solar

Have you ever looked into solar?

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than utility energy.**

Check out our monthly column: Solar Today!

John Boiano 860-798-5692
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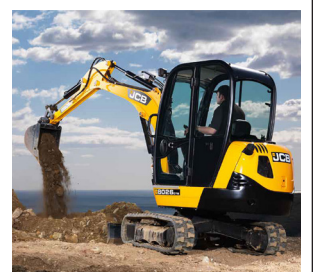
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Vaccinated With a Victrola Needle

By Donna Dufresne



Although I don't think of myself as particularly talkative, my family seemed to think I was a bit too verbal and curious. Of course they never told me so directly. Instead, they let idioms do their passive aggressive work with sayings like "don't you know curiosity killed the cat?" Or, "You're walking on thin ice in hot slippers". When my dad had enough of me following him around the farm asking endless questions and opining about everything he did, he would turn to me and say, "Jesus H. Christ, you must have been vaccinated with a Victrola needle". He used that phrase a lot, but he didn't put much credence in vaccinations. That was my mother's department, and she made sure I got all my puppy shots – at least the few that were available in the 1950's. She'd worked too hard to get me and wasn't about to give me up to some chance contagion. The polio vaccine was a Godsend in an age when we watched our classmates become crippled for life. And nobody wanted their child to end up with rheumatic fever, deafness, or blindness from the measles. A vaccine was far less risky than the real thing.

As we all duck and cover once again from what appears to be another round of Covid it is baffling that so many Americans refuse to get vaccinated. We Americans are an entitled and narcissistic lot. Of course, it didn't help that we had an inept President during the first outbreak who perpetuated the conspiracy theories that it was a Democratic hoax. Typical of the "Divider in Chief", Trump politicized the public health crisis, and pitted anti-maskers against fellow Americans who believe in science, facts, and real news rather than the political poppycock found on social media.

The one thing Mr. Trump did right was to push for a vaccine in his Operation Warp Speed. However, it seems that he was more interested in pushing for a vaccine while he was President to pump his ego and his savior complex. He has been remarkably silent as republican states and constituents, even those in Congress, refuse to implement mask and vaccination mandates. It seems that the far-uber right wing nuts, after centuries of suppressing individual rights and freedoms are suddenly interested in the first amendment. Typical of the anti-government sentiment nurtured by the Fox in the Henhouse "News", republicans and anarchists alike would rather Live Free and Die and infect everyone around them than cow tow to science and rationality.

But the crazy conspiracy theory infested Trump base are not the only ones reticent to get a vaccine. African Americans have been distrustful of the health system, and reluctant to seek medical care for good reasons. Institutional racism has reached its tentacles into the lives of Black and Brown people through a medical system which on the one hand has been overtly neglectful and on the other condoned medical torture. The white supremacist narrative that people of African descent did not feel pain led to 19th and 20th century debacles from the

genital mutilation of gynecological experiments to Syphilis "research". However, many folks in that demographic are starting to come around, having lost numerous family members including children and young people due to the Delta variant.

I'm sure I know many people who are secretly not vaccinated out of a false sense of virtue believing that they are exempt because they are vegan, or that they have a superior immune system because they tank up on elderberry syrup. Yet this virus doesn't give a shit how you treat your body. It is perfectly egalitarian and opportunistic. Even if you are not at risk for severe disease you can still pass the virus on to those who cannot take the vaccine due to immune suppression. It's one thing to believe in alternative medicine, but there is a growing number of nincompoops who are addicted to social media and prey to QAnon and other scam artists who have no interest in saving humanity.

Like Trump and his crackpot sycophants, they truck in lies and hoaxes. What's worse, the virus has become extremely politicized not only by Trump Republicans, but the extreme anti-vaxxers who not only refuse to vaccinate their children but won't let them wear masks. So let me get this straight: they don't want the "government" telling them to wear masks, they refuse to get vaccinated, the one thing that would save millions of lives and get us out of this mess, and they don't want the schools to close because, boo-hoo it's inconvenient and supposedly harmful to their children. And to add insult to injury the same cultish fiends have the audacity to claim the religious exemption even if they've never set foot in a church their whole lives. These children of the white, privileged middleclass are blatantly entitled, selfish and self-centered. Imagine if Americans during WWII refused to black out their windows to prevent air raids because it was inconvenient. Imagine if they refused to join the fight against Hitler, and fascism. Where would we be? Probably in the same boat we are today because those very same enemies of freedom have infiltrated free thought and brainwashed those who think they are "conservative" with the constant rhetoric of the culture wars.

Only in America, land of the free and home of the cowards would such narcissistic and selfish behavior be tolerated because, God forbid we impose any life-saving policies because they might take away the individual rights and freedom to be stupid. What's even more frustrating is that the same Trump supporters who are whining about their first amendment rights to foster hate and fly their confederate flags, and mask up or get a vaccination didn't give a rats-ass about the first amendment rights of Black athletes to kneel for justice or Black Lives Matter protestors. It just goes to show that the uber-right politics of Trump and his base have dumbed down America. Once the leaders of the free world, we are now a bunch of plebeian fools who refuse to believe in science and have been duped by lies and propaganda into believing the standard media is fake and climate change isn't real, and the Covid vaccine will cause you to grow a tail. Shame on us for squandering our freedom.

Dolphins vs. Sharks

By Bob Lorentson

Everybody loves dolphins. No, that's not the name of a new television show, but it should be. Dolphins are intelligent, charismatic creatures with a camera-ready smile that seems to be always asking the question, "Are you my friend?" Sharks get a whole week of TV dedicated to them and what do they have to offer? Nothing but big teeth and a stone cold look that, if it asks any question at all, it's "Are you my dinner?"

Being complex animals, it seems only fitting that dolphins have a complex evolutionary history. Fifty million years ago they were four-legged mammals that were apparently already smart enough to realize that the world was $\frac{3}{4}$ ocean, and that what the oceans really needed were some mammals to give them a bit of class. Fish were clearly only going to take the oceans so far, especially since all of the smarter ones had quit them for the land 325 million years earlier. These had gotten busy evolving into amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, and many could already demonstrate such advanced behaviors as caring for their young instead of eating them. The time was ripe to return home.

Ever so slowly then, one line of mammals became amphibious, much like the modern hippopotamus, which is believed to be the dolphin's closest living relative. Thinking it could do better than that, and really, who couldn't, it took the final plunge about forty million years ago and eventually became the dolphin we all know and love.

The oceans may have been without mammals in those early days, but what the new dolphins didn't know was that the oceans were most definitely not devoid of sharks. And that these sharks had already survived five mass extinction events over their 450 million years of existence in large part because they were not picky eaters. They also did not think much of evolution, particularly after discovering these strange new interlopers with their big brains and their fancy manners who did not show the proper fear and respect at mealtimes.

Dolphins, in fact, have the second largest brain to body mass ratio to humans, and while sharks may have the largest fish brains, they're still just fish brains, and I don't think anybody has ever been impressed by a fish's thoughts with the exception of certain fishermen. You know who you are. Anyway, it likely did not take the dolphins long to take the measure of sharks. When they saw that sharks never slept, as they had to constantly swim to push water over their gills to breathe, the dolphins didn't just wait to be eaten in their sleep. They evolved the amazing ability to shut down half their brain so as to let the other half keep things running smoothly. (A word of caution is warranted here. These are professional dolphins. Any humans

operating in half brain mode should think twice about continuing, or risk serious injury to everything they hold dear.)

Incredibly, dolphins exhibit culture, shared patterns of thought, language, and behaviors that allow them to form complex societies. They also use tools, typically shells and sponges. Sharks lack culture, as anybody knows who has seen them eat. They do not even much like other sharks, and sharing an ocean is about as far as they will go. The only tools they use are their own teeth, which, while impressive for biting prospective food, and really just about anything because everything looks like prospective food to them, are rather limited.

Dolphins in the U.S. and Russian Navies for instance have even been trained to use cameras, spears, and explosives, though both the dolphins and the governments would probably deny it. Sharks, who have been found with such things in their stomachs as fur coats, cannonballs, tires, and a whole suit of armor, would undoubtedly eat even the explosives. Any denials would be loud, but pointless.

Most scientists who study dolphins, or cetologists, agree that dolphins are intelligent on the basis that they can understand new situations, apply newly learned knowledge, and think abstractly. They also note that dolphins demonstrate self-awareness, problem-solving, grief, empathy, joy, teaching skills, and playfulness. Most dolphins say the same things about cetologists, with the exception of those cetologists affiliated with dolphin shows. Dolphins know when anyone is operating with only half a brain.

Dolphins say these things because they can. Through a wide variety of whistles, yelps, squeaks, clicks, and behaviors, their communication abilities are extensive and complex. Bottlenose dolphins are the most widely studied species, and cetologists believe that all bottlenose dolphins have a distinctive whistle, called a signature whistle, which identifies each individual like a name. Infants learn their names from their mothers, and keep them for life.

Sharks demonstrate hunger. They make no sounds, communicating primarily through biting, which does often elicit loud sounds from those bitten. If 450 million years of shark evolution have not produced any of the signs of intelligence of a dolphin, it's probably pointless to wait. Still, there is Shark Week, which, while good for the sharks, may actually say something more about human than shark intelligence. (Nine out of ten dolphins thought this was funny. The tenth was busy watching Shark Week.)

Bob Lorentson is a retired environmental scientist and an active daydreamer. For more of Bob's writing, see www.boblorentson.com

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Pomfret Historical Society Receives Grant

Submitted by Donna Dufresne

On June 24th, the Pomfret Historical Society was awarded a grant from Connecticut Humanities. This funding will enable the organization to offer four historical workshops this October in Pomfret. Entitled, *Waking the Dead: Archaeology, Genealogical and Archival Research About Enslaved Africans in Windham County*, these workshops are open to the public and will help facilitate restoration of the Randall Higginbotham Burial Ground on the Wyndham Land Trust's Nightingale Woods property in Pomfret.

Workshop presenters include historian and writer, Donna Dufresne; Dr. Nick Bellantoni, State Archaeologist Emeritus; Dr. Sarah Sportman, State Archaeologist; Ruth Shapleigh Brown, CT Gravestone Network; Michael Carroll, Rediscovering History Gravestone Restoration; and William Fothergill, expert in African and Native American genealogy.

Two workshops will be centered around current research on the enslaved Africans buried at the Randall Higginbotham Burial Ground. On October 2nd, in collaboration with The Last Green Valley's *Walktober* (a month-long series of regional walks and other activities), Donna Dufresne will present *The Lost Village of Voices, A New Narrative*. The presentation will begin at the Pomfret Community Center at 10 A.M., followed by a tour of the Higginbotham Homestead at Nightingale Woods. Rain date is October 3rd at 1 P.M. Registration is \$5.

The second workshop on local enslaved Africans, *Waking the Dead, The Story Told by Artifacts and Prima-*

ry Sources, will be held on October 23rd. This day-long symposium will include presentations by keynote speakers Dr. Nick Bellantoni, Dr. Sarah Sportman, Ruth Shapleigh Brown and Michael Carroll. The morning program will begin at the Rectory School at 9 A.M. followed by a demonstration on gravestone cleaning, restoration and repairs at the Randall/Higginbotham Burial Ground and a tour of the historic remains of the Higginbotham farm and mills. Registration is \$20, including lunch.



The third workshop, *Waking the Dead, Uncovering the Past in Ancient Burial Grounds*, will take place at the Sabin/South Cemetery in Pomfret on October 30th at 1 P.M. A presentation by Ruth Shapleigh Brown at the Pomfret Community Center will be followed by a tour of the Sabin/South Cemetery and workshop on gravestone carvers, lichen removal and safe cleaning of gravestones and the care of ancient burial grounds. Registration is \$5. The fourth workshop, *Waking the Dead, Native American and African Descent Genealogy and Archival Research* will take place at the Pomfret Community Center on November 6th at 1 P.M. with genealogist William Fothergill. Mr. Fothergill will share techniques he learned while researching Ebenezer Bassett, from Litchfield, CT, who was of Native and African American descent and the first person of color appointed as ambassador to Haiti in 1869. Registration is \$5.

Further details and online registration can be found on the Pomfret Historical Society website <https://pomfret-historical-society.org> starting August 15th. Register for individual workshops or all four for a discounted fee of \$30.

(Photo by Donna Dufresne).

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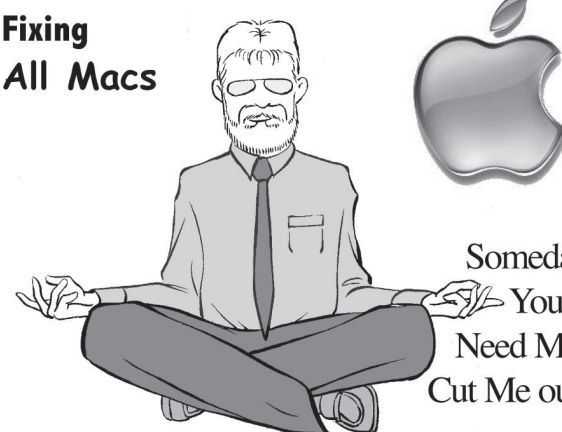
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Dear Reader-

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

The Packing House Reopens September 18th!

August

“Woodstock happened in August 1969, long before the Internet and mobile phones made it possible to communicate instantly with anyone, anywhere.

It was a time when we weren't able to witness world events or the horrors of war live on 24-hour news channels.”

-Richie Havens

By EC-CHAP

It's not about “where have all the flowers gone?” It's about where has the summer of 2021 gone??? As we engage the final month of summer, we need to squeeze out and savor all the summer life we can. Fall will be upon us before we know it...

Since our last performance on March 7, 2020, we are excited and appreciative to have the opportunity to reopen The Packing House once again on September 18, 2021! We will reopen responsibly - with reduced capacity and appropriate safeguards to protect our patrons, performers, and volunteers. We hope you will join us in celebrating a new season at this regional performance venue.

Since May, our monthly Performance article in the *Neighbors* paper has provided highlights of the various artists and films leading up to the Fall Reopening of The Packing House. We hope this advanced information has served to better inform you of the dates, genre, and details of our programming. Save the dates!

This month's article will conclude our series by highlighting the artists and film screening scheduled for the month of December. These include singer / songwriter, bassist, and producer Tracy Walton; and Grammy nominated vocalist, musician, and composer Nicole Zuraitis. In keeping with our holiday tradition, we will offer the classic film, “It's a Wonderful Life”.

EC-CHAP continues to seek new volunteers! We need folks that may possess video production, photographic, 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 assist, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Julie Engelke, 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, August 11th (all files must be received by Wednesday, August 4th).

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).

Finally, we would like to extend a BIG Thanks to all those who weathered out in the storm to attend the Opening of our current exhibit, The Mill Works Artist Community, Saturday, July 17th at the Dye & Bleach House Community Gallery. The exhibit will remain on display for public viewing Saturdays from 10:00am ~ 2:00pm through September 18, 2021.

We leave you with the following:

“I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”

- Albert Einstein

Peace,
EC-CHAP Board

NOTE: Based on a request from Eric Sommer, and to accommodate his tour schedule, we have rescheduled his performance from Saturday, November 20th to Friday, November 19th. All ticket sales for the original date have been refunded to the purchaser.

DECEMBER 2021 HIGHLIGHTS AT THE PACKING HOUSE

Solo Artist Tracy Walton in Concert (Indie / Folk). Saturday, December 4th, 7:30pm.

TRACY WALTON

wears many musical hats: Singer songwriter, bassist, producer, author, and studio owner. He has toured the country with various groups including most recently the duo Belle of the Fall. Tracy has also played bass with David Bromberg, and Vernon Reid among others.

Tracy's 4th solo album, *Small Town America*, has just been released (summer 2021). He also produces albums for artists at his studio, On Deck Sound Studio, in Northfield CT.

Join us for Tracy's solo performance and a slice of *Small Town America!*

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

“An Intimate Evening with Grammy Nominated Artist Nicole Zuraitis” (Jazz – A Holiday Theme). Saturday, December 18th, 7:30pm.

If recently you happened upon Greenwich Village's 55 Bar and were enchanted by the seismic talent of inspired vocalist, keyboard player and songwriter **NICOLE ZURAITIS**, you're officially part of the 32-year-old's burgeoning fan club. Nicole Zuraitis blends bountiful songwriting skills, an effervescent presence and dazzling vocals in a consummate package that has thrilled audiences across Manhattan and across the world.

Nicole is the 2016 New York City Songwriting Competition Coffee Music Project Winner, 2015 second runner-up in the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition and the 2014 Herb Albert ASCAP Young Composer Awards Winner. Nicole has headlined the Blue Note (NYC) and maintains residencies at the 55 Bar, Rockwood Music Hall (with the Dan Pugach Nonet), and Re-deye Grill. Audiences love Nicole's limitless enthusiasm, but that's only part of her story; only part of her talent.

“A heart as big as her remarkable voice”-- JAZZ POLICE

“A voice that's hard to ignore... remarkable range... you can't help but stop and take notice.” - JAZZ INSIDE MAGAZINE

Nicole's recording, *Hive Mind* (Dot Time Records), chronicles themes close to her heart, including an unflinching love of family and friends delivered with a sincere spirit that finds release in eight intimate original compositions (and two covers) which span genres. After hearing *Hive Mind*, you'd expect nothing less from this NYU trained classical vocalist and Connecticut born songwriter who swings hard as she brings listeners under her enveloping musical wings.

“Brooklyn's Nicole Zuraitis Brings Visceral Vocals, Her Powerhouse Presence and Winning Songwriting

to Jazz Outing, Hive Mind (Dot Time Records).” - KEN MICALLEF (DOWNBEAT)

Join us for Nicole's Holiday-themed performance at The Packing House!

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

Film Screening

“It's a Wonderful Life” (PG). 1946. Thursday, December 16th, 7:00pm

It's A Wonderful Life (PG) was written by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett; and directed by Frank Capra.

Join us for the 4th annual showing of this Holiday classic “It's A Wonderful Life” (1946) at The Packing House.

Starring James Stewart, Donna Reed, and Lionel Barrymore. “An angel helps a compassionate but despairingly frustrated businessman by showing what life would have been like if he never existed.” (IMDb)

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. Suggested donation \$5.00. 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.

“An Evening with Singer/Songwriter and Keyboard Artist Bob Malone” (Rock/R&B). Saturday, October 2nd, 7:30pm.

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

“AJ Jansen Band: The Outlaw Women of Country Show” (Country). Saturday, October 23rd, 7:30pm.

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

DATE CHANGE - “Eric Sommer” (Blues/Americana). Saturday, November 19th, 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.

EC-CHAP JAZZ SERIES

“Greg Abate Quartet” (BeeBop Jazz). Saturday, October 9th, 7:30pm.

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

“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.

EC-CHAP SPECIAL PROGRAM

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

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

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, August 11th (all files must be received by Wednesday, August 4th). 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.

“Begin Again” (R). 2013. Thursday, October 21st, 7:00pm

“Once” (R). 2007. Thursday, November 18th, 7:00pm

It’s A Wonderful Life” (PG). 1946. Thursday, December 16th, 7:00pm

Tickets, Reservations, CANCELLATIONS, 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).

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An Introduction to Musicology

By Calendula

As a new member of the EC-CHAP community, I want to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Abigail Golec, otherwise known as *Calendula*, the musical moniker for my singer-songwriter project. I am excited to be assuming the role of an Artist-In-Residence at EC-CHAP, and I'd like to tell you a bit more about myself. I grew up in Tolland, Connecticut, just down the road from The Mill Works facility. Music has been a significant part of my life for as long as I can remember, and I learned a myriad of different instruments while growing up, though I've now settled on the guitar as my main instrument. I graduated from UConn with a BFA in Technical Theatre and Design, and a concentration in Sound Design. I had the good fortune to live abroad and travel rather extensively both during and following my Bachelor's studies, and I graduated from the University of Amsterdam in 2019 with a Masters in Musicology.

Musicology, in addition to being my favorite Prince album, is quite simply the study of music as an academic subject. There are a number of disciplines within the overarching subject of musicology, but the main ones are the following: Cultural Musicology (also known as ethnomusicology), Historical Musicology, Cognitive Musicology, and Computational Musicology.

Cultural Musicology involves the critical examination of the role of music in different and various cultural communities. Music has cultural ties to every known human civilization - even as far back as prehistoric times. The oldest known instrument, the Neanderthal Flute, was found in 1995 in a cave in Slovenia and thought to be at least 60,000 years old! I suppose it shouldn't be too surprising that humans have been making music since the beginning, though. Could you imagine life without music?

Historical Musicology examines the composition, performance, reception and criticism of music over time. Traditionally, Historical Musicology has a particular focus on Western Art Music - i.e. classical music. This subject could be directly compared to Art History, which has a similar focus, but directed toward visual art rather than music.

Cognitive Musicology is the study of the psy-



Artist-In-Residence: Music

chological and physiological effects of music on the body and brain. Have you ever heard the claim that listening to Mozart can make you smarter? While actual findings of the study are not so cut and dry as that, such research is a good example of a question cognitive musicology tries to answer. This field of study is not just limited to human response to music, but also includes animals. Many animals use music and song as vehicles for communication, as well as important facilitators of survival - for example, the singing ability of a male song sparrow plays a key role in determining his ability to find a mate. This fascinating blend of music in relation to biology, psychology, and physiology is what I concentrated on in my Master's studies.



Computational Musicology is often related to Cognitive Musicology, because some studies will need to use both disciplines in their research procedure and analysis, however, they are distinct subjects. Computational Musicology is the study of how computers can process and analyze music. Surprisingly, computers do a pretty bad job analyzing music. While a human can tap to the beat of a song intuitively, a computer has a world of difficulty ascertaining this on its own. In fact, there is no computer that can reliably tell you the BPM (aka beats per minute, or the speed) of a song. Even Spotify, which has one of the most advanced and in-depth musical analysis tools and data sets can't tell you the correct BPM of any song 100% of the time.

This field of musicology crosses into computer science and artificial intelligence. Interestingly, there are a number of artificial intelligence software applications out there that can compose music on their own, such as the program AIVA. They have some examples of songs it's created on YouTube, and I highly recommend taking a listen, just to hear if you can spot the difference between human and computer-generated music. While the quality of the compositions can be questionable, you might be surprised by how close this software can get to something that sounds natural. Regardless of the outcome, this technology offers an interesting insight into music composition, and allows us to explore the ways that we can examine music through a technological lens.

I'm looking forward to writing more about music in the coming months, in all its various forms, and I hope you'll follow along!

Abigail Golec is an Artist-In-Residence (music discipline) at EC-CHAP, advancing her singer-songwriter project under the musical moniker Calendula. Abigail can be reached at: AIR-Music@ec-chap.org

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The Elements of Writing-

Plot Twist

By Felix F. Giordano

A Plot Twist is just that. It occurs when we think the plot is trending toward an expected conclusion and for one reason or another the author makes something occur which diverts the story from its expected path. Notice that I said “expected path” and not intended path. That’s because the author purposely interjects this literary concept of a plot twist into the story to befuddle the reader and keep them guessing, make the story more interesting, modify the relationship between the antagonist and protagonist, or even change the genre of the story. How many times have we read a book or watched a film and something unexpected happens which takes our breath away? In some instances a plot twist is what’s responsible for that sudden emotional train wreck.

On Wikipedia, Plot Twist is defined as, “...a literary technique that introduces a radical change in the direction or expected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction”. And on Reedsy.com, plot twist is defined as “...a story development that readers do not expect in which either something shocking happens or something shocking is revealed”. Children’s horror novelist R.L. Stine once said, “Every story ever told can be broken down into three parts. The beginning. The middle. And the plot twist”.

The structure for an effective plot twist requires these elements: it must be narratively sound, it must be unexpected, and it can be foreshadowed. Plot twists are usually found in these fiction genres: mysteries, thrillers, and suspense. However, if applied correctly plot twists can be utilized in any genre.

One very effective plot twist in a film that had audiences gasping for breath was from *The Sixth Sense*. Child psychologist Malcolm Crowe begins counseling a young boy named Cole Sear. Throughout the film, Cole continues his claim that he can see ghosts despite Mr. Crowe’s valiant efforts to convince the boy that they are essentially figments of the child’s imagination. As the film progresses, we begin to believe the boy and worry that perhaps something awful may happen to Mr. Crowe for his lack of confidence in the boy’s story. It’s not until the end of the film that Mr. Crowe realizes that he himself is one of the ghosts that Cole Sear can see and that the boy was telling the truth all along.

So how can we as writers use the technique of plot twist in our writing? To identify how a plot can be changed or modified either subtly or abruptly by a plot twist I arrived at a few hypothetical examples by genre –

DRAMA-

PLOT = a salesman is having difficulty moving up the corporate ladder until he meets and dates the daughter of the CEO. They get married and he begins to receive promotion after promotion and eventually becomes president.

PLOT TWIST = One day the daughter asks him to murder her father so that they will not only run the company but also inherit her father’s fortune sooner than later.

FANTASY-

PLOT = A king describes to his heir-apparent son in great detail of the repeated battles he leads against a ruthless and evil neighboring clan.

PLOT TWIST = For the first time the king brings his son with him to plunder and pillage the other clan’s village. The son meets a young woman from the village who reveals to him that it’s really the boy’s own father who’s a heartless killer and her people only want peace.

HISTORICAL FICTION-

PLOT = George Washington is crossing the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War.

PLOT TWIST = General Washington falls overboard and drowns. To not demoralize the confidence of the colonial troops, a soldier in the army who is a dead ringer for the deceased general is convinced to take on the identity of General Washington. The rest is history with a few clever comedic scenes to cover-up the impersonation.

MYSTERY-

PLOT = When a nameless man arrives in a small town and acts suspiciously, the local townspeople begin to disappear one by one.

PLOT TWIST = When cornered, the nameless man reveals to the chief of police that he is an undercover FBI agent on the trail of a kidnapper.

ROMANCE-

PLOT = Teenager Sally is attracted to twenty-something Tommy who just moved into town. Sally is

thrilled when Tommy asks her out on a date. However, she is dumfounded when at every turn Tommy refuses her affectionate advances.

PLOT TWIST = Pressured to put up or shut up, Tommy reveals to Sally that he’s really her half-brother whom she never met because Sally’s mother is on the run after embezzling \$100,000 from her ex-husband’s business. Later they find out they are not related and fall in love.

SciFi-

PLOT = Every five years a spaceship lands on Mars to restock supplies for the inhabitants who live in a series of underground modules. The crew aboard the spaceship eagerly anticipates reuniting with the colonists whom they obviously haven’t seen since their last trip.

PLOT TWIST = When the spaceship lands they find that Mars looks just like Earth. They then realize they were transported into an alternative universe where Earth is a wasteland and Mars is a beautiful planet.

THRILLER-

PLOT = A West Virginia town is besieged by the ghost of a man who was left behind to die in a tragic mining accident exactly one-hundred years ago which destroyed the mine and ended the company’s mining activities. Shadowy figures are seen entering and leaving homes as a lump of coal is left in each house as a reminder of the accident.

PLOT TWIST = A nosy reporter and a local female police officer team up to learn that the “ghost” is a scheme cooked up by the owner of a rival mining company who knows there’s a huge rich vein of silver in the now-defunct mine. The owner’s aim is to force most of the townspeople to pack up and leave so that he can purchase the town and the mine at a fraction of their actual value. A back and forth physical struggle with casualties ensues as the reporter and the female police officer battle the owner and his henchmen for the survival of the town.

I hope the above examples demonstrate how the plot and plot twists can be utilized and interrelated so that they make the story engaging and always keep the reader guessing.

As mentioned earlier in this text, foreshadowing is an element of a plot twist. Back in November 2020, the title of that month’s Elements of Writing submission in Neighbors Magazine was “Foreshadowing”. In that piece I hinted at the foreshadowing in Shakespeare’s balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. The point of that submission was the line, “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” My intent was to show that not only was Romeo explaining that their last names (Capulet and Montague) were inconsequential in the name of love, family, and ultimately God but that as I saw it, the frailty of a rose blossom would foreshadow an impending doom to the young lovers. We as readers see that doom come to full realization when a sword fight between Mercutio and Tybalt becomes deadly due to Romeo’s intercession. That’s the plot twist that Shakespeare inserted into his story that gives the reader pause. The plot evolves from an unpretentious romance, with its only potential consequence being the separation of the two lovers, to a killing (plot twist) that Romeo is held responsible for. Romeo is banished from the kingdom with no hope of ever seeing Juliet again, which ultimately leads to the young lovers’ demise.

Another example of foreshadowing as an element of a plot twist is in the novel *52 Pick-up* by Elmore Leonard. Early in that book, we learn that protagonist Harry Mitchell owns a construction company and uses explosives as a component of a lucrative government contract that he secured. That seems so inconsequential as it relates to the overall plot other than we understand that Harry is a rich executive. As an extortion plot against Harry unfolds we all but forget about the reference to explosives. But it’s a foreshadowing that comes to full fruition in the book’s final scene when it appears that all hope is lost. It’s then that Elmore Leonard uses a plot twist to show the reader that Harry uses his expertise in explosives to derail the villains’ plans.

We defined “Plot Twist” as part of The Elements of Writing, and I hope I’ve piqued your interest in writing. Storytelling is inherent in us all. It is who we are as social human beings and we all have stories to tell.

Felix F. Giordano is a local author with books sales in excess of 7,000 and has had more than 3 million pages of his books read by Amazon Kindle Unlimited subscribers. His website is jbnovels.com.

Next Month’s Topic: Sub Plots

Monarch Butterfly Tattoo

I saw a woman at the store today
Who had a monarch butterfly tattoo.
It was beautiful, but also sad,
As if it represented a farewell
To something that we hardly ever see,
So rare it is and ever disappearing.

A memory came to me from long ago
Of walking with my father down a road
When I was just a child of eight or nine.
We came upon a stand of milkweeds blooming,
With scores of hatching monarch butterflies,
Some fanning new wings in the summer sun,
Some still within their chrysalis of green.

My father, always showing off as teacher,
Conceived a heartless lesson in his mind:
From off a plant he plucked a chrysalis,
And as I watched him with a sinking dread,
He tore apart the living chrysalis!
As if I needed that to understand!
That that was where the lovely creatures came from!

Just then I got a gloomy premonition
About cruel men who trample over Nature
Crushing magic creatures for no reason!

Another time when I was with my mother,
We walked along a sidewalk past a meadow,
A flowery field alive with butterflies
In every shape and hue ever created.
I begged my mom to stop and see the wonder!
But she just gripped my wrist and hurried on.

The vision of ten million butterflies
Continued as a memory in my heart.
As I was growing up I saw them still,
But never in my life like that again,
And now in my old age they’re almost gone.

It’s sad to see a lonely monarch now,
Searching for a milkweed and a mate!
That’s why it was a melancholy sight
To see that butterfly tattoo today.

Kathy O. LaVallee, North Windham



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7.20.2021 The Great Garage Band Reunion performs at Ashford's Pompey Hollow Park.

Tom King photo.

Poetry Readings at Woodstock's Roseland Park



Submitted by Karin Warinsky

Two more free poetry readings will be held at Woodstock's Roseland Park this summer. The dates are August 15th and Sept. 26, 2-4 p.m. in the outdoor amphitheater (boat house if rain). The park is located at 205 Roseland Park Road.

Featured poets on the 15th will be Connecticut author and organizer of Quiet Corner Poets, Christine Kalafus, Massachusetts authors Gerald Yelle, David Wyman, and author and Professor Emirita, UMass, Janine Roberts.

Reading on Sept. 26 will be National Beat Poet Laureate for 2020, Paul Richmond, finalist in the Montreal International Poetry Contest and Woodstock resident Karen Warinsky, Massachusetts author Robert Eugene Perry and UCONN Assistant Professor Brian Sneed. All published poets will have books available for sale. There will also be an open mic segment as time allows. Sign-ups take place during the events.

This is the second year for the series. Covid guidelines will be met. This is rustic seating and lawn chairs/camp chairs are recommended. Ages 14 and up.



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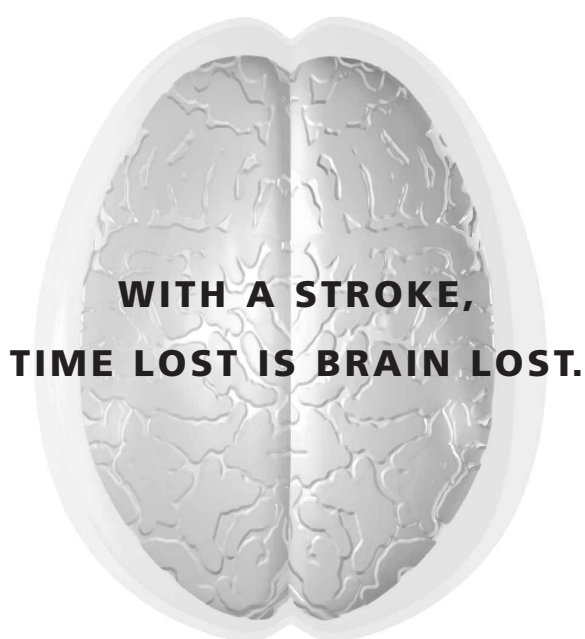
EC-CHAP is seeking a Curator / Director to oversee the **Gardiner Hall Jr History Museum**. Working with a small team of volunteers, this individual will assist in expanding the collection of artifacts; develop meaningful and relevant historical programming; and support EC-CHAP's **Framework for Raising Historical Awareness**.

To learn more please email: info@ec-chap.org or call: **518.791.9474**.

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Fireflies In Old Pickle Jars

The ocean visits me in the middle of my mind just moments away from listening to the waves reaching dampened shores.
 I can see distant flickering lights that remind me of evenings spent gathering fireflies in old pickle jars.
 The faces that emerge in fading clouds are friends whose seldom visits are now only wrinkles, in the cooling breeze.
 Where have all the laughters gone, like the sand that I can sense slipping between my toes, waiting for another child's castles to rise.
 As I close my eyes tighter and reach deeper into myself, I can taste the Atlantic as she covers my naked core.
 The tides, the never ending tides, pull me further and further away from the safe surroundings that still carry my name in shallow waters
 How will I ever find you again when my eyes finally can open? Will the gulls cry echo my own and together, will we find tokens to share with the sea?
 Here, behind the sweetness that accompanies sleep, I will hold you always in my heart as I walk beyond your soothing night air.
 I ask only that you never forget to wake me with the beautiful colors of your early morning dance, with the faithful rising sun.

Poem and photo by Wayne Erskine.



7.24.2021. Jan Jungden (left) & Patty Tuite perform on the Shaboo Stage during LOCO Fest at Jillson Square, Willimantic. Pete Polomski photos.

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